

Veterans Service Pension Benefits and Pending Legislation

As a nation we celebrated Veterans Day recently to honor our service men and women. We hope you enjoyed gathering with friends and family with a grateful heart towards our military men and women. In keeping with this theme, the *ElderCounselor*[™] will focus our attention this month on Service Pension benefits, which are available to qualifying Veterans. This is a valuable benefit that many Veterans and their families are unaware exists. The law providing this benefit is facing potential legislative changes. In this newsletter we will provide an overview of the benefit as well as an outline and status of the current proposed changes.

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General Requirements for Basic Service Pension

In order to qualify for Basic Service Pension, Veterans must meet several criteria.

The first requirement has to do with the amount of time Veterans were in active duty and whether they served during wartime. Prior to September 1980, Veterans are required to have at least ninety (90) days of active duty with at least one day being during a wartime period. *See "Wartime Periods" chart.* After 1980, Veterans must have generally served at least 24 months (or the full period for which they were called or ordered) of active duty with at least one day being during a wartime period. Second, Veterans must not have been dishonorably discharged.

Third, Veterans must meet one of the following criteria:

- sixty-five (65) years of age or older;
- permanently and totally disabled;
- in a nursing home receiving skilled nursing care;
- receiving Social Security Disability Insurance; or
- receiving Supplemental Security Income.

In addition, Veterans' worth must not be excessive and their countable family income must be below a yearly limit set by law. *See "Pension Benefit Figures" chart.*