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July 19, 2023

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
United States Senate
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C., 20510**RE: SUPPORT, S. 344, Major Richard Star Act**

Dear Senator Feinstein:

On behalf of the Solano County Board of Supervisors, I am writing to thank you for your co-sponsorship of the Major Richard Star Act (S. 344). Our Board strongly supports this important bill and we look forward to working with you to ensure its passage in the 118th Congress.

As you know, the Major Richard Star Act is a bipartisan piece of legislation that would provide full benefits to combat-injured veterans who have less than 20 years of military service. Under current law, only veterans with disability ratings above 50 percent and more than 20 years of service are eligible to receive the full amount of their U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) retirement and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability payments. H.R. 1282 would fix this misguided policy.

Disability compensation and retirement pay are two different payments and should be treated as such. DoD awards retirement pay for honorable service, while the VA is responsible for disability compensation. Conflating the two and forcing deductions in retirement pay is an injustice. Under the Major Richard Star Act, nearly 50,000 veterans nationwide with less than 20 years of service would be provided with concurrent receipt, allowing them to collect both earned retirement and disability benefits.

Solano County stands with disabled veterans and urges Congress to overturn the denial of retirement benefits. Accordingly, we urge you to make passage of the Major Richard Star Act a top priority. Thank you, as always, for your strong support of our country's veterans. If you have any questions or if you need additional information, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John M. Vasquez".

John M. Vasquez, Chair
Solano County Board of Supervisors**CC:**The Honorable Alex Padilla, U.S. Senator
The Honorable John Garamendi, Representative
The Honorable Mike Thompson, Representative
The Honorable Bill Dodd, Senator
The Honorable Lori D. Wilson, Assemblymember
Paragon Government Relations
Karen Lange, SYASL Partners, Inc.