Let's Pass the Major Richard Star Act

To help move the Major Richard Star Act forward, we are asking state lawmakers to introduce an official statement — called a resolution — showing that their state supports the Major Richard Star Act and wants Congress to pass it.

A state resolution does not change federal law by itself. Instead, it is a way for states to publicly speak up and put pressure on Congress to act. When multiple states do this, it sends a powerful message that this issue cannot be ignored.

Your state is well-positioned to help move this effort forward.
Your voice can make a real difference.

This toolkit contains everything you need to have a resolution introduced in your state, including template emails, resolutions, and fact sheets about the Major Richard Star Act. Thank you for your help with getting a resolution passed in your state. If you have any questions about any part of this toolkit, or need assistance with any step in the process, please email advocacy@staractalliance.org.

Identify Your State Lawmakers

You only need one state lawmaker to agree to introduce a resolution, but reaching out to multiple lawmakers increases your chances of success.

PRIMARY CONTACTS

We recommend the following lawmakers as priority contacts to start the process.

- Your own State Senator
- Your own State Representative (House or Assembly)
- Chairs of your state's veterans-related committees. Committee names vary by state (for example, Veterans Affairs Committee or Military and Veterans Issues Committee). Both your state's House/Assembly and Senate will have committees that handle veterans' issues.

HOW TO FIND THEM

- **Your own legislators:** Go to your state legislature's website and enter your address to find your Representative and Senator. They always want to hear from their constituents.
- **Veterans' committee chairs:** On your state legislature's website, look up the House/Assembly and Senate committees that handle veterans' issues and identify the committee chairs. Even if you are not a constituent, they will want to hear about legislation or resolutions affecting veterans.
- **Note:** If your state has part-time legislators, make sure your legislature is in session. In 2026, most state legislatures will be in session for at least a few months, typically beginning in January or February. A few will not be in session at all this year. The website should list the dates.

SECONDARY CONTACTS

Other contacts you can reach out to about introducing a resolution include:

- **Legislators you already know:** State legislators (in either the House/Assembly or Senate) you have a relationship with. Even if you're not their constituent, a prior connection can help spark interest in introducing a resolution. They may also be able to point you to the right person or make an introduction.
- **Proclamations or Resolutions committee chairs:** Some states have committees that handle proclamations or resolutions (not all do). If your state has one, reaching out to the chair could also be helpful in getting a resolution introduced.

Request a Meeting

Most state lawmakers are accessible. A simple, personal request works.

HOW TO ASK

- Email their office (sample email below).
- Call the office and say you are a constituent and a wounded veteran.
- If they hold town halls or district events, attend and introduce yourself.

WHAT TO SAY WHEN ASKING FOR THE MEETING

- "I live in [STATE] and I'm a veteran. I'd like to meet briefly to discuss a resolution supporting combat-wounded veterans in our state."

Email/Letter Templates

SAMPLE EMAIL

Please read before using the template: The email on the next page is provided as a starting point and should be customized based on whom you are contacting.

- **Your own representative:** Be sure to note that you are a constituent.
- **A chair of a state committee that handles veterans' issues:** Acknowledge their role. For example: "As chair of our state's committee on veterans' issues, I'm writing to you …"
- **A lawmaker you already have a relationship with:** Personalize the message to reflect that relationship. For example: "It was great speaking with you at the event last month …"

IF YOU DO NOT HEAR BACK

Send a follow-up email. Be sure to reference the date you first emailed.

INITIAL OUTREACH

Subject: Meeting Request from a Wounded Veteran

Dear [Senator/Representative LAST NAME],

My name is [YOUR NAME], and I am a veteran from [STATE]. I'm reaching out because I would appreciate a brief meeting to discuss a state resolution that would support combat-wounded veterans here in [STATE].

The resolution does not change state law or require any funding. It simply urges Congress to ensure medically retired combat-wounded veterans receive the full benefits they earned.

For your reference, I've attached a one-pager that provides additional background on the Major Richard Star Act and its impact. I have also attached sample language that may be used as a starting point for any official resolution.

I can meet in person or by phone/Zoom, whatever works best for your schedule. Please let me know whom on your staff I should coordinate with.

Thank you for your time and for your service to our community.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]
[Address, Including Zip Code]
[Email]
[Phone Number]

FOLLOW-UP EMAIL

Subject: Follow-Up: Request re: Major Richard Star Act

Dear [Senator/Representative LAST NAME],

I wanted to follow up on my recent email, sent on [DATE], regarding a possible state resolution supporting the Major Richard Star Act. I would be grateful for the opportunity to discuss this request or provide additional information, if helpful.

Thank you again for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]
[Address or Zip Code]
[Email]
[Phone Number]

Prepare for the Meeting

You do not need to be an expert. You only need three things:

1. **Your Story:** Explain that the Star Act offset affects real lives. If the offset affects you personally, a family member, or someone else you know, you may share that (you don't have to identify them). If not, simply state why the issue matters.

2. **The Purpose:** Tell them you are asking the legislator to introduce a state resolution urging Congress to pass the Major Richard Star Act.

3. **Your Packet:** Bring or send:
   a. Template resolution language
   b. Major Richard Star Act one-pager

The resolution language and the one-pager can be found at the back of this toolkit. Feel free to print those pages for the meeting.

In the Meeting

Here is a simple script you can use:

Step 1. Thank them and introduce yourself. Tell them where you live and be sure to mention that you're a veteran.

Step 2. Explain the issue in plain terms:

- Under current law, many medically retired combat-wounded veterans lose part of the benefits they earned. This is called the "Wounded Veterans Tax."
- Veterans should not have to choose between earned retirement pay and disability compensation.
- Over 54,000 veterans nationwide are affected, including [Number] veterans in [State]. **See the one-pager at the end of the toolkit for the number in your state.**
- The Major Richard Star Act fixes this injustice.
- Your state can help by sending a unified message to Congress.
- Many states, including Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Louisiana, and California have already introduced or passed resolutions regarding the Major Richard Star Act.

Step 3. Ask directly: "I am asking if you would introduce a state resolution supporting the Major Richard Star Act."

Step 4. Hand over the materials: Let the documents explain the details. You do not need to debate policy.

Step 5. Identify next steps. Ask: "Whom on your staff should I follow up with to move this forward?"

Follow Up After the Meeting

You've held the meeting and asked a lawmaker to introduce legislation. That's a big step. Thank you!

There are a few other things still to do around the meeting:

- Email a thank-you to the legislator within 24 hours.
- Attach the materials again.
- **Notify the Star Act Alliance** (info@staractalliance.org) about the meeting and any details so we can support the legislator's staff and help draft the final resolution text if necessary
- **Connect with local veterans' organizations:** Reach out to local organizations and/or their chapters, like Disabled Veterans of America, Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, Military Officers Association of America, Iraq & Afghanistan Veterans of America, etc. Encourage them to send a letter of support!
- **Encourage other veterans to email or call:** Share a copy of this toolkit with others so they can use the scripts and templates too. Urge them to contact their own state lawmakers, as well as any chairs of committees addressing veterans' issues or proclamations. More voices help legislators act faster.

Bill Introduction

This step is critical. Stay in touch with your state legislators and/or their staff and ask for updates on the status of the resolution, especially if they have indicated they plan to move it forward.

If you learn that a resolution will be introduced:

- **Notify the Star Act Alliance:** Email (info@staractalliance.org) as soon as possible and take a moment to congratulate yourself on a job well done.
- **Be prepared for next steps.** Before the resolution is introduced, or shortly after, a few key things often happen:
  - A press conference to highlight the resolution
  - Committee discussion and deliberation, which may include testimony from veterans impacted by the Major Richard Star Act
  - You may be invited to participate in one or more of these activities. The Star Act Alliance can support you if this happens.
- **Use available advocacy resources:** The Star Act Alliance offers a communications toolkit with social media posts, sample letters to the editor, and other resources to help build momentum and awareness once the resolution is introduced. You can find the toolkit at StarActAlliance.org.

Model State Resolution Template

(For Introduction in Any U.S. State Legislature)

TITLE

A Resolution urging the United States Congress to pass the Major Richard Star Act to ensure that veterans with disabilities receive their full Department of Defense retirement pay and Department of Veterans Affairs disability compensation without offset.

WHEREAS, the Major Richard Star Act (H.R. 2102, S. 1032) before the United States Congress seeks to amend federal law to expand eligibility for concurrent receipt of disability compensation and retirement pay for veterans, allowing eligible veterans to receive the full benefits they earned through their service and sacrifice; and

WHEREAS, current federal law requires a dollar-for-dollar offset of Department of Defense retirement pay for any veteran with a disability who was medically retired with fewer than twenty years of service, which denies veterans the full benefits they earned and creates significant financial hardship for approximately fifty thousand medically retired combat-wounded veterans nationwide ; and

WHEREAS, these veterans, including many who sustained combat-related injuries, lose, on average, more than one thousand dollars per month in earned benefits because of the offset, despite the fact that military retirement and disability benefits compensate for two distinct forms of service and sacrifice; and

WHEREAS, the Major Richard Star Act has strong bipartisan support in Congress, including cosponsors from states across the nation, and has been endorsed by numerous veterans' service organizations for its role in correcting this long-standing inequity; and

WHEREAS, veterans with disabilities and their families have advocated for the elimination of the offset due to the physical, psychological, and financial burdens it imposes, and have urged Congress to act swiftly to ensure full, earned compensation; and

WHEREAS, [STATE] is home to thousands of veterans with disabilities who have served honorably and are impacted by the current offset policy, and the State Legislature recognizes the need to support these veterans by urging Congress to pass this important legislation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Legislature of the State of [STATE] urges the United States Congress to pass the Major Richard Star Act (H.R. 2102, S. 1032) to ensure that veterans with disabilities receive their full Department of Defense retirement pay and Department of Veterans Affairs disability compensation without offset; and be it further

RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President and Vice President of the United States, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Majority Leader of the United States Senate, each Member of Congress representing [STATE], and to the author of this resolution for appropriate distribution.

Major Richard Star Act
(H.R. 2102 / S. 1032)

HONOR THEIR SACRIFICE End the Dollar-for-Dollar Offset Now

THE PROBLEM

Veterans who are forced to medically retire due to combat injuries or combat-related injuries are not receiving their full military retirement pay from the Department of Defense (DoD). Reducing their retirement pay because of combat-related injuries is an injustice.

Many veterans have suffered serious combat-related injuries that end their military careers and complicate future job opportunities. Here's how the current law hurts them:

- Service members **with less than 20 years of service** who are medically retired for combat or combat-related injuries can't get their full retirement pay if they also get VA disability pay.
- Their retirement pay is offset dollar-for-dollar, by the amount of VA disability pay they receive. This impacts veterans who still face physical, emotional, and financial challenges from their service injuries.

WHY IT'S UNFAIR

This offset is essentially a "wounded veteran tax." It unfairly takes away benefits Service members earned through their sacrifice and service.

THE SOLUTION

PASS THE MAJOR RICHARD STAR ACT — END THE "WOUNDED VETERAN TAX"

The Major Richard Star Act would end the unjust offset for veterans who:

- Were medically retired
- Sustained combat or combat related injuries
- Are eligible for Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC)

About 54,000 veterans meet these rules. This bill would give them the choice to switch to Concurrent Receipt of Disability Pay (CRDP) so their benefits would no longer be reduced. Removing the offset would make a big difference for these veterans.

Nearly a million veterans with 20+ years of service and a 50% disability rating get both retirement pay and VA benefits.

Why not the 54,000 forced to retire from combat injuries?

THEY'VE EARNED IT, TOO.

MYTHS vs. FACTS

MYTH: These soldiers are "double-dipping" when they receive both benefits.

Military retirement pay, and VA disability pay are two separate benefits created for different reasons.

- Retirement pay is money veterans earn for the years they served in the military.
- VA disability pay is extra money to help make up for income veterans might lose in the future because of injuries or health problems caused by their service.

MYTH: The bill is too expensive.

The bill's cost is $8 billion over 10 years — representing just one-tenth of one percent (0.1%) of a single year's defense budget (FY25 $852.2 billion). This bill isn't retroactive and won't include back pay, and the phased-in approach will significantly reduce the full cost of the legislation.

Each veteran can choose the option that works best for them. About half may benefit from the Major Richard Star Act, while others might keep their tax-free CRSC with no extra cost to the government.

MYTH: It would make no real impact on veterans who need it the most.

Veterans could receive an average of approximately $1,200 more each month.

MYTH: This isn't the right time to be offering new benefits.

The Major Richard Star Act is not a new benefit. It fixes a problem from 2004, when Congress eliminated the offset and left out 54,000 veterans who were forced to retire because of combat injuries.