



## Wounded Troops Face Too Much Bureaucracy

Written On October 29, 2009 By [Bob Kraft](#)

In a speech this week Defense Secretary Robert Gates gave his opinion that troops injured in combat in Iraq and Afghanistan continue to face too many bureaucratic hurdles. This is true of course, but applies equally to all veterans applying for medical care and disability benefits, and not only to those who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan. The federal government should be bending over backward to help these veterans, but often seems to be more interested in delaying the process.

The VA has a backlogged disability claims system with hundreds of thousands of claims that need to be processed. The current system is failing our veterans, and must be streamlined, especially because we're seeing more and more claims coming from our current two wars. Fortunately, the troops fighting in Afghanistan and in Iraq are surviving battle wounds at a higher rate than in previous wars, but the injuries they return with are more serious than in the past. A recent RAND Corporation study estimated that there could be more than 600,000 service members with traumatic brain injuries or mental health issues.

The government is aware of the problems in the VA system and seems to be making a good faith effort to improve the system. But we have a long way to go before we can show proper respect to our veterans.