



## ★ ★ ★ LEGISLATIVE WEEKLY ★ ★ ★

November 21, 2025

### WEEKLY GRASSROOTS NEWSLETTER

This week, we are asking Legionnaires to contact Congress to urge them to *Include Section 1092 in the Fiscal Year 2026 National Defense Authorization Act!* This legislation would update and preserve the **Chaplains Hill Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery**. Due to unclear language in past NDAA's, Arlington National Cemetery officials have delayed updates and preservation efforts of the memorial. This legislation would ensure that previous mandates for maintaining the memorial are carried out.

*The American Legion appreciates 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.

\*\*\*There will be NO Grassroots Newsletter next week due to the holiday. Newsletters will resume on Friday, December 5.\*\*\*

### NEED TO FIND YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS?

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

### TOP GRASSROOTS DEPARTMENTS

Kansas	392
Wisconsin	334

<b>Tennessee</b>	<b>251</b>
<b>New York</b>	<b>155</b>
<b>West Virginia</b>	<b>98</b>
<b>Virginia</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>Indiana</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>Texas</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>Ohio</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>Alaska</b>	<b>65</b>

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>

## **VA HOUSES LARGEST NUMBER OF HOMELESS VETERANS IN SEVEN YEARS**



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

The Department of Veterans Affairs today announced that it permanently housed 51,936 homeless Veterans across the country in fiscal year 2025.

That number is 4,011 more Veterans than VA housed [last year under the prior administration](#).

It's also VA's best performance since it began tracking the number of individual Veterans permanently housed instead of the total number of permanent housing placements, ensuring a more accurate count of the number of Veterans helped.

The Biden Administration began using this new methodology in 2022, and when applied retroactively to 2019, the numbers look like this:

FY	Permanent Housing Placements	Unique Veterans Housed
FY 2025	53,839	51,936
FY 2024	51,124	47,925
FY 2023	48,059	46,051
FY 2022	41,208	39,868

FY 2021	39,637	38,401
FY 2020	45,397	44,048
FY 2019	49,462	48,133

“This is life-changing and in many cases life-saving work,” said VA Secretary Doug Collins. “We are proud of the progress VA is making to get Veterans off the streets and are redoubling our efforts to continue this momentum moving forward.”

In May 2025, VA took bold action to reduce Veteran homelessness by launching its [Getting Veterans Off the Street](#) initiative, in which every VA health care system across the country hosted dedicated outreach surge events to locate unsheltered Veterans and offer them immediate access to housing programs, health care, behavioral health services, and VA benefits.

Getting Veterans Off the Street helped move 25,065 unsheltered Veterans to interim (emergency and transition) or permanent housing.

These efforts complement President Trump’s May executive order to establish a [National Center for Warrior Independence for Homeless Veterans](#) on the West Los Angeles VA Medical Center campus. The [National Center for Warrior Independence for Homeless Veterans](#) aims to provide housing and support for up to 6,000 homeless Veterans from across the nation by 2028.

Every day, VA staff and community partners across the country help Veterans find [permanent housing](#) — such as apartments or houses to rent or own — often with subsidies to help make the housing more affordable. In some cases, VA teams and partners help Veterans end their homelessness by reuniting them with family and friends.

Visit [VA.gov/homeless](https://www.va.gov/homeless) to learn about housing initiatives and other programs supporting homeless Veterans.

## **VETERANS SET FOR \$272M BOOST**

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

More than \$272 million in potentially backlogged medical bills will be forgiven for U.S. [veterans](#) in a boost for ex-servicemen and women, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has announced.

### **Why It Matters**

It follows recent [VA funding reallocations](#) aimed at strengthening [veteran services](#) and comes amid broader scrutiny over how VA manages its infrastructure and [financial obligations to veterans](#).

These efforts come at a time when economic pressures weigh heavily on veterans with fixed incomes.

## **What To Know**

Thousands of former service members will be relieved of debts that accrued due to unprocessed copayments for community care.

An unprocessed copayment is a fixed fee for a healthcare service that has not yet been posted or finalized in the billing system.

Veterans racked up debts when their copayments were paused, starting in February 2023 under the Biden Administration, because of technical issues with the VA's [Program Integrity Tool](#) (PIT) initiative, the VA said in a press release.

The PIT is an internal platform intended to accurately consolidate community care claims data and ensure proper billing to both veterans and medical providers.

It is a tool that checks incoming healthcare claims and scores them for risk by flagging claims that might be suspicious, so VA can review them before paying.

Beginning November 11, 2025, VA resumed billing for current community care copayments and guaranteed that all previously backlogged amounts accumulated during the PIT hiatus would be forgiven, according to a [VA press release](#).

The relief measure is the latest in a series of funding shifts and grant programs [targeting veteran welfare](#).

And VA said the measure is intended to reduce administrative burdens and stress on [veteran](#) families.

Earlier this year, the VA [redirected \\$77 million previously slated for electric vehicle charging](#) infrastructure toward direct healthcare improvements and committed [\\$42 million in grants](#) to organizations supporting unhoused veterans.

## **What People Are Saying**

VA Secretary Doug Collins said: "Under President [Trump](#), VA is focused on providing the best possible care and maximum convenience for Veterans, families, caregivers and survivors. Taking these steps to efficiently resolve the backlog of copayments will prevent Veterans from being blindsided with mountains of medical debt that accumulated due to problems the Biden Administration failed to solve."

## What Happens Next

Those with [health care](#) or benefits questions can use the [Ask VA portal](#) or the VA chatbot for more information.

VA has stated it remains focused on care and convenience for veterans and will continue to respond to evolving needs amid future legislative and technological changes.

## **TRUMP EO REINSTATES GI BILL BENEFITS TO VETERANS DISCHARGED FOR REFUSING COVID VACCINE**

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

The Department of Veterans Affairs today announced that potentially thousands of Veterans who were discharged from service by the Biden Administration for refusing the COVID vaccine may regain eligibility for GI Bill education benefits.

In January, President Trump issued Executive Order 14184, [Reinstating Service Members Discharged Under the Military's COVID-19 Vaccination Mandate](#). Following that, Secretary of War Pete Hegseth directed the military departments to facilitate, among other things, discharge upgrades for individuals involuntarily separated solely for refusing to take the COVID-19 vaccine and whose service was characterized as less than fully honorable.

The Biden Administration separated more than 8,000 service members from the military because they had refused to comply with the Department of Defense (now Department of War) COVID vaccine mandate. More than half of these warriors received a discharge that was characterized as less than fully honorable, which may have made them ineligible for GI Bill education benefits.

Following Department of War reviews, 899 of these Veterans are now eligible for GI Bill education benefits, and thousands more could also regain GI Bill eligibility thanks to the executive order.

In September, VA sent letters to Veterans who have already received upgraded discharges to inform them of their potential eligibility for GI Bill education benefits. VA encourages all Veterans who were discharged from service for refusing the COVID vaccine to seek an upgraded status and apply for GI Bill benefits.

“The Biden Administration’s authoritarian COVID mandates upended the lives and livelihoods of thousands of service members and Veterans,” said VA Secretary Doug Collins. “We are proud to help implement President Trump’s executive order and make these Veterans whole again.”

“One of the most atrocious attacks on our military by the previous administration was the discharging and targeting of perfectly healthy warfighters who refused to take an experimental vaccine implemented by an illegal mandate. We must never let that happen again, and we must also right the wrongs of the past in order to restore trust. We at the Department of War and the VA are grateful for President Trump’s Executive Order reinstating GI Bill benefits for those veterans who were targeted for refusing the illegal COVID-19 vaccine mandate.” — Secretary of War Pete Hegseth.

#### **What Veterans should know:**

- Veterans who believe they were discharged inappropriately or believe their military personnel records still reflect an error or injustice (for example, separation under the COVID-19 mandate) may request review from a Discharge Review Board or Board for Correction of Military or Naval Records. For more information, visit the Military Department Review Boards website at <https://www.milreviewbds.mil/>.
- Once Veterans receive official notification that their discharge status has been upgraded to fully honorable, they can [submit a new education benefits claim](#) to VA.
- For more information on VA education benefits, visit [www.va.gov/education](http://www.va.gov/education) or call 888-GIBILL-1.

### **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.

#### **Linda Allen, Department of Florida**

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

This month, Linda attended the VIP VetFest Dinner at American Legion Post 418. She and Representative Gus Bilirakis were speakers at the event, discussing veteran legislation like the Major Richard Star Act and the SAVES Act. Linda also met with Representative Jeff Holcomb and Hernando County BOCC Ryan Ansler and Brian Hawkins to discuss veterans legislation.

*Thank you, Linda, 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!

*10 Tips for a Successful Meeting on Capitol Hill* and the *Legislative Meeting Worksheet* are now available for viewing and download on The Legion's website. You can find them and other legislative resources on the [Legislative Advocacy Resources & Toolkit page](#).

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](mailto:grassroots@legion.org) or [ejohnson@legion.org](mailto:ejohnson@legion.org).

On Thursday, November 20, a training session for National Legislative Council members was held via Teams. Over 80 members tuned in to learn about how to have a successful meeting with Congressional members and staff, best practices for grassroots engagement, and tips on how to utilize VoterVoice for all grassroots needs. If you are a member of the NLC and were unable to attend, please email [jfunari@legion.org](mailto:jfunari@legion.org) for a copy of the slideshow if you would like to review it.

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>**

## WASHINGTON CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Washington Conference is scheduled for Feb 28-Mar 5 at the Washington Hilton!

March 2 – Legislative Commission Meeting and Commander's Call

March 3 – 'Know Before You Go' briefs and Hill visits

March 4 – National Commander's Testimony to Joint session of Congress





## UPCOMING CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS

As of 11/21, there are **NO** hearings scheduled for next week. Congress will return on 12/01.

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](#)