

VFW Salutes New Stolen Valor Law

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WASHINGTON — The U.S. Supreme Court overturned the Stolen Valor Act of 2005 almost a year ago on the grounds that lying was protected speech, but justices on both sides of the 6-3 decision also provided a roadmap requiring any future legislation to be narrower in focus than just to penalize people for simple lying. Yesterday, the president signed the new Stolen Valor Act of 2013 into law.

Said John E. Hamilton, national commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S., “the new law is bullet-proof against another constitutional challenge because the focus is now on the intent to profit from the lie — to obtain money, property or something of a tangible benefit or value — which is what con artists have been doing throughout history.”

The VFW-supported legislation was introduced by Rep. Joe Heck and Sen. Dean Heller, both from Nevada. H.R. 258 passed overwhelmingly in the House two weeks ago and its Senate companion, S. 210, passed by unanimous consent two days later.

Not every combat award is covered, but the ones most coveted will now have wannabe heroes facing up to a year in jail and \$100,000 fines for each offense. Now protected by law are the Medal of Honor, service crosses, Silver Star, the Purple Heart, and combat badges such as the Combat Infantryman’s Badge, Combat Action Badge, Combat Medical Badge, Combat Action Ribbon and Combat Action Medal.

“The VFW salutes Congressman Heck, Senator Heller, their co-sponsors, and President Obama for following through on a very sensitive issue that everyone who has worn the uniform cares deeply about,” said Hamilton, who earned three Purple Hearts as a Marine Corps rifleman in Vietnam. “We want all con artists to pay a very severe penalty — and a very public price — for daring to steal the valor of those too few who survived and of the great many who did not.”

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

406 W. 34th Street
Kansas City, MO 64111
Office 816.756.3390
Fax 816.968.1157

WASHINGTON OFFICE

200 Maryland Ave., N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002
Office 202.543.2239
Fax 202.543.6719

info@vfw.org
www.vfw.org