

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 5, 2019

The Honorable James Inhofe  
Chairman  
Committee on Armed Services  
228 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Armed Services  
228 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Adam Smith  
Chairman  
Committee on Armed Services  
2216 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mac Thornberry  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Armed Services  
2216 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Inhofe, Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Reed, and Ranking Member Thornberry:

We write to ask you to include House-passed provisions which repeal the Survivor Benefit Plan – Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (SBP-DIC) offset, the so-called “widow’s tax,” in the final National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020 (NDAA) conference agreement. The widow’s tax prevents more than 67,000 surviving spouses of servicemen and women who die of service related causes from receiving the full SBP annuities they deserve.

As a result of the widow’s tax, tens of thousands of surviving spouses are prevented from collecting the full insurance benefits from the Department of Defense for which their military retiree spouses paid because those benefits are offset by the DIC payments they receive from the Department of Veterans Affairs. On average, this offset means that surviving spouses are denied more than \$11,000 per year in SBP benefits. In response to this unfairness, thousands of military widows have become grassroots advocates, working in many cases for more than 30 years to right this wrong for their own families and the entire military family community.

There has never before been more bipartisan support in Congress for repealing the SBP-DIC offset. Currently, there are 75 co-sponsors of legislation to repeal the widow’s tax in the Senate and 371 co-sponsors in the House. Numerous military and veterans advocacy groups have joined us in this effort.

We have an obligation to make sure that we are taking care of our military families who have sacrificed so much. This problem goes back decades, but this year we can finally solve it once and for all. It is our time to do our duty not only to support the brave men and women of our military, but also to support their families.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

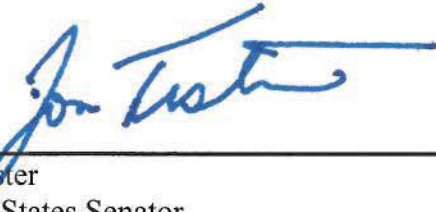
Sincerely,



Doug Jones  
United States Senator



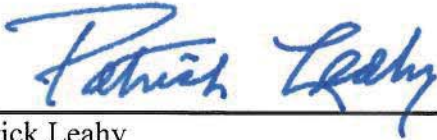
Susan M. Collins  
United States Senator



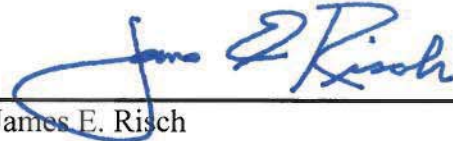
Jon Tester  
United States Senator



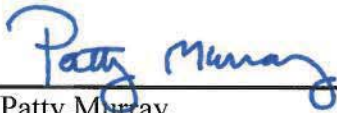
Mike Crapo  
United States Senator



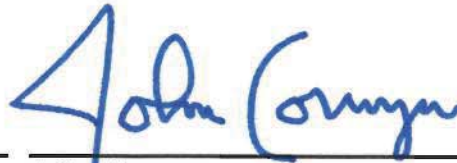
Patrick Leahy  
United States Senator



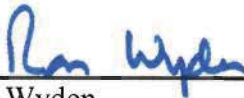
James E. Risch  
United States Senator



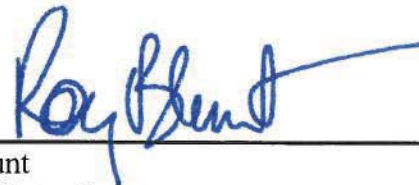
Patty Murray  
United States Senator



John Cornyn  
United States Senator



Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



Roy Blunt  
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator



Jerry Moran  
United States Senator



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Charles E. Schumer  
United States Senator



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John Boozman  
United States Senator



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Thomas R. Carper  
United States Senator



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John Hoeven  
United States Senator



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Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator



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Marco Rubio  
United States Senator



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Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator



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Ted Cruz  
United States Senator



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Robert Menendez  
United States Senator



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Shelley Moore Capito  
United States Senator



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Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator



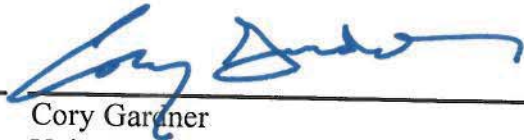
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Bill Cassidy  
United States Senator





Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator



Cory Gardner  
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator



Tom Cotton  
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey Jr.  
United States Senator



Steve Daines  
United States Senator




Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator



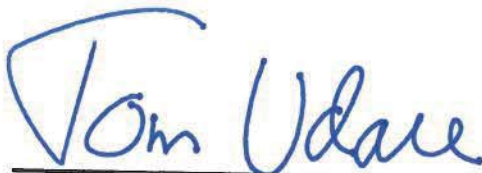
M. Michael Rounds  
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator



John Kennedy  
United States Senator



Tom Udall  
United States Senator



Marsha Blackburn  
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator



Martha McSally  
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner  
United States Senator



Lindsey O. Graham  
United States Senator



Kirsten E. Gillibrand  
United States Senator



Richard Burr  
United States Senator



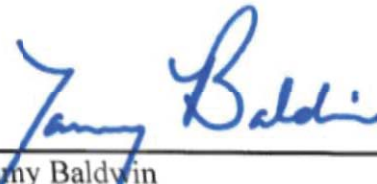
Christopher A. Coons  
United States Senator



Rick Scott  
United States Senator



Brian Schatz  
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator




Kevin Cramer  
United States Senator




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Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator



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Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator



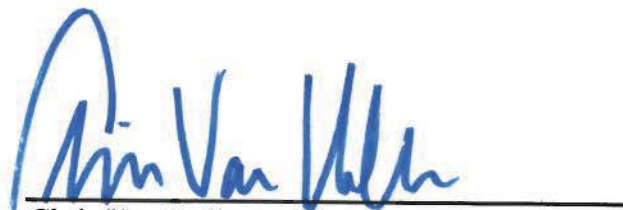
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Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator



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Gary C. Peters  
United States Senator



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Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator



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Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator



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Margaret Wood Hassan  
United States Senator



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Kamala D. Harris  
United States Senator



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Catherine Cortez Masto  
United States Senator




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Tina Smith  
United States Senator




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Kyrsten Sinema  
United States Senator




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Jacky Rosen  
United States Senator



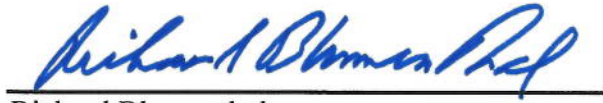
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Joe Manchin III  
United States Senator



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Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator



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Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator




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Lamar Alexander  
United States Senator



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Lisa Murkowski  
United States Senator



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Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator