



# NATIONAL COALITION *for* HOMELESS VETERANS

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## Senate Unanimously Passes Bill to Reauthorize, Improve Critical Homeless Veteran Programs

*July 19, 2012*

WASHINGTON – On July 18, 2012, the U.S. Senate unanimously passed H.R. 1627, the “Honoring America’s Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012.” This bill addresses several areas of concern for veterans, including health care, housing, education and benefits. Notably, the bill would reauthorize and improve several homeless veteran programs that are critical to the success of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)’s Five-Year Plan to End Veteran Homelessness.

In June 2011, NCHV submitted congressional testimony on Sen. Murray’s S. 1148, the “Veterans Programs Improvement Act of 2011.” Throughout the past 13 months, NCHV has regularly advised both House and Senate committees of jurisdiction. Many important homeless veteran provisions from S. 1148 were incorporated into the legislation passed by the Senate yesterday.

Among this bill’s highlights are as follows:

- **Increased authorization of the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Program to \$300 million** – Previously authorized at \$100 million, the SSVF Program is the only federal, veteran-specific program offering rapid re-housing and prevention resources to community providers.
- **Reauthorization of the VA’s Enhanced-Use Lease program** – Authority for this program expired on Dec. 31, 2011. H.R. 1627 would modify the previous authority in part by limiting leases to programs that serve homeless and at-risk veterans and their families.
- **Requirement for VA to study and improve the Grant and Per Diem (GPD) Program reimbursement method** – Within one year, the VA Secretary must complete a study that would develop a more effective and efficient method for adequately reimbursing per diem recipients for services furnished to homeless veterans.
- **Reauthorization of the GPD Program at \$250 million** – This authority would be maintained through FY 2013, after which authorized funding would drop to \$150 million. NCHV maintains that the program cannot be scaled back before the maturity of the Five-Year Plan.
- **Reauthorization of the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP)** – Authorized at \$50 million, HVRP authority would be extended through FY 2013.

- **Expansion of the VA’s Special Needs Grant Program to include male homeless veterans with minor dependents** – Current authority restricts these services to women who have care of minor dependents.
- **Reauthorization of the VA’s Special Needs Grant Program** – Authorized at \$5 million, the Special Needs program’s authority would be extended through FY 2013.

The “Honoring America’s Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012” represents a comprehensive agreement between both parties in both the U.S. House and the Senate. [NCHV’s most recent Congressional Leadership Award recipients](#) – Rep. Jeff Miller (R-FL), Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, and Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA), Chairman of the Senate of the Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs – were at the center of this compromise.

“This legislation brings together nearly two years’ worth of work on behalf of America’s veterans,” Rep. Miller said. An overview of the bill is currently available on his committee’s website; it can be accessed [here](#).

“This bill will finally provide health care to veterans and family members exposed to contaminated water at Camp Lejeune, expand eligibility for housing adaptation grants to more seriously injured veterans, and make help for homeless veterans more widely available,” Sen. Murray said in [her press release](#).

For more information on policy and legislative issues that affect homeless veteran service providers, visit <http://nchv.org/index.php/policy/>.

**Veteran in crisis? Dial 1.877.424.3838 for 24/7 assistance.**

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