



DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

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Hawaii Attorney General Joins Multistate Coalition Urging the VA to Suspend Deadlines and Collection Activities for Veterans During COVID-19 Pandemic

HONOLULU – Hawaii Attorney General Clare E. Connors today joined a multistate coalition of 22 attorneys general led by California in submitting a letter urging the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to suspend benefits claims deadlines and debt collection activities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the current situation, unemployment has skyrocketed, and veterans are losing their jobs, making it difficult for them to make debt payments. In the letter, the coalition argues that the VA's continued enforcement of these deadlines and collections is putting veterans in financial danger and increasing their risk of losing essential VA benefits that they rely on for basic necessities – such as food and housing.

“Under the current conditions all of us are facing, we should be making it easier for veterans to live their lives with dignity,” said Attorney General Connors. “Suspending claims deadlines and debt collection are common sense measures that the VA should take.”

Almost half of all U.S. veterans are over 65 years old, and the aging population is at an increased risk of contracting COVID-19 and suffering serious health consequences or dying. The attorneys general argue that because the VA is closed to in-person claims assistance, veterans are forced to face significant barriers on their own. These barriers include the burden of gathering evidence to meet claims deadlines; lack of access to electronic means of claims submission; and a lack of access to veterans' organizations and attorneys. Additionally, most of the country is subject to a stay-at-home order, making it nearly impossible for veterans to get the help that they need. The coalition urges the VA to suspend all claims deadlines and issue a moratorium on collection activities for benefits overpayments and other debt.

In submitting today's letter, Attorney General Connors joins the attorneys general of California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Idaho, Maine, Maryland,

Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, Virginia, Washington, and the District of Columbia.

A copy of the letter can be found [here](#).

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