

H.R. 6047: The Sharri Briley and Eric Edmundson Veterans Benefits Expansion Act

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
VETERANS' AFFAIRS
CHAIRMAN MIKE BOST

BACKGROUND:

The Sharri Briley and Eric Edmundson Veterans Benefits Expansion Act of 2026, as amended introduced by Rep. Tom Barrett (R-MI) would create a significant increase in benefits for a forgotten group of veterans and their families for the first time in over 20 years.

Sharri Briley is the surviving spouse of CW3 Donovan Lee 'Bull' Briley, an Army Special Operations Blackhawk helicopter pilot who tragically lost his life in Mogadishu, Somalia during Operation Gothic Serpent while providing aviation support to the ground forces that were a part of a United Nations peacekeeping mission objective at the time in 1993. Donovan and his fellow soldiers' actions inspired the movie *Black Hawk Down* and his story of service continues to be told today. Following her husband's death, Sharri Briley has made it her mission to honor fallen servicemembers by ensuring the families left behind are never forgotten and they receive the survivor benefits they have earned. Surviving spouses like Sharri Briley would directly benefit from the expansions this bill would make to VA survivor benefits.

Sergeant Eric Edmundson is an Army veteran whose vehicle was hit by an improvised explosive device (IED) on October 2, 2005, in Iraq. Eric sustained lifechanging injuries including an anoxic brain injury which changed the course of his life by ending his ability to speak or walk. Despite these challenges, Eric continues to lead a full life through enhanced medical technology and therapy. Sergeant Edmundson's wife, and his parents serve as his full-time caregivers to allow him to still do the things he enjoys, including going to the gym, doing yoga, painting, and spending quality time with his two children. Families of catastrophically disabled veterans like the Edmundson's would directly benefit from the benefits expansions this bill would make to allow veterans like Eric to live comfortably in exchange for their service in uniform.

The Sharri Briley and Eric Edmundson Veterans Benefits Expansion Act would –

- **Significantly increase the monthly benefits rate for catastrophically service-connected disabled veterans** with a traumatic brain injury or other severe disabilities that require regular, round the clock, in-home medical care, offering an additional \$10,000 annually.
- **Raise survivors' VA benefits (DIC) by an extra 1.5% over two years**, providing an extra couple hundred dollars to over 500,000 survivors. Since 1993, Congress has not adjusted DIC, aside from inflation.
- **Expand the eligibility requirements for National Guard and Reservists from 90 days of active-duty service to 14 days of active-duty service** with a 1% fee. This would allow more members of the Guard and Reserve, generally younger members, to be able to live the American dream by owning their first home.
- **Over 500,000 survivors, National Guard and Reservists, and thousands of catastrophically disabled veterans and their families will be positively impacted by these changes.**

For years, Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) have emphasized the need for improved benefits for catastrophically injured veterans, their families, and their survivors. **This bill would answer the call from VSOs for veterans, dependents, catastrophically injured veterans needing in-home care, and veterans' survivors receiving VA DIC benefits to grant them the benefits they have earned.**

The Sharri Briley and Eric Edmundson Veterans Benefits Expansion Act is fully offset.

STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT:

The *Sharri Briley and Eric Edmundson Veterans Benefits Expansion Act*, as amended is supported by the following veteran service organizations (VSOs) and stakeholders: Paralyzed Veterans of America, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S., The American Legion, Disabled American Veterans (DAV), Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS), Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA), Elizabeth Dole Foundation (EDF), Wounded Warrior Project (WWP), AMVETS, Gold Star Spouses of America, Gold Star Wives of America, Fleet Reserve Association, Marine Corps League, Military Officers Association of America, Armed Forces Retiree Association, Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A., Military Order of the Purple Heart, Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S.P.H.S., Blinded Veterans Association, Quality of Life Foundation, and Independence Fund.

H.R. 6047 OFFSET: Increasing the IRRRL (refinancing) fee from 0.5% to 1.42%, this fee would be an average of \$16 more per month for those who choose to refinance their current VA home loan.

- Increasing the VA home loan funding fee for borrowers (including non-veterans) who are assuming a current VA home loan from .5% to 1.0%. This fee would be an average of \$5 more per month.
- Extend current home loan rates through the budget window, on average \$8 more per month for non-disabled veterans with 0% down.
- Expands VA home loan eligibility to Guard and Reserve from 90 days to 14 days of active-duty service with a 1% fee added.
- Extends current law by using the bipartisan pension offset used in previous bills such as H.R. 695 and S. 201.

Why these offsets?

- Due to House rules and the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go (PAYGO) Act of 2010, bills that increase federal spending must be offset to ensure Congress does not increase the national deficit.
- All offsets in this legislation have current bi-partisan support, or versions of these increases were voted on and supported by members of both parties in previous Congresses.

THE MESSAGE:

- *The Sharri Briley and Eric Edmundson Veterans Benefits Expansion Act* would transform the lives of over **500,000 veterans and their families**, filling crucial gaps in VA benefits delivery that has not changed in decades.
- American hero's families like the Briley's and the Edmundson's – and the hundreds of thousands more like them – should never have to worry if they will be able to make ends meet.
- *The Sharri Briley and Eric Edmundson Veterans Benefits Expansion Act* would expand homeownership opportunities to members of the National Guard and Reserve to expand economic opportunity.
- *The Sharri Briley and Eric Edmundson Veterans Benefits Expansion Act* would deliver vital support to the catastrophically injured, widows, dependents, and survivors; many of whom have not seen their benefits properly expanded in decades.
- *The Sharri Briley and Eric Edmundson Veterans Benefits Expansion Act* would enhance the lives of veterans living with limb loss, severe disabilities, quadriplegia, paraplegia, and their families to deliver on the debt we owe to those who have served.