

# Wayne Allard

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## ALLARD SPONSORS VETERANS IMPROVEMENT ACT SAYS LEGISLATION WILL SPEED UP V. A. BENEFIT CLAIMS

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Senator Wayne Allard (R-CO) has joined forces with U.S. Senators John Ashcroft (R-MO) and Russ Feingold (D-WI) in sponsoring legislation to address the current backlog of almost half a million veterans' pension and compensation claims pending before the Veterans Administration. Currently veterans wait an average of 203 days before an original compensation claim is completed. An average Senator Allard calls "unacceptable."

"Veterans should not have to wait for months and endure endless appeals to receive the benefits that are rightly theirs," said Allard. "The time has come for Congress to take a more active role in addressing this issue."

The Veterans Improvement Act, S. 1680, will require the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to submit a comprehensive plan to Congress to improve training of claims caseworkers, enhance employee accountability for accuracy in reviewing claims, and improve data collection by the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) to increase accuracy of benefit decisions and reduce the need for appeals. Following submissions of the report to Congress, the Department would then be required to implement the proposal.

"We have a number of memorials in Washington, D.C. dedicated to the personal sacrifices made by the thousands of veterans who have fought to keep our nation free," added Allard. "But we must never forget our veterans are living memorials who need more than just remembrance. They need our support and help in obtaining the benefits they have earned."

The bill has been referred to the Senate Veterans Committee. Allard hopes a hearing on the bill can take place early next year.

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