



VFWA NEW MEXICO
LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM
Lukas Gersich Program Chair 2026-2027



Promotional July 2026

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Greetings fellow New Mexicans,

My name is Luke Gersich, and I am the 2026-27 Legislative Chairman. I am from post 3370, Moriarty, and the current junior vice president.

Under my chairmanship, I will be talking about the Major Richard Star Act now and then as it moves through Congress.

What is the Major Richard Star Act?

“Under current law, veterans who served fewer than 20 years as a result of their combat-related injuries are ineligible for full military retirement pay and disability benefits. These veterans have their retirement pay reduced dollar-for-dollar by their disability compensation, an offset that currently affects more than 50,000 combat-injured military retirees.”

-www.vfw.org/media-and-events/latest-releases/archives/2026/6/the-major-richard-star-act-is-about-fairness

What is the impact on veterans who are in this “Wounded Veterans Tax”, as it has been called? Veterans could see an average of approximately \$1,200 more each month, according to www.staractalliance.org.

In my research the number varies between 50 to 65 THOUSAND veterans. In New Mexico where we are only 0.62% of the United States population, that will still be roughly 4,000 veterans. I believe this is a low estimate due to the amount of military installations in New Mexico and surrounding states such as Fort Bliss in El Paso, TX.

All of our Congressional Senators and Representatives: Senators Martin Heinrich and Ben Ray Luján, and Representatives Gabe Vasquez and Teresa Leger Fernández - are strong supporters and cosponsors of the Major Richard Star Act.

If you have any questions or would like to research more, please feel free to call me at 505-395-6393 or email me at ljgersich@gmail.com.

Thank you for your time,

Luke Gersich
Legislative Chairman
Department of New Mexico