



Trends in Veterans with a Service-Connected Disability: 1985 to 2009

Prepared by the National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics

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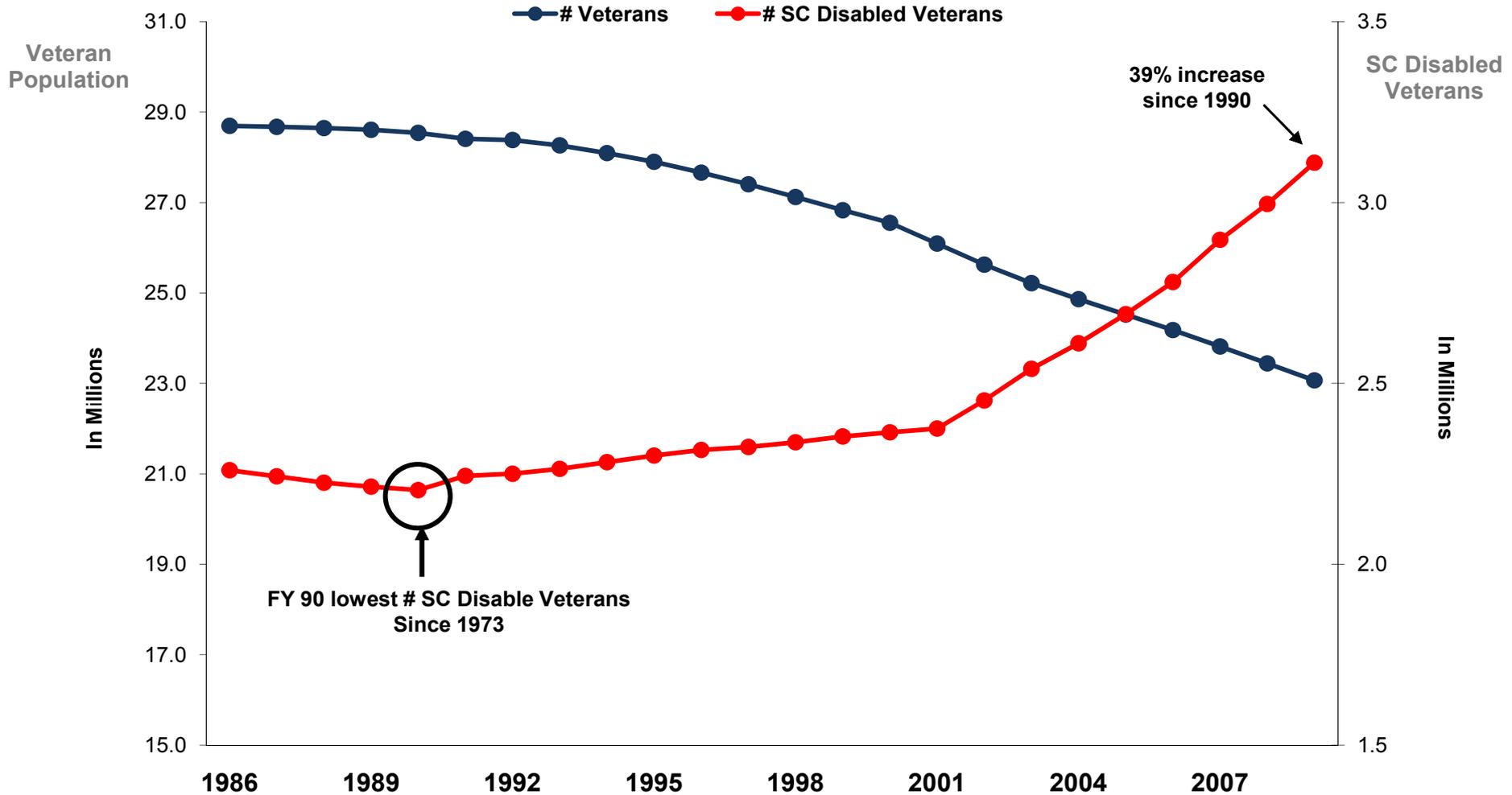
Data Source

- Data regarding Veterans with service-connected disabilities were derived from individual [Annual Benefits Reports](#) available on the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) website.
- The data were supplemented using annual extracts of VA's disability payment files
- For details regarding estimates of the total veteran population, see Veteran Population Projection Model (VetPop) 2007 [Technical Documentation](#).

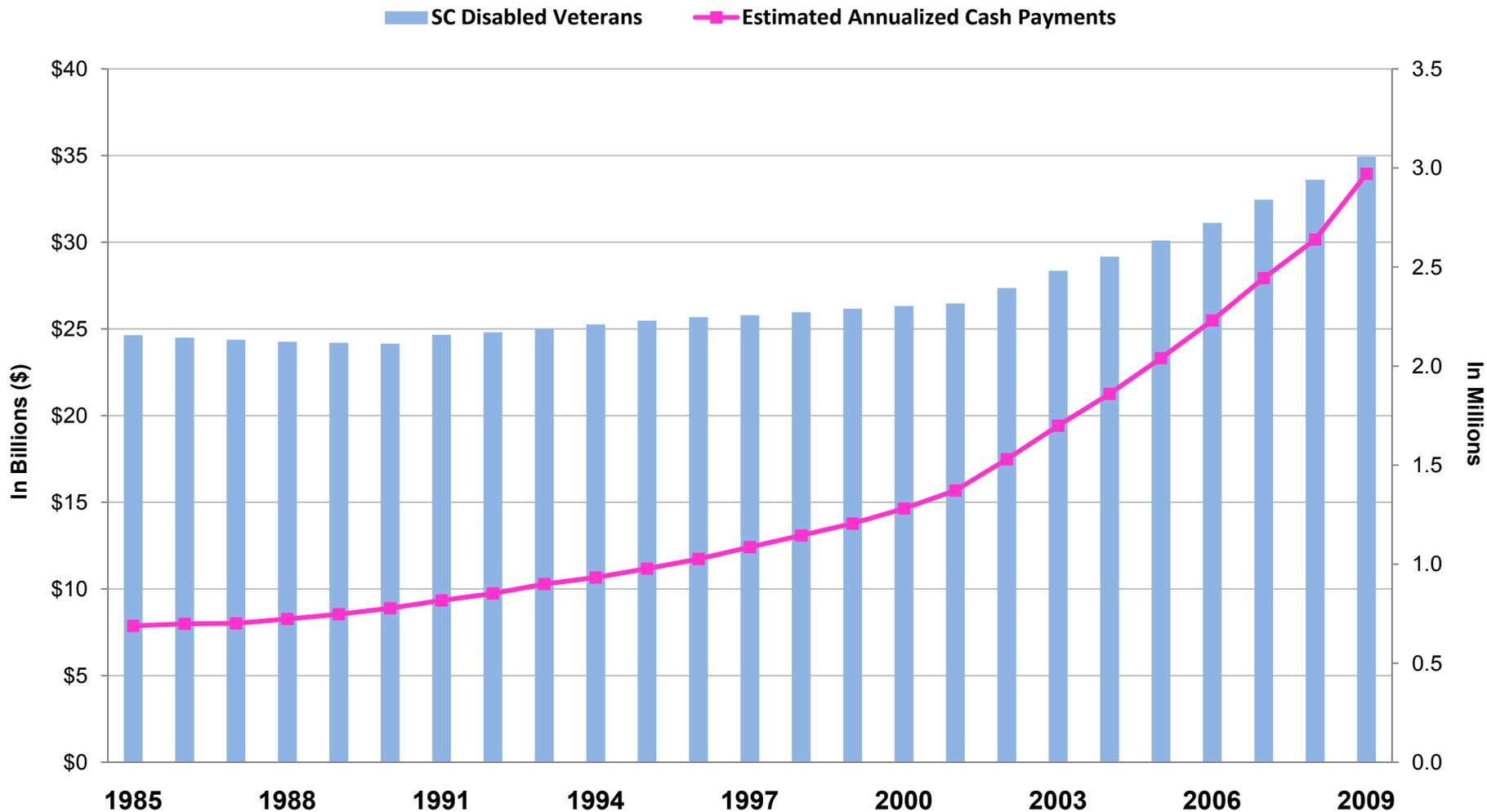
What is a service-connected disability?

- "**Service-connected**" means the disability was a result of disease or injury incurred or aggravated during active military service. These disabilities are evaluated according to the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Schedule for Rating Disabilities in Title 38, U.S. Code of Federal Regulations, Part 4.
- Service-connected disability ratings are graduated based on the degree of the Veteran's disability on a scale of 0 to 100 percent, in increments of 10 percent.
- Zero percent is a valid rating and is different than having no rating at all.

The Veteran population has been declining since 1985 while the number of Veterans with a service-connected disability has been on the rise.

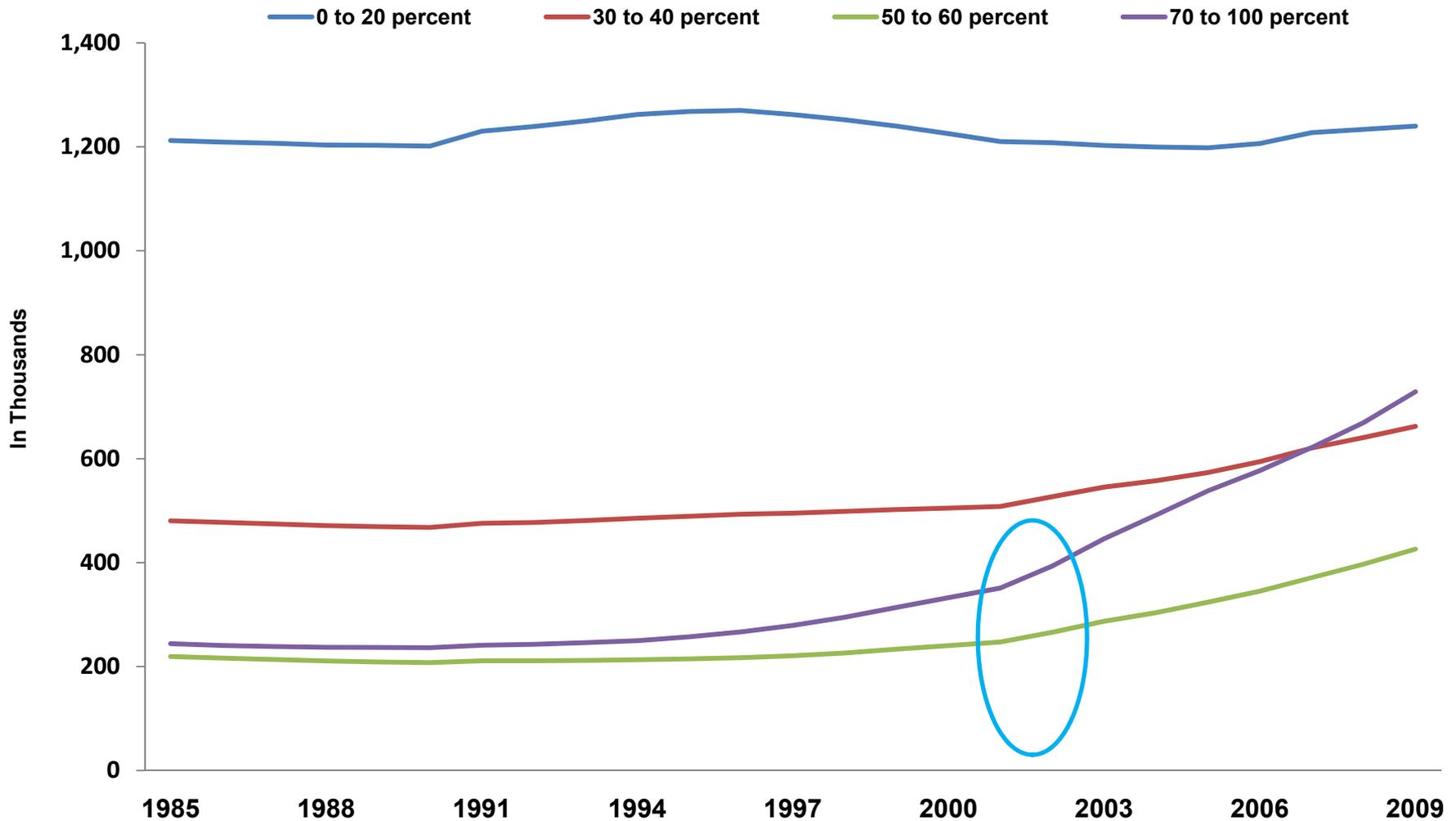


The rate of increase in cash payments is outpacing the growth in the number of Veterans with a service-connected disability.

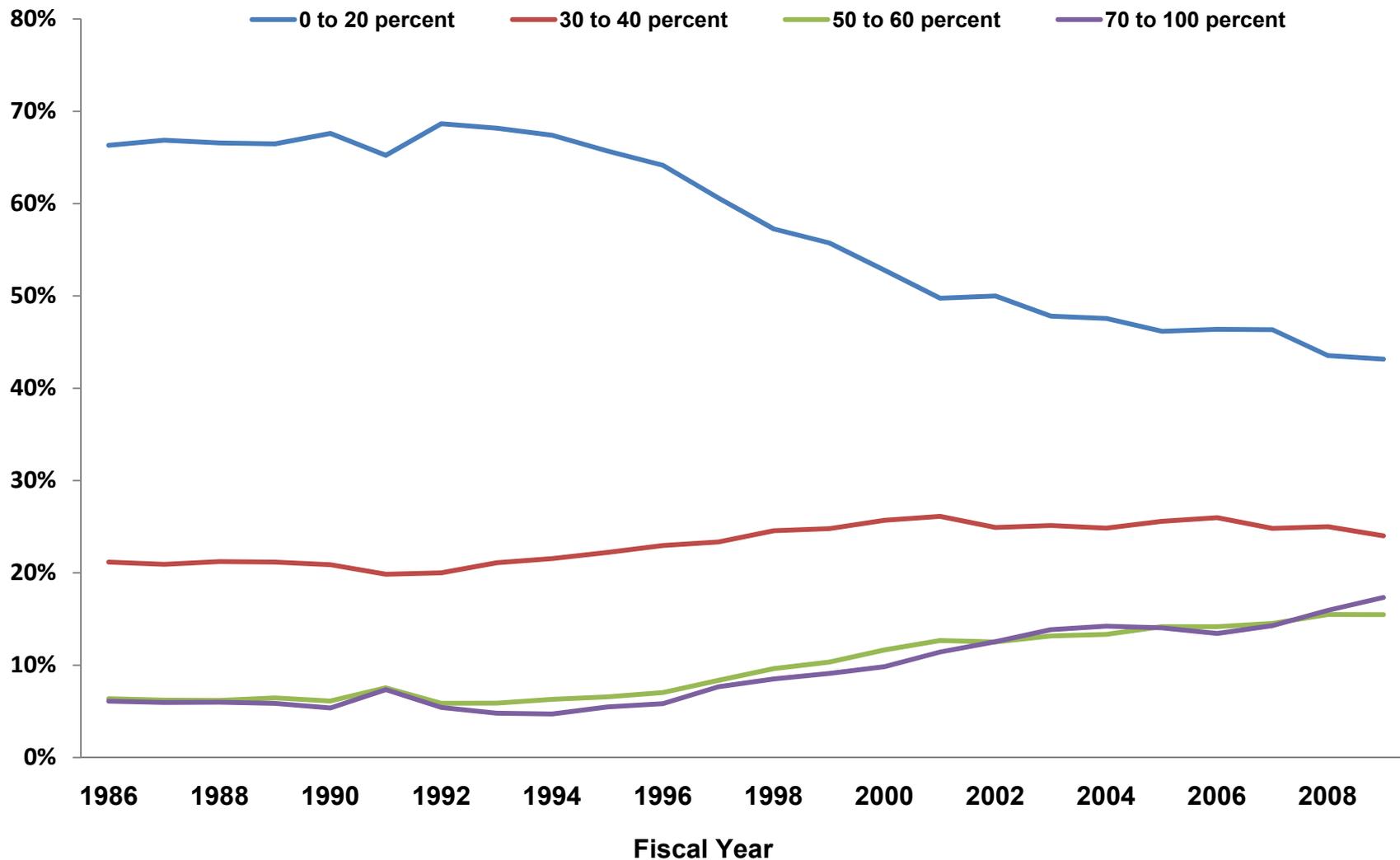


Source: Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Benefits Administration Annual Benefits Reports, 1985-2009
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Growth in the number of Veterans with a service-connected disability is concentrated among those rated 50 percent or higher.



Veterans with a service-connected disability have received higher ratings in recent years compared with those in the late 1980s.



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