

WWP News & Media: Veteran Group Outings, Charity Events, Helping Vets

## Wounded Warrior Project Calls on Congress to Take Action

### **Testimony Requests Improvements in Health Care Coverage and Costs**

WASHINGTON, March 4, 2016 /[PRNewswire-USNewswire](#)/ -- "In war, there are no unwounded soldiers." The quote attributed to Argentinian Jose Narosky talks about the toll of battlefield experiences. It sits as one of the centerpieces for the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial, just around the corner from congressional offices in Washington D.C. The quote and memorial serve as a reminder of the sacrifice service members make when they serve our nation, and the importance of taking care of them when they return home.

In the Cannon House Office Building Thursday, Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) called on Congress to take action to help wounded veterans with two key policy items: covering the cost of starting a family for veterans who lost that ability due to injury, and fixing a loophole in health care coverage for some wounded veterans.

That loophole can force some of the most seriously injured service members onto Medicare health coverage from TRICARE. This causes their annual premium to jump by more than \$1,000. Some can progress enough in their recovery to return to work, but they must wait to return to TRICARE and the lower premiums.

Ryan Kules is the director of Combat Stress Recovery at WWP. An improvised explosive device severed his right arm and left leg in 2005. Two years later, he had to transition to Medicare health coverage. While Ryan's recovery has fueled a successful civilian career, he told the Joint Veterans' Affairs Committee about the impact this has had on him and his family.

"In the next few months, I will finally be able to transition back to the more reasonably priced TRICARE plan I prefer. But my family, like so many others, has felt for the last eight years as though we were being made to pay an extra annual expense for no reason at all."

WWP is also seeking help for wounded veterans who lose the chance to start a family, because of wounds they sustain serving their country.

Ryan shared the story of Matthew and Tracy Keil. A bullet struck Matthew's spine, leaving him paralyzed. Matthew and Tracy were able to scrape together the money for one in vitro fertilization (IVF) treatment, but not everyone can afford the expensive procedure. WWP wants Congress to authorize the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to offer IVF in appropriate instances.

WWP takes advocacy for injured veterans very seriously. Previous bills created by WWP and passed by Congress have led to more than \$2.5 billion in benefits for wounded service members, their families, and caregivers. These laws will continue to help families cope with the visible and invisible wounds of war. The American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial reminds us all of the cost of war every veteran pays. It is why WWP is committed to a lifetime of service to these servicemen and women.

WWP offers 20 programs and services to injured veterans, their families, and their caregivers – all free of charge. Among them, Benefits Services, a partner in the process with wounded veterans as they navigate the VA. The Benefits Services team helps the transition to life after injury by identifying wounded veterans' individual needs and working to ensure access to government benefits they earned. Through fiscal year 2015, the Benefits Service team has secured more than \$160 million for wounded veterans and their families.

## **About Wounded Warrior Project**

The mission of Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) is to honor and empower Wounded Warriors. WWP's purpose is to raise awareness and to enlist the public's aid for the needs of injured service members, to help injured servicemen and women aid and assist each other, and to provide unique, direct programs and services to meet their needs. WWP is a national, nonpartisan organization headquartered in Jacksonville, Florida. To get involved and learn more, visit [woundedwarriorproject.org](http://woundedwarriorproject.org).

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