

Warren County Veterans Service Officer's Report for August 2013

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Prudential Insurance Lawsuit: Papers were filed for a class action lawsuit against Prudential Insurance Company concerning its handling of life insurance benefits for service members and veterans. The lawsuit, filed in 2010, alleges that Prudential failed to pay death benefits in a manner required by federal law, and instead profited from money belonging to families of deceased service members. Prudential administers the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance or SGLI program for VA and has denied any wrongdoing. Most of the records filed have been sealed. A motion was made to make the records public so that families and general public can fully understand what Prudential has done with a federally subsidized insurance program meant to help service members and their families in a time of need. For more information, visit our website at: <http://www.vfw.org/News-and-Events/Articles/2013-Articles/VFW-WANTS-PRUDENTIAL%E2%80%99S-RECORDS-MADE-PUBLIC/>

VA Reviewing MST Claims: Recently, the VFW participated in a discussion with VA and several other Veterans' Service Organizations regarding ongoing reviews of previously denied disability claims involving Military Sexual Trauma (MST) tied to PTSD. Representative Chellie Pingree (D-ME), has also been asking VA to reopen cases in which victims of sexual assault suffered from PTSD and have applied for benefits but were denied. VA had begun reviewing cases last summer but just recently began notifying veterans (by letter) who had their claims denied that they can ask for their file to be reopened or reconsidered for benefits. HR 671 (sponsored by Rep. Pingree) would relax evidentiary standards to make it easier for MST survivors to receive VA benefits. Many are disappointed that VA hasn't made this a priority for the some 2500 cases that were denied. A substantial change in policy for survivors of sexual assault is laid out in the *Independent Budget* and contained in HR 671, the *Ruth Moore Act* which passed the House and is awaiting action in the Senate. For the VA letter and information on how to get a claim reviewed, visit Representative Pingree's website at: http://pingree.house.gov/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1042%3Amst-denied-claim-review-process&catid=3%3Aissues&Itemid=1

For more on the MST bills in Congress, visit our website at: <http://capwiz.com/vfw/issues/bills/>

For the FY 2014 *Independent Budget* click here: <http://www.independentbudget.org/>

VA Announces \$300 Million in New Grants to Help End Veterans' Homelessness FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - July 11, 2013

Initiative Targets 120,000 Homeless and At-Risk Vets and Families

WASHINGTON – Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced today the award of nearly \$300 million in grants that will help approximately 120,000 homeless and at-risk Veterans and their families. The grants have been awarded to 319 community agencies in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

“With these grants, we are strengthening our partnership with community non-profits across the country to provide Veterans and their families with hope, a home, and a future,” said Shinseki. “The work of Supportive Services for Veteran Families program grantees has already helped us prevent and end homelessness among tens of thousands of homeless Veterans and their families, but as long as a single Veteran lives on our streets, we have work to do.”

More information about VA's homeless programs is available at www.va.gov/homeless.

Details about the Supportive Services for Veteran Families program are online at www.va.gov/homeless/ssvf.asp.