NINETY-SEVENTH NATIONAL CONVENTION
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
Baltimore, Maryland
September 1, 2, 3, 2015

Resolution No. 104: Local Accredited Representative Access to Veterans Benefits Management System Decisions
Origin: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

WHEREAS, Veterans, their dependents, and survivors authorize service organizations to represent them with Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) claims and appeals; and

WHEREAS, Service organizations employ accredited service officers co-located with VA Regional Offices (VAROs) to provide representation to individual claimants and/or appellants; and

WHEREAS, VA often transfers jurisdiction from regional offices for decisions; and

WHEREAS, VA does not currently inform the veteran's local representative of decisions made by VAROs not within the veteran's state of residence; and

WHEREAS, The representative at the local VARO needs access to VA decisions to help make sure they are correct before VA promulgates those decisions; and

WHEREAS, VA often promulgates decisions before the local representative has reviewed the decision, and if necessary, discussed it with decision makers; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Baltimore, Maryland, September 1, 2, 3, 2015, That The American Legion urge the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to keep the veterans' accredited service organization representatives at the local VA Regional Offices (VAROs) informed of all decisions made on claims and/or appeals of claimants/appellants who have assigned the service organizations as their VA accredited representative; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That VA inform representatives at the local VAROs of decisions by placing a filter in VA's Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS) allowing local representatives to find their client's VBMS records, including but not limited to, rating decisions by conducting the client's state of residence search; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That VA set the VBMS system so a VARO cannot promulgate decisions until the accredited representation at the VARO either signifies the decision has been reviewed without significant concern(s), or after two full regular working days have expired; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That VA not promulgate decisions questioned by the local representative until VA responds to the local representative's concerns.