



Veterans-For-Change Newsletter

A Voice of the Veterans

Week Ending Sunday, December 18, 2016
Volume 7, Issue 47

This-N-That

This time of year is supposed to be cheerful; full of joy and excitement all while we're rushing around trying to find the perfect gift for each of our loved ones and friends. But this can also be a difficult time of year as well.

Many are alone, may have lost a loved one during a prior holiday season, or any of a million other reasons which can bring about depression, despair, and a host of other emotions and feelings.

So I'd like to ask each of you that if you know someone who is alone, or you know might be having a hard time this time of year to please, reach out to those individuals, check-in on them. And further down in this newsletter you will telephone numbers for crisis assistance, please write them down, or print it out and put it on your fridge or next to the telephone to keep handy.

I'd also like to ask all those who are single and might be having a hard time getting through the season, please stay in touch with your battle buddies, those whom you can talk to you know what ever is discussed is kept confidential between the two of you. And if you know you're in trouble, please use the crisis help line.

Something else I often preach about, especially this time of year, visit your local animal shelter see if you can find a puppy or a dog that just seems to connect with you!

Most shelters if they know you're a Veteran will often either wave the adoption fee or at least reduce it.

And, not only will you be bringing a new friend home, you just might be saving their life as well as your own!

Dogs are truly amazing in that they can sense your feelings and almost immediately will be right there by your side and are able to bring you out of your current emotion and back to being on level ground again! Please give this some serious thought!

You are important, you have value, and you are needed!

It would seem that for Zeb Miller, his wife Lacey, and their three girls are all facing serious medical complications and the VA has once again let yet another Veteran and his family down by not processing a VA claim to assist.

After quite sometime now, and the Millers having to shell out money left and right to civilian hospitals and doctors they've racked up more than \$250,000.00 in medical debt and having to make choices as to what gifts can be bought for their daughters and what medication can be skipped.

With over 85 different prescriptions and ten medical visits per month and Zeb bringing in the only paycheck they are now forced to sell their home and move to something else that is cheaper and help stretch out medical bills over the next couple of years.

No Veteran should have to be in such a position that they need to decide which medications can be done without, when they have a specific purpose and is also keeping them alive.

As most of you know I am not very fond of any of the nationally chartered Veteran Service Organizations with the exception of one. DAV (Disabled American Veterans) who like Veterans-For-Change fights publicly for all Veterans and also makes available a means to communicate with your Reps in DC.

This past week and I am terribly sorry but I can't remember the name of the individual who E-Mailed me promising their support for a Veteran issue I had brought up last week, but they were DAV and had copied in several others also affiliated with the DAV.

I'm very thankful they read our newsletter and are stepping up, but we still need YOU! We need all Veterans to get involved, involved in your own healthcare and that of your fellow Veterans. When you fight with us, and if we win, and you win for yourself too, there are thousands of other Veterans who also win too!

So please, write down, print out and put by your phone the list of phone numbers to call on your reps.

If you need talking points on a specific issue, don't hesitate to write to me and I will gladly assist.

On behalf of our Volunteers nationwide and myself, we wish you and your family good health and a Very Merry Christmas!

Respectfully,
Jim Davis
Founder

Jim.Davis@Veterans-For-Change.org

"Privatization" Comes to Washington, D.C.

Will it Affect you?

One of the buzzwords being heard more frequently in the nation's capital is "privatization." In a nutshell, the term means contracting with civilians and civilian companies to do the jobs that federal employees used to do.

In recent days there has been talk of privatizing Medicare and the Department of Veterans Affairs. While it hasn't been described as such, parts of the military have been privatized since the beginning of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan by hiring contractors who do many of the jobs uniformed personnel used to do. It's true that contractors were used during World War II, but it was not nearly to the extent that they are being used today.

There has been talk of privatizing commissaries for a few years now, and while actual privatization appears to be on hold, officials in the Pentagon who are in charge of the commissaries are moving ahead with a plan to reduce the commissaries' dependence on tax dollars. This is being done as a result of threats by Congress, led by Arizona Senator John McCain, to fully privatize commissaries.

The Pentagon officials have told Congress that the commissary benefit cannot be maintained if they are fully privatized. But they are implementing programs they say are designed to reduce the taxpayer subsidy while keeping the benefit.

Next year commissary shoppers will see fewer overall name-brand products on the commissary shelves, while also seeing for the first time generic products – products with the commissary's brand on them. For instance, today if you go to Walmart to buy groceries, you see a brand called "Great Value," which is the Walmart brand. These products generally cost less than the name-brand products, but some people would argue the quality is also less.

In any case, that is where the commissaries are headed.

With all of these issues, whether it's commissaries or Veterans Affairs or Medicare or any others, you can be sure TREA is carefully monitoring these issues and will alert you anytime we believe your promised and earned military benefits are in danger.

Source: TREA

2017 Pay Raise Sent to President for Signature

The U.S. Senate on Thursday joined the House of Representatives in approving a 2.1 percent [pay raise](#) next year for troops. The upper chamber passed the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act, which included the pay increase, by a vote of 92-7. Now the bill waits for President Obama's signature to make it official.

TRICARE: State of Emergency in Tennessee

The governor of Tennessee has declared a State of Emergency in Sevier County due to wildfires. Emergency refill procedures are in place from November 30, 2016 through December 30, 2016. To get an emergency refill, take your prescription bottle to any TRICARE retail network pharmacy. To find a network pharmacy, call Express Scripts at 1-877-363-1303 or search the [network pharmacy locator](#). If possible, visit the pharmacy where the prescription was filled. If you use a retail chain, you can fill your prescription at another store in that chain. If your provider is available, he or she may call in a new prescription to any network pharmacy. You can request assistance at another pharmacy, but it is at that pharmacy's discretion to help you.

VA To Eliminate 7 Compensable Disabilities

Not all service-connected medical conditions and injuries are incurred or exacerbated in the performance of military duties. For example, a qualifying injury can occur when a service member was at home or on leave, and a qualifying medical condition, such as multiple sclerosis, can develop independently of a service

member's military duties. In 2015, VA paid 716,000 veterans a total of \$3.7 billion, the Congressional Budget Office estimates, to compensate for seven of the medical conditions that, according to the Government Accountability Office (GAO), military service is unlikely to cause or aggravate. Those conditions are arteriosclerotic heart disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, Crohn's disease, hemorrhoids, multiple sclerosis, osteoarthritis, and uterine fibroids.

Beginning in January 2018, this option would cease veterans' disability compensation for those seven medical conditions GAO identified. Under the option, veterans now receiving compensation for those conditions would have their compensation reduced or eliminated, and veterans who applied for compensation for those conditions in the future would not be eligible for it. The option would not alter DoD's disability compensation system, which focuses on fitness for military duties rather than compensation for disabilities.

An argument in support of this option is that it would make the disability compensation system for military veterans more comparable to civilian systems. Few civilian employers offer long-term disability benefits, and among those that do, benefits do not typically compensate individuals for all medical problems that developed during employment.

An argument against this option is that military service is not like a civilian job; instead, it confers unique benefits to society and imposes extraordinary risks on service members. By that logic, the pay and benefits that service members receive should reflect the hardships of military life, including compensating veterans who become disabled in any way during their military service.

Source: U.S. Congressional Budget Office



Supreme Court May Change Divorce Pension Payments

The U.S. Supreme Court will next year consider a case which could change how divorce pension payments are influenced by VA disability pay. An Arizona divorcee asked a state family court to force her ex-husband to pay extra alimony after his decision to accept VA disability payments lowered the amount of his pension she received each month. When a series of courts ruled in her favor, her ex-husband asked the U.S. Supreme Court to hear the case. For more details, see [this Military.com article](#).

Reservists to Get Equal Death Benefits Under the Law

A change to the Survivor Benefit Plan for the families of guard members and reservists killed during inactive training will mean an increase in benefits. Currently the families of those killed while on active duty and those

killed while on an inactive training receive different amounts due to how the benefit is calculated. The new law fixes that discrepancy.

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

Organization Honors Women Veterans

First Nations Women Warriors is a non-profit organization that was created in 2013 to raise awareness of women veterans. The group of professional native women veterans is focused on helping veterans through guidance and resources. Since its creation, the group has also made special appearances as motivational, guest and keynote speakers at various events. For more information visit the [First Nations Women Warriors website](#) and read the [VA Vantage Point Blog](#).



Omnibus Veterans Bill Passed by House and Senate

On December 10, 2016, the Senate passed H.R. 6416, the Jeff Miller and Richard Blumenthal Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2016.

H.R. 6416 now heads to the President's desk to be signed into law. The bill contains legislation consistent with several of DAV's national resolutions. Highlights of the measure include provisions to:

Benefits

- Establish automatic entitlement to survivor benefit payments in certain cases;

- Streamline the Board of Veterans Appeals video hearing process;
- Enhance the Veterans Benefit Administration's contract medical examination process;
- Temporarily increase the number of judges presiding at Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims;
- Require continuous review of the Transition Goals Plans and Success (GPS) program, its workshops, training methodology, delivery of services, collection and analysis of course critiques and VSO involvement;
- Establish a three-year transition period for Service Disabled Veteran Owned Businesses following the non-service-connected death of the service-disabled veteran owner, rated less than 100 percent;
- Express a sense of Congress that October 5 be recognized annually as American Veteran Disabled for Life Day;

Health Care

- Authorize advanced appropriations for VA's Medical Community Care account;
- Improve access to standard immunizations for veterans;
- Provide priority services to Medal of Honor recipients within VA's health care system;
- Establish procedures for mental health treatment for veterans who performed classified missions while on active duty;
- Provide examination and treatment by VA for emergency medical conditions and women in labor;
- Authorize several major VHA medical facility projects;
- Authorize research for descendant health conditions potentially related to veterans exposed to toxic substances during their service in the Armed Forces;

Homeless

- Expand the definition of "homeless veteran" to authorize access to VA services and benefits to this group of veterans;
- Increase per diem payment rates for transitional housing assistance that later become permanent housing for homeless veterans;
- Establish a program to improve retention of housing by formerly homeless veterans and veterans at risk of becoming homeless;
- Establish a National Center on Homelessness Among Veterans and
- Require VA to assess comprehensive service programs for homeless veterans.

For detailed information about H.R. 6416, please [click here](#).

“Fairness for Vets Act” Included In NDAA

An important amendment to the Fiscal Year 2017 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) made it through both the House and Senate and is expected to be signed by President Obama: it requires military record review boards to give liberal consideration to medical conditions like Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), and Military Sexual Trauma (MST) in the discharge review process.

This is essentially the codification of the “Hagel Memo,” which was penned by former Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel in early 2014 but that has been haltingly applied by the various military Departments. For instance, the Army only recently hired two mental health specialists to work full-time on military record reviews; previously doctors with specialties like orthopedics or obstetrics were given the ability to weigh in on things like PTSD, when they had no formal training on the subject.

It should be pointed out that servicemembers who are discharged with “bad paper” discharges (which are General or Other-Than-Honorable discharges, NOT Dishonorables) have not been court-martialed, and are at vastly higher risk of developing substance abuse problems, unemployment and homelessness without access to the VA’s mental healthcare services.

Allowing these veterans to be treated at the VA can head off much more serious, life-threatening issues with simple, cost-effective treatment once the servicemember leaves the service. Currently these “bad paper discharge” servicemembers suffer for years and eventually become a much bigger burden to society than they would have been if we had just stepped to the plate and gotten them the help they needed at the outset, so they can get their lives back on track and become productive members of society.

Source: TREA

Operation Mail Call



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

Our men and women in uniform often go months without hugging their children, walking through the park with a significant other or enjoying Mom’s home-cooked Sunday dinners.

Ask them where they’d go if they had a free plane ticket anywhere in the world, and the overwhelming majority would say, “home.”

Of course, we can’t replace the hugs, the love or the secret family chili recipe – but with your help, we can provide them a connection to their fellow Americans who are grateful for their service.

Now, we’re hoping you’ll take your support to the next level by sending more cards and letters. Hand made cards by your children, or class mates are a terrific means of putting smiles on their faces even if only for a moment.

Cards and Letters of encouragement to help boost moral and let them know we sincerely appreciate the job they are doing and look forward to they day they are all brought home. Your card or letter will show your

appreciation and help thousands more American heroes feel connected to the people they love and the country they serve.

Please help us to make a powerful expression of how much their fellow Americans care about them.

Thank you so much for all you're doing to show our service men and women they are appreciated missed and loved.

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

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

Government Accountability Reports

Air Traffic Control: Experts' and Stakeholders' Views on Key Issues to Consider in a Potential Restructuring
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-17-131>

Combating Terrorism: Additional Steps Needed in U.S. Efforts to Counter ISIS Messaging.
http://www.gao.gov/restricted/restricted_reports

Child Care: Access to Subsidies and Strategies to Manage Demand Vary Across States.
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-17-60>

Medicare: Initial Results of Revised Process to Screen Providers and Suppliers, and Need for Objectives and Performance Measures. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-17-42>

Mortgage-Related Assets: Capital Requirements Vary Depending on Type of Asset.
<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-17-93>

Newborn Screening Timeliness: Most States Had Not Met Screening Goals, but Some Are Developing Strategies to Address Barriers. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-17-196>

Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act: Results of Enrollment Testing for the 2016 Special Enrollment Period. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-17-78>

GAO Moves Up, Tied for Number Two in "Best Places to Work."
http://www.gao.gov/press/best_places_2016.htm

Identity Theft and Tax Fraud: IRS Needs to Improve its Ability to Locate Fraudsters and Monitor Identity Theft Controls. http://www.gao.gov/restricted/restricted_reports



TRICARE Expands Auditory Coverage

Effective early December, TRICARE will expand its coverage to include the care and treatment of beneficiaries requiring an auditory osseointegrated implant (AOI) to non-active duty family members, and will also cover the services and supplies needed to diagnose and treat illness or injury of the urinary system. These additions to coverage come right after TRICARE's recently expanded preventive services and care for [congestive heart failure](#) under the TRICARE cardiac rehabilitation benefit. For questions about covered services, visit [the TRICARE website](#). You can also visit the website to learn [how a benefit becomes covered](#).



VA Says Veterans May Now Apply in Advance for Burial in a Veterans Cemetery

While most civilian cemeteries have long offered individuals the opportunity to buy a burial plot ahead of time, the VA has required that the families of veterans must wait to apply for burial until after the veteran has passed away. This policy has added to the stress families face when a loved one dies, even if the death was anticipated.

Finally, last week the VA announced it has changed its policy and will now allow veterans to apply prior to their deaths for burial in a veterans cemetery.

According to a VA press release, "Interested individuals may submit [VA Form 40-10007](#), *Application for Pre-Need Determination of Eligibility for Burial in a VA National Cemetery*, and supporting documentation, such as

a DD Form 214, if readily available, to the VA National Cemetery Scheduling Office by: toll-free fax at 1-855-840-8299; email to Eligibility.PreNeed@va.gov; or mail to the National Cemetery Scheduling Office, P.O. Box 510543, St. Louis, MO 63151.

“VA will review applications and provide written notice of its determination of eligibility. VA will save determinations and supporting documentation in an electronic information system to expedite burial arrangements at the time of need. Because laws and personal circumstances change, upon receipt of a burial request, VA will validate all pre-need determinations in accordance with the laws in effect at that time.”

It was noted that this does not allow veterans to choose a particular plot within the cemetery, but only the cemetery where they wish to be buried. In addition, this does not apply to Arlington National Cemetery, which is run by the Department of the Army, not the Department of Veterans Affairs.

As a reminder, eligible individuals are entitled to burial in any open VA national cemetery, opening/closing of the grave, a grave liner, perpetual care of the gravesite, and a government-furnished headstone or marker or niche cover, all at no cost to the family. Burial benefits available for spouses and dependents buried in a national cemetery include burial with the Veteran, perpetual care, and the spouse or dependents name and date of birth and death will be inscribed on the Veteran's headstone, at no cost to the family. Eligible spouses and dependents may be buried, even if they predecease the Veteran.

Veterans are also eligible for a burial flag and may be eligible for a Presidential Memorial Certificate. Information on VA burial benefits is available from local VA national cemetery offices, from the Internet at www.cem.va.gov, or by calling VA regional offices toll-free at 800-827-1000. To make burial arrangements at any open VA national cemetery at the time of need, call the National Cemetery Scheduling Office at 800-535-1117.

Source: TREA



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

Tax Refunds May be Delayed

Many taxpayers plan their holiday shopping and other purchases on the fact they will get their tax refund from the IRS at the earliest possible date. In 2017, that may no longer be the case. The Protecting Americans from Tax Hikes (PATH) Act, signed into law December 2015, requires the IRS to hold tax refunds which include Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Additional Child Tax Credit (ACTC) until Feb. 15, 2017. Also, new identity theft and refund fraud safeguards by both the IRS and individual states may mean some tax returns and refunds face additional review. The Where's My Refund? Tool on IRS.gov and the IRS2Go phone app remain the best ways to check on the status of a refund.

Veterans-For-Change Web Site

The Veterans-For-Change website has been under construction since day one back in 2009 and every day since then. The looks pretty much stay the same, but in the background constant improvement and change is being done to make our website the most user friendly "One-Stop-Shop" website to find almost everything you might have tried to find searching the internet.

Almost a hundred people have been involved; collecting web links to documents now houses on the VFC website, collecting thousands of web links for various issues, illnesses and benefits. Creating forums for all eras of service and two forums one just for men and one just for woman where you can go question, comment, share medical and personal concerns, what ever you'd like it to be.

We also have a forum with a licensed Mental Health Worker, again where you can seek help or just ask questions.

We average 1,700 hits per day, and downloads average 1,400 per day with a total **3,116,743** visitors as of Friday.

If you subscribe you will have full access to the entire website and best of all it's **FREE** of charge! You just need a valid E-mail address so the system can send you a confirmation E-Mail. Once received, click on the link to be authorized automatically.

www.veterans-for-change.org

- Documents Library with over 15,905 documents on-line (Updated: **12/12/16**)

- FAQ's with more than 1,600 FAQ's and answers (Updated: **02/20/16**)
- Multiple Forums
 - Afghanistan Veterans
 - FMP - Foreign Medial Program
 - Gulf War & Desert Storm Veterans
 - Iraq Veterans
 - Korean Veterans
 - Men Veterans Forum
 - Mental Health for Veterans
 - Political Issues
 - Suggestion Box
 - The Mess Hall
 - VA Hospitals and Medical Centers
 - Veteran Affairs
 - Vietnam Veterans
 - Welcome Mat
 - Women Veterans Forum
 - WW II Veterans
- Job Postings (Updated: **09/15/16**)
- Memorial Pages (Updated: **10/10/16**)
- News (Articles On-Line: **6,211**)
- Polls
- Web Links, more than 3,494, Added 1 New Links (Updated: **12/08/16**)

If you have a submission for the memorial pages, E-Mail: Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org

VA to Let Vets Pre-Select Cemetery Burials Before Death

A rule change at the Veterans Affairs Department will allow veterans to apply for burial in national cemeteries before their death, rather than requiring family members to apply on their behalf after it. For more details, see [this Military.com article](#).



<https://twitter.com/Veterans4Change>

Links to Other Stories

- 1) [Horror: VA Employees Left Body of Deceased Veteran in a Shower for Hours](#)
- 2) [Letter to the Editor of USA Today, Dated December 8, 2016](#)
- 3) [New Regulation Decreases Cost of Outpatient Medication Copay for Most Veterans](#)
- 4) [VA Announces Funding Opportunity for Community Partners Working to End Veteran Homelessness](#)
- 5) [VA Study Confirms High Cure Rates With New Hepatitis C Drugs](#)
- 6) [Vietnam Vet Gives His Time to the VA in Georgia](#)
- 7) [Waco Family must choose between medicines and home for Christmas](#)

You can help VFC by reading articles posted and commenting at the bottom and rate the articles. If you don't have an account, sign up today, it's FREE. Your comments and rankings tell us what type of information you want most.

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

Career Ready Student Veterans Act Becomes Law

The short-term government funding bill that President Obama signed last week contained a provision that is intended to prevent student veterans from using their Post-9/11 G.I. Bill benefits on career programs that won't help them land a job.

The Career Ready Student Veterans Act, which TREA: The Enlisted Association supported, would prohibit institutions from receiving GI Bill benefits if their programs don't meet the requirements needed for required licensing exams or certification in order to enter the chosen career field.

A group called Veterans for Education Success conducted a study last year that found that 20 percent of about 300 approved programs to train veterans were improperly accredited and that, as a result, their graduates were not eligible to sit for licensing exams or certification in their fields of study. The report identified eight programs offered by 15 different institutions at 60 campuses that failed to meet employer or state requirements.

The legislation was originally sponsored by Senator Thom Tillis (R-NC).

Source: TREA

TRICARE Pharmacy Provider Changes

Walgreens pharmacies joined the TRICARE retail pharmacy network on Dec. 1, 2016. CVS pharmacies, including those in Target stores, left the network on the same day. Most [pharmacy locations](#) in the network are not changing, including other major chains like Rite Aid and Walmart, grocery stores, and thousands of community pharmacies around the country. Starting on Dec. 1, you can transfer your prescription to Walgreens, or any other pharmacy in the TRICARE retail pharmacy network. [TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery](#) and [military pharmacies](#) may also be lower-cost choices for some beneficiaries. The [Express Scripts, Inc. \(ESI\) website](#) has more information on the revised network, and can help you find a new retail pharmacy location near you, or you can call ESI at 855-778-1417.



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

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

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

If you're an employer and have a job to post, send an E-Mail to: Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org



Medication Copayment Changes In 2017

DAV is pleased that there will be a reduction in copayments for many service-connected veterans in accordance with DAV Resolution No. 135.

VA issued final regulations set to take effect February 27, 2017, changing VA's current copayments structure for each 30-day or less supply of medication and how future year copayment amounts and annual caps are calculated.

Veterans who are currently exempt from medication copayments remain exempt, including but not limited to, a veteran with a service-connected disability rated 50 percent or more, medication for a service-connected disability, and a former prisoner of war.

Currently, Priority Group (PG) 2-6 veterans must pay \$8 for each 30-day or less supply of medication and PG 7-8 veterans must pay \$9. Under the new rule, VA will essentially assign three categories for medication and associated copayments:

- Tier 1 - preferred generics - \$5 copayment for 30-day supply;

- Tier 2 - non-preferred generics - \$8 copayment for 30-day supply; and
- Tier 3 - brand name drugs - \$11 for 30-day supply.

In addition, current copayment costs for veterans in PG 2-6 is limited to a \$960 annual copayment cap and PG 7-8 veterans have no protections afforded by a cap. Under the new rule, VA will reduce the annual copayment cap to \$700 for all veterans, including PG 7-8 veterans, who are required to pay medication copayments.

It is estimated that a large majority of veterans will encounter no cost increase, or will realize savings, while a small percentage of veterans-veterans who only fill Tier 3 medications-may experience a small increase in medication copayments. Based on a comparison of the current and proposed copayment amounts, VA anticipates that most veterans would realize between a 10 and 50 percent reduction in their annual pharmacy copayment costs. VA also estimates, 94 percent of copayment eligible veterans will experience no cost increase, and 80 percent will realize a savings of between \$1 and \$4 per 30-day supply of medications.



**“We Proudly Support our
Military Personnel & Families”**

Bill to Honor Certain Guard-Reserve Retirees as Veterans Passes Congress

Members of the Guard and Reserve have had the opportunity to serve for twenty years or more and earn a military retirement for many decades. This service could be a combination of active duty and reserve component duty or totally reserve component duty. When members retired from the reserve components they were recognized as military retirees and had the same benefits as other military retirees, including most VA benefits. However, this did not include the right or opportunity to use VA health care facilities.

In spite of that, they were not recognized by the government as a “veteran” unless they had served on active duty (Title 10) orders other than for training for 180 consecutive days or more. Upon retirement from the reserve components they did not receive a DD-214.

That is about to change. Congress has now passed legislation that will honor all members of the Guard and Reserve who are eligible for retirement pay as military veterans, although it does not confer any new or additional benefits.

TREA has been helping to lead on this issue for years. There are many members of TREA who are retired from the Guard and Reserve and although many had active duty service, many others served 20 years or more in reserve status only.

Some actually serve in an operational capacity for more than 180 consecutive days, but the Reserve Components (RC) have over 20 categories of orders which they can use to mobilize Guardsmen and Reservists. In fact, in many instances RC members were deliberately kept off of Title 10 orders in order to reduce the benefits they would be entitled to, including veterans benefits.

Especially now, when the RC have become an integral part of our Armed Forces, it makes sense to recognized Guard-Reserve retirees as veterans. We want to extend special thanks to Congressman Tim Walz of Minnesota, a TREA Life Member and the highest ranking enlisted person ever to serve in Congress, for his dogged determination, year after year, to champion this legislation. Without his tireless support this probably would never have happened. We have also had champions in the Senate including Senator John Boozman of Arkansas and Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut. We are grateful to all of them for their hard work on this issue.

Source: TREA



If you received this newsletter as a courtesy or a forward from a friend or relative, you can sign up to receive in your E-mail every week.

<https://gem.godaddy.com/signups/193302/join>



Veterans-For-Change, Inc.

Riverside County, CA

Visit our website today

www.Veterans-For-Change.org

Serving those who served!

Please pass on to all your Veteran Friends and Family

Distribution	
Express Mail	144,695
Boston	74,416
Courtesy Copies	3,500
Department of VA	12,219
DoD	20,974
Face Book Pages	3,405
Google	21,752
Los Angeles	131,543
Microsoft	3,877
National Guard	2974
New York	147,230
Other Social Media	37,823
San Francisco	76,280
Twitter	37
US House of Reps & Staff	973
US Senators & Staff	102
University of So. California	4,805
US Air Force	16,725
US Army	44,883
US Marines	25,589
US Navy	22,890
Veterans	19,075,650
Washington DC	140,683
Yahoo	134
	20,013,159

Please do not reply to this E-Mail, this is an unattended E-Mail address, please send all correspondence to: Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org