

ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION No. 258

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JUNE 1, 2021

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman JOHN ARMATO

District 2 (Atlantic)

Assemblywoman CLEOPATRA G. TUCKER

District 28 (Essex)

Assemblyman ROBERT J. KARABINCHAK

District 18 (Middlesex)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblymen Wirths and Space

SYNOPSIS

Urges US Congress pass “Major Richard Star Act.”

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/24/2021)

AR258 ARMATO, TUCKER

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1 AN ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION urging the United States Congress to
2 pass the “Major Richard Star Act.”

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4 WHEREAS, Disability compensation is a monetary benefit paid to a
5 disabled veteran when the disability was incurred or aggravated
6 during military service, known as a service-connected disability; and

7 WHEREAS, Under current federal law, retirees with 20 years of service
8 and a disability rating of at least 50 percent are eligible to collect both
9 a pension from the military and disability compensation
10 concurrently, while veterans who do not meet those requirements
11 have their pension reduced by the amount of disability compensation
12 received from the federal Department of Veterans Affairs; and

13 WHEREAS, United States Senate Bill No. 344 and House of
14 Representatives Bill No. 1282, the “Major Richard Star Act,” was
15 introduced in the Senate on February 22, 2021 sponsored by Senator
16 Jon Tester and in the House of Representatives on February 24, 2021
17 sponsored by Representative Gus M. Bilirakis to allow a veteran with
18 a combat-related disability and fewer than 20 years of creditable
19 service to receive retirement pay, without reduction, while also
20 receiving disability compensation; and

21 WHEREAS, The “Major Richard Star Act” addresses the injustice when
22 a veteran is forced to retire due to wounds or illness attributable to
23 combat, taking away their choice to continue to serve and
24 simultaneously denying full benefits to those veterans and their
25 families; and

26 WHEREAS, This legislation is named for Major Richard Star, a
27 decorated veteran and advocate for disabled veterans, who recently
28 lost his battle with lung cancer on February 13, 2021, after exposure
29 to burn pits overseas; and

30 WHEREAS, New Jersey is grateful for the sacrifices that members of the
31 military and their families have made in service to this nation, and
32 recognizes the hardships that result from the inability to collect both
33 a full military pension and disability compensation when retirement
34 is not the choice of the veteran and the veteran and their family take
35 on additional health-related expenses due to the veteran’s service
36 now, therefore,

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38 BE IT RESOLVED by the General Assembly of the State of New
39 Jersey:

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41 1. This House respectfully urges the United States Congress pass
42 S.344 and H.R.1282, the “Major Richard Star Act.”

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44 2. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State,
45 shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly to the
46 Speaker and Minority Leader of the United States House of
47 Representatives, the Majority and Minority Leaders in the United
48 States Senate, and every member of Congress elected from this State.

STATEMENT

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This resolution urges the United States Congress to pass the “Major Richard Star Act” in order to address the injustice faced by combat-disabled veterans with less than 20 years of creditable service and allow them to receive a full military pension and disability compensation concurrently.

Currently, a veteran with a combat-related disability and fewer than 20 years of service has their military pension reduced by the amount of disability compensation the veteran receives from the Department of Veterans Affairs. A veteran with 20 years of creditable service and a disability rating of at least 50 percent is eligible to collect both a pension and disability compensation without reduction. This is an injustice when retirement was not the choice of the veteran and the veteran and their family face additional health-related expenses due to the veteran’s service. Veterans who sacrifice their health and their lives to serve this nation should not be penalized for their service and dedication.