



★ ★ ★ LEGISLATIVE WEEKLY ★ ★ ★

August 15, 2025

WEEKLY GRASSROOTS NEWSLETTER

This week, we are asking Legionnaires to contact Congress to request support for the *SHIPS for America Act*! This legislation would improve the maritime security of the United States. This crucial domain has been overlooked for too long. Our members are clear in their belief that the US needs sustained investment in our national security to reduce the chances of armed conflict. *The American Legion supports this legislation, and we appreciate all the emails you have sent so far.*

Go to the [Action Center](#) to quickly email a letter of support to your members of Congress.

Have you had a recent meeting or phone call with your member of Congress? Report your contact today! Click [here](#) to register your Congressional contact and demonstrate the power of The American Legion advocacy in action.

NEED TO FIND YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS?

<https://www.votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/Address>

TOP GRASSROOTS DEPARTMENTS

Wisconsin	141
Florida	131
Kansas	128
New York	127
Tennessee	118

These are the number of e-mail messages these Departments sent to Congress on the VoterVoice campaigns this past week.

Register more participants in your Department to increase the number of veteran voices advocating on the Hill!

<https://www.votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/Register>

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

The American Legion's 106th National Convention is from August 22-28 in Tampa Bay, Florida. To stay up to date on information, schedules, and more, go to the information page [here](#).

The Legislative Commission will meet Saturday August 23rd in Tampa Bay to hear updates from the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees and discuss best-practices for conducting meetings with your members of Congress. This meeting will take place at the Marriott Water Street, Grand Salon G-H on the second floor. The agenda for the meeting is as follows:

9:00 AM: Call to Order – Matthew Shuman (AZ), Chairman

9:10 AM: Opening Remarks – Chairman Shuman

9:25 AM: Legislative Update Brief

10:00 AM: Congressional Staff Panel -- HVAC Minority & Majority and SVAC Minority Staff

10:45 AM: BREAK

11:00 AM: Training & Advice – Secretary Patrick Murphy

12:00 PM: Lunch

1:00 PM: Roll Call & Remarks

1:15 PM: Final Presentations

2:15 PM: Chairman Announcements, Closing Prayer, Salute to the Colors – Chairman Shuman

2:30 PM: Adjourn

****There will be no Grassroots Newsletters on August 22 or August 29 due to National Convention****

**VA PROCESSES MORE CLAIMS IN A SINGLE YEAR THAN EVER
BEFORE**

This article's original publication can be found [here](#)



Backlog of veterans waiting for VA benefits down 37% since Jan. 20.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs announced today it has processed more disability benefits compensation & pension ratings claims in a single year than ever before.

In fiscal year 2024, VA processed a total of 2,517,519 ratings claims, and this year the department reached an all-time high of 2,524,115 ratings claims issued Aug. 8 — nearly two months before the end of Fiscal 25.

In July, VA completed more than 300,000 ratings claims in a single month for the first time ever. VA is processing claims faster in Fiscal 25 than in Fiscal 24, completing them 17.8 percent faster even as receipts are 10 percent higher than this time last year.

“Under President Trump, VA is making major improvements to better serve Veterans, and this announcement underscores that fact,” said VA Secretary Doug Collins. “We look forward to implementing more reforms to increase customer service and convenience for those we are charged with serving.”

Other highlights of VA's accomplishments this year include:

- VA has opened [16 new health care clinics around the country](#).

- Since Jan. 20, VA has offered veterans nearly 1 million appointments outside of normal operating hours. These early-morning, evening, and weekend appointments are giving veterans more timely and convenient options for care.
- VA is spending [an additional \\$800 million](#) on infrastructure improvements to ensure VA facilities provide safe and effective patient care.
- VA has made it [easier](#) and [faster](#) for VA-enrolled veterans to access care from non-VA providers at the department's expense.
- VA has implemented [major reforms](#) to make it easier for survivors to get benefits.
- VA is [accelerating the deployment](#) of its integrated electronic health record system.
- VA partnered with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to identify and recover [\\$106 million in duplicate billing](#).
- VA has brought tens of thousands of VA employees [back to the office](#), where VA can work better as a team to serve veterans.

VA encourages all veterans to visit [VA.gov](#) to learn more and apply for the care and benefits they have earned.

LAWMAKERS SEEK A DEDICATED VETERANS FRAUD PREVENTION OFFICER AT THE VA

This article's original publication can be found [here](#)

The Department of Veterans Affairs would have to establish an officer to assist with fraud and scam response and prevention among veterans under a new bill filed Tuesday in the Senate.

The Veterans Scam and Fraud Evasion, or VSAFE, Act would create a job focused on prevention, reporting and incident response plans in the wake of a 2023 Federal Trade Commission review that found veterans and military retirees reported \$350 million in losses to fraud. That is up from a 2021 report that showed veterans lost roughly \$177 million to scams.

Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, introduced the bill alongside Sens. Maggie Hassan, D-N.H., John Boozman, R-Ark., and Angus King, I-Maine. Rep. Ken Calvert, R-Calif., introduced the bill in February in the House and the legislation has gained 10 cosponsors.

"Texas is proudly home to more veterans than any other state, and it is imperative that we do everything in our power to protect our nation's heroes from predatory scams," Cornyn said in a statement.

While the VA already offers veterans resources, such as a hotline and website to report veteran-specific scams, this bill would establish a veterans scam and fraud evasion officer and offer more communication within the VA and with veterans. The job is also expected to improve coordination between government agencies.

Roughly 152,000 veterans reported fraud to the FTC in 2023, with about 31% reporting that they lost money in the scam. It is the largest type of military fraud. The next largest category, active-duty service members, made more than 16,000 reports for a loss of about \$52 million.

“With scammers increasingly targeting our veterans, we should ensure they have advocates in their corner helping them avoid or mitigate any potential harm and providing helpful resources to fight back,” Boozman said in a statement.

Some of the most common scams among veterans include benefit payment redirection, which occurs when someone gets hold of a veteran’s personal information and gains control of email or bank accounts, according to the VA. Another involves convincing veterans to move their pension benefits into false trusts or annuity products.

To avoid scams, the VA recommends disconnecting any phone calls where the caller demands money or personal information and to verify an organization’s authenticity before making any requested payments.

LEGIONNAIRE OF THE WEEK

To recognize the weekly accomplishments of our Legionnaires, we will spotlight an individual every week. These individuals demonstrate exceptional grassroots activism by meeting with/contacting their Congressional Representative/Senator to advocate for veterans. Efforts like these truly make a difference and give veterans a voice in Congress.

Kathryn Bates, Washington

Kathryn, thank you for your steadfast advocacy of Legion priorities; we are honored to name you Legionnaire of the Week!

Last week, Kathryn attended a ten-person roundtable discussion about veterans’ issue held by Rep. Emily Randall in Tacoma. They discussed various issues around VA health care accessibility and slowdowns/stoppages due to the reduction in force at the VA. They also discussed the lack of services in the vast area of Washington, as well as

lack of transportation for veterans living far away from VA facilities. The Congresswoman took many notes, as did three members of her staff that were present, including one from her DC office.

Thank you, Kathryn, for your report and the time you have dedicated to the Legion's legislative priorities.

GRASSROOTS INFORMATION

Interested in what the Legion is advocating for in Congress? Check out our [information papers and Legislative priorities](#). This is a great starting point for a conversation with your elected officials!

As part of our ongoing Grassroots efforts, LegDiv staff is available to provide **Grassroots Training** tailored to the hosting Department's needs. If you are interested in hosting a Grassroots training event, please contact grassroots@legion.org or ejohnson@legion.org.

You can find relevant legislation and the Legion's stance on them in the [key legislation section of VoterVoice](#).

Register for Action Alerts today at
<https://www.votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/Register>



UPCOMING CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS

As of 8/15, the following hearings are scheduled:

- Friday, August 22, 11:00 AM CST: Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs --
"Separating Fact from Fiction: Exploring Alternative Therapies for Veterans' Mental Health" at **American Village Liberty Hall 3727 Highway 119, Montevallo, AL, 35115**

HVAC hearings can be viewed at: [Calendar Home | House Committee on Veterans Affairs](#)

SVAC hearings can be viewed at: [Hearings - U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs](#)

HASC hearings can be viewed at: [Hearings – House Armed Services Committee](#)

SASC hearings can be viewed at: [Hearings – U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services](#)

[View The American Legion Legislative Handbook Here](#)