

MEMORANDUM

TO: National Officers
Supervisory National Service Officers
Department Commanders and Adjutants
National Legislative Interim Committee
DAVA National Adjutant
DAV CAN Members
Action E-List Members

FROM: Joseph A. Violante, National Legislative Director

SUBJ: **ATTORNEYS IN VA CLAIMS PROCESS**

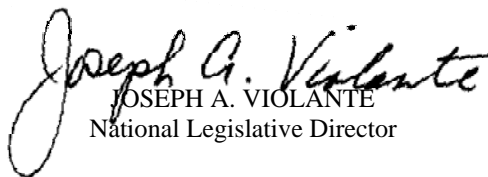
DATE: June 21, 2006

On Thursday, June 22, 2006, the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee will mark up S. 2694, the Veterans Choice of Representation Act. This bill will remove certain limitations on attorney representation of claimants for veterans' benefits in administrative proceedings before the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

The Disabled American Veterans (DAV) is concerned that the current claims process does not work properly. We believe Congress should focus on correcting the process, not making it more adversarial and legalistic. The question should not be whether veterans have a right to hire an attorney, but how to improve claims processing. Clearly, the solution is not to allow attorneys into the process.

The VA benefits delivery system was designed to be open, informal, and helpful to veterans. The goal was to ensure that veterans receive the benefits a grateful nation has provided for them, rather than discourage or inhibit their claims with government "red tape" or lengthy litigation. Allowing attorneys into the process would interfere with this goal and will create a system that is more adversarial and legalistic and less veteran-friendly.

I urge you to call or send an e-mail to your Senators, urging them to oppose the enactment of this bill and to truly focus the attention of Congress on ways to ensure the process performs in the manner for which it was designed—an ex parte, non-adversarial system, with VA being obligated to provide all benefits allowable under the law.


JOSEPH A. VIOLANTE
National Legislative Director

JAV:lmb

DAV DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

Building Better Lives for America's Disabled Veterans

Dear Senator:

As a disabled veteran who has experience with the disability compensation process, and as your constituent, I am concerned that allowing attorneys into the process will make it more adversarial and legalistic. I urge you to please oppose S. 2694.

I am concerned that the current claims process does not work properly. I believe Congress should focus on correcting the process, not making it more adversarial and legalistic and less veteran-friendly.

I encourage Congress to look at ways to ensure that the disability claims process performs in the manner for which it was designed—an ex parte, non-adversarial system, with the Department of Veterans Affairs being obligated to provide all benefits allowable under the law.

Please let me know your position on this important issue.