

Legal Issues of Military Veterans

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It would be reasonable to say that thinking about military personnel, people who often sacrifice personal preferences for the sake of national security, it is almost unimaginable that such individuals face distinct legal issues. Unfortunately, despite the immense contribution of military veterans during active service, there are various legal problems they face while trying to receive veteran benefits. To understand the case, one should explore particular aspects of the issue, thus focusing on elements like disabilities, education, and healthcare, which have proved to have the most drastic impact on the quality of life of military veterans. Veterans find it challenging to receive an academic degree because of the for-profit educational system and bureaucracy—something that should be modified. In addition, the current legislation does not offer proper access for veterans to healthcare and disability compensation.

Education

One of the sacrifices people make when joining the military is about having no time and chance for receiving an academic degree. However, after fulfilling their duties, many individuals seek education while having the status of a military veteran. In the past, many people engaged in active duty because of the opportunity to receive a free academic degree. Unfortunately, nowadays, when such individuals try to enter academic institutions, they often face obstacles created by for-profit educational institutions that do not want to accept veterans merely because the individuals have no financial means of paying the tuition. The College Assistance and Substandard Schools U.S. Department of Education concluded that more than a hundred for-profit colleges violated legislation that grants military veterans access to education (French & Bayes, 2014, p. 9-10). The GI Bill is the foundational legislative norm directed toward providing military veterans with substantial assistance while an individual engages in getting an academic

degree (Glantz, 2014). Initially, the Bill allowed military veterans to receive academic degrees after being discharged from active duty. However, the situation with for-profit colleges proved that the legislature should be modified to prevent educational institutions from getting federal aid and not providing it to veterans. Experts indicate that while the GI Bill originally was designed to help military veterans get an academic degree and have a chance for decent employment, in reality, benefits for-profit colleges left veterans with a worthless degree and limited access to the job market (Glantz, 2014). Loopholes in the GI Bill create a massive legal issue when military veterans try to receive a chance to have access to the American Dream after serving their nation. Apparently, after investing time and effort into the security and stability of the American nation, military veterans should receive benefits as compensation for their service.

Disability

Without a doubt, serving in the military is an endeavor associated with a high degree of risk. As a result, many individuals who participated in active conflicts sometimes receive injuries that lead to disabilities. For instance, in 2014, there were 970,000 disability claims registered by the Department of Veteran Affairs (French & Bayes, 2014, p.7). In such a context, one should also add that disability is directly associated with poverty among military veterans. While the poverty rate of the nonveteran disabled population is at 16.9 percent, the poverty rate of disabled veterans is a staggering 29.1 percent (French & Bayes, 2014, p. 7). The reason the problem exists is that the current legislature cannot meet the demands for disability compensation issues by all veterans. Title 38 of the United States Code indicates the existence of programs like “service-connected compensation” and “pension” (Legal Information Institute, 2016). Also, there is the Veterans Claims Assistance Act of 2000. This document suggests that to receive disability compensation, a veteran should provide substantial evidence to make them eligible for the claim

(French & Bayes, 2014, p. 8-9). The problem is that military veterans often cannot provide sufficient information concerning their disability because of his or her condition in the first place. As a result, many people who are eligible for compensation are left without benefits that would have improved the quality of their lives. People find them in a vicious circle, namely because their disability is something that makes it challenging to apply for compensation.

Healthcare

It is apparent that proper access to healthcare is something that military veterans should have, namely because of the medical assistance such individuals often need after being exposed to active conflicts and psychological pressures associated with active duty. Unfortunately, over a million veterans under the age of 65 lack health insurance coverage (French & Bayes, 2014, p. 15). The core of the issue is that while the Department of Veteran Affairs offers various healthcare options for veterans, the priority and access to such opportunities are based on factors like income level and service-related disability. As a result, while the majority of low-income military veterans are eligible for healthcare insurance, often such individuals do not have physical access to the Department of Veteran Affairs, merely because they do not live close enough to the institution or do not know where it is located (French & Bayes, 2014, p. 15). In terms of legal issues, while there is The Veterans Healthcare Eligibility Reform Act of 1996 and Medicaid Expansion under the Affordable Care Act, the laws do not fix the problem mentioned above. Unfortunately, tens of thousands of veterans are forced to wait months for medical appointments—the crucial aspect of receiving access to healthcare insurance (French & Bayes, 2014, p. 15). Evidently, the legislature designed to assist veterans in receiving care is flawed in terms of the process of determining who is eligible for benefits and who is not qualified. Military

veterans are forced to spend countless hours waiting for appointments, as well as face legal issues when it comes to proving one's eligibility for healthcare benefits.

Conclusion

Considering what has been stated, one should say that legal issues military veterans face make it challenging to receive an academic degree, disability compensation, and access to healthcare. The existing legislature creates loopholes, making it possible for many for-profit academic institutions to exploit the federal aid system without offering veterans a chance to get an academic degree. Instead, people are left with worthless educational options—something that has an adverse impact on further job opportunities. In terms of disability benefits and access to healthcare, the process of discerning people eligible and non-eligible for benefits, the existing legal foundation cannot meet the demand of veterans applying for assistance and compensation. Therefore, the legal norms should be changed to improve the bureaucratic process and cover existing loopholes, making it impossible for third parties to exploit the system.

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