

## **Advocates Call on Appropriations Chair Collins to Secure Vote for Combat-Injured Veterans, Break Senate Gridlock**

Advocates urge Chair Collins to use appropriations power to bypass the single objection via S.Amdt. 4056 for 54,000 combat-injured veterans.



**Portland, Maine Jan 1, 2026** ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - As the 119th Congress enters its second session, advocates are calling on Maine Senator Susan Collins, Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee,

to press for a public vote on the Major Richard Star Act following a procedural objection that stalled the bill. The legislation affects more than 54,000 combat-injured, medically retired veterans nationwide.

[54KVeterans.org](https://54KVeterans.org), a grassroots coalition representing these veterans, is urging Senator Collins to use the Defense Appropriations process—specifically S.Amdt. 4056—to break procedural gridlock and end the financial penalty known as the "Wounded Warrior Tax."

## The Power of the Chair

Over four Congresses, the Major Richard Star Act has remained in procedural limbo despite earning 77 Senate cosponsors, including three-quarters of the Republican conference. Advocates say that while the bill has been blocked via objection, Chair Collins possesses the authority to include the measure in the final Defense Appropriations package.

"Senator Wicker has proven he will not move this bill, so we need an adult in the room who will," said Senior Chief Shane Junkert, USN (Ret.), a decorated combat veteran and founder of 54KVeterans.org. "Chair Collins holds the checkbook. She manages the final spending deal. We are looking to her to cut through the gamesmanship and allow the Senate to finally vote on a measure that 77 of her colleagues have already signed."

## Media Coverage of the Senate Objection

The stalled legislation has drawn significant media attention regarding the specific Senate obstacle. A recent report by WTVA 9 News detailed the objection by Senator Roger Wicker that prevented the bill's passage and highlighted a billboard campaign launched to draw attention to the delay.

<https://youtu.be/zMYuPw4ELTA?si=Fy2EsseWt1ChaRX4>

In 2021, Senator Wicker publicly described himself as a cosponsor of the Major Richard Star Act in a Memorial Day column, calling it a commonsense fix for combat-injured retirees.

## Maine's Opportunity to Lead

Advocates note a clear opening for the Maine delegation. Senator Angus King has already moved to support S.Amdt. 4056. Chair Collins now has the opportunity to ensure the Star Act language is included in the managers' package tied to the Defense Appropriations Act.

## The Human Cost of Delay

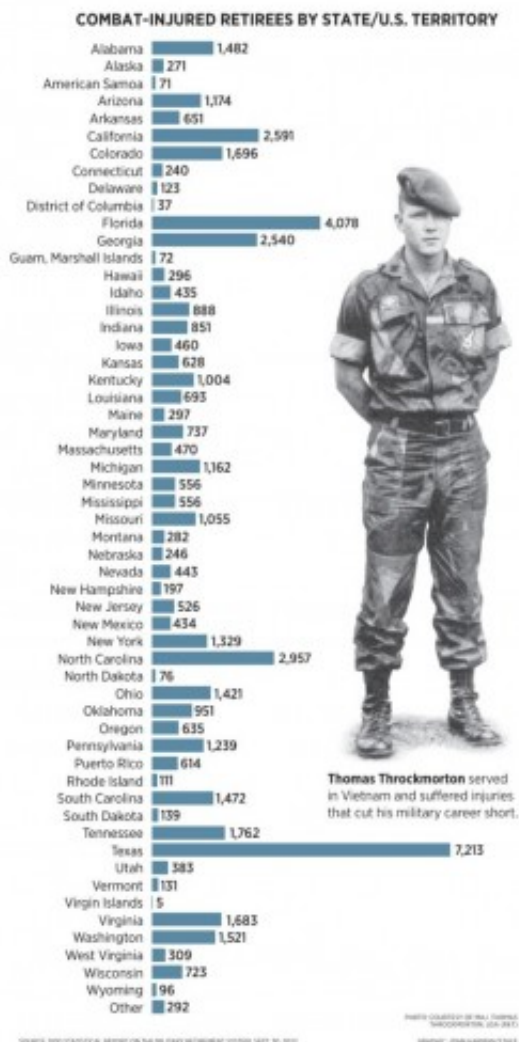
The retirement offset forces combat-injured veterans to forfeit one dollar of earned retired pay for every dollar of VA disability compensation they receive. For many medically retired veterans, VA compensation replaces rather than supplements military retirement pay, leaving some retirees with their DoD retirement reduced to zero.

"The time for thanking us for our service with words is over. The time for action is now," Junkert said. "We call on Chair Collins to force a vote."

About [54KVeterans.org](https://54KVeterans.org)

[54KVeterans.org](https://54KVeterans.org) is a grassroots coalition of combat-injured veterans dedicated to passing the Major

Richard Star Act to end the Chapter 61 retirement offset for eligible combat-injured medical retirees. The organization is led by Senior Chief Shane Junkert, USN (Ret.), a combat veteran who completed six deployments.



## Combat Span

Thomas Throckmorton's career-focus was on the battlefield. He believed in the mission and the mission alone.

He healed again to fight in arms fire. The helicopter was thrown on 24 places where he was shot.

"Well, the doctor quit surgery. I serve a few premature."

"I never finished the duration of retirement pay. After we were cut short."

Because of combat, I to benefit. The benefit is generational.

"I'm ... at 1 to help me people to."

While Congress for combat special come closer to stress.

"The thing is why, if I compensate ... W."

# ONE MAN BLOCKED 54,000 VETERANS

It wasn't a vote. It was a veto.

**76 SENATORS SUPPORTED IT**

76 Senators said YES.  
Every Veteran Group said YES.

**1 SENATOR BLOCKED IT**

Roger Wicker said NO.  
One man stood between 54,000 veterans and their livelihood.

**Break the Blockade. Sign the Petition:**  
[change.org/54KVeterans](https://change.org/54KVeterans) #MajorStarAct #VeteranBetrayal

## Media Contact

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Source : 54K Veterans

[See on IssueWire](#)