



## Help for veterans

Congressman Zack Space is right on target: "Ohio veterans have been the victims of a flawed bureaucratic system for far too long." Legislation that Space introduced in April and the U.S. House passed unanimously Wednesday should help to right that wrong.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs said last year that veterans living in Ohio receive the lowest average disability payments in the country. The Ohio average is \$7,556 a year. The state with the highest payments, New Mexico, pays out an average \$12,395.

How can this be? In about one-third of the disparities it found, the VA admitted that the problem was poor training of its employees.

Rep. Space, a Democrat from Dover and a member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, held hearings in October. The result was the Veterans Disability Fairness Act, which passed on a 429-0 vote Wednesday. It requires the VA to ensure that disability claims are treated the same way no matter where they are made. The VA secretary must conduct reviews and audits at least every year to correct inconsistencies and must make an annual report to Congress. Sen. Sherrod Brown of Ohio has introduced a companion bill in the Senate.

Space's bill will make it easy to track VA's progress in correcting a serious problem. It's good to see Ohio legislators lead the fight to get justice for Ohio veterans.

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