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Fit Generals Who Claim Disability

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Citing the retirement on tax-free disability pay of physically fit Air Force generals, Senator William Proxmire (Dem-Wis.) says "either the rules are wrong or the system winks at cheating."

Proxmire said an officer retiring on disability can have a proportion of his retirement pay exempted from federal income taxes.

Proxmire said yesterday that a report from the General Accounting Office showed that 130 of the 327 Air Force generals who retired in the last five years qualified for disability.

But he said that 97 of the 130 had been receiving flight pay during the year immediately preceding retirement. Flight pay indicates the men were physically fit, the Senator said.

"Either the rules are wrong or the system winks at cheating when such a high percentage of general officers are so benefitted," Proxmire said.

The Air Force said different ratings were used to determine a person's flight condition and retiring condition.

"Some persons meet the physical standards for flying

with physical defects, e.g. arthritis, sight, hearing, ulcers, pulmonary diseases such as bronchitis, degenerative disc disease, etc.," the Air Force said.

Certain of these defects qualify a person for disability retirement under Veterans Administration rules.

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