

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2013 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Joint Resolution 3 (Senator Peters, *et al.*)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Rules and Executive Nominations

Crisis in Waiting Periods for Veterans with Disabilities to Receive Services from the Federal Veterans Benefits Administration

This joint resolution urges that specified actions be taken by Congress, the federal Department of Veterans Affairs, and the federal Veterans Benefits Administration to address (1) the long waiting periods for veterans with disabilities who file disability compensation claims with the Baltimore Regional Office to receive services and compensation from the federal Veterans Benefits Administration; and (2) the mishandling of such claims.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Urging the Congress and federal agencies to take specified actions does not directly affect State operations or finances.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary/Background: The preamble notes that:

- documented significant mistakes regarding medical claims filed with the federal Veterans Benefits Administration mean that many veterans with disabilities are denied full compensation for their injuries, while others are overcompensated;

- Maryland is ranked number one in education, entrepreneurship, and research and development, and Maryland should be ranked number one in veteran services;
- veterans who file disability compensation claims at the Baltimore Regional Office of the federal Veterans Benefits Administration face a 25% chance of those claims being mishandled;
- the performance of the Baltimore Regional Office is among the nation's worst, with claims filed by veterans seeking disability compensation pending considerably longer than the federal Veterans Benefits Administration's goal or the national average;
- the wait for those who file claims with the Baltimore Regional Office, which serves nearly 500,000 veterans living in Maryland, is longer than any of the federal Veterans Benefits Administration's 56 offices; and
- the Baltimore Regional Office has a 73.8% accuracy rate, which is the second worst in the country.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 18, 2013
ncs/lgc

Analysis by: Guy G. Cherry

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510