

October 7, 2025

Matt Murray
Executive Editor
The Washington Post
By email

Dear Mr. Murray:

The 26 signatory military and veteran advocacy and service organizations below take great umbrage with *The Washington Post's* article of October 6th, "[How Some Veterans Exploit \\$193 Billion VA Program, Due to Lax Controls](#)," specifically because the article:

- Attempts to draw tenuous (at best) causal relationships between the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability rating and compensation system and what *The Post* appears to imply is widespread veteran fraud;
- Blindly ignores, as former [VA Secretary David Shulkin points out](#), "[t]he sheer complexity of the [disability claim] process leads to unnecessary delays and denials—not because of veterans' shortcomings, but because of how the system is designed," despite the article quoting him without that crucial proviso; and
- Implies veterans are fraudulently claiming post-traumatic stress disorder without in-service records of such medical treatment, even though the [National Institutes of Health argues](#) is a condition whose symptoms are delayed by months or years.

As even some of the commenters on the article webpage noted, the article fails to provide "context for some of its data" leading that commenter to be "concerned about some of the other conditions discussed" (Mandy Foster). The risk of such a lack of context in the article's argumentation and the selective use of statistical figures cannot be understated; doing so as was done with this article fails to place things in proper context and generates false conclusions, even if not explicitly stated by the authors.

For example, the organization [Mission Roll Call pointed out today](#), "Advances in triage and battlefield medicine saved thousands who would not have survived in earlier wars, but survival came with new and complex injuries" something the article admits along with VA's concerted effort to provide "treatment for depression and post-traumatic stress" given the spike in veteran suicide. But the article admits this only as a seeming factor which "contributed to the torrent of claims."

Would *The Post* prefer the wounded military personnel to have bled out on the battlefield rather than live and file a disability claim, or that veterans successfully kill themselves at higher rates so as not to burden the VA with their mental health care needs? While we certainly hope that is not the editorial position of *The Washington Post*, the article would appear to argue in favor of more dead military personnel and veterans and less disability claims and PTSD-related mental health care.

Similarly, the article argues "veterans have flooded VA with escalating numbers of claims. In 2001, veterans received benefits for a total of nearly 6 million disabilities. By last year, that figure had risen to 41.7 million, a sevenfold increase." Similarly, the article implies disabled veterans with 100% ratings are somehow bilking the system because they "hold normal, full-time jobs." Without identifying what percentage of veterans with a 100% rating are holding such jobs, nor defining what a "normal, full-time" job is, *The Post* article seems to clutch its pearls in

shock that “More than 1.5 million veterans held a 100 percent rating last year, double the figure from 2019 and nearly nine times as many as in 2001.”

In both these data sets which the article references, while the statistics are true, what is left unsaid is that those are both based upon pre-9/11 numbers, ignoring the now 24 years of near continuous combat and high-intensity non-combat operations in which U.S. military personnel are involved. We believe there was likely a similar spike when comparing disability claims before December 7, 1941, and after 1945, or before August 1964, and after 1972. Of course, many of those military personnel and veterans from World War II and Vietnam would not have the benefit of the lifesaving modern military medicine techniques the article notes, may very well have died on the battlefield or soon thereafter, and therefore wouldn't be such a burden on an apparently ungrateful nation, at least one in which *The Post* seemingly resides.

While *The Post* argues “Democracy Dies in Darkness,” it appears that what is dying here is *The Washington Post's* reporting integrity. To argue, as the article does, that “[m]any veterans see those [disability compensation] checks as validation of their service and the sacrifice they made” is to belittle the disabilities – large and small, complex and simple – that befall the post-9/11 military veteran. We expect more from a supposed Paper of Record, but we note *The Post* “presented VA officials with a detailed summary of this story and a list of questions, which they declined to answer.” We ask you to present those questions to our groups, and we will be happy to engage you in a rigorous analysis of your concerns and those questions to provide you with what we believe is the proper context for these programs.

We hope you will accept our offer.

Very Respectfully,

National Defense Committee
U.S. Navy Chief Petty Officers Association
American GI Forum
Chief Warrant and Warrant Officers
Association, U.S. Coast Guard
Commissioned Officers Association of the
U.S. Public Health Service
Armed Forces Retirees Association
Ranger Leadership and Policy Center
Burn Pits 360
Association of the U.S. Navy
The Independence Fund
The Veterans Education Project
Moral Compass Foundation

Jewish War Veterans of the USA
Vietnam Veterans of America
Sea Service Family Foundation
Korean War Veterans Association
Wounded Paw Project
U.S. Army Warrant Officers Association
Veteran Warriors
WiseHealth/VeteranCaregiver.com
Operation First Response
Mission Roll Call
Fleet Reserve Association
Special Operations Association of America
American Retirees Association
America's Warrior Partnership