



ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY

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

21 May 2013

The Honorable Bill Nelson
United States Senate
716 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Nelson:

On behalf of the members of the Association of the United States Army, I write to thank you for introducing S 734, legislation that would repeal the law requiring a dollar-for-dollar deduction of veterans' benefits for service-connected deaths from military survivors' Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) annuity. Your legislation also would prohibit the Department of Defense (DoD) from recouping retired pay refunds previously paid to SBP recipients.

We believe that if military service caused a member's death, the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) that the VA pays their 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 their children. That forces the spouse to give up any SBP claim after the children attain their majority – leaving the spouse with only a small monthly indemnity from the VA. Surely those who gave their lives for their country deserve fairer compensation for their surviving spouses.

The elimination of this survivor benefit inequity is a top AUSA legislative goal for 2013. We strongly support your legislation and urge your colleagues to add their names as cosponsors.

Sincerely,



GORDON R. SULLIVAN
General, USA Retired

GRS/wbl