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Key Vote NO on the Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefits and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act, S. 1982

As one of our over 6 million FreedomWorks members nationwide, I urge you to contact your senators and ask that they vote NO on the Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefits and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act. Sponsored by Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT), this bill would add to the burden of the already dysfunctional Veterans' Affairs (VA) system, and abuses wartime emergency funding to do it.

The federal government's network of veterans' benefits programs is well-intended, but the VA system as a whole is notoriously disorganized, inefficient, and beset by massive backlogs of claims. The VA health care system in particular is a quagmire of epic proportions that already delivers long waits and subpar health care to our nation's veterans.

Instead of reforming this desperately broken system, Senator Sanders' bill would actually dramatically add to the VA system's caseload, by greatly expanding eligibility. It should be simple logic that increasing the burden on an already failing system will worsen, not improve, its performance for those already enrolled.

The VA system does desperately need to be reformed, but this bill actually works against that goal.

In addition to the policy questions, this bill would cost about \$24 billion over ten years, and pays for much of this new spending with Overseas Contingency Operation (OCO) funds. OCO is off-budget, emergency spending that is supposed to be for funding actual military operations. Even if this bill were good policy, it needs to be paid for like any other new spending – by finding savings from elsewhere in the federal budget.

For these reasons, I urge you to call your senators and ask them to vote NO on the Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefits and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act. We will count their vote as a KEY VOTE when calculating FreedomWorks' Economic Freedom Scorecard for 2014. The Scorecard is used to determine eligibility for the FreedomFighter Award, which recognizes Members of Congress who consistently vote to support economic freedom.

Sincerely,

Matt Kibbe
President and CEO
FreedomWorks