



Veterans-For-Change Newsletter

A Voice of the Veterans

Week Ending Sunday, May 19, 2019

Volume 10, Issue 20



This-N-That

First off I'd like to thank Don M. for all the information and documentation he's provided to us regarding Ionizing Radiation, TCE, AO and more. It will take a little time to get it all captured, prepped and posted to the website for all to have access to.

I don't know first hand, but through the information, stories I've been told, and some of the horror stories, it's real bad.

I did receive from a Veteran about three maybe 4

months ago four DVD's packed full of information, and I'd appreciate if you would contact me again. My one volunteer who handles filing my documents away for me, daily mail, etc., accidentally threw the envelope away and I honestly don't remember who sent them to me.

We've been talking to a new hosting service, and hopefully will receive their final bid to host and provide us a webmaster sometime today. So if their final bid meets all our needs we will most likely make the transfer over on or around June 1, 2019.

I look forward to making that announcement this next weekend.

While many bills have come out of committee, been sent to the floor, some already voted on and passed, our job is still not over.

We still need to continually push on both our Congressmen and Senators weekly to make sure these bills all get fully passed, sent to the President, and signed into law.

So those of you who have been active, please keep it up, you're doing a great job! Those of you who are still on the fence post, please, become pro-

active, make the calls, send off all the pre-written E-Mails, and keep it going. We still do need all the help we can get for ALL Veterans.

There are still so many other issues we need to get addressed, legislation drafted, put to the committees and sent to the floor for a vote and passage. I know all the bills listed all throughout this newsletter don't cover everything, but all of us can only move to fast, and please do know, we're trying.

And we've also received assurances from several other organizations to help support VFC on legislation we need, so my best advice, as always, share these newsletters with friends and family and ask all of them to sign and send off all the pre-written E-Mails, to make the calls to their Reps in DC, they don't have to be a Veteran or Active Duty Military, Civilians are more than welcome to help and join in the fight!

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



VA Mission Act Implementation date is June 6, 2019

VA's improvements to Veteran community care under MISSION Act on track for June 6 implementation

As the one-year anniversary of President Trump's signing of the VA Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks (MISSION) Act of 2018 approaches on June 6, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is making significant strides in implementing major improvements to community care for Veterans.

"The Veteran is at the center of everything we do," VA Secretary Robert Wilkie said. "Through the MISSION Act, Veterans will have more choices than ever in getting timely, high-quality care. Most important, Veterans will be able to decide what is important and best for them."

The MISSION Act will strengthen VA's health care system by improving both aspects of care delivery and empowering Veterans to find the balance in the system that is right for them,

A key aspect of the MISSION Act is the consolidation of VA's community care programs, which will make community care work better for Veterans and their families, providers and VA employees. When this transition is complete, the following will occur:

- Veterans will have more options for community care.
- Eligibility criteria for community care will be expanded, including new access standards.
- Scheduling appointments will be easier, and care coordination between VA and community providers will be better.
- Eligible Veterans will have access to a network of walk-in and urgent care facilities for minor injuries and illnesses.

"Transitioning to the new eligibility criteria for community care should be seamless for Veterans," Wilkie said. "Veterans will continue to talk to their care team or scheduler as they have been doing to get the care they need."

VA also has been working closely with community providers to ensure Veterans have a positive experience when receiving community care. For example, VA has developed education and training

materials to help community providers understand some of the unique challenges Veterans can face.

Going forward, community care will be easier to use, and Veterans will remain at the center of their VA health care decisions.

In addition to information VA has made available digitally, Veterans enrolled in VA health care can expect to receive a letter in the mail providing details on where to go for more information.

For more information about community care under the MISSION Act, visit [HERE](#).



Support Agent Orange Blue Water Navy Bill (HR 299 & S. 1195)

The House has passed (410-0) the FRA supported "Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act" (H.R. 299) sponsored by Rep. Mark Takano (CA). The bill now goes to the Senate for further

consideration. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, (NY), and Sen. Steve Daines (MT) have introduced a similar bill in the Senate (S. 1195). These bills clarify that service members serving off the coast of the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam conflict have a presumption for filing disability claims with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for ailments associated with exposure to the Agent Orange herbicide.

The bills also extend the presumption of herbicide exposure for veterans who served on or near the Korean DMZ between September 1, 1967 and August 31, 1971. The legislation provides health care, vocational training, rehabilitation and monetary allowance to a child who was born with spina bifida, if at least one of the child's parents served in Thailand between January 9, 1962 and May 7, 1975 and the VA determines that at least one of the parents had been exposed to an herbicide agent during that period. These bills make changes to the VA home loan program.

The FRA believes Congress should recognize these veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange herbicide and authorize presumptive status for VA disability claims associated with this exposure. Now

is the time to **contact your Senators** to urge them to support these proposals (HR 299 & S 1195).



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 for Mental Health and

are currently seeking a new Licensed Mental Health Worker, where you can seek help or just ask questions.

We average **2,726** hits per day, and downloads average **2,880** per day with a total **4,989,873** 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 **17,242** documents on-line (Updated: 04/11/19)
- 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 (*Counselor Needed*)
 - 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: 10/30/18) (37 Added)
- News (Articles On-Line: **8,533**)
- Polls
- Web Links, more than **4,926**, Added 16 New Links (Updated: 05/07/19)

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





H.R. 1527, the Long-Term Care Veterans Choice Act

Representative Clay Higgins introduced H.R. 1527, the Long-Term Care Veterans Choice Act. This bill would provide veterans who are no longer capable of living independently an alternative to nursing home care, in which the veteran would continue to receive the care that they need in an intimate home-like environment through VA's Home-Based Primary Care program, and the Medical Foster

Home (MFH) attendant program.

Started in 2000, VA Medical Foster Homes provide veterans who need nursing home level of care an alternative to being placed in a nursing home. VA Medical Foster Homes merge traditional adult foster care with comprehensive longitudinal care provided in the home by a VA interdisciplinary team that includes a physician, nurse, social worker, rehabilitation therapist, mental health provider, dietitian, and pharmacist. Since its inception, over 4,000 veterans have resided in Medical Foster Homes.

However, many service-connected veterans who wish to reside in a VA Medical Foster Home are unable to do so because of substantial out-of-pocket costs of approximately \$1,500 to \$3,000 per month. Because VA does not have the authority to cover these costs, veterans are placed in nursing homes which VA pays for but cost more than twice as much.

As the veteran population continues to age, the need for long-term care services will continue to grow. Home-based community programs like MFHs will enable VA to meet the needs of aging veterans in a manner closer to independent living than

institutionalized care. With the passage of this bill, veterans would have the option of care that more closely aligns with their independence while maintaining their quality of life.

This bill is in accordance with DAV Resolution No. 085, which calls for legislation to improve the comprehensive program of long-term services and supports for service-connected disabled veterans regardless of their disability ratings.

Please use the prepared letter to write your Representative to cosponsor and support passage of H.R. 1527, the Long-Term Care Veterans Choice Act. Thank you for your efforts and support of the Commander's Action Network.

Take Action



Feedback, Please! Take the TRICARE Publications Survey

Do you read TRICARE publications to learn more about your TRICARE medical and dental benefit? Maybe you've recently downloaded the TRICARE Costs and Fees Sheet or TRICARE For Life Handbook? If so, share your feedback to help us improve your TRICARE benefit resources. Read the full article [here](#).



Action Alert: Tell Congress to End the Widow's Tax Now!

Background: More than 65,000 surviving military spouses and dependents are unjustly penalized because their loved ones made the ultimate sacrifice for our country.

Similar to life insurance, the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) is purchased through DOD by military retirees to ensure their surviving loved ones can

maintain a modest standard of living. When service members or veterans die from injuries or illnesses related to their military service, survivors are eligible for VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC). Despite the two payments being paid for two different reasons from two different federal departments, all monthly SBP retirement payments are reduced by \$1,319 — the current payout for DIC benefits. For many survivors, this offset completely eliminates their SBP payments and threatens their financial security. The recent tax law makes this situation worse by doubling the tax on dependents to whom parents transferred SBP benefits to avoid having to forfeit DIC benefits.

Take Action: Contact your members of Congress and urge them to end the injustice now! The message these aptly termed “Widow’s Tax” and “Kiddie Tax” sends to service members, veterans, and their families is that our government salutes their service while in uniform, but they cost too much if they die on active duty or from service-connected conditions.

[CLICK HERE TO TAKE ACTION](#)



~Follow Veterans-For-Change on MEWE Social Media~

Follow us on [MEWE](#)! We've move to [MEWE](#) and after three months, membership has grown and the support staff at [MEWE](#) is responsive, open to suggestions and works very hard to protect your personal information.

IMAGINE A SOCIAL NETWORK WITH ALL THE FEATURES YOU LOVE AND NONE OF THE BS.

Where you are the customer to serve and not data to sell.

Where you share your real life and celebrate, not censor, diversity.

We know most people don't like change, however,

this new Social Media Site, MEWE.COM has no advertisers, truly respects privacy and protects your security far better than Face Book ever could. They also have a fantastic customer service group who actually does respond to your messages, suggestions, ideas and more!

We hope you will join us on this new site.

VETERANS-FOR-CHANGE

www.mewe.com/join/veterans-for-change

HOMELESS HEROES PROGRAM OF VETERANS-FOR-CHANGE

www.mewe.com/join/homelessheroesprogramofveterans-for-change

AMVETS GROUP

www.mewe.com/join/amvetsgroup

VETERANS SOCIAL GROUP

www.mewe.com/join/veteranssocialgroup

{USAVET} SUPPORTING GOD & ALL WHO SERVED OUR GREAT NATION

www.mewe.com/join/usavetsupportinggodallwhoserveandserve

AMERICANS FOR SOVEREIGNTY

www.mewe.com/join/americansforsovereignty



H.R. 303, the Retired Pay Restoration Act

On January 8, 2019, Representative Gus Bilirakis (FL) introduced H.R. 303, the Retired Pay Restoration Act.

This bill would extend concurrent receipt authority to longevity retirees with service-connected disabilities rated less than 50 percent disabling.

Under current law disabled veterans with longevity retirement from active military service who are also in receipt of a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability determination of 50 percent or higher may retain both military retirement pay and their compensation.

DAV strongly supports H.R. 303 as it would end the unfair policy of forcing many military longevity

retirees to forfeit some of their retired pay in order to receive equal amounts of disability compensation from the VA. This legislation is in accord with DAV Resolution No. 104 and would eliminate concurrent receipt for all longevity retirees.

Please use the prepared electronic letter or draft your own to urge your Representative to support and cosponsor H.R. 303. As always, we appreciate your support for DAV and your grassroots activism in participating in DAV CAN. Thank you for all you do for America's veterans and their families.

Take Action





TRICARE Beneficiary Bulletin #501

Listen to this week's podcast to hear about:

- Moving with TRICARE
- Mental Health Awareness Month
- TRICARE Plan Finder

Visit the Multimedia Center for this podcast and previous podcasts at www.tricare.mil/podcasts.



House Passes Blue Water Navy Act

By a vote of 410-0, the House on Tuesday unanimously passed H.R. 299, the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019. “The VFW salutes the united support of the House,” said VFW National Commander B.J. Lawrence. “Your vote will

positively impact thousands of lives, and it once again proves that taking care of veterans and their families is a nonpartisan issue.” Once signed into law, H.R. 299 will restore VA benefits to thousands of so-called Blue Water Navy Vietnam veterans who had their disability eligibility taken away after regulatory changes. Veterans exposed to Agent Orange while serving along the Korean DMZ will have an earlier start date to encompass the time frame when various defoliants were tested — from April 1, 1968, to Sept. 1, 1967. Benefits will expand to include children born with spina bifida due to a parent’s exposure in Thailand, as well as require VA to report on research being conducted on a broad range of conditions possibly related to service in Southwest Asia. The bill now moves to the Senate, which “failed to pass H.R. 299 in the previous Congress,” said Lawrence. “We cannot allow this to happen again, which is why I am urging every veteran, family member and advocate to contact their U.S. senators to get this bill passed and signed into law now!” **Contact your senators.**



VFW National Home for Children

How does your Post or District communicate to its membership? Is there a monthly newsletter, website or Facebook page? Please consider sharing information regarding your VFW National Home for Children. [Learn more](#) about who we help at the National Home.



S. 514, the Deborah Sampson Act to Improve VA Services for Women Veterans

Senator Jon Tester (MT), Ranking Member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, introduced S. 514, the Deborah Sampson Act. This legislation, a comprehensive measure addressing gender disparities, aims to improve and expand Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) programs and services for women veterans.

The bill would permanently authorize counseling for veterans recently separated from military service

and accompanying family members in group retreat settings, including in women-exclusive settings. It would extend the number of days, from seven to 14, VA may cover the cost of care for newborns of women veterans. It would also provide adoption assistance to veterans who have infertility conditions incurred or aggravated in the line of duty.

S. 514 aims to eliminate barriers to care by:

- Adding \$20 million to retrofit VA medical facilities to comply with environment of care deficiencies;
- Requiring every VA medical facility to have at least one full-time or part-time designated women's health provider on staff;
- Studying the staffing needs of Women Veteran Program Managers in addition to determining the need for a Women Veterans Ombudsman;
- Conducting mini-residency training for women's health providers;
- Requiring VA to create a training module for community providers specific to women veterans' unique medical needs;
- Providing support services for women veterans seeking legal assistance;
- Authorizing grants for organizations supporting women veterans and their families;

- Requiring VA to report on its use of various primary care models serving women veterans;
- Requiring VA to provide information on staffing levels of women's health providers including PACT team members and gynecologists;
- Requiring data collection and reporting on all VA programs serving veterans, by gender and minority status;
- Requiring VA to report on the availability of prosthetics for women veterans; and
- Centralizing all information for women veterans in one easily accessible place on VA's website.

DAV's 2018 report, [Women Veterans: The Journey Ahead](#) identified many of these gaps in VA programs for women and calls for comprehensive VA women's health services that appropriately recognize and honor their military service and sacrifices. This bill is also consistent with DAV Resolution No. 019, which supports enhanced medical services and benefits for women veterans.

Please contact your Senators to urge co-sponsorship and passage of S. 514. A letter has been prepared for this purpose or you may write your own to express your personal views.

As always, thank you for your advocacy and

support of our nation's women veterans.

Take Action



Lawsuit Filed over Display of Bible at Veterans Hospital

A Bible on display as part of a memorial at New Hampshire's veterans hospital should be removed because it is a violation of the First Amendment, a [U.S. Air Force](#) veteran said in a federal lawsuit May 7. The Bible was carried by a prisoner of war during World War II and became part of the Missing Man Table honoring missing veterans and POWs at the entranceway of the Manchester VA Medical Center. [The Department of Veterans Affairs](#) said May 7 the table was sponsored by a veterans group called the Northeast POW/MIA Network. Read more about the lawsuit [here](#).



Don't Cut Military Health Care Staff!

FRA has signed onto a letter, with other like-minded organizations, to members of the House and Senate Armed Services Committees asking Congress to delay and closely review proposed cuts of nearly 18,000 military medical billets from the current 130,000. The Defense Department's fiscal 2020 budget calls for the elimination of about 18,000 military medical positions, and FRA is concerned that such drastic cuts could impact access and quality of care for retirees, active duty members and their families. These proposed cuts could also impact combat casualty care capabilities.

Members are urged to use the [Action Center](#) to urge their legislators to delay and closely review these drastic cuts to military medical care staff.





H.R 445, Help Hire Our Heroes Act

On January 10, 2019, Representative Julia Brownley introduced H.R. 445, the Help Hire Our Heroes Act. This bill would amend the VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011 to make permanent the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP).

The VRAP was started in 2012 to provide training assistance to unemployed veterans between the ages of 35 and 60 who are no longer eligible for the GI Bill. It provided up to 12 months of training

benefits at community colleges and technical schools in occupations that the Department of Labor has identified as "high demand." Since funding for this program expired in March 2014, the VA has not been able to enroll new veterans in VRAP. This program gap means that thousands of older, qualified veterans have been unable to access the resources which could help them find work.

This bill would strike the end dates of the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program and would replace it with year to year authorizations. This bill is in accord with DAV Resolution No. 190 which seeks adequate funding and permanency for veterans' employment and training programs.

Please use the prepared letter to write to your Representative to cosponsor and support passage of H.R. 445, the Help Hire Our Heroes Act. Thank you for your efforts and support of the Commander's Action Network.

Take Action



A Change of Address May Mean New TRICARE Health Options

Are you and your family moving? Moving doesn't change your TRICARE eligibility. But it may change the TRICARE health care options available to you and your family. A change of address, such as moving to a new country, city, region, or ZIP+4 code is a TRICARE Qualifying Life Event.

Read the full article [here](#).



Houses passes H.R. 299 Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veteran Act by a vote of 410-0

VVA Applauds House Veterans Affairs Leadership for Introduction of H.R. 299, Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019

(Washington, D.C.) -- "On the eve of the House vote on H.R. 299, the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019, VVA applauds Veterans Affairs Chair Mark Takano (D-CA) and Ranking Member Dr. Phil Roe (R-TN) for their leadership and their deep resolve in ensuring our Blue Water Navy veterans receive the healthcare and benefits they have earned by virtue of their service during

the Vietnam War," said John Rowan, VVA National President. "We expect that our Senators in the 116th Congress will do the right thing and pass the bill when it appears before them."

H.R.299, the first bill introduced this Congress by Chair Takano, is similar to a bill that was passed unanimously in the House of Representatives last Congress but was stalled in the Senate by Sens. Mike Enzi (R-WY) and Mike Lee (R-UT), despite overwhelming bipartisan support. Members from both sides of the aisle will again vote to extend benefits to some 90,000 service members who served in the territorial waters off Vietnam and were exposed to Agent Orange.

"Contrary to the VA's assertions, noted Rowan, "we have the science that shows the pathways of exposure to this insidious herbicide." Earlier this year, VA Secretary Robert Wilkie voiced opposition to the legislation, reversing an earlier commitment by his predecessor, Dr. David Shulkin, to "do the right thing." Secretary Wilkie has now reversed his earlier position and has urged the administration not to appeal the U.S. Appeals Court decision in Alfred Procopio, Jr., V. Robert Wilkie, which will, in fact, restore healthcare and benefits to many veterans who served in the waters off Vietnam. It

will also extend benefits to veterans who served in Thailand and those who served along the DMZ in Korea at any time. "We applaud Secretary Wilke for his support in moving forward to assist Blue Water Navy Veterans," said Rowan.

In February 2002, the VA abruptly terminated benefits to the 534,300+ Blue Water U.S. Navy, Coast Guard, and FMF Marine veterans, thereby limiting the scope of the Agent Orange Act of 1991 to veterans who could provide proof of "boots on the ground" in Vietnam which encompassed ground forces and the inland rivers. Suddenly, offshore veterans stopped receiving VA health care and disability compensation. The Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act, when signed into law, will right this wrong.

Mokie Pratt Porter
Director of Communications
Vietnam Veterans of America



**CONTACT YOUR
MEMBERS OF CONGRESS!**

To Call your Representative:

202-225-2305

To Call your Senators:

202-224-3841 or 202-224-3553

To call Different Members of Congress:

202-224-3121

TOLL FREE: 866-272-6622

PLEASE... STOP Making Excuses!

www.veterans-for-change.org



**H.R. 96, to Provide Dental Care for
All Veterans Enrolled in Veterans
Health Care**

Chairwoman Julia Brownley of the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health introduced H.R. 96, legislation that would phase in eligibility for all Veterans enrolled in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for health care to receive dental care as a part of their medical benefits package.

The bill would require the VA Secretary to furnish dental care in the same manner as any other medical service, and defines a four-year implementation plan beginning with Veterans in priority groups one and two (Veterans with service-connected disabilities rated at 30 percent or more) in year one.

Dental care has been proven to be an important part of overall health care. Many private employers and state Medicaid programs provide it as part of a comprehensive health care package. Most clinicians agree there are strong associations between significant dental issues and other adverse systemic health outcomes.

Unfortunately gaps in coverage often affect people with lower incomes and complex health needs the most.

DAV Resolution No. 018 calls for the provision of comprehensive dental care to all service-connected disabled Veterans within the VA health care system. Therefore, DAV strongly supports this legislation.

Please use the prepared email or your own letter to ask your Representative in Congress to cosponsor H.R. 96.

Thank you for your support of the DAV's legislative priorities.

Take Action



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Going forward, community care will be easier to use, and Veterans will remain at the center of their VA health care decisions.

In addition to information VA has made available digitally, Veterans enrolled in VA health care can expect to receive a letter in the mail providing details on where to go for more information.

For more information about community care under the MISSION Act, visit

<https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/58621/new-eligibility-criteria-a-major-improvement-over-existing-rules/>.

Source:

<https://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=5235>



This World War II Vet Is Turning 100, and She'd Like a Birthday Card from You

World War II veteran Charlotte Schwid will be celebrating her 100th birthday on May 22 at the [Eagle River VFW Post 9785](#) in Alaska. The post is throwing her a big party! After graduating from the Riverside Hospital School of Nursing in Roanoke, Virginia, in 1940, Schwid enlisted in the Army and worked in a military hospital in Tidworth, England. She took care of D-Day patients near the end of the war, at a time when one nurse was assigned to 200 to 300 beds at a time. Send birthday cards to Schwid here: Khampheng Scott; C/O: Charlotte Schwid; 12110 Business Blvd. Ste 6; PMB 207; Eagle River, AK 99577. See photos of Schwid on [here](#).





TRICARE Beneficiary Bulletin #502

Listen to this week's podcast to hear about:

- TRICARE Publications Survey
- Benefits of Flossing and TRICARE Dental Program
- Substance Use Disorder and Treatment

Visit the Multimedia Center for this podcast and previous podcasts at www.tricare.mil/podcasts.





H.R. 840, the Veterans' Access to Child Care Act

Representative Julia Brownley introduced H.R. 840, the Veterans' Access to Child Care Act, authorizing the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to pay for or provide child care for veterans traveling to and returning from a VA facility for regular or intensive mental health treatment or necessary health care services. Veterans-particularly younger women veterans returning from recent deployments-have indicated that lack of child care is a significant barrier in accessing medically necessary mental health readjustment services.

VA reports that younger veterans demonstrate high usage rates of VA mental health care services and data shows women veterans are especially likely to make intensive use of such services. In a recent study, a third of veterans indicated an interest in access to child care services and 10 percent

reportedly have canceled medical appointments because they did not have child care. H.R. 840 would allow VA to pay for or otherwise furnish child care to those children for whom a veteran is the primary caretaker to allow the veteran to seek needed treatment.

DAV Resolution No. 173 supports VA's provision of child care services and assistance to veterans accessing needed VA health care, benefits, education, employment, rehabilitative or other specialized services offered.

Please help support passage of this important legislation by sending your representative the prepared letter or drafting your own version.

Thank you for your participation in the DAV Commander's Action Network and for your support of our nation's veterans.

Take Action

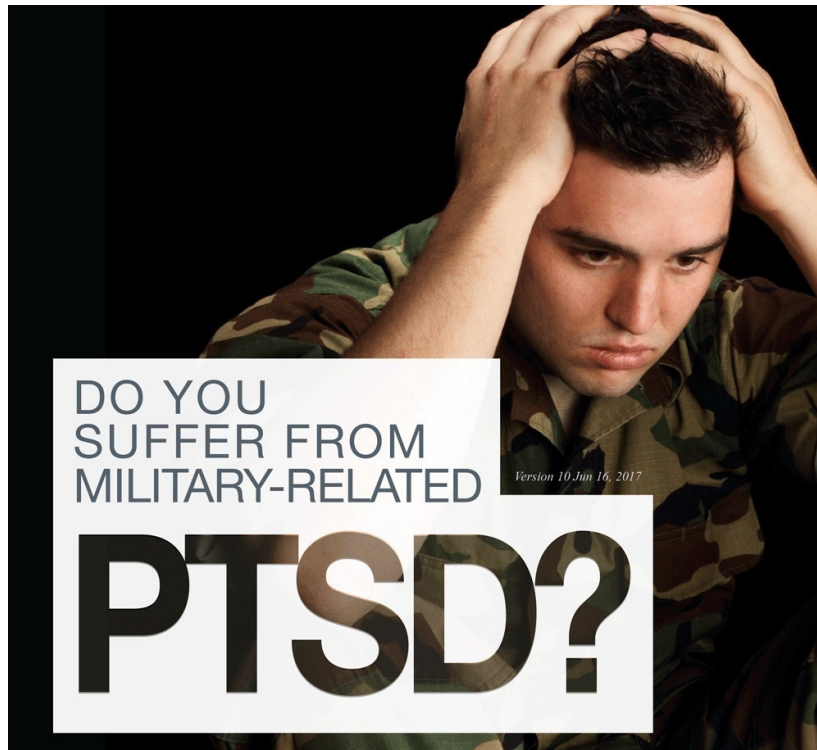




Two Services to Reimburse Military Spouse Relicensing Costs

The Army and Air Force announced new programs this week that will reimburse military spouse relicensing and recertification costs if a permanent change of station requires them to move across state lines. Both services will reimburse qualifying fees of up to \$500 if authenticated on or after Dec. 12, 2017. “This is a tremendous quality of life initiative,” said VFW National Commander B.J. Lawrence. Citing Defense Department [data](#) that puts the military spouse unemployment rate at 24 percent and underemployed rate at 31 percent, Lawrence said that any initiative that helps ease the stress of rotating assignments every few years is going to have a tremendous impact not only on military recruiting but on retention, as well. “The old adage that you recruit individuals but retain families is entirely true,” he said. “Our military has been actively engaged since the beginning of Operation Desert Shield in 1990, and with still no end in sight. The services must explore all avenues to keep the troops and their families happy, and this great initiative is something I hope the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard will quickly emulate.” Learn more about the [Army program](#), or the [Air Force program](#).





**Veterans Crisis Line:
1-800-273-8255 & Press 1
Ntl Call Center for Homeless Vets
1-877-424-3838**



**S. 179/H.R. 712, Legislation Calling
for Clinical Trials to Evaluate the
Effectiveness of Medical Cannabis
for Chronic Pain and PTSD**

These companion bills, S. 179 and H.R. 712, would direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA) to carry out a clinical trial of the effects of cannabis on health outcomes of adults with chronic pain and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

These measures would require the VA Secretary to conduct clinical trials that look into whether cannabis is able to reduce symptoms associated with chronic pain such as inflammation, sleep disorders, spasticity, and agitation and effects on the use or dosage of opioids, benzodiazepines or alcohol for veterans with PTSD.

Research is necessary to determine the safety and efficacy of any drug. At this time there are few definitive answers about risks and benefits associated with the use of cannabis on various medical conditions and illnesses. Research is necessary to help clinicians better understand the safety and efficacy of cannabis use for certain conditions common in the veteran population such as chronic pain and posttraumatic stress.

These bills are in line with DAV Resolution No. 023 which calls for comprehensive and scientifically rigorous research by the VA into the therapeutic benefits and risks of cannabis, cannabis-derived

products as a possible treatment for service-connected disabled veterans.

Thank you for your support of our nation's ill and injured veterans. Please use the letters below to ask your elected officials to support S. 179/H.R. 712.

Take Action



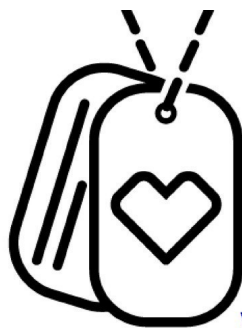
Widow's Tax Legislation Reaches Milestone, More Support Needed

The House and Senate have demonstrated momentous support to end the demeaning Survivor Benefits Plan (SBP) and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) Offset. H.R. 553, [the Military Surviving Spouses Equity Act](#), has reached the 290 cosponsor threshold which triggers full House consideration. On May 21 and 22, 2019, the VFW will join members of Congress, other veterans service organizations, and survivor organizations to storm Capitol Hill to urge immediate congressional action on the Widow's Tax. Events will be broadcast live at www.facebook.com/VFWFans. **Contact your members of Congress.** Join us on Twitter or on Facebook by copying and pasting: More than 65,000 surviving military spouses and dependents are unjustly penalized because their loved ones made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. America must honor military survivors, NOT tax them! Stand with the VFW and call on Congress to [#AxeWidowsTax](https://bit.ly/2LfrvGL) <https://bit.ly/2LfrvGL>.



**VA May Have Incorrect Addresses
for 25,000 Veterans**

The Department of Veterans Affairs has notified veterans in several states that the address the agency has on file for them may have been incorrectly changed. In social media postings and press releases, the VA has stated that both the Veterans Health Administration and Veterans Benefits Administration have "detected inconsistencies with how veterans' permanent mailing addresses are being updated and stored at VHA medical facilities and shared with the national enrollment system." The postings urge all veterans to verify that the information the VA has on file for them is correct. To do this, veterans should go to www.va.gov/change-address and verify that their mailing and home addresses, phone number and email information are all correct. Read more about the incorrect address problem [here](#).



**Our values
match yours.**



www.veterans-for-change.org





Blue Water Navy Act Awaits Vote by House of Representatives

The VFW is saluting the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs for unanimously passing H.R. 299, the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019. The VFW-supported bill, which must still be approved by the full House and Senate before going to the president, would restore VA benefits to thousands of Vietnam veterans, expand inclusive dates to those who served along the Korean DMZ, and benefit children born with spina bifida due to a parent's exposure to Agent Orange in Thailand. "Toxic exposure is toxic exposure, and denying benefits to any veteran just because of time or location denigrates their service and marginalizes their suffering," said VFW National Commander B.J. Lawrence. "I'm urging every veteran, family member and advocate to contact their respective members of Congress to get this bill passed and signed into law now!" Stay tuned to the Action Corps Weekly for updates on this important bill.

[Contact your members of Congress here.](#)



**Struggling with a Substance Use
Disorder? TRICARE Has You
Covered**

As opioid overdose deaths continue to rise, the Department of Defense (DoD) continues to expand access to treatments for substance use disorder (SUD). This includes medication assisted treatment (MAT), and other mental health services. Although the number of military members abusing substances is lower than the national average, substance use is also a problem for TRICARE beneficiaries. TRICARE provides a wide range of effective treatments for substance use disorders.

Read the full article [here](#).



Bill That Would Grant Benefits to Blue Water Navy Vets Is Headed for a Vote

House members moved May 8 to accelerate extending disability benefits to "blue water" Vietnam veterans and expand eligibility to more troops, including those who served in the Korean demilitarized zone in the late 1960s. A bill proposed by the House Veterans Affairs Committee would direct the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide disability compensation for veterans who served on Navy ships off Vietnam and have been diagnosed with one of 14 diseases presumed related to Agent Orange exposure. The bill, H.R. 299, now goes to the House for a vote. Members of the Senate, meanwhile, are considering similar legislation proposed by Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-New York. Read more about the bill on [here](#).





H.R. 444, Reduce Unemployment for Veterans of All Ages Act of 2019

On January 10, 2019, Representative Julia Brown (CA) introduced H.R. 444, the Reduce Unemployment for Veterans of All Ages Act of 2019.

Currently, veterans with service-connected disabilities or other employment handicaps are able to receive career development services through VA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment program up to 12 years after they separate from military service. H.R. 444 would remove the limiting 12-year-period for eligibility.

In agreement with DAV Resolution No. 310, we support this legislation to eliminate the 12-year-period of eligibility. By removing the limited eligibility period, H.R. 444 will provide veterans the flexibility to receive the support they have earned and

deserve throughout their lifetime and thus help reduce unemployment for service-connected veterans.

Please use the prepared electronic letter or draft your own to urge your Member of Congress to support and cosponsor H.R. 444.

Standing up for veterans is vital and we thank you for your advocacy. Your actions help make DAV a highly influential and effective organization in Washington. Thank you for all you do for America's veterans and their families.

Take Action



T-Mobile is Hiring Vets – Multiple Locations

Be a part of something big. View jobs now. Be a part of something big. [View jobs now.](#)



Fiscal Year 2020 Defense Funding Bill

On Tuesday, the House Appropriations Committee released their first draft of the 2020 defense funding bill. In total, the proposal would provide \$690.2 billion in new discretionary funds for the Department of Defense, an increase of \$15.8 billion above fiscal year 2019. Of that total number, \$622.1 billion would be allocated for base funding, an increase of \$15.6 billion above fiscal year 2019, and \$68.1 billion for Overseas Contingency Operations funding, an increase of \$165 million. Other provisions in the bill include a prohibition on transferring F-35s to Turkey and \$21.7 billion for 11 Navy ships. Additionally, it would provide funds for the advance procurement of the first Columbia-class submarine and three Virginia-class submarines. [Learn more about the fiscal year 2020 defense funding bill.](#)





We will always be our
Brothers Keeper!



In First, Pentagon to Release Information on Military Dependent Suicides

The Pentagon will release a new annual report on active-duty military suicides this year — one that will provide complete data for 2018 as well as a first-ever look at suicides among military family members. In a hearing before the House Oversight and Reform national security subcommittee May 8, Navy Capt. Mike Colston, the Defense Department's mental health director, and Defense Suicide Prevention Office Director Karin Orvis said the new report will allow for more timely publication of suicide rates, which are a more accurate measure of trends than yearly tallies. Currently, the DoD publishes quarterly reports of the number of deaths in the previous three months, with the year-end data included in the fourth-quarter report for the calendar year. Read more about the upcoming release [here](#).



Your VA Loan Benefit is Worth up to \$484k Financing

Your VA loan benefit is ready to use and is worth up to \$484k financing. [Find lenders now](#).





Never forget our fallen!



**Pell Grant Limits Increase While
Student Loan Interest Rates
Decrease This July**

There is good news for college students using federal financial aid this year: Pell Grant maximums will increase as, for the first time in three years, student loan interest rates will decrease. The maximum amount for [Federal Pell Grants](#) issued between July 1, 2019, and June 1, 2020, will rise to \$6,195, an increase of \$100 from the 2018-2019 rate. Federal Pell Grants usually are awarded only to undergraduate students and are based on financial need.

Federal student loan interest rates are also changing on July 1, 2019. The interest rate for new undergraduate loans issued on or after July 1 will drop from 5.05% to 4.53%. While that doesn't sound like much, the difference could be thousands of dollars over the normal lifetime of a student loan. The interest rates for graduate loans will also drop from 6.60% to 6.08%, and PLUS loans (which are usually issued to the parents of a student or to graduate or professional students) will drop from 7.60% to 7.08%. Read more about the rate changes [here](#).





H.R. 553, Military Surviving Spouses Equity Act

On January 15, 2019, Congressman Joe Wilson introduced H.R. 553, the Military Surviving Spouses Equity Act. This bill would eliminate an unfair offset placed on many surviving spouses of service members who pass away during active duty or spouses of retirees who die of a service-connected disability.

Currently, purchased Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) annuities are offset by the amount of any benefit payable under the VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) program. SBP is not a government gratuity benefit; rather, it is a type of insurance purchased out-of-pocket by military retirees for their survivors while DIC is a VA benefit intended to provide spouses of veterans who died from a service-connected condition some semblance of financial security. Thousands of survivors of military retirees are adversely affected

by this unfair offset between SBP and DIC benefits.

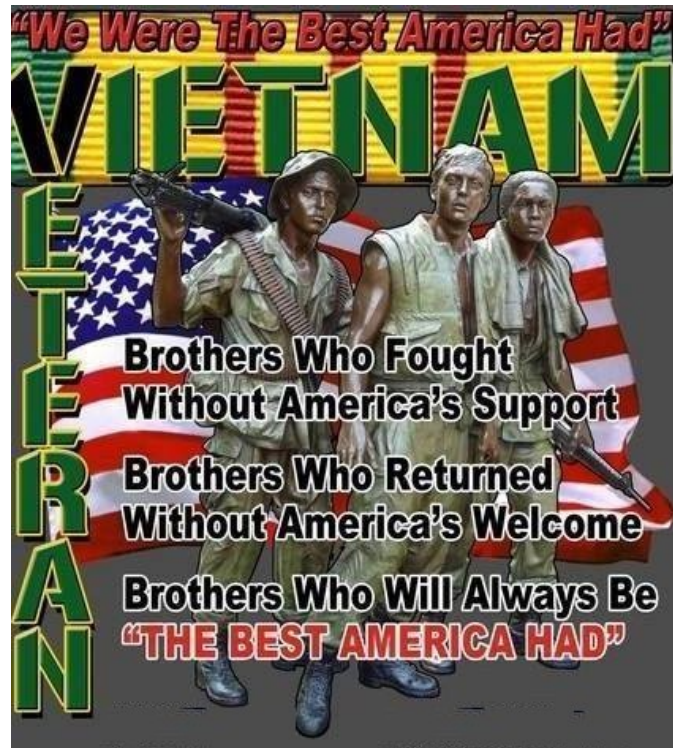
Upon the retiree's death, the SBP annuity is paid monthly to eligible beneficiaries; however, if a surviving spouse is also entitled to DIC, the SBP benefit is reduced by the amount of the DIC benefit (currently \$1,283.11 per month). In general, when DIC benefits are payable but the monthly rate is equal to, or greater than, the monthly SBP payment amount, beneficiaries lose the entire SBP payment.

This bill would eliminate the offset and allow surviving spouses to receive both the purchased SBP annuities and their earned DIC benefits. This bill is in accordance with DAV Resolution No. 014, which calls for Congress to repeal the offset between SBP annuity payments and DIC payments.

Please use the prepared letter to write your Representative to cosponsor and support passage of H.R. 553, the Military Surviving Spouses Equity Act. Thank you for your efforts and support of the Commander's Action Network.

Take Action





Links to Other Stories

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.

1. ['My dad died at their hands': WWII Vet fatally injured in VA nursing home](#)
2. [Brewing Capitol Hill fight: Is VA broken or under attack?](#)
3. [Crackdown at Lejeune: Inside the 2nd Marine](#)

Division commander's controversial call for discipline

4. Frustrations mount over lack of progress on preventing Veterans' suicide
5. Ginnie Mae considering changes to VA loan rules as refinances continue to soar
6. Glaucoma? Meet VA doctor working to improve vision
7. Having trouble finding a job? Check out this 'Match.com for Veteran employment'
8. How the Xbox Adaptive Controller is helping VA medical centers support Veterans
9. Lawmakers Call for Action on Burn Pit Exposure
10. Meet the women helping VA work for women Veterans
11. New VA clinic in North Charleston marks changing times for SC Veterans
12. Recent series of campus suicides raise complicated questions for VA
13. Supreme Court delays final ruling on 'blue water' Vietnam Veterans benefits
14. Ten things most Veterans don't know about VA home loans
15. This week in Congress: Vets suicides in the spotlight
16. Tricare approved this disabled airman's surgery, then stuck him with a \$46K bill

17. VA and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services join to strengthen safety surveillance for medications issued to Veterans
18. VA and Cigna partner to help prevent opioid misuse and improve treatment of Veterans with chronic pain
19. VA celebrates Women's Health Week with events at medical centers
20. VA privatization latest battleground for congressional rising stars
21. VA publishes Code of Integrity ethical standards for its Health Care Administration employees
22. VA's suicide prevention campaign 'Be There' kicks off in Times Square
23. Veteran found dead under Columbia bridge to get final salute after he was 'unclaimed'
24. Veterans Affairs To Renegotiate AFGE Collective Bargaining Agreement
25. WWII Vet wants Army to upgrade discriminatory discharge to 'honorable,' nearly 75 years after expelling him

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



**Senate Confirmation Hearing for
Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs**

On Thursday, the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs held a hearing to discuss the nomination of James M. Byrne to be Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs. Byrne has more than 20 years of public service experience, including service as a deployed Marine infantry officer and a U.S. Department of Justice international narcotics prosecutor. Committee members questioned the nominee on VA's plans to implement the VFW-supported VA MISSION Act, VA's plan to provide benefits to Blue Water Navy veterans, and VA's suicide prevention efforts. [Watch the hearing](#), which starts at the 18:30 mark.



H.R. 1182, Veterans' Access to Acupuncture Services

HR 1182, Acupuncture for Our Heroes Act would provide access to acupuncture for veterans enrolled in the Department of Veterans Affairs health care system. It would provide such care at a

minimum of one VA medical center in each veterans' integrated service network and ensure access to such services for certain conditions by contract without need for the veteran to have a referral for such care.

DAV supports complementary and integrative medical practices such as acupuncture as part of a comprehensive medical benefits package under DAV Resolution No. 277. Veterans have increasingly sought such treatments as a means of providing relief from conditions that have not been effectively addressed by more conventional medical practices and to decrease or avoid the use of controlled substances, such as opioids, that have the potential for harmful side effects, including addiction.

Please consider sending the letter prepared below to encourage your Representative to support H.R. 1182.

Thank you for your support of our nation's wartime service-disabled veterans.

Take Action





CLICK HERE TO FOLLOW US ON TWITTER !



**Support SBP/DIC Offset Repeal (S.
622/H.R. 553)!**

Sen. Doug Jones (AL) has introduced legislation (S. 622) that repeals the SBP/DIC offset for survivors, sometimes referred to as the "military widows tax." Earlier, Rep. Joe Wilson (SC) introduced similar legislation in the House, the "Military Surviving Spouses Equity Act" (H.R. 553).

SBP and DIC payments are paid for different reasons. The Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) is purchased by the retiree and is intended to provide a portion of retired pay to the survivor. Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) is a special indemnity compensation paid to the survivor when a member's service causes his or her premature death. In such cases, the VA DIC should be added to the SBP the retiree paid for, not substituted for it. It should be noted as a matter of equity that surviving spouses of federal civilian retirees who are disabled veterans and die of military-service-connected causes can receive DIC without losing any of their federal civilian SBP benefits.

TAKE ACTION





VFW Calls for Return of War Memorabilia

The VFW is asking Vietnam veterans to search their war memorabilia for any artifacts that might help Vietnam to determine the fate of its estimated 300,000 MIAs, or may at least bring some comfort to their families. The call to action, which will be repeated at the upcoming 120th VFW National Convention in Orlando, Fla., is the result of requests for help from Vietnamese veterans organizations directly to VFW Junior Vice Commander-in-Chief Hal Roesch, who recently returned from a POW/MIA fact-finding trip to Vietnam, Thailand and Laos. Being requested are photos and detailed maps of battle sites or burial locations, as well as personal artifacts that may contain names, family photos and personal letters.

No weapons, please! Veteran-to-veteran initiatives generate goodwill and further assist the U.S. government's efforts to recover Americans missing from the war, where a total of 1,589 Americans remain missing; a number that includes 1,246 in Vietnam (North-452, South-794), 288 in Laos, 48 in Cambodia, and 7 in Chinese territorial waters. Please mail your memorabilia to Joe Davis, VFW Washington Office, 200 Maryland Avenue, NE, Washington, DC 20002. Everything collected will be turned over to the Vietnamese Embassy in Washington through the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency.





S. 374/H.R. 1092, the Servicemembers and Veterans Empowerment and Support Act of 2019

Senator Jon Tester (MT) and Representative Chellie Pingree (ME) introduced S. 374 and H.R. 1092, the Servicemembers and Veterans Empowerment and Support Act of 2019.

This legislation will codify VA regulations regarding the adjudication of claims for mental health conditions, including post-traumatic stress disorder, associated with experiencing Military Sexual Trauma (MST). It would also add technological abuse, defined as "behavior intended to harm, threaten, intimidate, control, stalk, harass, impersonate, or monitor another person, [...] that occurs via the Internet, through social networking sites, computers, mobile devices [...] to the types of trauma and resulting conditions for which survivors may seek benefits and health care. Finally, the bill

would require VA to re-establish specially trained teams to adjudicate MST-related claims for mental health conditions and to report annually to Congress to ensure that these claims are adjudicated equitably.

VA's regulations for adjudicating claims for mental health conditions stemming from MST allow the Department to consider sources such as a statement from police, a rape hotline, or corroborating reports from friends, relatives or roommates to substantiate a claim. However, in 2017 the Inspector General (IG) issued a report indicating VA had discontinued the specialized training and handling of MST-related cases which resulted in discrepancies in the outcome of many of these claims.

The IG reported it found that VA's manuals related to processing these cases were outdated and that more than half of the MST-related PTSD claims had been inappropriately developed and considered. This legislation will help to re-establish protocols for developing and adjudicating these cases thereby eliminating the disparity between awards for MST-related PTSD claims and other PTSD claims.

This bill is consistent with DAV Resolution No. 042

which calls for VA to conduct rigorous oversight of adjudication personnel who are responsible for evaluating disability claims associated with military sexual trauma and review of data to ensure existing policies are being faithfully followed and standardized in all VA regional offices.

Please ask your elected officials in Congress to cosponsor and support for final passage of S. 374/H.R. 1092.

Thank you for your support of the DAV CAN-Commanders Action Network.

Take Action



Office of Inspector General

1. Additional Actions Are Needed to Effectively Expand Management Oversight
2. DHS Should Address Limitations to Its Program to Secure Key Cities
3. Opportunities to Improve Compliance with Regulations and Enhance Tax Collections
4. USAID Supported Activities Overseas but Could Improve Funds Tracking and Response Planning



Urge Congress to Pass the Retired Pay Restoration Act

Background: Military retirees who have a service-connected disability rating below 50 percent have their retirement pay reduced, dollar for dollar, by the amount of disability compensation they receive. This demeaning tax, created by Congress to save money, forces those who have dedicated their careers to military service to make due without benefits they need to provide for their families.

Take Action: Contact your members of Congress and urge them to cosponsor the Retired Pay Restoration Act. Our nation is still at war. We must ensure that benefits earned through honorable service to this country are improved, not eroded.

TAKE ACTION



Protect Bankrupt Disabled Veterans from Losing Benefits

Sens. Tammy Baldwin (Wis.) and John Cornyn (Texas) have introduced the Honoring American Veterans in Extreme Need (HAVEN-S.679) bill to shield veterans' disability benefits from debt collectors when a veteran declares bankruptcy.

Under current law, when a disabled veteran declares bankruptcy debtors can seize their disability benefits because they are considered disposable income. Yet social security benefits are exempt from being included as disposable income. Disability benefits in any form are not taxable and therefore should not be considered disposable income. The legislative sponsors noted that it is unfair veterans may be forced to give up their disability benefits when declaring bankruptcy, while the general population receiving similar benefits from social security do not.

Sen. Baldwin believes this bill will help veterans with mental health issues by easing their financial burdens. Members are encouraged to weigh in on this issue by contacting their Senators through the [**FRA Action Center**](#) online.



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



S. 318, the VA Newborn Emergency Treatment Act

On February 4, 2019, Senator Patty Murray (WA) introduced S. 318, the VA Newborn Emergency Treatment Act. The bill would authorize the VA Secretary to provide payment for emergency transportation of a woman veteran's newborn who requires more specialized treatment at a newborn care facility. In some cases, women veterans are transferred with the newborn and payment is authorized by VA. However, VA believes it lacks clear authority to pay for the transportation of the newborn infant alone. This legislation would provide such authority.

DAV Resolution No. 019 calls for enhancing women veterans health care services. DAV

believes women veterans deserve a robust maternity care benefit that allows their infants initial coverage for care that would be covered under Medicaid and many private insurance plans. Maternity care is an important benefit to the significant portion of women veterans now under VA care. Many women veterans for whom VA coordinates maternity care are at high risk for pregnancy complications, including pre-term labor or low-birth weight newborns, because of service-connected conditions. Infants born to these mothers often require more specialized and intensive services after birth; however, not all hospitals have such services available and transportation for the infant, but not necessarily the mother, becomes necessary.

Please help us ensure that VA covers the expense of emergency transportation for newborns of women veterans. Use the letter below to ask your Senators to support this important measure.

Thank you for your support of America's disabled veterans and the Commander's Action Network.

Take Action



S. 785, the Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act

Jon Tester (MT), introduced S. 785, the Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act to improve eligibility and access to transitioning service members and veterans to federal programs such as transitional assistance programs and health care, including mental health care, to reduce suicide rates and improve mental health among veterans.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) mental health program experienced tremendous growth (86%) between 2005 and 2017. Troops returning from deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan required mental health care services including treatment for PTSD, substance use disorders, depression, and anxiety. During this time VA also identified an upward trend in suicides among veterans.

Homelessness and unemployment were considered contributing factors, particularly for some subgroups in the veterans' population such as women and minorities.

The bill would:

- Improve access to transition services for veterans by extending VA health care eligibility to a year after discharge from military service;
- Create a grant program to help veterans obtain employment and help identify the many non-profit programs available to veterans in their communities;
- Create a new suicide prevention program to include new grant programs designed to reach veterans at risk of suicide who are not obtaining VA mental health care;
- Help facilitate post-traumatic growth services through community partners;
- Encourage peer support by organizing education and awareness of Buddy Checks;
- Require VA to track and report on goals and objectives in its suicide prevention plan and direct the Government Accountability Office to evaluate VA's case management program for veterans at high risk of suicide;
- Require VA to update guidelines on suicide

prevention including using gender specific risk factors and treatment options

- Require VA to create treatment guidelines for trauma comorbid with chronic pain and substance abuse; and
- Require certain oversight reports and improve authorities to assist in recruiting mental health providers and increasing veterans' access to telehealth.

The following resolutions lead DAV to strongly support this bill. DAV Resolution No. 293 supports program improvement and enhanced resources for VA Mental Health Programs, emphasizing the importance of timely access to mental health and readjustment services for transitioning service members. DAV Resolution No. 304 urges Congress to monitor programs in place to assist those service members transitioning to civilian life with access to appropriate federal programs.

Please contact your Senators to ask them to support this comprehensive bill to support our nation's veterans. Please use the letter prepared below or draft your own letter to ask for their support.

Take Action



1. Brodt Zenatti Holding LLC Recalls Karawan Brand Tahini Because Of Possible Health Risk
2. Deshi Distributors LLC Issues Alert on Undeclared Sulfites in Deshi “Golden Raisins”
3. Ethicon Recalls Circular Staplers for Insufficient Firing and Failure to Completely Form Staples
4. FDA Warns People with Diabetes and Health Care Providers Against the Use of Devices for Diabetes Management Not Authorized for Sale in the United States: FDA Safety Communication
5. GHSW, LLC Issues Allergy Alert On Undeclared Soy in Certain Salads, Wraps and Salad Bar Trays Sold at Select Whole Foods Market and Whole Foods Market 365 Stores
6. Novartis Issues Voluntary Nationwide Recall of Promacta® 12.5 mg for Oral Suspension Due to Potential Peanut Contamination
7. Seven Seas International USA, LLC Recalls Biltmore Smoked Sockeye Salmon Because of Possible Health Risk



H.R. 713, Provide Beneficiary Travel Funds to Veterans Seeking Specialized Treatment for Military Sexual Trauma

Representative Jackie Walorski introduced H.R. 713, a bill that would require the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to provide beneficiary travel for veterans seeking specialized outpatient or residential treatment at another VA facility for conditions related to military sexual trauma (MST).

DAV Resolution No. 138 recognizes the current VA policy on beneficiary travel is a barrier to some veterans obtaining appropriate care and calls for changes to improve veterans' access to specialized care for MST-related conditions.

One in four women and one in 20 men using VA health care services screen positive for MST. While all VA medical centers are required to offer

screening and related treatment for MST, about a third claim that staffing shortages compromise their ability to provide such care. Travel is often necessary for veterans to obtain the right type of specialized treatment in an environment veterans consider safe and appropriate to discuss sensitive issues. These perceptions are often the basis for choosing a provider and/or group of their own gender or where they feel most comfortable.

Please write your Representative today to urge co-sponsorship and enactment of H.R. 713. As always, thank you for your efforts and for participating in the Commander's Action Network.

Take Action



Tax & Credit Information



1. April 2019 Recap
2. Businesses should review depreciation deductions rules
3. Consumers have few legal options for protecting privacy
4. During Small Business Week, IRS spotlights expanded tax benefits for depreciation and expensing
5. During Small Business Week, IRS urges businesses to make estimated tax payments so they don't owe
6. IRS highlights credits and deductions for businesses during Small Business Week
7. It pays for employers to file payroll taxes electronically
8. Keylogger
9. Labs Cybercrime Tactics and Techniques report finds businesses hit with 235 percent more threats in Q1
10. Many tax-exempt organizations have until May 15 to file information returns; IRS warns against including personal data
11. March 2019 Recap

12. New requirement applies to any business seeking a tax ID number; IRS offers data security tips during National Small Business Week
13. Recapping highlights from National Small Business Week 2019
14. Small businesses can benefit from deducting vehicle costs on their taxes
15. SQL Injection
16. Taking care of business: recordkeeping for small businesses
17. US Congress proposes comprehensive federal data privacy legislation—finally
18. Who is managing the security of medical management apps?



H.R. 663/S. 191, Burn Pits Accountability Act

On January 17, 2019, Representative Tulsi Gabbard (HI) introduced H.R. 663, the Burn Pits Accountability Act in the House and Senator Amy

Klobuchar (MN) introduced a companion bill, S. 191, in the Senate.

Since the Persian Gulf War, a common waste disposal practice at military sites outside the United States was the use of burn pits. Smoke from these pits contained toxic substances that may have short- and long-term health effects, especially for those who were exposed for longer periods. Many service members reported acute symptoms of respiratory or eye irritation, gastrointestinal distress, or rashes during or shortly after exposure, but the research thus far has been inconclusive about whether there are longer lasting consequences to these exposures as many veterans, who are still struggling with health conditions that arose during or after military service believe.

Both bills would require the Secretary of Defense to ensure that periodic health assessments ascertain whether a service member has been at a location when an open burn pit was used or exposed to toxic airborne chemicals. It will further require the Secretary to enter into an information sharing agreement with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA). If a service member was exposed, the VA Secretary will enroll the member into the VA

Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry, unless the member elects not to enroll.

In agreement with DAV Resolution No. 069, DAV supports H.R. 663 and S. 191-legislation that would ensure that exposure to burn pits and airborne chemicals are recognized by both the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs.

Thank you for all you do for America's wartime service-disabled veterans and their families.

Take Action



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VFC WEEKLY NEWSLETTER !*



H.R. 1963, Expanding Care for Veterans Act

Like other Americans, veterans have grown increasingly interested in complementary treatment options to enhance wellness or address symptoms that are not well managed with conventional medicine. A 2014 study found that service members experienced chronic pain at a much

higher rate (44% post combat) than the general population (26%). Veterans were also far more likely to be prescribed opioids compared to non-veterans (15% v. 4%) to manage their chronic pain. Many veterans view complementary and integrative treatment approaches as a means to limiting or avoiding the use of opioids and other pharmaceuticals that may have adverse side effects.

Based on these findings, Representative Julia Brownley (CA) introduced comprehensive legislation aimed at expanding veterans' access to complementary and integrative medicine in VA medical centers.

The Expanding Care for Veterans Act, H.R. 1963, would:

- Require VA to develop a plan for expanding delivery and integration of complementary medicine within the Department;
- Create a 3-year pilot program to add complementary and integrative practices to the existing health benefits package in at least 15 VA medical centers and evaluate the effectiveness of these interventions for veterans with mental health issues, chronic pain and other debilitating

conditions;

- Require a study to determine barriers to veterans' receipt of and administrators and clinicians' delivery of complementary and integrative health practices furnished by or through VA; and
- Create a grant program to complement services of individuals receiving counseling through VA's Vet Center programs.

Please write your Representative today to urge co-sponsorship and enactment of H.R. 1963. As always, thank you for your advocacy by participating in the DAV CAN (Commander's Action Network).

Take Action



MIA Update

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency has announced the identifications of three American servicemen who had been missing and unaccounted for from Korea and WWII. Returning home for burial with full military honors are:

Army Cpl. Charles S. Lawler was a member of Company M, 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment,

1st Cavalry Division, engaged against enemy forces near Unsan, North Korea. He was reported missing in action on Nov. 2, 1950, when he could not be accounted for by his unit. Interment services are pending. [Read about Lawler.](#)

Army Air Forces 2nd Lt. Toney W. Gochnauer was a member of the 425th Bombardment Squadron, 308th Heavy Bombardment Group, 14th Air Force, where he served as a copilot of a B-24J bomber aircraft. On Jan. 25, 1944, contact with his aircraft was lost shortly following takeoff while on a flight from Kunming, China, to Chabua, India. No communication could be established and the crew did not reach its destination. The eight crewmembers and four passengers were subsequently declared missing in action. Interment services are pending. [Read about Gochnauer.](#)

Army Pvt. Roy Brown, Jr. was a member of Company I, 126th Infantry Regiment, 32nd Infantry Division, when he was reported missing in action following engagement with enemy forces along the Soputa-Sananda Track, while defending a position known as the Huggins Roadblock, near Buna, Papua New Guinea. Interment services are pending. [Read about Brown.](#)



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