

DAVID B. MCKINLEY, P.E.

1ST DISTRICT, WEST VIRGINIA

2239 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515

TEL: (202) 225-4172

FAX: (202) 225-7564

www.mckinley.house.gov

COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND COMMERCE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
ENVIRONMENT
VICE CHAIR

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
ENERGY

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
DIGITAL COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

May 16, 2018

CHAIRMAN,
CONGRESSIONAL COAL CAUCUS

CO-CHAIR,
CONGRESSIONAL BUILDING TRADES CAUCUS

CO-CHAIR,
CONGRESSIONAL ARTHRITIS CAUCUS

CO-CHAIR,
CONGRESSIONAL YOUTH CHALLENGE CAUCUS

CO-CHAIR,
HIGH PERFORMANCE BUILDINGS CAUCUS

CO-CHAIR
CONGRESSIONAL HEARING HEALTH CAUCUS

CO-CHAIR
CONGRESSIONAL PENSION PROTECTION CAUCUS

The Honorable Phil Roe
Chairman
House Committee on Veterans Affairs
335 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Roe,

Veterans throughout my district and across the country continue to express concerns that their cancers and illnesses are linked to toxic exposures during military service, as well as their frustrations with the Veterans Affairs Claims Process.

Recently, a constituent noted that when a claim is approved but the veteran dies before his benefits are mailed, the current system allows benefits to be withheld. In those cases, if a veteran's beneficiary wants to apply for survivor benefits, he or she must file a new claim and will not be retroactively reimbursed. If a veteran successfully proved his or her case before death, it seems fair that the veteran's estate should receive benefits retroactively.

Benefits to veterans and their families should not be withheld due to an untimely death or a delay in the processing of paperwork. Claims filed under the current system can take years to be processed and any efforts that can be taken to streamline and simplify this process for our veterans should be taken into consideration.

I commend the Committee for their work to strengthen veterans' healthcare options and Department of Veterans Affairs for their recent announcement to offer two opportunities for early participation in a new claims decision review process that will remove burdensome requirements.

As the Committee and the VA continue their work to improve the claims process, it is critical that we review these circumstances to ensure veterans and their families are receiving the benefits they deserve. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



David B. McKinley, P.E.
Member of Congress