

# Quarterly Court Case Analysis

## Addendum

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***Soto v. United States***  
**\_\_\_ U.S. \_\_\_, 145 S. Ct. 1677, No. 24-320**  
Jun. 12, 2025  
Prepared by Bergmann & Moore for  
Department / Veteran Service Officers

**The bottom line:** The U.S. Supreme Court in *Soto***Error! Bookmark not defined.** determined that the general six-year limit on retroactive benefits does **not** apply to “Combat-Related Special Compensation” (CRSC). This is a significant win for eligible Veterans as it opens the door to longer retroactive awards for those who delayed applying. Although these benefits are not administered by VA, they interact with disability compensation, and it is important to understand the relationship.

**Background:**

- Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) was authorized by the 2002 Bob Stump National Defense Authorization Act.
  - 10 U.S.C. §1413a
- CRSC eliminated the offset between DoD retirement pay and VA disability compensation for certain combat disabled retirees.
- Eligibility includes those:
  - Warranting a Purple Heart
  - Injury incurred in armed conflict, hazardous service, conditions simulating war, or due to an instrumentality of war (equipment designed for combat operations (vehicles, weapons systems, aircraft or hazardous material).

**What happened in *Soto*:**

- Mr. Soto was medically retired in 2006 and did not apply for CRSC until 2016.
- DoD initially limited his retroactive benefits to six (6) years, citing a general limitation period from another statute.
- The Supreme Court, which held this six-year limitation, does not apply to CRSC, allowing a full ten (10) year retroactive award not the limited to the six-year retroactive he had previously been awarded.

## **Key Takeaways for VSOs:**

- *Soto* was a class action case.
- Veterans who applied for CRSC late, or are eligible and have not yet applied, may now receive expanded retroactive benefits.
- Veterans who have already been awarded CRSC and are eligible for additional benefits should be notified by DoD of the additional retroactive award.
- When assisting a retired Veteran who appears to have a qualifying combat-related disability, be sure to inquire about whether they have applied for CRSC.