

# **Urgent:** We need to take ACTION NOW by CONTACTING your Representatives and Senators TODAY!!

Congress will be in recess from March 30<sup>th</sup> thru April 10<sup>th</sup>. Call and make an appointment to meet with them while they are at their home office. Tell your story and why the passage of these bills is important to you! We have five very important bills to discuss with them and ask for their support:

S 2661 (Sponsored by Senator Brown - OH) has recently been introduced in the Senate and needs Senators to co-sponsor this bill. This bill clarifies the period of eligibility during which certain spouses are entitled to assistance under the Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship and for other purposes (basically this bill will extend the eligibility time for the early Post 9/11 surviving spouses to use the Fry Scholarship benefit). The bill on the House side that extends the time period, HR 3016, has passed. Now we need to help this provision on the Senate side.

HR 4095 and Senate Companion Bill S 1366. There is 1 co-sponsor for the House bill and no co-sponsors for the Senate bill. This bill will amend the charter of Gold Star Wives of America, Inc. to remove the restriction on the federally chartered corporation, and directors and officers of the corporation, attempting to influence legislation.

HR 4519: (No Senate companion bill yet). This is the extension of Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance (SSIA) for five years. There are 6 co-sponsors for this bill. The current SSIA is set to expire October 2017. (If this expires, these surviving spouses will lose \$310 per month!

HR 1594 Military Surviving Spouses Equity Act and Senate Companion Bill S 979. There are 181 co-sponsors for the House bill and 17 co-sponsors for the Senate bill. These bills will repeal the Survivor Benefit Plan/Dependency Indemnity Compensation Offset (SBP/DIC offset) in which current law requires a \$1.00 reduction in Department of Defense (DoD) for each \$1.00 received from the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) DIC.

HR 2539 Military Surviving Spouses Benefits Improvement Act of 2015. (No Senate companion bill yet). There are 11 co-sponsors for this bill. The flat rate of DIC compensation (which has not been raised except for Cost of Living since 1993) would be raised from the current \$1254.19 to \$1598.76 per month which is the equivalent of 55% of the full disabled single veteran's compensation and would bring surviving military spouses to a level comparable to other federal employees surviving spouses.

THESE LAST 2 BILLS ARE 2 SEPARATE BILLS ADDRESSING 2 SEPARATE ISSUES! (To read these bills and follow their progress, go to [www.congress.gov](http://www.congress.gov) ).

For these bills to be passed into law, Congress needs to hear from us to let them know that as their voting constituents: THESE BILLS MATTER! We need them to co-sponsor and VOTE for these bills!!

Now to find your Representative and Senators, call 202-224-3121 for contact information and to schedule an appointment while they are home on recess.

If you have questions about the above Legislation please contact the Co-Chairs of the Gold Star Wives Government Relations Committee (GRC) who are listed below:

Chris Kinnard: [cmkinnard@yahoo.com](mailto:cmkinnard@yahoo.com) or Donna Eldridge: [donnaeldridge@verizon.net](mailto:donnaeldridge@verizon.net)

Thank You!