

Wounded Warrior Project, Veterans Service Organizations, and Congressional Leaders Announce Passage of "Death Gratuity" Payment Reform Bill

WASHINGTON, Sept. 18, 2018 [/PRNewswire/](#) -- Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) applauds the addition of H.R. 1928 *Families of The Fallen Service Members Act* to the minibuss carrying the defense appropriations package and is proud to have led the way in [advocating for this important change](#) to the law. This bill protects military families from being inadvertently and adversely impacted by government shutdowns that suspend immediate financial assistance to families whose loved one dies while on active duty.

When a servicemember loses their life while serving on active duty, their family is provided a tax-free stipend of \$100,000, known as a death gratuity payment. Grieving families rely on these funds to address immediate financial impacts that often occur after the death of a servicemember – such as travel and lodging for family members to travel for the return of remains; funeral costs; and other expenses that are unique to military families. In the past when the government has shut down, these funds were frozen until the shutdown expired, and military nonprofit groups generously contributed to families to cover what the government should have immediately provided.

Through a unified advocacy effort between Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS), the Military Order of the Purple Heart, and WWP, along with help from other veterans service organizations, Congress announced they would authorize death gratuity payments even during a government shutdown.

"While infrequent, government shutdowns, which are inherently political, had an unfortunate and egregious impact on those who sacrifice most for our country," said René Bardorf, WWP Vice President of Government Affairs and Community Relations. "Unfortunately, service personnel may be wounded, injured, or become ill in the line of duty, and sadly that sometimes results in the untimely death of our young heroes who serve us. That's why over the past year Wounded Warrior Project has worked alongside numerous veterans service organizations and senior government officials to advocate on behalf of our [families of the fallen](#)."

To read more about this bill, including statements from TAPS, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Sen. Chris Coons of Delaware and Rep. Gerald Connolly of Virginia's 11th District, visit:

<https://newsroom.woundedwarriorproject.org/highlights?item=31026>.

About Wounded Warrior Project

Since 2003, Wounded Warrior Project® (WWP) has been meeting the growing needs of warriors, their families, and caregivers – helping them achieve their highest ambition. Learn more: <http://newsroom.woundedwarriorproject.org/about-us>.

SOURCE Wounded Warrior Project

For further information: Mattison Brooks - Communications Specialist, Government & Community Relations
mbrooks@woundedwarriorproject.org, 202.969.1120

<https://newsroom.woundedwarriorproject.org/2018-09-18-Wounded-Warrior-Project-Veterans-Service-Organizations-and-Congressional-Leaders-Announce-Passage-of-Death-Gratuity-Payment-Reform-Bill>