

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

REPUBLICANS | RANKING MEMBER MIKE BOST

The Modernizing VA Disability Benefit Questionnaires Act

Background:

Disability Benefits Questionnaires (DBQs) are standardized forms used by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), private physicians, and contractors to perform disability examinations in support of a veteran's claim for disability compensation as a result of a service-connected injury or illness. Current practice does not require VA contractors, who perform disability exams, to submit DBQs in a format that can be easily read by VA's claims automation software. Additionally, there is currently no convenient online portal that veterans' private physicians can use to submit DBQs. As a result, automation is more error-prone and VA employees have to manually read and input DBQs from outside providers, which contributes to the growing backlog of disability claims and results in veterans waiting longer to get their disability compensation from VA.

The Modernizing VA Disability Benefit Questionnaires Act would create a universal standard for contractors to use when transmitting DBQs. The standard would require them to be readable by an automated program in an effort to streamline the claims process. It would also require VA to submit a plan for a convenient, online portal that veterans' private physicians could use to complete DBQs. *The Modernizing VA Disability Benefit Questionnaires Act* would make DBQs more convenient and useful, allowing VA employees to focus on claims processing activities that require human intervention, such as rating claims and weighing evidence, rather than menial processing tasks.

The Message:

- No veteran should have to cut through bureaucratic red tape once they leave the military and seek the benefits they have earned from VA.
- *The Modernizing VA Disability Benefit Questionnaires Act* is a step in the right direction to simplify the claim process for veterans, VA employees, and veterans' private providers.
- *The Modernizing VA Disability Benefit Questionnaires Act* would eliminate roadblocks to modernizing the disability claims process to help veterans receive the benefits they earned faster.