

America's veterans deserve America's best. They deserve the best health care and the best government service.

I introduced the bipartisan VA Overpayment Accountability Act with Congressman French Hill because sometimes, our veterans do not receive the best.

Through several programs, the Department of Veterans Affairs provides monthly payments to veterans and other beneficiaries. Because the VA often relies on outdated systems to provide those payments, those recipients sometimes receive overpayments at no fault of their own.

When this happens, it's the veterans who pay a price. In order to compensate for their mistake, the VA will withhold payments from veterans. At a time in which 1.4 million veterans across the United States are struggling with poverty issues, withholding payment can have severe consequences for Americans who earned these benefits.

Because there is no limit on how much the VA can ask a vet to repay, and no limit on how far back it can go to collect the debt, these sums can impact the credit and financial stability of veterans.

The VA Overpayment Accountability Act aims to fix these issues by improving VA IT systems that are often the cause of these overpayments. It also provides credit protections for veterans who are the victims of overpayments and become targets of unfair VA practices.

As a grateful nation, we should aim to honor our veterans, not send debt collectors after them because of a failure at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Barbara Kim-Hagemann, the State Commander of the Department of New Jersey Veterans of Foreign Wars said in her endorsement remarks of this bill, that it is imperative that Congress work to correct, “harsh Veterans Administration procedures in recouping benefit overpayments from veterans who are barely living paycheck to paycheck.”

On behalf of the thousands of veterans that Barbara fights for every day, and the millions across our country who sacrificed in their service, I call on the members of this committee to join me and Congressman Hill in this bipartisan effort to make the VA work and honor our veterans.