



February 2, 2026

The Honorable Morgan Luttrell
Chairman
Sub. on Disability Assistance, Memorial Affairs
Committee on Veterans' Affairs
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Morgan McGarvey
Ranking Member
Sub. on Disability Assistance, Memorial Affairs
Committee on Veterans' Affairs
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Luttrell and Ranking Member McGarvey:

On behalf of ALS United and the people living with ALS and families we serve nationwide, we submit this statement for the record for the Subcommittee's February 3, 2026, legislative hearing to express our strong support for the Justice for ALS Veterans Act of 2025 (H.R. 1685).

ALS, commonly known as Lou Gehrig's disease, is a fatal, progressive neurodegenerative disease affecting nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord. ALS gradually results in the loss of the ability to walk, speak, move, and eventually breathe. There is still no cure, and ALS often progresses rapidly, meaning families are forced to navigate devastating medical and financial realities on an unforgiving timeline.

For veterans and their families, an ALS diagnosis often follows years of service and sacrifice. When the Department of Veterans Affairs recognizes ALS as connected to military service, survivors can encounter a benefit structure that does not reflect the medical reality of this disease. In particular, current law ties increased Dependency and Indemnity Compensation for surviving spouses to whether a veteran was rated totally disabled for a continuous period of at least eight years immediately preceding death. For ALS, that standard is frequently impossible to satisfy, not because a veteran's need was any less profound, but because the disease simply does not allow time for families to clear an arbitrary clock.

The Justice for ALS Veterans Act offers a straightforward, targeted solution. H.R. 1685 would ensure that surviving spouses of veterans who die from ALS are not denied increased survivor compensation solely because ALS progresses too quickly for the veteran to meet an eight-year total disability duration requirement. Military families who have already carried the burden of service and sacrifice should not face an additional barrier that ignores the clinical course of a universally terminal disease.

ALS United appreciates the Subcommittee's attention to disability and survivor benefits, and we are grateful for the bipartisan leadership behind H.R. 1685. We respectfully urge the Subcommittee to advance the Justice for ALS Veterans Act of 2025 and to ensure that military families confronting ALS receive fair, medically appropriate treatment under VA survivor benefit policies.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jerry Dawson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jerry" being more prominent than the last name "Dawson".

Jerry Dawson
President and CEO
ALS United