

# **Senator Warren and Rep. Bustos Urge Three of the Largest Carmakers Operating in the U.S. to Implement New Car Leasing Relief Requirement for Military Spouses**

Recently enacted NDAA included Warren-Bustos proposal that protects Gold Star spouses and spouses of injured servicemembers from financial penalties associated with terminating unnecessary car leases

**Washington, D.C.** - United States Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), a member of the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC), and Congresswoman Cheri Bustos (D-Ill.), a member of the U.S. House Appropriations Subcommittees on Defense and on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies, sent a letter to three major car companies -- General Motors Company, Ford Motor Company, and Fiat Chrysler Automobiles United States LLC -- urging them to immediately implement the car leasing relief provisions for military spouses secured in the recently enacted Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

Military families often relocate frequently or suddenly as the result of a servicemember's military orders, and these moves can involve entering into an automobile lease. If a servicemember dies or sustains a catastrophic injury or

illness during military service, his or her spouse may be forced to pay off the remainder of that lease or face a penalty for breaking the agreement.

"Military spouses should only have to focus on caring for the needs of injured servicemembers or their surviving dependents -- not incur the burdensome costs associated with terminating an unnecessary or unwanted car lease," **wrote the lawmakers.**

Section 545 of the [FY 2020 NDAA](#), which was signed into law on December 20, 2019, addresses this unnecessary burden and contains the language of a bipartisan bill that Senator Warren [introduced](#) last year. The NDAA section expands financial protections for military families by allowing the spouse of a servicemember who died while in military service to terminate a car lease one year from the date of the servicemember's death, as long as that servicemember died while in military service or while performing full-time National Guard duty, active Guard and Reserve duty, or inactive-duty training. In addition, these provisions allow the spouse of a servicemember who sustained a catastrophic injury or illness to terminate a car lease one year from the date of the catastrophic event, as long as that servicemember sustained the injury or illness while in military service or while performing full-time National Guard duty, active Guard and Reserve duty, or inactive-duty training. In their letter, Senator Warren and Congresswoman Bustos acknowledged a program established by [Toyota](#) prior to the NDAA's enactment that waives outstanding car lease payments for military customers who die or are catastrophically injured in the line of duty.

"Fundamentally, military families are middle class families, and they make incredible sacrifices in service to our country. One way to honor those sacrifices is to ensure they have the support they need, including reasonable financial protections," **wrote the lawmakers.**

Senator Warren has worked with members of both parties to enact legislation that strengthens financial protections for military families. For example, the bipartisan Gold Star Spouses Leasing Relief Act she [introduced](#) with Congresswoman Bustos and Senator Rob Portman (R-Ohio) was [signed into law](#) as part of the omnibus veterans legislation, the [Veterans Benefits and Transition Act](#), in December 2018 and allows a Gold Star spouse to terminate a residential lease, without penalty, within one year of the servicemember's death.

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