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### **AKAKA INTRODUCES COST-OF-LIVING-INCREASE FOR DISABLED VETERANS WITH UNANIMOUS COMMITTEE SUPPORT**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – U.S. Senator Daniel K. Akaka (D-HI), Chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, introduced legislation yesterday to increase veterans' compensation through a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA). The bill is cosponsored by Ranking Minority Member Senator Richard Burr (R-NC) and all the other members of the Veterans' Affairs Committee: Senators Rockefeller (D-WV), Murray (D-WA), Sanders (I-VT), Brown (D-OH), Webb (D-VA), Tester (D-MT), Begich (D-AK), Burris (D-IL), Specter (R-PA), Isakson (R-GA), Wicker (R-MS), Johanns (R-NE), and Graham (R-SC).

*"Compensation for disabled veterans and their survivors is a cost of war. Many of the veterans and widows receiving this benefit live on a fixed income, and they count on annual cost-of-living-increases to protect the purchasing power of their compensation,"* said Akaka.

The Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2009 directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to increase, as of December 1, 2009, the rates of:

- Veterans' disability compensation,
- Dependency and indemnity compensation for surviving spouses and children, and
- Additional related benefits.

The COLA increase for veterans would match the annual increase provided to Social Security recipients, which is based on the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Price Index. The COLA is designed to offset inflation and other factors that alter the cost of living over time. Last year's increase was 5.8 percent. The increase for this year has not yet been determined.