



# Veterans-For-Change Newsletter

## *A Voice of the Veterans*

*Week Ending Sunday, January 15, 2017*

*Volume 8, Issue 03*

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

Well the long wait is over, President elect Donald Trump has chosen his new Secretary of the VA, Dr. David Shulkin.

Veterans-For-Changes wishes Dr. Shulkin all the best in his new position, and we pray he will be able to make the difference Veterans have been begging for, for many decades!

I want to thank everyone who signed the petition to get Commander Wells considered for the position, we gave it a good try!

A VA dentist could have just infected nearly 600 Veterans with deadly diseases including HIV/AIDS, Hep B and C by his failure to properly clean and sterilize dental instruments.

Was he terminated or lose his license hell no, he's rewarded with a nice new comfy administrative position.

So what I'd like to know is what was going on in the head of the person who promoted this dentist, and what was his/her justification in the decision? Was it to reward flat out for good job performance, or was it to hide the fact this dentist broke all medical procedures?

What ever happened to the part of their oath where they swore to "first do no harm?"

Why are none of the nationally chartered VSO's screaming bloody murder? Why are Veterans not screaming bloody murder? This is your health we're dealing with.

The same would apply to all our homeless Veterans which numbers nearly 1.5 million, Veteran suicides which if you listen to most is 22 per day, and if you really think about it is more like double that number as many suicides are not ever reported to the VA.

So as with any government agency, if you're not on their rolls, you don't count! Example would be unemployment. If you're not collecting benefits, even though you remain unemployed, you fall off their rolls and aren't even counted!

Many good people across the country are doing their level best to fight for all Veterans, many of us have been doing it for many years, and most with little to no funds, very little help from Veterans and even less help from any of the VSO's.

Many of those organizations are fighting a single cause, and trust me there is nothing wrong with that, some causes need a lot of attention, focus and resources in order to achieve the goals set to help the many!

But there are so many issues and problems all needing attention, needing to be addressed, and all needing to be fixed or repaired. So if you belong to any of these organizations, or get correspondence or newsletters from them, please, please, offer to help, offer to be a part of the solution.

Complaining and bitching about problems never solves them, actions do!

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

Respectfully,

Jim Davis

Founder

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

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**Sec Dev Nominee Backs Women in Combat**

Retired [Marine](#) Gen. James Mattis set out positions at odds with the campaign statements of President-elect Donald Trump on Russia and Iran at his Senate confirmation hearing Thursday to become the nation's 26th secretary of defense. Mattis also pledged to keep in place the current policies opening up all military occupational specialties, including combat jobs, to women and allowing gays to serve openly. Read the full [article](#).

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## **Military Veterans Advocacy Comment on Appointment of Dr. David Shulkin as VA Secretary**

President-Elect Trump has announced his intent to appoint David Shulkin, the current Under Secretary for Health as the Secretary of the VA. Military-Veterans Advocacy congratulates Dr. Shulkin and President-Elect Trump on this appointment. He is a good choice who has tried to make a difference in the Veterans Health Administration. Changing the VA will not happen overnight. Military-Veterans Advocacy pledges our personal support to assist Dr. Shulkin to accomplish the goal of making the VA Great Again.

We also call on Dr. Shulkin to immediately designate a center of excellence to review the effects of toxic exposure on veterans and their descendants. We also ask that he immediately rescind the VA policy that denies the presumption of exposure to Agent Orange to veterans serving in the bays, harbors and territorial seas of the Republic of Vietnam. We further call for a review, via the center of excellence of reported Agent Orange exposure in Guam, Thailand Laos, Cambodia, Korea, Panama and other areas. We further call on the center of excellence to review and recommend benefits for other toxic exposures including PCBs, mustard gas, asbestos, radiation, burn pits, Fort McClellan, depleted uranium and other toxic substances that have been negatively affected the health of veterans who were exposed while on active duty.

Commander J. B. Wells U. S. Navy (Retired)  
Attorney at Law  
Executive Director  
Military-Veterans Advocacy, Inc.

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## State of Emergency in Oklahoma due to Severe Ice Storm

The governor of Oklahoma has declared a State of Emergency for the entire state due to a severe ice storm. Emergency refill procedures are in place from January 13, 2017 through February 12, 2017.

Click [here](#) for more information.

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## State of Emergency in Several States due to Severe Weather

The governors of Nevada, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia have declared States of Emergency due to severe weather. Emergency refill procedures are in place. Please visit [www.tricare.mil/Resources/DisasterInfo](http://www.tricare.mil/Resources/DisasterInfo) for details.

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## **Opt Out Now: Website Lets Anyone See Your Home Address**

As military members and spouses we hear a lot about personal security and operational security. [FamilyTreeNow.com](https://www.familytreenow.com) and a series of other, similar sites pulls from public government records to compile information about you including long ago addresses, a list of associated names (for many women that likely includes your maiden name), a list of family members and a much less accurate list of "possible associates." The good news is: you can opt out of FamilyTreeNow and remove your information.

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## **More Vets Able to Shop at Exchanges Online**

After two years of study and debate, the Department of Defense has made a policy change, effective next November, to allow 16 million honorably discharged veterans to shop online for discounted military exchange products. Read more [here](#).

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## US Agrees to Pay Billions to Marines Affected by Toxic Water

The Obama administration has agreed to provide [disability benefits](#) totaling more than \$2 billion to veterans who had been exposed to contaminated drinking water while assigned to [Camp Lejeune](#) in North Carolina. The decision was quietly made public Thursday with a notice in the Federal Register, the government's official journal.

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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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## How to Report Tricare on Your Tax Return

Tax season is here, and people are wondering how to report Tricare health coverage on a federal income tax return. The Affordable Care Act (ACA), sometimes called Obamacare, requires that all Americans have qualifying health care coverage, called minimum essential coverage (MEC). If you do not have MEC for the entire year, you may have to pay a penalty for not having the required health care coverage. For more details, see this Paycheck [Chronicles post](#).

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## History of the Medal of Honor

Pvt. Jacob Parrott, a member of the Ohio Volunteer Militia, the predecessor to the Ohio National Guard, was the first person to receive the [Medal of Honor](#), on March 25, 1863. Parrott is featured online in a new [history](#) of the Medal of Honor, posted by the

Defense Department. Congress authorized the Medal of Honor in December 1861, specifically for the Department of the Navy, but within two months it was adapted for Army recipients as well. The medal is now bestowed on individuals serving in any branch of the armed forces who have performed a personal act of valor above and beyond the call of duty in action against an enemy force.

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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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**VA Announces Efforts to Curb Homelessness**



The Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) has announced a concentrated 30-day effort by VA staff and partners to house as many homeless veterans in their communities as possible. VA's network of federal, local and nongovernmental partners will target available housing and supportive services to homeless veterans. The 30-day surge called Operation Reveille builds on the all-in, surge concept VA uses during its homeless stand downs. Find a list of when VA medical centers are holding stand downs [online](#). For more information on how to help veterans in your community find permanent housing, read an overview [here](#), and contact your local VA medical center. To learn more, visit the VA Ending Veteran Homelessness [Webpage](#), read the VA [Fact Sheet](#), and learn about steps taken to end veteran homelessness in Los Angeles [here](#).



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## **Government Accountability Reports**

Flood Insurance: FEMA Needs to Address Data Quality and Consider Company Characteristics When Revising Its Compensation Methodology.

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-17-36>

Indian Health Service: Actions Needed to Improve Oversight of Quality of Care.

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-17-181>

Public Health Emergencies: HHS Needs to Better Communicate Requirements and Revise Plans for Assessing Impact of Personnel Reassignment.

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-17-187>

Retirement Security: Improved Guidance Could Help Account Owners Understand the Risks of Investing in Unconventional Assets. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-17-102>

Troubled Asset Relief Program: Status of Housing Programs.

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-17-236>

Border Patrol: Actions Needed to Improve Oversight of Post-Apprehension Consequences. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-17-66>

Financial Audit: Fiscal Years 2016 and 2015 Consolidated Financial Statements of the U.S. Government.

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-17-283R>

Grants Management: Selected Agencies Should Clarify Merit-Based Award Criteria and Provide Guidance for Reviewing Potentially Duplicative Awards.

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-17-113>

National Park Service: Process Exists for Prioritizing Asset Maintenance Decisions, but Evaluation Could Improve Efforts. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-17-136>

School Bus Safety: Crash Data Trends and Federal and State Requirements.

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-17-209>

Terrorism Risk Insurance: Market Challenges May Exist for Current Structure and Alternative Approaches. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-17-62>

GAO Cannot Provide Audit Opinion on U.S. Government's Annual Financial Report.

[http://www.gao.gov/press/usgov\\_financial\\_report\\_gao\\_2017.htm](http://www.gao.gov/press/usgov_financial_report_gao_2017.htm)

Military Personnel: DOD Has Processes for Operating and Managing Its Sexual Assault Incident Database. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-17-99>

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## **Eyeglasses Available at Bremerton**

The Naval Hospital Bremerton's Optometry Clinic offers a simple process for someone to get new eyeglasses. The visit begins with an eye exam. Patients should have their eyes examined every 12-24 months unless their doctor recommends otherwise. Most new eyeglasses can be fitted, fabricated, and finalized the same day as the visit. Patients needing to order glasses or needing repair of military glasses do not need appointments and are welcome to walk in during clinic hours. Outside prescriptions are accepted. An appointment for NHB Optometry Clinic, Branch Health Clinic Bangor, or BHC Everett can be made by calling TRICARE at 1-800-404-4506 and appointments for BHC Puget Sound Naval Shipyard at 360-476-7058. Referrals are not needed to make an appointment. Clinic hours are 7:30 a.m. To 4 p.m.



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## **VA Offers Services for Transgender Vets**

There are currently about 5,000 transgender veterans receiving their healthcare from VA. Transgender people, according to Wikipedia, are people who have a gender identity or gender expression that differs from their assigned sex. VA provides gender transition counseling, evaluations for hormone therapy, and evaluations for gender transition surgeries. VA offers training to help VA healthcare providers get up to speed on how to successfully interact with their transgender patients and how to address their sometimes unique healthcare concerns. For more information, read the [VA Vantage Point Blog](#) and visit the VA Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Veteran Care [webpage](#).

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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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## **National Veterans Golden Age Games**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will accept applications from Veterans interested in competing in the 2017 National Veterans Golden Age Games beginning Feb. 1. Veterans ages 55 and older and enrolled in VA health care may complete applications online at the National Veterans Golden Age Games [website](#). Applications will be accepted through March 1. Competitive events include air rifle, badminton, boccia, bowling, cycling, golf, horseshoes, nine ball, powerwalk, shuffleboard, swimming, table tennis, and track and field. Exhibition events include: air pistol, archery, basketball, blind disc golf and pickleball. For more information, visit the National Veterans Golden Age Games website and follow VA Adaptive Sports on Twitter at [@VAAdaptiveSport](#) or on [Facebook](#).

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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 3,141,783 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](http://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
- Multiple Forums
  - o Afghanistan Veterans
  - o FMP - Foreign Medial Program
  - o Gulf War & Desert Storm Veterans
  - o Iraq Veterans
  - o Korean Veterans
  - o Men Veterans Forum
  - o Mental Health for Veterans
  - o Political Issues
  - o Suggestion Box
  - o The Mess Hall
  - o VA Hospitals and Medical Centers

- o Veteran Affairs
- o Vietnam Veterans
- o Welcome Mat
- o Women Veterans Forum
- o WW II Veterans
- Job Postings
- Memorial Pages (Updated: 10/10/16)
- News (Articles On-Line: 6,295)
- Polls
- Web Links, more than 3,541, Added 46 New Links (Updated: 12/28/16)

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



<https://twitter.com/Veterans4Change>

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**Links to Other Stories**

- 1) Brother says system failed troubled Veteran accused in Florida airport shooting
- 2) IDIOCRACY: VA Public Affairs Tells Top Advocate How To 'Help' Veterans
- 3) More than 1,200 homeless Veterans living on Los Angeles streets still need housing
- 4) Nonprofit plans microhomes for homeless female Veterans
- 5) Oklahoma Department of Veteran Affairs director gets \$15,000 pay raise
- 6) Plan to move Veterans homes out of HHS, into Nebraska VA department expected to save state \$1.4 million
- 7) Tiny homes for the homeless. Why not? | Editorial
- 8) To solve the VA appeals problem, get rid of the hamster wheel
- 9) Trump Struggles To Find A Veterans Hatchet Person
- 10) Veterans Affairs Dentist May Have Spread Diseases Hepatitis B And C, And Even AIDS To Veterans, Then Gets Rewarded For It
- 11) Veterans Affairs turns away Veterans of war on Christmas
- 12) Veterans Affairs: We've Improved Our Medical Centers
- 13) Veterans try again for popular but expensive Agent Orange bill
- 14) Vietnam: The War That Killed Trust

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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## **VA's Rule Establishes a Presumption of Service Connection for Diseases Associated with Exposure to Contaminants in the Water Supply at Camp Lejeune**

*VA to provide disability benefits for related diseases*

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has published regulations to establish presumptions for the service connection of eight diseases associated with exposure to contaminants in the water supply at Camp Lejeune, N.C.

The presumption of service connection applies to active duty, reserve and National Guard members who served at Camp Lejeune for a minimum of 30 days (cumulative) between August 1, 1953 and December 31, 1987, and are diagnosed with any of the following conditions:

- adult leukemia

- aplastic anemia and other myelodysplastic syndromes
- bladder cancer
- kidney cancer
- liver cancer
- multiple myeloma
- non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
- Parkinson's disease

“We have a responsibility to take care of those who have served our Nation and have been exposed to harm as a result of that service,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald. “Establishing a presumption for service at Camp Lejeune will make it easier for those Veterans to receive the care and benefits they earned.”

Environmental health experts in VA's Technical Workgroup conducted comprehensive reviews of scientific evidence, which included analysis and research done by the Department of Health and Human Service's Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), the Environmental Protection Agency, the International Agency for Research on Cancer, the National Toxicology Program, and the National Academies of Science.

Veterans with 30 or more cumulative days of active duty service, at Camp Lejeune during the contamination period are already eligible for certain medical benefits, following passage of the Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012.

In the early 1980s, volatile organic compounds, trichloroethylene (TCE), a metal degreaser, and perchloroethylene (PCE), a dry cleaning agent, as well as benzene and vinyl chloride, were discovered in two on-base water supply systems at Camp Lejeune. The contaminated wells supplying the water systems were shut down in February 1985.

The area included in this presumption is all of Camp Lejeune and MCAS New River, including satellite camps and housing areas.

The rule will be effective either 60 days after publication in the Federal Register, or following conclusion of the 60-day Congressional Review, whichever is later.

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## **AF Exceptional Family Member Program**



The Air Force Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) allows Airmen to proceed to assignment locations where suitable medical, educational and other resources are available to treat special needs family members. Enrollment in EFMP is mandatory for all active-duty Airmen with a family member with special needs. More than 28,000 active-duty Airmen with one or more exceptional family members are enrolled in the program. EFMP is limited to the Airman's spouse, child or other person actually residing in the Airman's household who is dependent on the Airman for financial support and who meets Defense Department enrollment criteria and is a military health care beneficiary. For more information, search "EFMP" on the [myPers](#) website.

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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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## **MLK Day - A Brief Reminder**

I've sent this note out every year for the past 15+ years and do so again because it is timeless. Perhaps it is my advanced years (sic) but every year I am struck by the fact that many folks may not appreciate the significance of this particular holiday – or perhaps are not old enough to have lived through these times. Please take a minute to read this over and pass it on if you like. I'm sending it out today as many folks may be taking tomorrow off.

As we prepare to take off for a long weekend, it might be appropriate to take just a moment to think about why we aren't coming to work Monday ... Martin Luther King Day – for his commitment to equal rights, non-violence, and social change. The inspiration of Dr. King and the civil rights movement led our nation and the Federal government to a new standard of equality and inclusion, which was Dr. King's purpose. He wanted to challenge our country to be a better place, where every person is valued and respected.

Dr. King challenged us to overcome oppression and violence. He urged us to reject revenge, aggression, and retaliation. His vision that “no individual be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character,” set in motion changes that led to the passage of civil rights and voting laws. In honor and respect for his contribution to the improvement of our national attitudes, policies, and laws, the Federal government celebrates Dr. King.

Over the years, there has been some speculation on what Dr. King could have accomplished if his life had not been so tragically cut short. He was only 28 years old when he was elected the first President of the Southern Christian Leadership Council. He had already graduated from college at 19 and graduated from Divinity school at 22. By the time Dr. King was 29, he had published his first book, “Stride Toward Freedom.” In 1964, he gave his famous “I Have A Dream” speech to 250,000 people who marched on Washington in support of pending civil rights legislation. In the same year, he was successful in getting the legislation passed and he won the Nobel Peace Prize. A lot of accomplishments for a man who was only 35 years old.

Dr. Martin Luther King believed in our country and its potential for greatness. He also believed that each one of us is essential to achieving its full potential. Although Dr. King’s primary efforts focused on equality for African-Americans, his ultimate goal was the equality and inclusion of every individual. As Dr. King said “There is nothing more dangerous than to build a society, with a large segment of people in that society who feel that they have no stake in it; who feel that they have nothing to lose. People who have a stake in their society protect that society. But when they don’t have it, they unconsciously want to destroy it.”

This weekend gives us all another opportunity to reaffirm and reflect on our appreciation for the uniqueness that each individual brings to the work place. Have a good and safe long weekend with friends and family. It is my honor to work with all of you.

Curtis L. Coy  
Deputy Under Secretary for Economic Opportunity  
Veterans Benefits Administration  
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

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**~We Proudly Support our  
Military Personnel & Families~**

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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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Express Mail	144,707
Boston	76,148
Courtesy Copies	3,500
Department of VA	12,236
DoD	26,454
Face Book Pages	3,437
Google	23,013
Los Angeles	132,424
Microsoft	5,075
National Guard	3609
New York	149,982
Other Social Media	38,423
San Francisco	76,868
Twitter	36
US House of Reps & Staff	984
US Senators & Staff	103
University of So. California	4,869
US Air Force	19,581
US Army	59,409
US Marines	26,489
US Navy	30,383
Veterans	19,076,224
Washington DC	143,089
Yahoo	134
	20,057,177

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](mailto:Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org)

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