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House of Representatives

REMEMBERING OUR VETERANS' LOVED ONES!

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. Speaker, on several occasions when we begin a discussion about taking care of veterans, we sometimes bypass or overlook the veterans' survivors.

Today, I am introducing a bill, H.R. 813, to help our veterans' survivors.

Survivors often serve as the backbone of our veterans. In many instances while they are serving and giving selflessly to their nation, their loved ones are holding down the homefront for when they return.

However, I believe that current law shortchanges our survivors.

This bill speaks directly to the appropriateness of our current regulations

regarding Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) because it would shorten the time period for which a veteran must be rated continuously totally disabled immediately preceding his or her death before the veteran's survivors are eligible for these benefits from 10 years to 1 year.

DIC is a monetary payment made to survivors of our service-connected disabled veterans. Survivors deserve to be taken care of when their spouse who served and gave their all has died.

Given the current backlog in the VA's claims processing system, veterans wait years, even decades, to receive their final rating. In the case of totally disabled veterans, the resulting

benefits may, unfortunately, come too late. These delays should not negate our responsibility to these veterans' families and this legislation would ensure that their survivors receive the benefits due to them.

Mr. Speaker, when we provide for and protect our veterans we must always remember to include their survivors. They cannot be an afterthought.

When I was the Chair of this Committee, I always remembered our veterans' survivors and made them a priority. I hope we continue that tradition in this Congress.

I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.