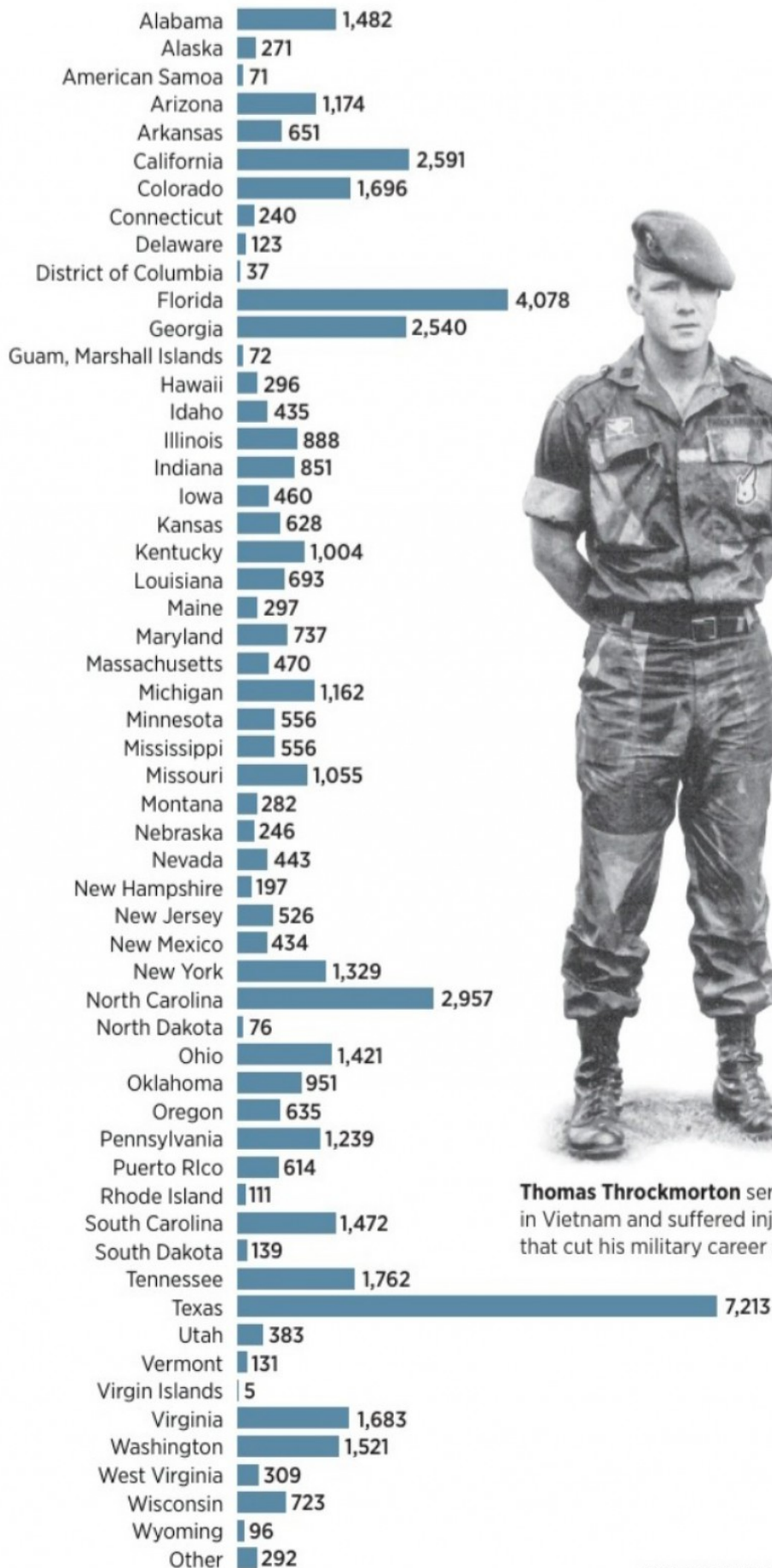


1,521 Combat-Injured Washington Veterans Lose \$1.8 Million Monthly as Major Star Act Stalls in U.S. Senate

Advocates urge Appropriations Chair Murray and Sen. Cantwell to bypass Wicker objection and support S.Amdt. 4056.

COMBAT-INJURED RETIREES BY STATE/U.S. TERRITORY



Thomas Throckmorton served in Vietnam and suffered injuries that cut his military career short.

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Seattle, Washington Jan 1, 2026 ([IssueWire.com](https://www.IssueWire.com)) - Combat-injured veterans in Washington are losing more than \$1.8 million in earned military retirement pay every month because Congress has not acted to fix a long-standing federal retirement offset affecting medically retired service members.

Advocates say progress on the Major Richard Star Act has stalled in the U.S. Senate following an objection during floor consideration, leaving thousands of Washington families absorbing the financial consequences.

Media Coverage of the Senate Objection

The stalled legislation has drawn significant media attention regarding the specific obstacle in the Senate. A recent report by WTVA9 News details the objection by Senator Roger Wicker that prevented the bill's passage. The coverage also highlights the billboard campaign launched across the region by [PassTheAct.org](https://www.PassTheAct.org) to raise awareness about the delay in allowing a vote.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zMYuPw4ELTA>

Senior Chief Shane Junkert, USN (Ret.), is a decorated combat veteran whose awards include Army commendations for joint service deployments. Junkert completed six combat deployments and was medically retired after 18.5 years of service due to combat-related injuries.

"Senator Patty Murray holds the checkbook for the entire United States government as Chair of the Appropriations Committee," Junkert said. "She has the power to fund the government, yet 1,521 combat-injured veterans in her own state are being defunded every month. It is unacceptable for the Chair of Appropriations to claim her hands are tied by a procedural objection from Mississippi."

The scope of the loss in Washington

According to recent figures compiled by veteran advocacy groups, 1,521 combat-injured, medically retired veterans in Washington are affected by the offset the Major Star Act is designed to end. With an average loss of approximately \$1,200 per month per household, Washington veterans are losing an estimated \$1,825,200 every month, or more than \$21.9 million annually.

On a weekly basis, that amounts to roughly \$300 per household—money typically used for groceries, fuel, prescriptions, utilities, rent, or school expenses.

"This is \$300 a week that should be staying in Washington communities," Junkert said. "Instead, it is being confiscated by the very government Senator Murray leads funding for. Senator Cantwell and Senator Murray have the seniority and the power to end this theft. The only thing missing is the urgency."

Washington's role in national defense

Washington is a cornerstone of American military power, home to Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM), Naval Base Kitsap, and Fairchild Air Force Base. The state hosts key special operations forces, airlift

wings, and the submarine fleet that deters global aggression.

Many of the veterans affected by the offset trained, deployed, or served through these Washington installations before returning home with combat injuries that ended their military careers early.

“These veterans deployed from JBLM and Kitsap to defend our freedom,” Junkert said. “They held up their end of the contract. It is shameful that the Senate is using budget gimmicks to avoid holding up theirs.”

What the offset does

The Major Star Act applies to a specific group of veterans: those medically retired under Chapter 61 due to combat-related injuries who did not reach 20 years of service. By law, they are military retirees. In practice, many see their Department of Defense retired pay reduced to zero.

Under current law, these veterans must waive retired pay dollar for dollar when they receive VA disability compensation. As a result, the VA payment replaces—rather than supplements—the retirement earned through years of service.

“If a construction worker falls off a roof and breaks their back, they don’t lose their pension just because they collect disability. They get both,” Junkert said. “Retired pay is for the work they did. Disability pay is for the permanent damage to their health. Merging the two is an accounting trick that hurts real people.”

The Major Star Act would end this offset for that narrow group. It does not create a new benefit or expand VA eligibility. It simply allows combat-injured medical retirees to receive both forms of compensation, consistent with how many other retirees are already treated.

Senate action and next steps

In December 2025, Senator Richard Blumenthal filed S.Amdt. 4056, seeking to attach the full Major Star Act to a must-pass defense funding bill. Supporters say inclusion of the amendment in the final defense package would force a recorded vote and move the issue toward resolution.

“S.Amdt. 4056 is where every senator—including Senators Murray and Cantwell—has to decide where they stand,” Junkert said. “Supporting it restores \$1.8 million a month to Washington families. Silence just keeps sending the bill to the veterans.”

A question for Washington senators

“If you represent Washington, you know there are 1,521 combat-injured retirees living with this offset,” Junkert said. “Why is the Chair of Appropriations allowing a single objection from Mississippi to strip \$21.9 million a year from the Washington economy? It is time to go on the record.”

About 54KVeterans.org

[54KVeterans.org](https://www.54KVeterans.org) is a grassroots coalition of combat-injured veterans dedicated to passing the Major Richard Star Act. The organization is led by Senior Chief Shane Junkert, USN (Ret.), a decorated combat veteran who completed six combat deployments during 18.5 years of service before being medically retired due to combat-related injuries. The coalition advocates on behalf of approximately 54,000 veterans nationwide affected by the Chapter 61 retirement offset.

**THE WOUNDED VETERAN TAX:
BLEEDING WASHINGTON
VETERANS DRY**

**\$21,902,400
YEARLY LOSS**


**\$1,825,200
MONTHLY LOSS**


**1,521
WASHINGTON
VETS AFFECTED**


Senator Roger Wicker blocked the
Major Richard Star Act on Oct 8, 2025.
This "Wounded Warrior Tax" siphons
millions from our state economy.

**WASHINGTON VETERANS DESERVE
THEIR FULL RETIREMENT PAY.**

**DEMAND ACTION. SIGN THE PETITION:
change.org/54KVeterans**

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Source : 54K Veterans

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