

Committee on Veterans' Affairs

Member Day Hearing | December 4, 2025

TESTIMONY OF REPRESENTATIVE BRIAN K. FITZPATRICK

Chairman Bost, Ranking Member Takano, Members of this Committee:

Thank you for holding this Member Day hearing and providing me with the opportunity to share the concerns of my constituents.

As you continue your critical work, I want to urge you to consider legislative action on policies to address the prevalence and impact of ALS on military and veteran communities. I am proud to co-lead the Veterans with ALS Reporting Act, which would require the VA study and provide needed data on the prevalence of ALS among veterans and establish a strategy for improving timely access to clinical trials for veterans. I am also proud to sponsor the Justice for ALS Veterans Act, a bicameral-bipartisan bill, which ensures the surviving spouses of veterans who pass due to ALS receive the full benefits they have rightfully earned.

Our veterans are heroes who fought for us, and when they face ALS, we must fight for them and their families. Veterans are twice as likely to be diagnosed with ALS compared to the general population. This makes the mission even more critical—especially in understanding the genesis of this trend.

Under current law, surviving spouses and families of veterans who had a service-connected disability deemed “fully debilitating” for at least eight continuous years before death to receive an additional monthly stipend from the VA. However, with an average life expectancy of only two to five years after diagnosis, ALS veterans often do not survive long enough to meet this requirement, leaving their families without this benefit.

Denying a surviving spouse benefits because their loved one didn’t live long enough to meet an arbitrary requirement is not just unfair, it is a betrayal of our commitment to those who served. The Justice for ALS Veterans Act rights this wrong and ensures that the families of our brave service members receive the support they have earned.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify, and I look forward to working with you all to move this bill through Committee once again this Congress and in addressing the prevalence and impact of ALS among our veteran community.