



## ***Driver Reimbursement Increase for Veteran Equity (DRIVE) Act***

**Introduced by:** Sens. Peter Welch (D-Vt.); Alex Padilla (D-Calif.); Catherine Cortez Masto (D-Nev.); Mazie Hirono (D-Hawaii); Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.); Tina Smith (D-Minn.); Ron Wyden (D-Ore.); Cory Booker (D-N.J.)

**Led in the House by:** Reps. Julia Brownley (D-CA-26); Rashida Tlaib (D-MI-12); Dan Crenshaw (R-TX-02); Juan Vargas (D-CA-52); Jay Obernolte (R-CA-23); Brad Sherman (D-CA-32); Steve Cohen (D-TN-09); Nikki Budzinski (D-IL-13); Andrea Salinas (D-OR-06); Val Hoyle (D-OR-04); Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC-AL); Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick (D-FL-20); Ted Lieu (D-CA-36); Dina Titus (D-NV-01)

### **Background:**

Veterans served our nation honorably and have earned and deserve affordable, accessible health care—which includes help getting to their health appointments. Travel reimbursement is particularly important for veterans in small and rural communities, where veterans are required to travel long distances to receive medical care from doctors and specialists.

In 2010, Congress passed [legislation](#) to set the mileage reimbursement rate at a minimum of \$0.41 per mile. At the time, this was comparable to reimbursement rates for federal employees' work-related travel. This law also gave the Secretary of the VA the authority to increase rates, consistent with the mileage rate for federal employees for the use of their private vehicles on official business, as determined by the Administrator of the General Services Administration (GSA). However, since the enactment of this law, the VA's travel mileage reimbursement rate has remained stagnant—even while gas prices and other costs, like auto insurance and vehicle maintenance, have increased. Since the enactment of the law in 2010, the GSA rate has risen over time to \$0.70 per mile.

### **Legislation:**

The *DRIVE Act* would require the Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure the Beneficiary Travel Reimbursement Rate is at least equal to the General Services Administration (GSA) Reimbursement Rate applied to federal employees who use their personal vehicles for official business. This change would ensure that VA's reimbursement rate keeps up with the cost of inflation and properly accounts for fluctuations in gas prices and inflation over time.

When the House considered the *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023*, Rep. Brownley and then-Rep. Welch offered a similar amendment, which was adopted as part of an *En Bloc* amendment by a bipartisan vote of 277 to 150. The *NDAA* passed the House on July 14, 2022, but the policy was not included in the final conference agreement.

### **Endorsing Organizations:**

The *DRIVE Act* is endorsed by Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), Military Order of the Purple Heart USA, Vietnam Veterans of America, Disabled American Veterans (DAV), AMVETS, and Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA).