



**Legislative Alert #113-21: SUPPORT H.R. 3225 & S. 1564, Legislation to Help [Take Action!](#)
Fund Vital VA Programs during Government Shutdown
VETERANS**

Issue Background: As a result of failed negotiations by 30 September 2013, the shutdown of the Federal government began in the early morning of 1 October 2013 when the House and Senate both failed to agree to pass a stopgap funding Continuing Resolution (CR) for the first few months of Fiscal Year 2014 (FY14). This was due primarily to disagreements over funding language and other provisions of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), with the Senate insisting on a clean CR, and the House attempting to make various changes, funding and/or implementation, towards the ACA. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), although mostly spared from major impacts on their services, will still be forced to suspend many vital programs which help our nation's Veterans and their families under the currently implemented Government Shutdown. These includes Vocational Rehabilitation and Education Counseling programs, VetSuccess on Campus for student Veterans, and scheduled overtime for claims processors working on the current VA claims backlog. In addition, should the shutdown go beyond October, the VA recently announced its plans to stop claims processing and payments for disability compensation, pension, education and vocational rehabilitation programs.

Action Required: Contact your Representatives and Senators and urge them to support and cosponsor H.R. 3225, introduced by Representative Matthew Salmon (R-AZ-015), and S. 1564, introduced by Senator Bernie Sanders (D-VT), which protect the impacted VA compensation and pension benefit programs for Veterans and their families, and funds the Department of Veterans Affairs through 1 January 2015 or until the House and Senate reach an agreement.

Details (To Be Put Into Letter):

Our nation's Veterans are currently facing the loss of vital support provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) due to the ongoing Government Shutdown. These brave men and women served our country, but they would no longer receive the benefits they expect and earned from the government. Such interruption of vital VA support includes Vocational Rehabilitation and Education Counseling programs, VetSuccess on Campus for student Veterans, and scheduled overtime for claims processors working on the current VA claims backlog. In addition, should the shutdown go beyond October, the VA recently announced its plans to stop certain claims processing and payments for disability compensation, pension, education and vocational rehabilitation programs.

H.R. 3225 and S. 1564 are both commendable pieces of legislation that will help alleviate financial pressures from those who proudly served this nation by sustaining appropriations for such benefits and services impacted during a Government Shutdown. This legislation would allow the Federal government to continue working on the VA disability backlog to avoid losing the progress that has been made and allow Veterans to continue to use their VA education benefits without the worry of having these earned benefits taken away at a moment's notice. These bills will also ease financial concerns of Veterans who are disabled or otherwise unable to work, and may depend on their VA claims for disability compensation to go through in order to provide for themselves and their families. Finally, this legislation helps the VA continue the progress made in reducing its claims backlog, ensuring that Veterans receive the compensation and benefits they need and deserve in a timely manner.

Take Action: Click the "Take Action" link at the top of the Alert to immediately email and/or write to your Senators and Representatives. This is the quickest and most effective method of expressing your views to Congress. You can also write and/or e-mail the 'Details' section or edit as you desire for a more personalized communication . Also, contact friends and family and urge them to use the Contact Congress feature on AUSN's website as well. Please direct any questions concerning this issue to our Director of Legislation, Anthony Wallis, at 703-548-5800 or at Anthony.Wallis@ausn.org.