



HONORING OUR NATION'S OBLIGATION TO REMEMBER (HONOR) GOLD STAR FAMILIES ACT

Key Provisions

- **DOUBLES** the military death gratuity from **\$100,000 to \$200,000** for the families of fallen servicemembers.
- Locks in annual inflation protection through an automatic cost-of-living adjustment (COLA), ensuring the benefit never again erodes in real value.
- Applies retroactively to service members who lost their lives on or after January 1, 2026.

Background

The military death gratuity has not been updated since the **FY2006 National Defense Authorization Act** (NDAA) and remains fixed at \$100,000. Over nearly two decades of inflation, its purchasing power has eroded substantially; adjusted for inflation, \$100,000 in 2006 would exceed **\$160,000 today**. While Social Security benefits, military retirement, and federal salaries receive regular cost-of-living adjustments, the immediate payment made to the families of fallen servicemembers has remained stagnant.

By contrast, under federal law, the family of a deceased Member of Congress receives a death gratuity equal to one year of salary — currently **\$174,000**. The families of those who make the ultimate sacrifice for our nation should not receive less immediate support than the families of lawmakers. The death gratuity is the first tangible promise the nation makes to a grieving military family: a tax-free payment delivered within days to help stabilize finances and navigate sudden loss of income during a moment of profound upheaval.

The **HONOR Gold Star Families Act** corrects this inequity by increasing the gratuity to **\$200,000** and permanently tying it to inflation through an annual CPI-U adjustment, ensuring it never again loses value over time