



Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable French Hill  
Statement for the Record  
House Committee on Veterans' Affairs  
U.S. House of Representatives  
December 3, 2025

Chairman Bost, Ranking Member Takano, and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to submit a Statement for the Record. I appreciate the opportunity to offer my insights for the Legislative Hearing considering H.R. 6047, the *Sharri Briley and Eric Edmundson Veterans Benefits Expansion Act of 2025*.

Since I came to Congress, I have been an outspoken advocate for our nation's veterans. I believe it is absolutely imperative that we ensure that our veterans, service members, and their families receive the care and benefits they have earned and deserve. But the best advocacy is always done by those closest to our veterans, such as Sharri Briley Eric Edmundson for whom the bill is named.

Arkansas's Second Congressional District is home to many of our brave veterans and active service members stationed at Little Rock Air Force Base and Camp Robinson. My district is also home to Sharri Briley, for whom H.R. 6047 is partially named. Many of you know her as the surviving spouse of CW3 Donovan Lee "Bull" Briley, an Army Special Operations Blackhawk helicopter pilot who tragically lost his life during Operation Gothic Serpent, known to many as Black Hawk Down.

After losing her husband, Sharri Briley began her mission of serving fallen service members and their families. Central Arkansas has significantly benefited from Sharri Briley's work, which includes, but is not limited to, advocating for policy changes on behalf of other Gold Star spouses in Congress and volunteering at the Arkansas State Capitol for Hearts of Our Heroes, a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping families of deceased military members. Sharri Briley also serves as a spokesperson for Gold Star Families of Arkansas. Central Arkansas and our nation benefit from Sharri Briley's service and leadership – it is a privilege to represent her in Congress.

I also want to honor Eric Edmundson, the Army Veteran who shares the namesake of this legislation. While serving in Iraq, Eric Edmundson was hit by an improvised explosive device (IED), and he sustained life-changing injuries that ended his ability to speak or walk. Today, Eric Edmundson lives a full life, with his wife and parents supporting him in daily life. Families of catastrophically injured veterans are often forgotten, and they, too, deserve our respect and expanded benefits.

I am humbled to stand with Sharri Briley and Eric Edmundson on their mission to increase benefits for catastrophically injured veterans, their families, and their survivors. That is why I am honored to be an original cosponsor of H.R. 6047, the *Sharri Briley and Eric Edmundson Veterans Benefits Expansion Act of 2025*. This legislation provides long overdue benefit increases for an often overlooked group of veterans and their families for the first time in over twenty years. I extend my sincere thanks to my colleague, Representative Tom Barrett of Michigan, for sponsoring this bill and championing this effort.

As a committed advocate for our nation's veterans, I am pleased that H.R. 6047 will fill critical gaps in the delivery of Veterans' Affairs (VA) benefits to over 500,000 veterans and their families. Those who have made great sacrifices for our nation should never have to worry about making ends meet. This legislation delivers critical support to those who have not seen their benefits expanded in over two decades - catastrophically injured, widows, dependents, and survivors. It is time for Congress to change that. This bill will positively impact the lives of veterans and their families. To put it simply, this bill honors our nation's promise to care for our veterans and their families. I respectfully urge my colleagues on the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to support H.R. 6047 so the bill can be one step closer to becoming law.

Thank you for your consideration. I stand at the ready to work with the Committee on this critical legislation and efforts to support our veterans and their families.