

# Equal Access to Air Travel for Service-Disabled Veterans (HR 2264)

**The Space Available Program unjustly denies**

**100 percent service-disabled veterans the opportunity to participate.**

**One hundred percent service-disabled veterans are not entitled to air travel privileges to which other members of the military have access.** The Space Available Programallows members of the active military, some family members, Red Cross employees, and retired armed services members to travel on military aircraft if space is available. However, members of the military who were classified as 100 percent service disabled before September 23, 1996, do not qualify for this program because they are not considered “retired.”

**This exclusion denies 100 percent service-disabled veterans discharged before September 23, 1996, a privilege to which they would be entitled had they not been disabled during service.** Those service members who were disabled during active duty and were medically discharged prior to September 23, 1996, did not have the chance to stay on active duty, to be classified as “medically retired,” or to fulfill the twenty years requirement to become qualified for this program. These men and women have earned the right to space-available travel just as others have because they sacrificed so much for our country.

**Military aircraft are already equipped to accommodate passengers with disabilities.** Retired military personnel, their family members, and Red Cross workers with disabilities are already permitted to use the Space Available Program, and according to the AMC Space-Available Handbook & FAQ’s, “Every effort shall be made to transport passengers with disabilities who are otherwise eligible to travel.”[[1]](#endnote-1) Therefore, permitting 100 percent service-disabled veterans the opportunity to ride on military aircraft if space is available will not cause any new burden to the program.

**The National Defense Authorization Act provides the platform to achieve the goal of this bill.** In a letter dated November 3, 2015, Bob Dole, a decorated World War II veteran and longtime Senate majority leader, urged Senator John McCain, Chairman of the US Senate Committee on Armed Services, to incorporate this bill into the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). Indeed, the House of Representatives’ version of NDAA for fiscal years 2014 and 2015 included the language of HR 2264.

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**Equal Access to Air Travel for Service-Disabled Veterans would:**

**Provide travel privileges to all 100 percent service-disabled veterans.** This bill amends Title 10 of the United States Code to permit veterans who have a service-connected, permanent disability rated as total to travel on military aircraft in the same manner and to the same extent as retired members of the Armed Forces.

**HONOR OUR SERVICE-DISABLED VETERANS:**

**PERMIT THEM TO USE THE SPACE AVAILABLE PROGRAM**

**Cosponsor HR 2264.**

**To cosponsor HR 2264 in the House of Representatives, contact:**

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“Brave soldiers made the same sacrifices as their fellow veterans, and their disabilities are a direct result of combat or its aftermath. I believe they should be able to participate in the Space Available program.” – Bob Dole Letter to Senator McCain, November 3, 2015

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1. Air Mobility Command. “AMC Space-Available Handbook & FAQ’s.” Last modified September 17, 2013. <http://www.amc.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-130917-139.pdf>. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)