



# T H E M I L I T A R Y C O A L I T I O N

201 North Washington Street  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314  
(703) 838-8113

March 13, 2009

The Honorable Steve Buyer  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Buyer:

The Military Coalition, a consortium of nationally prominent military and veterans associations representing 5.5 million active, Guard, Reserve, retired and former members of the uniformed services, plus their families and survivors, is grateful for your initiative to ensure fair and equal treatment for all survivors by sponsoring the *Survivor Benefit Improvement Act of 2009*.

Your bill would raise the amount of VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) to an amount equal to 55% of VA disability compensation for a 100%-disabled veteran. This would be consistent with other federal survivor benefits such as the military Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP), which represents 55% of the covered service member's retired pay. Raising DIC to this level of consistency has been a long-standing Coalition goal.

The Coalition also supports your initiative to ensure equal treatment of all SBP-DIC survivors. The recent ruling by the US Court of Claims in *Sharp v. United States*, if upheld, would eliminate the SBP-DIC offset for a specific set of survivors whose DIC was reinstated as a result of their remarriage after age 57. The case is being appealed by the government, and a favorable ruling for the survivor plaintiffs would create two distinct classes of SBP-DIC survivors, one subject to the offset and one not so subject. Your bill would apply the same legislative language at issue in the pending court case to all survivors affected by the SBP-DIC offset, so that a favorable court ruling would apply to all such survivors.

The Coalition applauds your initiative in sponsoring this important legislation and pledges our support to seek its enactment.

Sincerely,

The Military Coalition  
(Signatures enclosed)

Air Force Association  
Air Force Women Officers Associated  
American Logistics Association  
AMVETS (American Veterans)  
Army Aviation Association of America  
Association of Military Surgeons of the United States  
Association of the United States Army  
Chief Warrant Officer and Warrant Officer Association, U.S. Coast Guard  
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service, Inc.  
Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States  
Fleet Reserve Association  
Gold Star Wives of America, Inc.  
Iraq & Afghanistan Veterans of America  
Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America  
Marine Corps League  
Marine Corps Reserve Association  
Military Officers Association of America  
Military Order of the Purple Heart  
National Association for Uniformed Services  
National Guard Association of the United States  
National Military Family Association  
National Order of Battlefield Commissions  
Naval Enlisted Reserve Association  
Naval Reserve Association  
Non Commissioned Officers Association  
Reserve Enlisted Association of the United States  
Reserve Officers Association  
Society of Medical Consultants to the Armed Forces  
The Retired Enlisted Association  
United States Army Warrant Officers Association  
United States Coast Guard Chief Petty Officers Association  
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States