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September 26, 2025
WEEKLY GRASSROOTS NEWSLETTER

This week, we are asking Legionnaires to contact Congress to request support for the *Shipbuilding and Harbor Infrastructure for Prosperity and Security (SHIPS) Act!* This legislation aims to improve the maritime security of the United States. Our members served the nation in wartime and know the dangers of poor readiness. We cannot let the burden of these security failures fall on our service members. *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

Florida	347
Kansas	297
Texas	289
Wisconsin	280
New York	256

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!

TAKANO, LOFGREN, NADLER, CORREA, VARGAS, RUIZ, RADEWAGEN, AND SALAZAR REINTRODUCE BIPARTISAN VETERAN SERVICE RECOGNITION ACT

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

On September 24, Reps. **Mark Takano** (CA-39), Zoe Lofgren (CA-18), Jerry Nadler (NY-12), Lou Correa (CA-46), Juan Vargas (CA-52), Raul Ruiz (CA-25), Amata Coleman Radewagen (AS-AL), and Maria Elvira Salazar (FL-27) reintroduced the *Veteran Service Recognition Act*. In the Senate, Senator Alex Padilla (D-CA) is introducing companion legislation.

The *Veteran Service Recognition Act* would allow noncitizen servicemembers to apply for naturalization during basic training, establish a review process for those who are in removal proceedings, and provide an opportunity for noncitizen veterans who have been removed or ordered removed, and who have not been convicted of a serious crime, to obtain legal permanent residence.

"If you are willing to raise your right hand, put on the uniform, and defend this country, you should have a clear path to citizenship," **said Rep. Mark Takano, Ranking Member of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs**. "The *Veteran Service Recognition Act* makes good on that promise, and it gives us a way to bring home veterans who served honorably but were deported. Standing up for our veterans has always been bipartisan, and this bill carries that tradition forward."

"The men and women who risk their lives to serve our country should not have to worry about their immigration status when they get home," **said Rep. Nadler**. "No matter where they were born, our veterans deserve the utmost respect and should be honored for their bravery and sacrifice, and that includes providing them a path to citizenship. I am proud to join Representative Takano in reintroducing the *Veteran Service Recognition Act*."

"Immigrants have valiantly served in our nation's military since its founding," **said Rep. Lofgren**. "Those who put their life on the line for our country should not be facing the possibility of deportation. I'm proud to be re-introducing the bipartisan *Veteran Service Recognition Act* with my colleagues, so that Congress rights these wrongs and ensures that noncitizen veterans are protected and can access the care and benefits that they've earned."

“If you put your life on the line for our country, you deserve the right to stay in our country,” **said Rep. Ruiz.** “That’s why the *Veteran Service Recognition Act* works to stop the deportation of noncitizen servicemembers and ensures they have due process here in America and a fair chance at citizenship. With today’s introduction of the *Veteran Service Recognition Act*, we are one step closer to making sure noncitizen veterans are never treated as second-class veterans.”

“Our nation’s veterans served with honor, and they should be treated with respect and dignity regardless of immigration status,” **said Rep. Vargas.** “The *Veteran Service Recognition Act* is an important step towards giving noncitizen veterans a pathway to citizenship in the country they put their lives on the line for, and I’m honored to be an original cosponsor of this legislation.”

“Veterans put their lives on the line to protect our nation and the ideals it represents,” **said Rep. Correa.** “This legislation honors that service by making it easier for active duty servicemembers to become citizens and creating a pathway to legal resident status for U.S. Veterans. Fighting for the United States is the ultimate act of patriotism—let’s deliver our vets the justice and equality they deserve.”

“Thank you to our many U.S. Service Members who volunteer from our closest allies and Freely Associated States,” **said Rep. Radewagen.** “After their service, it is common sense and good policy for these Veterans to be able to remain as permanent residents or pursue citizenship if they choose. They strengthened our military and strengthened the country. All our veterans showed commitment to the country through service, in turn we as a nation have a commitment to support our veterans. Thank you Congressman Takano for leading this effort.”

“All members of our Armed Forces deserve to be treated with dignity and respect,” **said Rep. Salazar.** “Noncitizen veterans, just like their American peers, make the ultimate sacrifice in service of the United States. I’m proud to reintroduce this legislation with Congressman Takano, to streamline the naturalization process for noncitizen veterans and provide due process for those who were wrongfully deported.”

Endorsements: The American Legion, VoteVets, LULAC, AFL-CIO, UnidosUS, ACLU.

You can find the bill text [here](#) and a one pager [here](#).

VA AWARDS \$84 MILLION IN GRANTS TO FIGHT VETERAN HOMELESSNESS

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



\$42 million in grants will cover legal services and another \$42 million in grants will go toward case management services.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs today announced \$84 million in grants to 176 organizations across the country to help veterans who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Of the total amount, \$42 million in grants will cover legal services and another \$42 million in grants will go toward case management services to improve housing retention by veterans who are at risk of becoming homeless or who were previously homeless and are transitioning to permanent housing.

Legal services grants will be distributed through VA's Legal Services for Homeless Veterans and Veterans At-Risk for Homelessness Grants program and provide veterans with:

- Assistance with landlord-tenant disputes to prevent eviction.
- Help with court proceedings for child support, custody, or estate planning.
- Help with obtaining benefits like state and federal compensation.
- Defending veterans in criminal cases, such as outstanding warrants, fines, and driver's license revocation.

[View the list of legal services grant awardees.](#)

Case management grants will be distributed through VA's Grant and Per Diem program and will fund approximately 100 case manager positions that provide essential services, such as:

- Assistance with housing search and placement.
- Home visits to monitor housing stability and assess the need for services and other support.
- Assistance with access to educational activities that support personal empowerment and independence.

[View the list of case management grant awardees.](#)

“No one who served our nation in uniform should go without shelter,” said VA Secretary Doug Collins. “These grants will provide crucial support and services to help thousands of Veterans on their journey back to self-sufficiency.”

If you are a veteran who is experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness, call the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at 877-4AID-VET (877-424-3838). Visit the [VA Homeless Programs](#) website to learn about housing initiatives and other programs for veterans exiting homelessness.

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.

Rafael Munos-Citron, Washington

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

Recently, Rafael met with the House Committee on Armed Services Ranking Member Adam Smith and his Legislative Aide. He thanked the Congressman for his continued support of The Legion’s legislative priorities. They discussed possible scenarios of payment to the troops if a government shutdown occurs in the coming weeks. Additionally, he discussed the work of HASC’s Quality of Life Subcommittee, and the Congressman thanked The Legion’s efforts in support of all service members’ well-being. He extended an invitation to Rafael to accompany him to visit a military facility for this related matter.

Lastly, Rafael worked with the Congressman’s aide to get a meeting scheduled between HASC Minority staff and members of the National Security team at The American Legion.

Thank you, Rafael, 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 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 9/26, the following hearings are scheduled:

- Tuesday, September 30, 9:45 AM: House Committee on Small Business – Full Committee Markup
- Wednesday, October 8, 10:00 AM: House Committee on Homeland Security, Full Committee Hearing – *Worldwide Threats to the Homeland*

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](#)