

**NINETY-EIGHTH NATIONAL CONVENTION
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
Cincinnati, Ohio
August 30, 31, September 1, 2016**

Resolution No. 59: Stopping Non-Attorney Representatives from Charging Fees to Provide Appellate Services to Veterans

Origin: Utah

Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, The Veterans Choice of Representation and Benefits Enhancement Act of 2006 allowed veterans to choose licensed Attorneys and other accredited individuals to charge a fee for benefits appeals after an initial decision by the respective regional offices; and

WHEREAS, This process inadvertently has created a “cottage industry” for non-attorney representatives in some instances to collect tens and hundreds of thousands of dollars annually for said representation; and

WHEREAS, Attorneys invest a great amount of time and resources obtaining and maintaining their licensure; and

WHEREAS, Said attorneys are overseen by licensing and disciplinary bodies that may scrutinize acts and omissions in their practice; and

WHEREAS, Non-attorney representatives have no such oversight and as such, are many times charging far above and beyond the amount for their respective time and efforts of licensed attorneys; and

WHEREAS, Many of the veterans choosing these representatives are unaware of the training, education, and ethical practices of said representatives; and

WHEREAS, Many are additionally unaware that service officers for veterans service organizations and employees of state, county and municipal governments provide said representation for no cost, and are additionally subject to oversight by the organization and/or their employers; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Cincinnati, Ohio, August 30, 31, September 1, 2016, That The American Legion, as the largest veterans organization urge Congress to enact legislation to halt the ability of non-attorney representatives to charge fees to provide appellate service to veterans.