



ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY

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General Gordon R. Sullivan
United States Army (Ret.)
President

February 6, 2009

On behalf of the more than 105,000 members of the Association of the United States Army, I write to thank you for introducing HR 775, the “Military Surviving Spouses Equity Act,” that would repeal the law requiring a dollar-for-dollar deduction of VA benefits for service connected deaths from military survivors’ Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) annuity.

We believe that if military service caused a member’s death, the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) that the VA pays the survivor should be added to the SBP benefits the disabled retiree paid for, not substituted for them. In the case of members who died on active duty, a surviving spouse with children can avoid the dollar-for-dollar offset only by assigning SBP to the children. That forces the spouse to give up any SBP claim after the children attain their majority – leaving the spouse with only a \$1,154 monthly indemnity from the VA. Surely, those who give their lives for their country deserve fairer compensation for their surviving spouses.

AUSA strongly supports this important legislation and encourages your colleagues to add their names as co-sponsors.

Sincerely,

GORDON R. SULLIVAN

General, USA Retired