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# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 15, 2012

The Honorable Eric K. Shinseki  
Secretary of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary Shinseki:

The Department's Specially Adapted Housing and Special Housing Adaptations programs provide necessary home modifications that enhance the quality of life for eligible veterans. I am concerned, however, that current eligibility criteria is too stringent and that a number of veterans who need these housing grants are unable to receive them.

Advances in battlefield medicine have meant that more servicemembers are surviving injuries that would have been deadly in previous conflicts. As a result, we are seeing more individuals with very specific combinations of injuries that affect their ability to live independently without adaptations such as non-slip flooring, bathroom grab bars, and specialized appliances that address safety issues.

I recently heard from a veteran who is severely injured with an above-the knee amputation and an injury to his hip. His combination of injuries makes it incredibly difficult for him to live comfortably in his home. Despite his serious injuries and mobility challenges, he does not meet current eligibility criteria for VA's adaptive housing programs, and therefore cannot receive this benefit that he so critically needs.

I will be working with my Congressional colleagues to forward legislative language to expand the eligibility criteria for your Specially Adapted Housing and Special Housing Adaptations programs. As Chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I look forward to working with you to ensure that disabled veterans can live comfortably and independently in their homes.

Sincerely,



Patty Murray  
Chairman