

The Vermont congressional delegation today asked the head of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to provide overdue documentation needed by about 2,200 disabled veterans to qualify for property tax abatements.

"Any further delay in this process during the current year will result in hundreds of eligible veterans paying significantly more in property taxes than they owe," Sens. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) and Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and Rep. Peter Welch (D-Vt.) wrote to Veterans Affairs Secretary Erik K. Shinseki. "We are concerned about the extreme financial hardship this will cause our veterans, particularly in the current economic climate."

In order to qualify for state and local property tax exemptions, veterans must submit VA "tax letters" to town clerks by May 1 certifying that they have what the department deems to be at least a 50 percent disability.

"We would ask that the situation with the current year letters be immediately addressed to ensure that Vermont's veterans have the proper documentation to meet their May 1, 2010 deadline. We would also ask that you take steps to ensure that in the coming days, Vermont's veterans are provided accurate information about the status of these letters when they contact the centralized call center," the senators and congressman added.

The letters with the verification forms now are almost two months overdue. The VA regional office had indicated earlier this year that the letters would be mailed in February. The Vermont Office of Veterans Affairs reached out to Town Clerks this week asking for them to be flexible because of this delay.

For a copy of the letter from the Vermont congressional delegation to Secretary Shinseki, [click here](#)