

## THE JOHN S. McCAIN NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2019 Report

[TO ACCOMPANY S. 2987]

### **Comptroller General study of dependency determinations for incapacitated adult children of military members**

The committee has learned about potential problems associated with dependency determinations made by the Department of Defense for incapacitated adult children. In some instances, adult children lose dependency status if they are placed in group homes or other institutional settings. In other cases, an adult child may not earn wages because those earnings would impact a dependency determination.

As a result, the committee directs the Comptroller General of the United States to conduct a study of the Department's policies, procedures, and processes for determining dependency status of incapacitated adult children. In the conduct of this study, the Comptroller General shall answer the following questions:

(1) To qualify as a military dependent, the servicemember's contribution to the incapacitated adult child's monthly living expenses must be greater than half of the dependent's actual living expenses.

What additional criteria does the Department use to determine dependency status of an incapacitated adult child?

(2) How many servicemembers requested incapacitated adult child dependency determinations over the last 5 years? How many dependency determinations did the Department grant, by year, over that time period?

(3) For a servicemember with an incapacitated adult child in a group home or other institutional setting, what options does the servicemember have to keep the family together geographically in the event of a permanent change of station?

(4) What assistance does the Department provide to families as they navigate the dependency determination process?

The Comptroller General shall brief the preliminary results of such study to the committee not later than February 1, 2019. At that time, the committee and the Comptroller General shall determine a mutually agreeable date for submission of the final report.