

VFW Continues Opposition to Individual Unemployability Cuts

VA Secretary now supports dropping IU cut

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KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Yesterday, during a hearing of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. testified in strong opposition to a provision of President Trump's budget proposal, which would cut up to \$22,000 from the annual compensation of severely disabled veterans who receive Individual Unemployability (IU) benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Veterans who are on the IU program have service-connected disabilities that prevent them from working, rendering them unable to pay into Social Security. The provision would have moved veterans from IU to Social Security at age 62, resulting in a significant decrease in compensation. Other benefits, such as dental care and medical coverage for their dependents, would have also been impacted. Many veterans have recently contacted the VFW to voice their concerns over how the proposal would have impacted the property and automobile tax breaks granted to them by some states and counties, adding to the financial hardship that many of our veterans already face.

During the hearing, Senator Dean Heller (R–Nev.) challenged Secretary of Veterans Affairs David J. Shulkin to explain why the Administration would propose a cut to veterans Individual Unemployability benefits and expressed concern that disabled veterans would be significantly impacted by the proposal. In response, Shulkin explained that the budget is a process and the proposal was one of many options. However, after hearing from the VFW and veterans, “it became clear that this would be hurting some veterans and this would be a take away from veterans who can't afford to have those benefits taken away and I'm really concerned about that,” Shulkin responded, “I'm not going to support policies that are going to hurt veterans.”

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“The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. is pleased to see that Secretary Shulkin no longer supports this devastating cut to Individual Unemployability benefits.” said VFW National Commander Brian Duffy. “This action clearly demonstrates that Secretary Shulkin and the entire Administration acknowledges the concerns veterans and their families have expressed, particularly regarding how this proposal would have forced many veterans to lose their homes due to a new significant financial hardship,” he added.

“We have made progress in defeating this ill-advised cut,” said Duffy, “It shouldn’t have been proposed to begin with. Balancing budgets on the backs of veterans is something the VFW will never tolerate.” Duffy asks the 1.7 million members of the VFW and its Auxiliary to urge their respective members of Congress to oppose the IU cuts and make certain this proposal does not resurface. [Send a message to Congress here.](#)