



Veterans-*For*-Change Newsletter

A Voice of the Veterans

Week Ending Sunday, May 29, 2016

Volume 7, Issue 22

This-N-That

It was bad enough a week ago how the AFGE Union was declaring the best care in the world and nothing was wrong, then our super fantastic Secretary of the VA has to compare wait times and quality of Service to Disneyland with "what's more important the wait time or the quality of care!"

Personally I would hope that he were forced to use VA Healthcare System and be stripped of all VIP Privileges and treated like every other Veteran is treated, then lets just see if he could compare the wait and care at a VA facility to that of an "E Coupon" ride at Disney.

And for those either not old enough or not having been to a Disney theme park in many years, Disney used to use coupon books for various rides and the "E" ticket was for the best of the best. I seriously doubt Secretary McDonald would be thrilled with the wait time nor the care received if he were treated exactly as Veterans are.

Just made my blood boil when I read that then heard it on the news! Proves just how either out of touch he is with reality, or flat out just doesn't care he is receiving a nice little paycheck and bonuses.

McDonald's shocking suggestion this week that wait times don't matter in medical care. While discussing reforms with reporters, McDonald wondered why anyone worries about them at all. "When you got to Disney, do they measure the number of hours you wait in line?" he asked. "What's important is, what's your satisfaction with the experience? And what I would like to move to, eventually, is that kind of measure."

And again it's been a week, and not a single peep from any of the nationally chartered Veteran Service Organizations, makes me truly wonder are they merely social clubs or do they really care either?

I don't know how many others will follow through, but I did send my letter to Secretary McDonald demanding his resignation and I also sent to my elected officials also demanding either his resignation or termination.

He has been in office long enough now and still absolutely NO real signs of change, improvement but still the dollars flow right out the door. Where is the accountability? Why are Veterans still being forced to wait to get a doctors appointment, or a referral to a specialist?

This is just pure insanity at it's best as I see it. And again I'm sure I will ruffle some feathers, but to me all the delays, wait times, denials is nothing less than MURDER!

If you have received bad care, been forced to wait for an appointment, had to sit in a waiting room for more than 90 minutes to be seen by a doctor, I would truly love to hear from you! And your confidentiality will be held in the strictest confidence, but I will pass on stories to all 535 Members of Congress.

Two weeks ago we added nearly 500 new documents to the Veterans-For-Change website. We plan on adding on average 100 more new documents each week for the next few months to try and bring our library's all current.

So if you didn't find what you were looking to find before, stop by and check again. All the new documents have a small orange flag that says "NEW!"

We're also working on a new hotline where Veterans and families can call in seeking information on local services and programs to help them through the month, so if you have an organization in your area who assists Veterans and families, please send me an E-Mail with the name, address and telephone numbers so we can add those to our databases.

We're anticipating approximately 60-90 days before we can roll out the new program, so keep an eye out.

Operation Mail Call is still in need of your help!

We need cards and letters of encouragement for those who are serving on foreign soil. Many are single, have no family, or are not communicating with family and just need a little encouragement, and know that WE THE PEOPLE do care about them, appreciate them, and thank them for the job that 99.5% of Americans can't or won't do.

Operation Mail Call is designed to address that problem and a little more!

Betty Hidalgo who is the director of VFC's Operation Mail Call Program does her level best to bring a little joy to all those on foreign soil by sending them care packages which she is working all the time to fill them with a little bit of home with cards, letters, baked goods, candies, and sometimes little gag gifts, anything she can find to bring a little joy to their daily lives where they are.

We'd appreciate anything you can do to help us bring a little joy to them, maybe even put a smile on their faces even if only for a few moments.

If you have not visited our website in the past few weeks, please check back again! We're adding more and more documents as quickly as we can. The new documents have a "NEW" label on them for about 10 days from upload.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and Volunteers nationwide, we wish you and your family good health!

Respectfully,
Jim Davis
Founder
Jim.Davis@Veterans-For-Change.org



While your out and about celebrating the four day weekend, please, stop, take a moment to remember all our fallen, with out them and those currently serving today, we'd not be enjoying all the freedoms we have today!

VA Opposes Expanding Choice Program

At a recent Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, VA Deputy Secretary Sloan Gibson said the Department of Veterans Affairs opposes efforts to expand the Veterans Choice program and instead wants permission from Congress to roll several private care programs into the Choice benefit, according to the *Military Times*.

"If veterans who currently do not use the VA health care system begin to seek community care through the Choice program, VA will have to divert resources from ... internal VA care, dramatically undercutting our ability to provide care tailored to the unique needs of veterans," Gibson said.

Senator John McCain (R-AZ) has proposed a bill that would make the Choice program permanent, which is set to expire next year. It would allow any veteran who uses VA health services to use the program. The current program only lets veterans get care at a private health facility if they live more than 40 miles from a VA facility or have to wait more than a month for an appointment. It also would require VA to expand pharmacy hours and let veterans be seen at commercial walk-in clinics without preauthorization or a co-payment.

McCain said the legislation is needed because some doctors are refusing to see veterans under the Choice program, knowing it has an expiration date.

"I've heard testimony from a number of veterans who have sat in the ER for 14 hours without being seen. Veterans would just like to see a provider on the same day. This legislation would do that," McCain said.

Veterans groups that testified, including the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Disabled American Veterans and American Legion, also said they oppose McCain's bill, adding they believe issues must be fixed with the current program before it is expanded.

Source: NAUS

Navy Vets Seek Agent Orange-related Benefits

Some Vietnam Navy veterans who never saw action on the ground say they deserve Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits for exposure to Agent Orange. Many of these veterans support the Vietnam Veterans Act, which is being pushed by a grassroots group of veteran volunteers called the Military Veterans Advocacy. The Act would compensate Navy veterans who say they were exposed as plumes of spray containing Agent Orange were washed over ships at sea. The sailors were also often given distilled seawater to bathe and drink. For more information, visit the Military Veterans Advocacy [website](#).

"Going Silent" on Memorial Day

IAVA has launched a Memorial Day #GoSilent campaign, in which Americans are asked to take the pledge to Go Silent at 12:01 pm on Monday, May 30th, for a moment of remembrance for those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in service to our country. For more details on taking the pledge, visit iava.org/memorial-day/.

SUPPORT KEY AMENDMENTS TO SENATE NDAA

The Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) recently approved the FY 2017 Defense Authorization bill (S. 2943) and soon the full Senate will consider the bill. Several key floor amendments have been filed that will impact disabled retirees, commissaries, and active duty pay. Please use the Action Center to ask your Senators to support these key amendments.

[Take Action Now](#)

OPERATION MAIL CALL



Operation Mail Call needs your help! We need cards and letters to send to our troops currently serving on foreign soil.

Doesn't have to be anything special, just words of support and thanking them for their service!

If you're a school teacher, please contact me at my e-mail address at the top, our troops love to hear from the kids too!

For more information visit: <http://veterans-for-change.org/5439-operation-mail-call-2>

Benefits for Veterans

A veteran's pension is a cash benefit paid to war-time veterans who have limited or no income. Veterans 65 and older automatically qualify to receive this benefit. Those younger than 65 must be permanently and totally disabled. Veterans who are more seriously disabled may qualify for Aid and Attendance or Household Benefits, paid in addition to their basic pension rates. The package may pay a monthly stipend of \$1,788 to \$2,120 to help with living expenses. A widow of a war-time veteran may also apply for the Widows Pension with Aid and Attendance benefit package, making them eligible to receive up to \$1,149 a month. For more information, contact your county veterans' services officer and visit the VA [website](#).

Veterans fought for us; we continue to fight for our veterans!

VFC Website Update

If you've not visited our website, maybe you should visit today! Since going on-line on 10/28/12 we have been averaging between 2,100 and 3,000 visitors per day and have had **2,764,092** visitors to date.

Visit today and subscribe, it's 100% **FREE** of charge to all! Just be sure to use a valid E-Mail address so the system can send you an authentication E-Mail. Becoming a subscriber will show you all the various forum's, added libraries, and more.

We have the largest One-Stop-Shop Veterans website available that is user friendly, offers a host of information on many topics, Several forums, Frequently Asked Questions and Answers, a massive Documents Library with more than 12,900 documents, various VA and DoD forms.

www.veterans-for-change.org

- Documents Library with over **140** different libraries and over **14,974+** documents (**Updated 05/19/16**)

- FAQ's (1,662 on-line now) (Updated 02/20/16)
- Forums (with Licensed Mental Health Worker Moderator)
- Job Postings and Job Fairs (Check Often)
- Memorial Pages (Updated 01/02/16 added 17)
- News (Updated almost daily, 5,749 articles on-line)
- Polls Added 02/08/16
- Web Links (3,435 Active Links)(Updated 05/21/16 added 4 New Links)

The documents library has many different categories and contains more than 55 million pages of information and forms.

There are forums for all Eras of service and one just for Women Veterans, which is locked to use by women only. Another for Men Veterans which is also locked to men only.

In the documents and forums we provide information pertaining to women and the ability speak freely in the forums to other women about the same issues and problems you face.

The Memorial Pages are open, and if you have a loved one or a buddy you've lost and would like for them to be added to our Memorial Pages, please send a photo, First and Last Name, Rank, Branch of Service, DOB and DOD, and allow us 2-3 days to install on the proper page. (Send to: Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org)

You also have the ability to comment and rate all NEWS articles which would be very helpful for us so we know the types of information you'd like to see on our website.

National Memorial Day Concert

The Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) presents the National Memorial Day Concert live from the West Lawn of the U.S. Capitol in Washington, DC on Sunday, May 29, 2016, at 8 p.m., Eastern Time. Hosts will be Gary Sinise and Joe Montegna with performers including National Medal of Honor winning vocalist Renee Fleming, country star Trace Atkins, and more than ten U.S. Military bands (chorus, chanters, trumpeters, field band and color guards). Please check your local television listings for exact broadcast date and time in your area. For more information, visit the National Memorial Day Concert [website](#).

Government Accountability Office (GAO) Reports

Managing for Results: OMB Improved Implementation of Cross-Agency Priority Goals, But Could Be More Transparent About Measuring Progress. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-509>

Prisoner Operations: United States Marshals Service Could Better Estimate Cost Savings and Monitor Efforts to Increase Efficiencies. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-472>

Congress Pressured to Stop Predatory Schools

Some of the nation's largest veterans and military organizations sent letters recently to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) asking it to crack down on colleges that prey on veterans by charging exorbitant fees for degrees that mostly fail to deliver promised skills and jobs. The letters were signed by top officials at the American Legion, the National Military Family Association, the Military Officers Association of America and nearly 20 other groups. Veterans are an especially enticing target because, under a loophole in federal law, money from the G.I. Bill does not count against a cap on federal funding to for-profit schools.

Follow Veterans-For-Change on Twitter



<https://twitter.com/Veterans4Change>

Links to other Stories

- 1) [Booted after battle](#)
- 2) [Busted! Feds caught shredding Veterans' health claims](#)
- 3) [It's Not Disney World--The VA Scandal Two Years Later](#)
- 4) [Obama's VA scandal is much bigger than a callous Disney analogy](#)
- 5) [Sen. John McCain, Pete Hegseth: It's time for the real reform our Veterans deserve](#)
- 6) [The Lingering Health Effects of Agent Orange](#)
- 7) [To cut wait times, VA wants nurses to act like doctors. Doctors say Veterans will be harmed.](#)
- 8) [VA Admits to Wrongly Declaring Over 4,000 Veterans Dead](#)

You can help Veterans-For-Change by reading the articles posted, and comment at the bottom and rank the article. If you don't have an account, sign-up today, it's **FREE**. Your comments and rankings help us to better determine the type of information you'd like most to see.

Check us out today: www.veterans-for-change.org

Veterans' Bills Advance in the House of Representatives

For your information, the House of Representatives earlier this week passed four veteran-related bills, with DAV's support based on our [national resolutions](#).

The bills are as follows:

- H.R. 2460 would authorize the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to pay costs associated with veterans receiving adult day health care services in state veterans homes (Resolution 101);
- H.R. 3989, the Support Our Military Caregivers Act, would establish a special appellate-like program to enable a family caregiver of a severely disabled veteran to challenge VA's decision to reduce or deny caregiver supports and services (Resolution 106);
- H.R. 5229, the Improving Transition Programs for All Veterans Act, would authorize a new study to evaluate the effectiveness of transition services for new veterans, with a special focus on women veterans (Resolutions 129 and 138); and
- H.R. 3956, the VA Health Center Management Stability and Improvement Act, would require VA to develop a plan to ensure each VA medical center is assigned a permanent chief executive (Resolution 126).

These bills will now be referred to the Senate for further consideration. **No action is required of you at this time.**

As always, thank you for ongoing advocacy and support for DAV's Commander's Action Network.

Click [HERE](#) and send your message.



Are you seeking employment? Been looking forever and not found the right job?

Well Veterans-For-Change is working very hard to bring you more information on Job Fairs and Job Postings available across the country.

Click on the link below, and find all the jobs available, Job Fairs coming up, locations, details, etc.

<http://veterans-for-change.org/documents-library/category/167-job-fairs-job-postings>

If you have a job position open, and are willing to hire a Veteran, please send an E-Mail to: JIM.DAVIS@VETERANS-FOR-CHANGE.ORG there is never any fee involved, this is a 100% free service in order to help thousands of Veterans nationwide to gain full time employment.

Check often for Updates!

Veteran Crisis Resources	
Veterans Crisis Line	1-800-273-8255 and Press 1
Military Crisis Line	1-800-273-TALK (8255)
National Call Center for Homeless Veterans	1-877-4AID-VET (424.3838)
VA Caregiver Support Line	1-855-260-3274

Eliminate Costs TRICARE Doesn't Cover

Doctor and hospital bills are expensive even when you're covered by TRICARE. Help minimize or even eliminate out-of-pocket expenses with the [TRICARE Insurance Supplement Plan](#).

~ We Proudly Support Our Military Personnel & Families ~

To Contact your Members of Congress	
To Call your Representative:	202-225-2305
To call your Senator:	202-224-3841 or 202-224-3553
To call different members of Congress:	202-224-3121
Toll FREE Number:	866-272-6622

TRICARE Highly Rated in Customer Experience

Kaiser Permanente and TRICARE received the highest customer experience rankings of any health plan, according to the *2016 Temkin Experience Ratings*, an annual customer experience ranking of companies based on a survey of 10,000 U.S. consumers.

Of the 16 health plans examined, Kaiser Permanente earned the highest score with a rating of 57%, placing it 182nd overall out of 294 companies across 20 industries. TRICARE ranked second in the industry with a rating of 55% and an overall ranking of 199th. Kaiser Permanente and TRICARE have been jockeying for the highest health plan score since the *Ratings* began in 2011.

The only other health plans to receive ratings above "very poor" (above 50%) were Aetna, CIGNA, and United Healthcare. Meanwhile, Health Net received the lowest score of any health plan with a rating of 32%, putting it in 293rd place out of 294 companies.

Overall, the health plan industry averaged a 47% rating in the *2016 Temkin Experience Ratings* and tied for last place out of 20 industries. The average rating of the industry decreased by seven percentage-points between 2015 and 2016, dropping from 54% to 47%.

Here are some additional findings from the health plan industry:

The ratings of all health plans in the *2016 Temkin Experience Ratings* are as follows: Kaiser Permanente (57%), TRICARE (55%), Aetna (51%), CIGNA (50%), United Healthcare (50%), Coventry Health Care (49%), Medicare (48%), Humana (48%), BCBS plan not listed (48%), Anthem (47%), Medicaid (40%), Blue Shield of California (40%), Empire (38%), Highmark (37%), CareFirst (37%), and Health Net (32%).

Coventry Health Care (+10 points) was the only health plan to improve its rating between 2015 and 2016.

Humana (-15 points), Health Net (-14 points), and TRICARE (-12 points) declined by the most percentage-points between 2015 and 2016.

Temkin Group asked consumers to evaluate their recent experiences across three dimensions: *success* (can you do what you want to do?), *effort* (how easy is it to work with the company?), and *emotion* (how do you feel about the interactions?). Temkin Group then averaged these three scores to produce each company's Temkin Experience Rating.

In these ratings, a score of 70% or above is considered "good," and a score of 80% or above is considered "excellent." In this year's *Temkin Experience Ratings*, 20% of companies earned a "good" or "excellent" score, while 44% received a "poor" or "very poor" score.

The *2016 Temkin Experience Ratings*, along with other ratings, can be accessed at the Temkin Ratings [website](#).

Now in its sixth year of publication, the *2016 Temkin Experience Ratings* is the most comprehensive benchmark of customer experience in the industry, evaluating 294 companies across 20 industries: airlines, appliance makers, auto dealers, banks, car rental agencies, computer makers, credit card issuers, fast food chains, health plans, hotel chains, insurance carriers, Internet service providers, investment firms, parcel delivery services, retailers, software firms, supermarket chains, TV service providers, utilities, and wireless carriers.

Source: NAUS

Using Your Vet Experience in College Applications

Veterans have a unique set of circumstances to draw upon when putting together their application essays. A Veteran is likely to have been many places, in many situations, and seen many things that the average high school senior simply can't imagine and for which he or she has no frame of reference. [Here are a couple of tips](#) for how best to use your military experience in your application essay—and (perhaps more importantly) some thoughts on what *not* to do.

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Complete all information, and select the appropriate box at the bottom of the form. You will then receive an automated authentication E-Mail, follow the instructions and you will then be added to the weekly distribution list.

Our mailing list is never sold, traded or shared with anyone ever, and is held in the strictest of confidence.



Veterans-For-Change Newsletter is a once weekly publication deadline for submission is 5:00 PM PST on Thursday!



Love your country. Your country is the land where your parents sleep, where is spoken that language in which the chosen of your heart, blushing, whispered the first word of love; it is the home that God has given you that by striving to perfect yourselves therein you may prepare to ascend to him.

~Giuseppe Mazzini~

Veterans-For-Change, Inc.

Riverside County, CA

Visit our website today
www.veterans-for-change.org

Serving those who served!

Please pass to all your Veteran friends and family!

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Microsoft	3,108
New York	135,271
Other Social Media:	22,887
San Francisco	67,753
Twitter:	32
U.S. House of Reps & Staff	829

U.S. Senators & Staff	95
University of So. CA	2,404
US Air Force	29,587
US Army	40,160
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US Navy	18,772
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	19,898,198