

Submitter: Shaun Ledford

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Higher Education and Workforce Development

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3920

Hello,

My name is Shaun Ledford, and I reside in Pendleton, Oregon. I am a permanently and totally disabled veteran as a direct result of my military service, and I am writing in full support of HB3920.

This bill is critical for ensuring that dependents of fully disabled veterans can pursue higher education, including a master's degree, without being unfairly penalized by arbitrary age limits. Currently, dependents lose eligibility at age 23. However, medical conditions—particularly mental health issues like combat-related PTSD, from which I personally suffer—do not follow arbitrary timelines. These conditions can remain dormant for years before emerging, making it impossible for veterans to secure a timely disability rating to align with their children's educational needs.

In my case, the process to obtain my 100% Permanent and Total disability rating took approximately two years. Initially, it required a lengthy claims process to achieve the qualifying disability rating, followed by an additional 9.5 months from the day my Veterans Service Officer submitted the claim until I was officially recognized as fully disabled. Such delays from the Veterans Administration inadvertently penalize dependents, causing them to age out of eligibility through no fault of their own.

My personal connection to this bill is profound: I have two dependents whose educational futures will directly benefit from this legislation. The timing of when a veteran finally receives necessary medical acknowledgment should never determine the educational opportunities available to their children.

HB3920 addresses and corrects these unjust barriers, ensuring fairness and proper support for veterans and their families.

I strongly urge the members of the House Committee on Higher Education and Workforce Development to vote in favor of HB3920. Thank you for your time, consideration, and your continued support of veterans and their families.

Sincerely,

Shaun Ledford
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