



# **Veterans-For-Change Newsletter**

*A Voice of the Veterans*

*Week Ending Sunday, December 25, 2016*  
Volume 7, Issue 48

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## ***This-N-That***

First, I'd like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas this weekend! Being with family and friends is the most important thing of all!

Not the fancy gifts wrapped in fancy paper and ribbons, but family and friends! And if you haven't already, and you know someone who is single, maybe has no family, or family is too far away to travel, invite them over for Christmas dinner!

Tax time is just around the corner, and many have already cleaned out their closets and garages to get rid of all the unwanted items. But there is still time to either get the job done, or go back and give a second look.

I'd really like to ask that if you have any gently used clothing, jackets, gloves, shoes, etc to donate them to the DAV (Disabled American Veterans) who in my opinion has the best track record of reaching out to our Veterans in need and especially this time of year to those who are homeless and possibly in temperatures below zero.

You'll be accomplishing three things, one is to clean house and make room for other things, providing warm clothing to a Veteran in need, and helping yourself with tax donation receipts to help reduce your income tax liability.

And from time to time when you go grocery shopping or if you have a dollar tree or a 99 cent store, maybe pick up one or two canned goods items and put them in a box till you have it filled, then deliver or have the DAV pick that up too and help them keep their food pantry stocked. And these items too when donated are tax deductible.

Many newspapers and television news stations and sources love to tout numbers of homeless Veterans, but the numbers they spew out are not even close to what reality is.

Two years ago it was 40,000, and that number magically dropped to 18,000 and we're talking nationwide, not a single state or a few states but nationwide.

Having worked with outreach programs in the VA, state and county Health and Human Services, police and sheriff's departments we all know numbers are hard to calculate, but we get damn close and reality is nationwide we have in excess of 150,000 homeless Veterans.

I don't have the exact number yet, but am working hard at finding out, but I do know it's several billion dollars the VA has spent or in my opinion WASTED on various programs and agencies when they have acres and acres of land all across the country, and what's been labeled as mini homes could be built for \$8-10,000 could be purchased and placed on VA Land and actually do something to reduce the homeless Veteran population.

And what's worse, there is absolutely no accountability where exactly these funds went and who they helped, if they helped anyone.

A little further down in this newsletter there is a link to a petition to President Elect Donald Trump to appoint Commander John Wells to the post of Secretary of the VA.

Veterans-For-Change fully endorses Commander Wells for the post and we ask all our readers to please help us make this happen!

Commander Wells can bring about real change in the VA Healthcare System and this is precisely what is needed! Veterans need care and benefits now, not twenty years from now!

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](mailto:Jim.Davis@Veterans-For-Change.org)

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## **Veterans Career Group Calls on President-Elect to Appoint Commander John Wells USN (Ret) as Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs**

Global Energy Technology Institute (GETI) CEO Len Swanson, an Air Force Vietnam veteran suffering from Agent Orange, has called upon President-Elect Donald J Trump to appoint Commander John B. Wells, USN (Retired) as Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Wells, 66, is an attorney and Executive Director of Military-Veterans Advocacy. GETI is a Houston based organization that assists veterans in preparing for jobs in the oil and gas industry.

Wells served for twenty-two years in the Navy as a surface warfare officer spending years at sea aboard several different ships. In his second career, he became an attorney emphasizing military and veterans law. "Commander Wells understands the intricacies and failings of the Veterans Administration and VA law," Swanson said. "He has fought the VA tooth and nail through their system to obtain benefits for veterans. I do not know of any other outsider who has such an intimate knowledge of the VA benefits system. He has a plan to reduce the unconscionable backlog of 450,000 appeals and he will get the job done."

For the past six years, Commander Wells has advocated before Congress, without pay, for veterans benefits legislation. Working first for the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Association and later for the organization

he founded, Military-Veterans Advocacy, he spends 10-12 weeks a year in Washington fighting for members of the armed forces and veterans. "Wells is well known on Capitol Hill," noted Swanson. "He has testified before the House and the Senate and meets with Members of Congress and Senators on a routine basis."

Swanson noted that Wells met with current VA Secretary Robert McDonald last week to argue on behalf of veterans. He has previously met with other VA officials including Deputy Secretary Sloan Gibson. "He may not be well liked among the upper echelons of the VA," Swanson said, "But they respect him. The thing about John Wells is he knows how the VA ticks. He also is known for thinking outside of the box and I know that he will change the culture of the VA."

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/president-trump-selecting-most-qualified-va-secretary-len-swanson?trk=prof-post>

According to Swanson, Wells has good rapport with both sides of the aisle in the Senate. "There should be no confirmation problems," he said.

Wells has the support of many veterans law attorneys including Ben Krause who recently analyzed his qualifications here: <http://www.disabledveterans.org/2016/12/09/john-wells-non-insider-seeks-top-spot-veterans-affairs/>

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***Appoint Commander John B Wells, USN (Retired), as  
Secretary of Veterans Affairs***

As you know Veterans-For-Change endorses Commander John B. Wells for Secretary of the VA.

He is a Veteran for Veterans! And will go in and hit the ground running in order to achieve all the goals both he and Veterans nationwide have in order to make the VA a much better Healthcare System.

We now come to you and ask for your support and ask you to click [HERE](#) to sign the petition posted on Change.org!

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**California Supports Veteran Housing and Support Services  
Third Round of Prop 41 Funds Now Available**

SACRAMENTO – The Veterans Housing and Homelessness Prevention (VHHP) program is making \$75 million available to communities throughout California in its third round of Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) application cycle. Awards will be made to qualifying developers and nonprofit entities to construct, acquire, rehabilitate, or preserve affordable multifamily housing for Veterans and their families.

As part of the funding, and in accordance with Chapter 44, Statutes of 2016, \$10 million is reserved for the construction or rehabilitation of transitional housing or shelter facilities that provide services to homeless Veterans. Funds will be awarded to programs or counties that demonstrate need, focus on long-term solutions, include mental health and addiction treatment services, and have proven long-term effectiveness.

In 2014, California voters approved \$600 million to build housing for homeless Veterans. The California Department of Housing and Community Development, the California Department of Veterans Affairs, and the

California Housing Finance Agency were tasked with jointly managing and developing the guidelines for how the funds would be expended.

The objective of the VHHP is to develop housing for our Veterans at risk of homelessness or experiencing temporary or chronic homelessness. To date, \$176 million has been awarded to 45 developments through the first two NOFA application cycles. When complete, these developments will provide more than 1,500 housing units for Veterans, including 900 plus units for homeless Veterans.

Additional funds will be released annually until all of the \$600 million is exhausted, with an objective of addressing the housing needs of low-income Veterans and reducing Veteran homelessness in California. Geographic distributions intend to focus on areas with the largest concentrations of Veterans in need. For more information about the VHHP and this NOFA, please visit <http://www.hcd.ca.gov/fa/vets/>.

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(916) 653-2547  
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### ***Protect Your Identity When Buying a House***

Applying for a mortgage can expose your data to cyber thieves. [Learn how to protect yourself and your identity during your search for a new home.](#)

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### ***Congress Closes With a Flourish***

Congress finished their urgent business before they left town and sent many bills to the President for his signature.

On Dec. 10, 2016, the President signed into law: **H.R. 2028**, the ***Further and Continuing and Security Assistance Appropriations Act, 2017***. This legislation funds the federal government until April 28.

On Dec. 13, 2016, President Obama signed into law **H.R. 34**, the ***21st Century Cures Act***. The legislation modifies current medical research and drug development and delivery processes; to reauthorize the National Institutes of Health and a number of other HHS programs and activities, including the cancer "moonshot" initiative; to fund State efforts to prevent and treat opioid abuse; make changes to health and justice authorities with respect to mental health and substance use disorders; and to make a variety of updates with respect to Medicare, Medicaid, and health information technology. Part of this bill includes the **PATH Act** which NAUS worked hard for passage.

On Dec. 14, 2016, President Obama signed into law:

- **H.R. 3471**, the **Veterans Mobility Safety Act of 2016**, which makes certain changes to the Department of Veterans Affairs' automobiles and adaptive equipment program, and amends requirements for the appointment of hearing aid specialists;
- **H.R. 5509**, which designates the Department of Veterans Affairs temporary lodging facility in Indianapolis, Indiana, as the Dr. Otis Bowen Veteran House;
- **S. 1555**, the **Filipino Veterans of World War II Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2015**, which provides for the award of a single Congressional gold medal of appropriate design on behalf of the Congress, to the Filipino Veterans of World War II in recognition of the dedicated service of the veterans during World War II;
- **S. 1915**, the **First Responder Anthrax Preparedness Act**, which requires the Department of Homeland Security to carry out a 5 year pilot program to make anthrax vaccines available to emergency response providers who are at high risk of exposure to anthrax and who voluntarily consent;
- **S. 2234**, the **Office of Strategic Services Congressional Gold Medal Act**, which provides for the award of a Congressional gold medal of appropriate design on behalf of the Congress, to the members of the Office of Strategic Services, in recognition of their superior service and major contributions during World War II;
- **S. 2873**, the **Expanding Capacity for Health Outcomes Act** or the "ECHO Act," which requires the Department of Health and Human Services to conduct studies and issue reports examining technology-enabled collaborative learning and capacity building models;
- **S. 2974**, which allows the Department of Health and Human Services to fund the national human trafficking hotline from appropriations made available to the Department to assist victims of trafficking;
- **S. 3076**, the **Charles Duncan Buried with Honor Act of 2016**, which expands the Department of Veterans Affairs authority to furnish a casket or urn for the burial of a veteran;
- **S. 3395**, the **Prescribed Burn Approval Act of 2016**, which restricts the U.S. Forest Service from authorizing a prescribed burn on Federal land; and
- **S. 3492**, which designates the Traverse City VA Community-Based Outpatient Clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Traverse City, Michigan, as the Colonel Demas T. Craw VA Clinic.

**NAUS Note: Just a reminder that any bill that has not come up for consideration will be discarded when Congress finally adjourns. If there are bills that you want reconsidered let your elected officials know.**

Source: NAUS

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### ***TRICARE Doesn't Cover All Costs - Get a TRICARE Supplement***

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](#).

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***AF Special Victims Counsel Program***

The Air Force Special Victims Counsel (SVC) program assists sexual assault victims. Victims have a completely confidential communication, which is protected by attorney-client privilege. All active-duty military members, regardless of who the perpetrator is, are eligible to use the SVC. Adult and minor dependents are also eligible for SVC services when the assault has a military connection. The assigned attorney is with the victim throughout the interviews, hearings and courts-martial to provide them with the legal advice and support they need. For more information, read the American Bar Association article and watch the videos [online](#).

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**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

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***Commissaries to Offer Private Labels***

The Defense Commissary Agency has selected MDV SpartanNash LLC to bring private label products to store shelves. Private label products are offered by a retailer under its own, in-house brand or under a brand developed by its suppliers. Retailers are able to do this by working directly with suppliers. [Commissaries will add private label options](#) to their assortments, while continuing to offer the name brands that patrons have always shopped. The initial assortment should be available at all commissaries worldwide in May 2017 and will include about 400 items. For more information on DeCA's private label program, read the [Transformation FAQ](#).

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***Update on Blue Water Navy from Commander John Wells***

How close did we come to passing the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act? Damn close! This was supposed to be our year and I thought we would make it. We had 336 sponsors in the House and 47 in the

Senate. We had a favorable Legislative hearing in the Senate 2015. Congressman Jeff Miller did not schedule a hearing for us in the House.

The holdup, as it always is, was the offset requirements under the Pay As You Go Act of 2010. We proposed using round downs which would have reduced monthly benefit checks to the nearest dollar. That would have cost the individual veteran a maximum of \$11.88 per year. The average cost would have been about \$5.50 per year. But it would have generated \$1.8 billion which would more than have paid for the \$1.1 billion cost of the bill. Senator Sanders of Vermont refused to let the bill go forward with that offset.

We turned next to Senator Grassley of Iowa who graciously authorized the Judiciary Committee to work with us. To put this in perspective, offsets are hard to find and are often jealously guarded. Here Senator Grassley, a supporter of the original Agent Orange Act of 1991, felt that the Blue Water Navy veterans were important enough to offer assistance from his committee staff. As a result, we were able to generate \$1.2 billion by placing a \$100 surcharge on foreign student visa fees. The intent was to “hotline” S 681, which means asking for unanimous consent. After passage, we would be able to bring the matter up in the House under a “suspension of the rules.” The House leadership was aware of the plan and I believe it would have passed.

Unfortunately, the plan was stymied by Senator Leahy of Vermont who placed a “hold” on the bill due to the offset. Senator Leahy is the ranking member of the Judiciary Committee. I met with his staff and they confirmed their opposition. They felt that they were not properly consulted by the bill’s sponsors. They further said that while the \$100 fee gave them concern, the need to renew the visa every 13 months was their main issue. Their fear was that the students would forget to renew the visa which would lead to deportation. While I am not certain how realistic that fear is, my personal opinion is that the little cupcakes should show some maturity and be responsible for ensuring their visas are current. I might also add I left a message for the Senator’s Legislative Director because I wanted to propose a compromise. The call was not returned.

So what is our strategy for 2017? We will start off with the Resolution and fight the attempt to score it. I have discussed this with the House leadership and they support the proposition that a non-binding resolution should not be scored. I met with Congresswoman Elise Stefanik R-NY, who will introduce the resolution early in the next Congress. If this resolution is passed before oral argument in the federal case, I can argue that the sense of Congress is that the bays, harbors and territorial seas were intended to have been included within the scope of the 1991 Agent Orange Act. Senator Grassley is willing to re-introduce in the Senate.

Congressman David Valadao, R-CA, along with Congressman Tim Walz D-MN will reintroduce the bill in the House. At this point, we will not include an offset pending a continued search. Additionally, should the court case be decided in our favor, the CBO score will be significantly lower which will make the search for the offset much easier.

I am also going to try another approach. The Blue Water bill has always been considered the point of the spear. Accordingly, I am going to float the idea of an omnibus bill covering all toxic exposures. This would require an independent funding source. I discussed this idea with several Members and staffs and will pursue the matter with the Ways and Means and Finance Committees, as well as the Republican Study Committee when I return to Washington in February. I intend to spend two weeks in Washington to meet the new Members of Congress and work with the various staffs.

Finally, I want to thank our many allies in Congress and the Senate. This list is too long but at the top is outgoing Congressman Chris Gibson, R-NY who was our House sponsor and biggest cheerleader these past 6 years. We will miss his enthusiasm and dedication to our cause. We are sorry to see him go. A true patriot, Chris Gibson was a retired Army Colonel who saw combat in Iraq. He announced when he ran for Congress

that he would only serve three terms and he kept his word. A good man and a good friend, he was the face of the Blue Water Navy in Congress. Pray for his future successes and if you ever see him on the street give him a handshake and a hug,

So here is the bottom line, We darned near got the bill through this Congress. But we are not giving up. So let's gear up for next year. Your prayerful support (a bit of financial support if you can afford it) will push us to success in the 115th Congress.

Please check us out and help us if you can at our website: <http://www.militaryveteransadvocacy.org/>

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## ***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>

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### ***Costs Kill Big Gains for Vets but Reserve Retirees Win 'Vet' Status***

For a while it seemed 2016 would be the year Congress phased in a \$3 billion plan to give older generations of severely injured veterans the same caregiver benefits enacted six years ago for Post-9/11 injured veterans. It also seemed Congress in 2016 would modernize VA's appeals process for veteran claims, and would impose stiff new accountability requirements on VA employees who are incompetent or misbehave. It even seemed possible this year that lawmakers would strengthen the Veterans Choice program by establishing prompt payment standards and by streamlining requirements for community medical care providers to enter into service agreements with VA. But have any of these things happened? For more details, see [this Military Advantage post](#).

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### ***Government Accountability Reports***

Declining Resources: Selected Agencies Took Steps to Minimize Effects on Mission but Opportunities Exist for Additional Action. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-17-79>

Social Security Offsets: Improvements to Program Design Could Better Assist Older Student Loan Borrowers with Obtaining Permitted Relief. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-17-45>

Homeless Veterans: Management Improvements Could Help VA Better Identify Supportive-Housing Projects. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-17-101>



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### *DeCA to Offer Commissary Gift Cards*

Anyone may now purchase a \$25 or \$50 commissary gift card for an authorized patron online at [commissaries.com](http://commissaries.com) or at all commissaries worldwide. The cards are good for five years from the date of purchase. Cards purchased online incur a shipping and handling fee, but there are no fees when the card is purchased in a store. There is no limit to the number of gifts cards that a purchaser can buy. Commissary Gift Cards can be shipped anywhere in the United States. When shipping outside the United States, an APO, FPO or DPO address must be used. For customer service questions, call 877-988-4438, which is also found on the back of the gift card. Customers can also use this number to check the balance on their card.



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### *Transition Assistance Program*

The Soldier for Life Transition Assistance Program (SFL TAP) is a commander's program that requires leaders to take an active role in a Soldier's transition. The program encourages Soldiers to attend early and often, starting 18 months prior to transition and 24 months prior to retirement from active duty. Participation in SFL TAP is required for all soldiers who have at least 180 days of continuous active duty service. The program

teaches career skills like resumé writing, financial planning, job application preparation and military skills translation. SFL TAP works to provide opportunities to Soldiers who are looking to pursue an education, entrepreneurship, or a career. For more information, visit the [U.S. Army SLF TAP website](#). For more transition tips, and a customized transition plan, visit [Military.com's Transition Center](#).

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### 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

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### VA Increases Access

By the end of this year, more than 160 VA facilities will offer same-day access to care. Learn what VA is doing to ensure that veterans and their family members receive the care they need when and where they need it — a top priority of the MyVA initiative. [Watch the video on the VA Vantage Point Blog](#).

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### 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.

- Documents Library with over 15,905 documents on-line (Updated: **12/12/16**)
- FAQ's with more than 1,600 FAQ's and answers
- 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
- Memorial Pages (Updated: **10/10/16**)
- News (Articles On-Line: **6,240**)
- Polls
- Web Links, more than 3,495, Added 1 New Links (Updated: **12/21/16**)

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

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### *VA Study Looks at Cure Rates*

A Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) database study shows that new drug regimens for hepatitis C have resulted in “remarkably high” cure rates among patients in VA's national health care system. Of the more than 17,000 Veterans in the study, all chronically infected with the hepatitis C virus at baseline, 75 percent to 93 percent had no detectable levels of the disease in their blood for 12 or more weeks after the end of treatment. An abstract of the study is available in the September 2016 issue of the journal [Gastroenterology](#). For more information on VA care for hepatitis C, visit the [VA Viral Hepatitis website](#) and the [VA Hepatitsis C webpage](#).

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### ***Links to Other Stories***

- 1) *'Without compensation' doctors train new physicians and treat Veterans for free*
- 2) *11 year old girl helps homeless Veterans during the holidays*
- 3) *1st US servicemember to die in Syria to be buried as coalition fight ramps up*
- 4) *Blumenthal To Hold Seats on Veterans Affairs, Judiciary, Armed Services, Commerce and Aging*
- 5) *Court officials who jailed a Veteran for living off-grid were "just doing their jobs"*
- 6) *Department of Homeland Security, Veterans Affairs the worst places to work in the government*
- 7) *DoD Unveils Redesigned National Resource Directory*
- 8) *Eyeing VA overhaul, Trump mulls Veterans secretary post*
- 9) *How to control a robotic arm with your mind — no implanted electrodes required*
- 10) *How Trump can fix the deadly Veterans Administration*
- 11) *Is It Possible to Speed Up the VA Appeals Process?*
- 12) *Nearly 100,000 Vets Enrolled in Burn Pit Registry*
- 13) *Some combat-wounded Vets could see a windfall thanks to tax fix passed by Congress*
- 14) *Some Veterans Suspect Key Senator Holding Up VA Secretary Selection*
- 15) *Transgender Day of Remembrance at West Point draws jeers; 'Thank God Mad Dog's coming!'*
- 16) *VA Disability Claims Involving Nerve Conditions – Part 3*
- 17) *VA Grants Full Practice Authority to Advance Practice Registered Nurses*
- 18) *VA research leading the way in treating hearing problems in Veterans*
- 19) *VA reverses course, releases health care quality data*
- 20) *VA Study Finds EEG Can Help Tell Apart PTSD & Mild Traumatic Brain Injury*
- 21) *Veteran Groups Comment On Trump's Possible VA Secretary*
- 22) *Veterans Affairs' defense of secrecy is no defense at all*
- 23) *Veterans Crisis Line Improves Service with New Call Center Opening in Atlanta*
- 24) *VP to Colbert: VA as largest hospital system in the world is leading change for cancer cures*
- 25) *What am I entitled to as a Disabled Veteran?*
- 26) *Why I Took My Daughter to Lay Wreaths at Arlington National Cemetery*

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](http://www.veterans-for-change.org)

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### ***2017 VA Loan Rates are Out: Use Your Benefit Now***

Get started using this increased VA Loan benefit for 2017. Qualified borrowers can pay as little as \$0 down, and have no PMI payments with great rates and financing up to \$424,000. [Use your VA Loan Benefit today.](#)

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## ***ABA Providers Must be Certified by Jan. 1, 2017***

TRICARE announced that the extension for Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) providers to get necessary certifications is ending.

Effective Jan. 1, 2017, claims submitted for services by providers who are not certified in Basic Life Support (BLS) or Behavior Technician Provides applied behavior analysis to beneficiaries with autism spectrum disorder (BT) will be denied.

As part of TRICARE's ongoing commitment to patient safety, the Defense Health Agency requires providers who deliver ABA services under the TRICARE Autism Care Demonstration (ACD) be certified and have BLS certification before they see TRICARE patients. Although many providers have complied with these requirements, there are still others who have not.

Some ABA providers in the local area have been identified by the TRICARE network contractor as not having met their goal for BT certification, BLS certification or both, despite DHA's extra effort to provide them the opportunity and means to meet their certification obligations to patient safety. BT certification ensures these providers are consistently well-trained in ABA services. Basic Life Support training helps keep victims who experience life-threatening events alive until they can get medical care from ambulance personnel or at a hospital.

The DHA is very concerned that continued and uninterrupted care be provided to children receiving ABA services to the degree that we extended these deadlines to allow more than ample time for providers to meet these basic standards. Providers who have chosen not to meet the requirements may no longer be able to provide therapy to TRICARE beneficiaries until they satisfy the minimum training and safety requirements.

Source: NAUS



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 and E-Mail to: [Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org](mailto:Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org)

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### *University of Cincinnati Seeks Vets for Survey*

The University of Cincinnati is recruiting Veterans to complete a survey as part of a research study aimed at better understanding the reintegration experiences of veterans, particularly concerning employment. Study administrators are currently recruiting 250 veterans who were discharged on or after September 1, 2001, for an online survey. The survey itself will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. The final data set used by researchers will not include personally identifying information and all survey responses will be kept confidential. For more information, read the [VA VAntage Point Blog](#) and visit the [University of Cincinnati website](#).

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

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### *VA Treats Dependency*

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, prescription drug use and binge drinking occurs at a much higher rate among Veterans and the numbers are growing. In fact, a Department of Defense study found that prescription drug misuse occurs 2.5 times more often in Veterans than it does in civilians as reported by the [National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence](#). This is due, in large part, to the high rate of post-traumatic stress disorder that occurs among Veterans. Both inpatient and outpatient treatment is available at [VA centers across the country](#). For more information, visit the [VA Mental Health webpage](#).

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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>

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### ***Veterans-For-Change, Inc.***

Riverside County, CA

Visit our website today

[www.Veterans-For-Change.org](http://www.Veterans-For-Change.org)

***Serving those who served!***

***Please pass on to all your Veteran Friends and Family***

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