



## The Clear Communications for Veterans Claims Act

**The Problem:** Veterans and their families often struggle with the complexity of correspondence from the Department of Veterans Affairs (V.A.) regarding benefits decisions, including those related to education, healthcare, and other services. The intent is for these letters to be user-friendly, but they have become increasingly convoluted, with often confusing legal language. Moreover, the complexity of current correspondence can exacerbate stress and mental health issues in veterans, thereby further impeding their access to entitled benefits. Previous efforts by the V.A. to simplify claims letters have been unsuccessful.

**The Solution:** This bill would require the V.A. Secretary to implement third-party entity recommendations for improving V.A. disability claims notice letters so that they are shorter and easier to understand for veterans and their families. It mandates the V.A. Secretary to collaborate with Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDCs) to assess and improve the notice letters under the laws administered by the Secretary. FFRDCs are public-private partnerships that conduct research and development for the United States Government. Specifically, the Clear Communications for Veterans Act:

1. Requires the V.A. Secretary to seek an agreement with an FFRDC for the assessment of notice letters within 30 days after the Act's enactment.
2. Requires the V.A. Secretary, within 90 days of receiving the assessment, to submit the recommendations from the FFRDC to the Committees on Veterans Affairs in the Senate and the House.

**The Bottom Line:** Congress needs to be committed to ensuring that the V.A. claims process is friendly to veterans. The Clear Communications for Veterans Claims Act underscores a commitment to supporting veterans by improving administrative processes and ensuring that communication regarding benefits is as clear and straightforward as possible.