

**NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
OF  
THE AMERICAN LEGION  
Indianapolis, Indiana  
May 9-10, 2018**

**Resolution No. 10: Expedited Citizenship Applications For Deported Veterans  
Origin: Register Resolution No. 2758 (AZ) Department Executive Committee  
Submitted By: National Security Commission**

WHEREAS, Approximately 35,000 legal permanent residents, or green card holders, serve on active duty and 8,000 join the military every year; and

WHEREAS, Between 2009 and 2016, the Military Accessions Vital to the National Interest Program (MAVNI) allowed approximately 10,400 non-citizens to join the military and lend critical language and medical skills to our country's defense; and

WHEREAS, Various reports from the citizenship organizations, national and local news sources, and firsthand accounts from members of Congress have confirmed that hundreds, possibly thousands, of veterans have been deported for committing certain crimes, many non-violent and substance abuse related, after serving in the United States Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, Many have been sent to countries they have not known since early childhood and many live in Mexico, along the U.S. border, to be close to loved ones and support networks; and

WHEREAS, The overwhelming majority of deported veterans who have been interviewed consider the U.S. their home; and

WHEREAS, Many deported veterans have said they believed their service automatically conferred citizenship upon them; and

WHEREAS, The servicemembers reportedly believe the military did not do enough to inform its non-citizen members that they qualified for an expedited naturalization process and it was typically left to the service-member to pursue it with little assistance or guidance; and

WHEREAS, Those same deported veterans were not aware that many non-violent crimes would trigger their deportation and keep them from ever becoming citizens; and

WHEREAS, Changes to the program would allow for a significant portion of deported veterans to access some form of health care no matter where they live with the Foreign Medical Program as an example; and

WHEREAS, Dependents eligible by a foreign-born service member's Department of Veterans Affairs benefits should not experience delay in delivery of their benefits, especially when some or all of those dependents may be U.S. citizens in their own right; and

WHEREAS, Congressional oversight of the Foreign Medical Program will be crucial to ensure that deported veterans have access to the only Department of Veterans Affairs health care currently available to them; and

WHEREAS, While the Foreign Medical Program is not direct Department of Veterans Affairs care, it gives them access to care addressing service connected issues; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 9-10, 2018, That The American Legion urges Congress to enact legislation to permit the granting of citizenship to deported veterans if their discharge is honorable and they do not have a felony conviction.**