

Resolution No. 617

VA CLAIMS WORKLOAD

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has made significant progress in reducing the backlog of claims for compensation, pension, education benefits and appeals, yet submissions and appeals continues to grow; and

WHEREAS, nearly, twenty five (25) percent of rating cases that have been pending for more than 125 days has remained constant for the last two years, more than 180,000 appeals are pending between the BVA and Regional Office and it still takes more than 1,700 days to receive a BVA decision after filing a substantive appeal; and

WHEREAS, VA continues to order redundant and often unnecessary examinations when the evidence of record is sufficient to make a determination, or claimants submit adequate medical records and doctors opinions; and

WHEREAS, Congress has provided increased funding for staffing at VA and improved its oversight. Yet, the attrition of new hires and retirement of journeymen claims processors continues to challenge VA's ability to train and maintain a technically proficient workforce; and

WHEREAS, after dozens of Congressional hearings, numerous studies, changes of VA leadership, altered workflow, amended work processes, erratic IT development, as well as fruitless pilot programs and experimental initiatives, it is clear that there are no easy, simple or quick solutions that lead to the speedy reduction of the backlog; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that Congress require VA to accept private medical evidence and opinions in lieu of VA examinations whenever they are sufficient for rating purposes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we continue to advise that Congress exercise its oversight authority and provide the vital resources necessary to sustain a sufficient workforce capable of effectively managing the workload and provide quality and timely service to those claiming benefits or appealing decisions from VA; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress bolsters its oversight and funding of VA technology initiatives to ensure that they are constructive, relevant and effective in streamlining claims processing and improving quality of entitlement decisions.

Submitted by Commander-in Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS