



## PRESS RELEASE

---

### **Attorney General Frosh Urges the VA to Suspend Deadlines and Collection Activities for Veterans During COVID-19 Pandemic**

**BALTIMORE, MD (April 3, 2020)** – Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh today joined a coalition of 22 attorneys general 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.

Almost half of all U.S. veterans are over 65 years old, and the aging population is at an increased risk of suffering serious health consequences or death if they contract COVID-19. 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 stay-at-home orders, 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.

“The VA must act now to address the lack of access to resources generated by this pandemic. They have a vulnerable population that they are charged to protect, and they should do their job,” said Attorney General Frosh.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 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.

In submitting today’s letter, Attorney General Frosh joins the attorneys general of California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Idaho, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, Virginia, and Washington.