

Wounded Warrior Project
1120 G St. NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20005
☎ 202.558.4302
☎ 202.898.0301



The Honorable Tim Walz
1034 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

February 19, 2013

Dear Congressman Walz:

As an organization whose mission is to honor and empower wounded warriors, Wounded Warrior Project (WWP) is committed to assisting servicemembers and veterans successfully navigate the challenges of recovery. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), combat stress, Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), and other invisible wounds continue to have an impact on the readjustment and daily lives of many of our warriors. Because of that, we offer our strong support for the Servicemember Mental Health Review Act.

Your bill would establish a much-needed remedial avenue for veterans to win reversal of erroneous determinations and potentially become eligible for service-connection based on PTSD or other service-incurred mental health conditions.

Department of Defense (DoD) records show that from fiscal years 2001 to 2010 the military has separated more than 31,000 servicemembers on the basis of a diagnosis of personality disorder. But as the General Accountability Office noted in its 2008 report on personality disorder separation requirements, accurately diagnosing OEF/OIF servicemembers with a personality disorder can be challenging. As a result, thousands of servicemembers who may be struggling with service-incurred mental health conditions end up carrying a particularly stigmatizing label that bars them from much-needed military and veterans' benefits and services. It is apparent that in many cases, their separations were not conducted in compliance with applicable DoD requirements and the servicemembers were not afforded applicable protections.

For warriors separated from service based on inappropriate psychiatric diagnoses, your legislation would at last allow individuals to present evidence and have their cases reviewed by a panel that includes appropriate mental health clinicians and that is empowered to recommend appropriate corrections. Erroneous "personality or adjustment disorder" designations have barred too many warriors with PTSD or other mental health conditions from getting needed help. We welcome this important step toward just resolution of these cases.

Sincerely,

John Molino
Acting EVP for Government Affairs

DUTY ★ HONOR ★ COURAGE ★ COMMITMENT ★ INTEGRITY ★ COUNTRY ★ SERVICE

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