

STILL SERVING: IT'S WHO WE ARE

The American Legion is the voice of 2.4 million American veterans and servicemembers. As a resolution-based organization, The American Legion's positions represent the views of its members and are based on the four pillars: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism, and Children & Youth.

Included within are the top issues The American Legion will be fighting for in 2014.



Louis Celli

Legislative Director
202.263.2981
lcelli@legion.org

National Security POC

Dean Stoline

Deputy Director
202.263.2990
dstoline@legion.org

Veterans Affairs POC

Ian de Planque

Deputy Director
202-263-5755
ideplanque@legion.org

Veterans Employment & Education POC

Shaun Rieley

Assistant Director
202.263.5756
srieley@legion.org

Americanism POC

Jeff Steele

Assistant Director
202.263.2987
jsteele@legion.org



THE AMERICAN LEGION

1608 K St. NW
Washington, D.C. 20006
(202) 861-2700

700 N. Pennsylvania St.
Indianapolis, IN 46204
(317) 630-1200

 www.legion.org

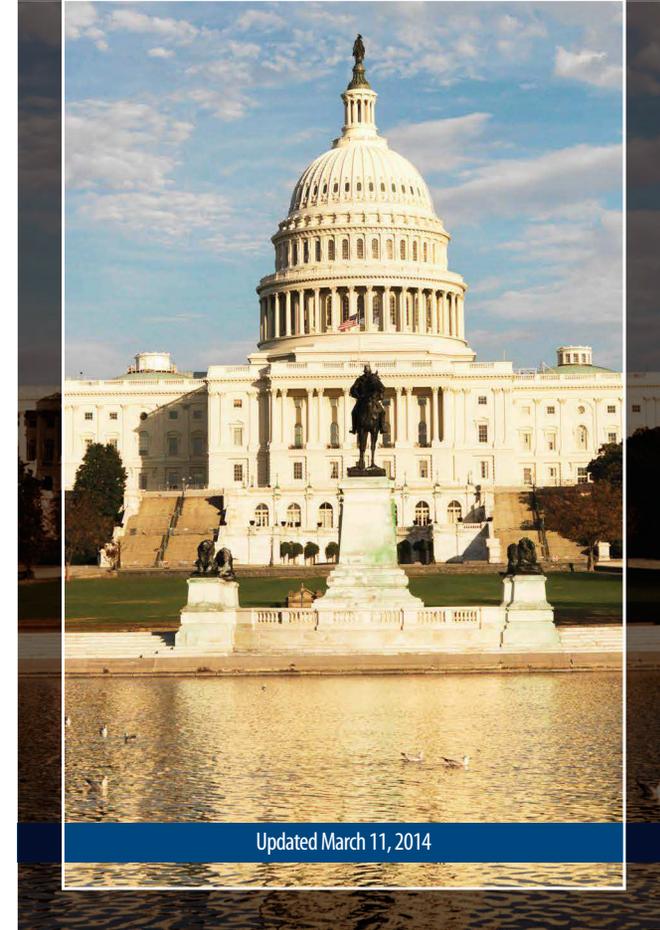


THE AMERICAN LEGION

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

for the 113th Congress

2nd Session



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THE AMERICAN LEGION LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES for the 113th Congress, 2nd Session

Fully fund a superior national defense and protect troops from cuts

The American Legion believes national security is upheld by keeping a well-funded Department of Defense, a good quality of life for troops and a sensible separation transition from military service to civilian life. This separation should include mandatory end-of-service physical examinations for reserve component service members like those conducted for active duty service members. The severity of sequester cuts has been lessened, however force reductions continue, and the military remains in a recovery mode after absorbing the dramatic cuts of the previous fiscal year. **(Support H.R. 2841)**

Contact: Dean Stoline

Oppose further increases in TRICARE fees, including prescription drug fees

The American Legion stands strong against those who would further dilute the promises made in the contract with those who served and still serve in our nation's defense. The Legion strongly opposes degradations of the health care promised to retired servicemembers when they enlisted.

Contact: Dean Stoline

Ensure stability of VA funding

Fourteen percent of VA's budget is still not covered under Advance Appropriations, including vital programs such as the disability claims processing, construction and the critical Information Technology budget. Congress must authorize full advance appropriations for all VA programs, benefits and services, thereby shielding VA from Washington's annual budget battles. **(Support H.R. 813/S. 932)**

Contact: Ian de Planque

Protect veterans' benefits and health care

The American Legion is deeply concerned about access to quality health care for veterans. In an era of budget restraint, VA cannot fall victim to underfunding, especially in light of the coming drawdown which will lead to an influx of newly eligible veterans. With rising health-care costs and the increased need for VA care and benefits, a budget with little or no increase will not sustain the level of care and assistance required. The Legion urges congressional oversight to ensure full staffing and funding. A solution must be found to VA's capital lease program that will allow VA to continue to deliver critical care and services through Community-based Outpatient Clinics.

Contact: Ian de Planque

End the VA claims backlog

The American Legion strongly supports the administration's goal of eliminating the backlog by 2015 and calls on Congress to support VBA's ongoing transformation of the benefits claims processing system, while providing aggressive oversight to ensure it is completed properly, sufficient funding to finish developing and deploying its new Veterans Benefits Management System, as well as support for the complete digital conversion of all active paper claims files.

Contact: Ian de Planque

Create opportunities for veterans in the private sector

The American Legion calls on Congress to implement a proposed pilot program that would subsidize businesses and non-profit organizations that create on-the-job training opportunities for veterans. **(Support S.1982)**. Additionally, extend and improve the work opportunity tax credit for hiring veterans under the VOW Act. **(Support S.1624/H.R.3395)**

Contact: Shaun Rieley

Support veteran entrepreneurs

The American Legion calls on Congress to fully fund SBA's veteran entrepreneurship programs such as Boots to Business and Veteran Business Outreach Centers.

Contact: Shaun Rieley

End veteran homelessness

The American Legion supports the administration's goal of eliminating veterans' homelessness by 2015 and calls on Congress to pledge necessary resources to accomplish this goal, including medical, rehabilitative and employment assistance to homeless veterans and their families. **(Support S.1387/ H.R.3743)**

Contact: Shaun Rieley

Provide quality education through Post-9/11 GI Bill

As one of the founding authors of the original GI Bill, The American Legion wants to ensure oversight over post-secondary education institutions on factors such as accreditation, transferability, cost, graduation rates and acceptance in the job market. State approving agencies should be returned their original power to protect the GI Bill along with adequate funding to execute their mandate. All student-veterans should be allowed in-state tuition rates. **(Support H.R. 357/S.257)**

Contact: Shaun Rieley

Repeal unfair offsets that penalize disabled veterans and widows

VA disability compensation should not be offset from military retired pay regardless of the VA rating percentage, nor should VA survivor benefits (DIC) be offset from military Survivor Benefit Plan annuities. The Legion supports legislation that would repeal these unjust offsets now. **(Support S.234/H.R.333/H.R.303/H.R.32)**

Contact: Dean Stoline

Protect the American Flag

The American Legion is committed to protecting Old Glory, and continues to support legislation that safeguards our nation's flag from physical desecration. **(Support H.J.Res.47/ S.J. Res.17)**

Contact: Jeff Steele