November 8, 2005

Honorable Bill Nelson
United States Senate
716 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-0905

Dear Senator Nelson:

The American Legion, on behalf it's 2.8 million members strongly supports your amendments that seek to restore fair treatment for military retirees and survivors.

Passage of these amendments would end the unfair deduction of VA survivor benefits from military Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) annuities when the servicemember dies of a service-connected cause and would end the disproportional SBP premium penalties imposed on Greatest Generation military retirees.

When a servicemember dies during military service, VA indemnity benefit should be added to the normal survivor benefit (which retirees paid for), not subtracted from it. Older retirees have already paid 20% more into SBP than post-1978 retirees will ever have to pay, and unless current law is changed, they'll end up paying a 32% extra penalty. Your amendments would end both penalties as of Oct 1, 2005.

Once again, The American Legion fully supports your amendments to restore fair treatment for military retirees and survivors. The American Legion appreciates your continued leadership in stepping-up to address issues important to veterans, members of the Armed Forces and their families.

Sincerely,

Steve A. Robertson, Director
National Legislative Commission