

## Position: The Reserve Organization of America urges Congress to support its *Delivering Reservist Integration and Veterans Education (DRIVE) Act*.

**Background:** 2023 brought two troubling reports that validated longstanding concerns regarding access to service earned benefits and support programs for reserve component members:

- 1) U.S. Government Accountability Office: [VA Disability Benefits: Actions Needed to Address Challenges Reserve Component Members Face Accessing Compensation](#).
- 2) RAND Corporation: [Improving Transition Assistance for Reserve Component Members](#).

GAO found that the Department of Veterans Affairs approved 11 to 20 percent fewer disability compensation claims from Reserve and National Guard members than the active component (**pictured right**).

GAO also found that VA and Department of Defense officials were “not aware of the difference(s) in reserve component and active component approval rates or the reasons behind it.”

RAND reported that TAP “does not adequately address reserve component members’ transition needs.”

These findings, among others, clearly show that the policies and practices governing service earned benefits and support programs **do not** reflect the modern-day tempo of reserve component service.

To improve the access to and quality of these benefits and programs, ROA urges Congress to support its *Delivering Reservist Integration and Veterans Education (DRIVE) Act*. ROA’s **DRIVE Act**:

- 1) Establishes an interagency task force on benefits and resources for reserve component service members, veterans, and their families.
- 2) Amends eligibility to receive preseparation counseling through TAP from “180 continuous days of active duty” to “180 days of active service,” wherein active service includes full-time training duty and annual training.
- 3) Establishes a reserve component curriculum within TAP focused on the unique separation and transition needs of Reserve and National Guard service members and their families.
- 4) Confers veteran status for proposes of federal hiring veterans’ preference on reserve component members after 180 “total” days on active duty as opposed to 180 “consecutive” days on active duty.

For contact: Matthew Schwartzman, [mschwartzman@roa.org](mailto:mschwartzman@roa.org)