



# Memorandum

To: Department Adjutants  
From: Dan West, Adjutant General  
Date: April 1, 2024

Attached are the resolutions referencing National Security & Foreign Affairs, POW/MIA, and Veterans Service to be proposed by the Commander-in-Chief to the delegates attending the 125th National Convention.

These resolutions are being provided for the review of your department convention. Do not return these resolutions to national. They require no action by your department convention other than to discuss, debate and inform respective committee members and registered delegates from your department. Consideration as to any of your convention proposed resolutions may be redundant or repetitive to these Commander-in-Chief resolutions. Additionally, the national convention committee members or registered delegates can still take the concerns of your membership to the national convention committee meetings and the convention floor for a final determination by the delegates.

The "Amendments and Resolutions" training piece is attached for your use. Please use this information as a guide when submitting a proposal for a bylaw amendment or preparing a resolution for your department's review or submission to the national convention.

Please mail or email your department's approved resolutions that require action by the national convention within three days following the close of your department convention. This includes approved resolutions concerning matters of interest beyond your department and any approved proposals to the National Bylaws, Manual of Procedure or the Ritual.

*Do not forward resolutions or bylaw proposals that were rejected or disapproved by your convention delegates or that refer to state issues.*

Resolutions regarding federal legislation, Department of Veterans Affairs' issues, Department of Defense policy or other matters of national significance approved by your department must be acted on by the national convention before becoming official policy.

Questions and information requirements regarding resolutions and proposals affecting the National Bylaws, Manual of Procedure or Ritual should be directed to the Administrative Operations office: Quentin Carroll, Director of Administrative Operations, (816) 968-1144 ([QCarroll@vfw.org](mailto:QCarroll@vfw.org)) or Tammie Gniotczynski, (816) 968-2727 ([TGniotczynski@vfw.org](mailto:TGniotczynski@vfw.org)).

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**125th NATIONAL CONVENTION**  
**COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF RESOLUTIONS**

**NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**  
**NATIONAL POW/MIA SUBCOMMITTEE**

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- 402 ELIMINATE SEXUAL ASSAULT AND HARASSMENT IN THE MILITARY
- 403 ENSURE DOD COMPLIANCE WITH TAP LAW
- 404 KEEP DEFENSE BUDGET RELEVANT
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- 407 PRESERVE THE INTEGRITY OF THE TRICARE BENEFIT
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## Resolution No. 401

### PRESERVE THE ALL-VOLUNTEER FORCE

WHEREAS, despite 20-plus years war, the United States has maintained an All-Volunteer Force for more than 50 years. America's All-Volunteer Force persists despite repeated combat tours, recruiting and retention challenges, and continues operations in an extremely dangerous and unpredictable world; and

WHEREAS, troops are worried that their concerns fall on deaf ears. They are concerned that elected and appointed officials cannot comprehend what it's like to serve in an All-Volunteer Force that has been overtasked for decades. They are concerned about rising costs of living, reductions in quality-of-life programs, and lack of access to mental health care. Moreover, military leaders are very concerned about burnout in a military that is continually tasked to do more with less human and financial resources; and

WHEREAS, worldwide commitments and challenges have increased with continuous military operations against radical forces aligned with terrorist organizations, heightened engagements in Africa, domestic activations to protect the border and assist with natural disasters, troop buildup in U.S. Indo-Pacific Command area of responsibility to counter Chinese expansion, increasing rotations to Eastern Europe to support NATO's deterrence of Russian hostilities in Ukraine, and maintaining a continuous presence of service members fighting terrorist organizations across Southwest Asia; and

WHEREAS, recently Congress has not provided sufficient oversight and scrutiny to the use of military force and military decision-making both for domestic and foreign missions and has also demonstrated the inability to provide a stable, consistent defense budget without constant threats of arbitrary cuts. Instead, some in Congress have promoted misleading narratives about today's service members, while projecting partisan politics onto our fighting force, disrupting an institution whose sole purpose is to protect our nation and jeopardizing the nonpartisan nature of our military; and

WHEREAS, the cumulative impact of lower pay, quality of life shortcomings, partisan politics and a higher operations tempo have had a direct impact on morale, which in combination with a more predictable and safer civilian economy, has resulted in a dire recruiting and retention problem, thereby threatening the continued existence and viability of the All-Volunteer Force; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we will redouble our efforts to work with Congress and the Administration to preserve the All-Volunteer Force by calling for proper oversight and scrutiny to both the domestic and foreign military mission and decision-making, investment in military quality-of-life programs, and an end of arbitrary budget caps, offering solidarity to those who volunteer to serve in a military that must protect American interests in a very dangerous and unpredictable world.

Submitted by the Commander-in-Chief  
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

## **Resolution No. 402**

### **ELIMINATE SEXUAL ASSAULT AND HARASSMENT IN THE MILITARY**

WHEREAS, sexual assault and harassment within the military and at the Military Service Academies are urgent, detrimental, and prevalent issues that impact individual well-being and morale, unit cohesion, recruiting, and retention and require aggressive action and accountability to eliminate; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense (DOD) Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military and Academic Program Year 2022-2023 Annual Report on Sexual Harassment and Violence at the Military Service Academies show that reports of sexual assault and harassment still continue to rise; and

WHEREAS, military sexual assault and harassment affect both men and women, occur on a “continuum of harm,” are enabled by entrenched culture, and are not always stereotypical in nature with women being disproportionately victimized; and

WHEREAS, it is widely held that a far greater number of sexual assault and harassment survivors do not come forward due to embarrassment, lack of trust in command support and accountability, and/or fear of personal and/or professional reprisal, to include real or perceived “red flags” in their military personnel folders; and

WHEREAS, DOD has implemented new and reformed programs, policies, and processes as a result of the 2021 Independent Review Commission (IRC) on Sexual Assault in the Military but is not estimated to be complete until FY 2030; and

WHEREAS, Congress has passed Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) reforms that will ensure investigation and prosecution of military sexual assault and harassment cases are independent of military chains of command; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly demand DOD become more aggressive in its efforts to reduce sexual assault and harassment, to provide victims with proper and necessary medical and mental health care, as well as assistance with disability claims as may be required, to aggressively and diligently investigate every reported incident and punish attackers, as well as individuals involved in acts of retribution and retaliation, and that Congress perform rigorous oversight of IRC recommendations and the recently passed UCMJ reforms to ensure timely and proper implementation, and identify areas for improvement.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief  
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

## **Resolution No. 403**

### **ENSURE DOD COMPLIANCE WITH TAP LAW**

WHEREAS, transition from military service is a very stressful and time-consuming period for service members and their families, and often presents psychological, financial, and professional challenges in addition to the need to find new housing, healthcare, resources, and programs to support the unique needs of each member and family; and

WHEREAS, Congress has mandated Transition Assistance Program (TAP) pre-separation counseling for all service members to ease the difficult transition from service into civilian life by offering job-search assistance, guidance on education and healthcare programs, and information on other benefits and post-service needs; and

WHEREAS, the DOD is required to abide by TAP reforms that were included in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 and directed, among other requirements, that all service members attend TAP at least 365 days prior to separation, complete a two-day career track if they are minimally prepared for transition, and be connected to resources in communities in which they plan to reside after service; and

WHEREAS, a December 2022 U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) report revealed that 70 percent of service members did not attend TAP on time and almost 25 percent of service members who needed to complete a two-day career track did not; and

WHEREAS, VFW surveys of transitioning service members (TSM) indicate findings that align with the GAO's report and show that nearly 34 percent of TSMs either were not or did not know if they were connected to community resources, while our accredited Benefits Delivery at Discharge program representatives hear that TSMs are not consistently getting connected to community resources; and

WHEREAS, new reforms to TAP require DOD and VA to grant accredited Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) access to and provide briefings on pre-discharge services like disability claims assistance to TSMs; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to pass the TAP Promotion Act, to ensure every TSM is allowed to attend TAP classes with sufficient time to participate in the Benefits Delivery at Discharge program and require DOD and its partner agencies to continuously improve TAP and maximize access to materials and resources for TSMs, veterans, and their families.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief  
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

## **Resolution No. 404**

### **KEEP DEFENSE BUDGET RELEVANT**

WHEREAS, America's top priority is to defend itself, its citizens, and its interests, and Congress must provide the Defense Department with sufficient funding to properly train, equip and field a military that can defeat all enemies, as well as protect vital U.S. interests around the globe; and

WHEREAS, the claim the U.S. spends more on defense than the next 8 or 10 countries combined is a false narrative. Except for China and Russia, all the other countries are focused on homeland and/or shared theater defense alliances, whereas the U.S. has a worldwide commitment to project power, reliability, and leadership; and

WHEREAS, defense spending accounts for nearly half of all discretionary spending, which makes DOD a consistent target for lawmakers trying to reduce overall federal spending, which puts America's national security at the risk; and

WHEREAS, Russia's attack on Ukraine's sovereignty, the continuing threats by North Korea and Iran, and China's military expansion, make the world more dangerous and therefore increases the world's reliance on the United States to lead militarily against those threats; and

WHEREAS, state sponsored terrorist groups such as Hamas, Hezbollah and Houthis continue to attack civilian populations, infrastructure, and threatening to further destabilize their regions; and

WHEREAS, it is crucial that any proposed reduction in funding not jeopardize America's security or break faith with those who serve or have served our nation in uniform. A nation that cherishes its freedom and supports the troops can afford to do both; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly urge Congress to provide the necessary funding for the readiness, training, modernization, healthcare, and quality of life initiatives for the armed forces of today and tomorrow.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief  
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

## Resolution No. 405

### LINK MILITARY PAY INCREASES TO PRIVATE-SECTOR INCREASES

WHEREAS, military pay raises are linked by law to the increase in private-sector wages, as measured by the Employment Cost Index (ECI). The Administration's military pay raise request, however, can be more or less than the ECI, with Congress having the final approval; and

WHEREAS, the 4.6 percent military pay raise for FY 2023 was the largest increase in 20 years but was below the ECI, but the Department of Defense — in its continuing campaign to slow the growth of military compensation due to budget constraints — recommended that future pay increases be limited; and

WHEREAS, the raise in FY 2023 and proposed raise in FY 2024 would be the largest pay raise in over 40 years, but still does not raise pay and benefits such as Basic Allowance for Housing to be competitive with civilian markets; and

WHEREAS, changes to military pay and benefits is the top concern of military service members and their families. Continued efforts to slow the growth of military compensation, combined with a better civilian job market, and a sustained intense operational tempo have already impacted recruiting and retention, which jeopardizes the continued existence and viability of the All-Volunteer Force; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense is already facing a shortage in key fields, such as pilots and maintenance personnel, and must develop competitive pay and benefit scales to recruit talent in critical high-tech fields, such as cyber and space; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon Congress to maintain military base pay comparability with private-sector wages by ensuring annual military pay raise percentages match or exceed annual ECI increases.



**Resolution No. 406**

**PROVIDE FULL CONCURRENT RECEIPT OF MILITARY RETIREMENT  
PAY AND VA DISABILITY COMPENSATION**

WHEREAS, military retirement pay and VA disability compensation are fundamentally different benefits earned for two very different reasons; and

WHEREAS, the fiscal year 2004 National Defense Authorization Act allowed for the gradual phase-in of full concurrent receipt of military retirement pay and Department of Veterans Affairs disability compensation for service-connected wounds, illnesses or injuries; and

WHEREAS, the 10-year phase-in period ended in 2014, which means military retirees with 20 or more years of service and 50 percent or higher VA disability ratings no longer have their military retirement pay offset by the amount of their VA disability compensation; and

WHEREAS, the law, however, did not provide the same equity to service-connected disabled military retirees with VA ratings of 40 percent or below, or to Chapter 61 retirees who were medically retired with less than 20 years, regardless of VA disability rating; and

WHEREAS, more than 50,000 Chapter 61 retirees receive Combat Related Special Compensation from the Department of Defense, many of whom are Purple Heart recipients; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support legislation that allows for the concurrent receipt of military retirement pay and VA disability compensation without offset and regardless of disability rating percentage.

## **Resolution No. 407**

### **PRESERVE THE INTEGRITY OF THE TRICARE BENEFIT**

WHEREAS, changes to Tricare this past year increased costs of both the Select and the Prime plans. Changes included a complete change in the cost-share methodology for the new Tricare Select plan, which changed the beneficiary costs from a percentage of individual-services-used to an averaged, flat-rate co-payment and increased Tricare Prime fees; and

WHEREAS, Congress added additional costs by raising mail order and retail pharmacy fees for all Tricare beneficiaries, including Tricare for Life members. The additional costs included raising the costs of a 90-day mail order supply of generic medications from a \$0 co-pay to a \$12 per prescription co-pay, adding significant out of pocket costs to beneficiaries on maintenance medications for chronic conditions; and

WHEREAS, military health coverage is expensive, yet so is the personal investment someone makes to voluntarily commit to a military career. Any real or perceived erosion of benefits for career-minded personnel will undermine long-term retention, as well as recruiting of new service members; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we oppose all Tricare fee increases as well as any additional fee increases or attempts to erode the earned benefit of military healthcare; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars, that we urge DOD to reform its healthcare programs by eliminating institutional inefficiencies before considering fee increases; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress and DOD to ensure timely and equal access across the force, regardless of geographic location, to holistic healthcare services including medical and non-medical mental health counseling, reproductive health services, specialty care, and pharmacies.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief  
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

## **Resolution 408**

### **AWARDING THE ARMED FORCES EXPEDITIONARY MEDAL FOR EXPEDITIONARY OPERATIONS IN EASTERN EUROPE**

WHEREAS, the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (AFEM) was established by Executive Order 10977, dated December 4, 1961 (DA Bulletin. 1, 1962) and Executive Order 11231, July 8, 1965; and

WHEREAS, the medal is authorized for (1) U.S. military operations, (2) U.S. operations in direct support of the United Nations, or (3) U.S. operations of assistance for friendly foreign nations; and

WHEREAS, the AFEM is awarded for services after July 1, 1958, meeting the following qualifications that military personnel must be a bona fide member of a unit and engaged in the operation, have served not less than 30 consecutive days in the area of operations, and be engaged in actual combat, or duty which is equally as hazardous as combat, during the operation with armed opposition, regardless of time in the area; and

WHEREAS, DOD has established precedent in awarding the AFEM for kinetic military operations supporting allied nations when individuals campaign medals have not yet been established; and

WHEREAS, United States military personnel have been assigned to eastern Europe under the operational banners of Operations Atlantic Resolve since February 24, 2022 to support NATO's deterrence and defense posture on its eastern flank; and

WHEREAS, since February 24, 2022, the United States has deployed units to the USEUCOM theater and has U.S. forces positioned in Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia. These are qualifying NATO countries with contiguous borders with Ukraine and are in direct support of NATO and friendly nations; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, supports and encourages Congress and the Secretary of Defense to designate Operations Atlantic Resolve since February 24, 2022 in support of NATO's deterrence and defense posture on its eastern flank as U.S. military operations that are eligible for the award of the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief  
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

## **Resolution No. 409**

### **PROTECT POW/MIA FULL ACCOUNTING MISSION FUNDING**

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is deeply committed to achieving the fullest possible accounting of nearly 82,000 missing Americans that include approximately 72,000 from World War II, 7,544 from the Korean War, 1,584 from the Vietnam War, 126 from the Cold War, and 8 post-Vietnam that include Operations Eldorado Canyon (1), Desert Storm (2), Iraqi Freedom (3), Operation Prosperity Guardian (2); and

WHEREAS, public-private partnerships are increasing the ability to be at more sites and DPAA has strong bipartisan support on Capitol Hill, which has in the past provided additional funding required to support pending recovery operations in North Korea, which have been interrupted since 2005 due to U.S. safety and security concerns; and

WHEREAS, Congress has in recent years acknowledged the importance of the Fullest Possible Accounting mission by increasing DPAA funding above requested amounts; and

WHEREAS, it is critical that DPAA remain adequately funded. Recovering fallen Americans from long-ago battlefields is demanding and often dangerous work for investigation and recovery teams, but it is the most sacred of missions. It is our government's fulfillment of a soldier's pledge to never leave a fallen comrade on the battlefield, which is a promise that spans all generations; and

WHEREAS, additional money enables DPAA to efficiently plan, resource and accomplish its worldwide mission to recover, identify and return to their families all missing American service members from our nation's previous conflicts; and

WHEREAS, Congress has adopted nine continuing resolutions in the last ten-years and caused three shutdowns since 2013, which hinder operational planning and slow recoveries; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon Congress to continue to increase funding levels for the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency and all supporting organizations involved in the Fullest possible Accounting Mission; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress must pass advanced appropriations to prevent a slowdown in recoveries and allow for budget carry-over allowing DPAA to plan multi-year operations.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief  
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

## **Resolution No. 410**

### **CALL FOR MORE UNILATERAL POW/MIA ACTIONS BY VIETNAM**

WHEREAS, 2,646 Americans were listed as missing and unaccounted-for at the end of the Vietnam War. As of March 2022, the number of missing is now 1,584 due to a combination of increased U.S. Government emphasis, better research and identification technology, stronger diplomatic ties with host governments, and access to aircraft crash and ground battlefield sites; and

WHEREAS, Vietnam had a comprehensive wartime and post-war process to collect and retain information and remains, and, according to the National League of POW/MIA Families, this unilateral effort enabled the Vietnamese to locate, and return remains to U.S. custody; and

WHEREAS, joint U.S. – Vietnam field operations, first conducted 37-years ago, continue to provide answers to families of unaccounted for American servicemen; and

WHEREAS, Vietnam granted access to their National Archives I and II and the People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN) Library; and

WHEREAS, many of the grieving families may never live to see the return of their missing loved one; and

WHEREAS, Vietnamese museums contain many personal items which belonged to missing U.S. servicemen; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we encourage Vietnam to grant U.S. government analysts access to the PAVN archives where potentially valuable documents which could lead to case resolution may be located; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, in this cooperative effort, that we encourage the Vietnamese government to turn over any items of a personal nature from missing American servicemen that are currently in the custody of Vietnamese museums or other locations under their control so they may be returned to their grieving families.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief  
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

## Resolution No. 411

### RECOGNITION FOR AFGHAN AND IRAQI COMBAT SUPPORT ROLES

WHEREAS, Afghan and Iraqi wartime allies were bridges to the Afghan and Iraqi people during U.S. operations against terrorism in those countries and mission success was directly dependent on close working relations between local nationals and U.S. agents; and

WHEREAS, our wartime allies often served consecutive tours with several different units to provide continuity and their lives and the lives of their family members were threatened for working with the Americans; and

WHEREAS, our wartime allies saved countless American lives and directly contributed to every level of tactical, operational, and strategic success during the missions in Iraq and Afghanistan; and

WHEREAS, Special Immigrant Visa recipients and Priority 2 Refugee Admissions Program recipients go through the strictest vetting and approval process of any category of person coming to the U.S.; and

WHEREAS, this initiative is supported by all post 9/11 former secretaries of defense as well as key national security leaders in the military, Department of State, and the intelligence community; and

WHEREAS, the former chairmen of the 9/11 Commission have stated, "As former chairman and vice chairman of the 9/11 Commission, we encourage Congress to do everything in its power to keep the nation's promise to Afghan and Iraqi combat translators and to ensure these intrepid partners can achieve the American Dream. Special Immigrant Visas recipients from Afghanistan and Iraq loyally protected our men and women in uniform. Many directly saved American lives. Their future success will help to prevent the continued growth of Islamist terrorism – the third goal identified by the 9/11 Commission. A great nation keeps its promises"; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the President of the United States and the U.S. Congress to recognize the contributions of Afghan and Iraqi Combat Interpreter Immigrants who stood shoulder to shoulder with, assisted and protected U.S. military service members, U.S. diplomats and government agents, non-governmental organizations, and media organizations during U.S. involvement in those countries.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief  
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

## Resolution No. 412

### SUPPORT THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA ON TAIWAN

WHEREAS, the Republic of China on Taiwan is a historic democratic ally of the United States, a valuable trading partner, and key link in the Western Pacific defense chain; and

WHEREAS, the Taiwan Relations Act (PL 96-8) codifies the policy of the United States to provide Taiwan with arms of a defensive character to bolster peace and stability in the cross-strait environment; and

WHEREAS, on January 1, 1979, then-President Carter terminated diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Taiwan, and instead established diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China to help maintain peace, security, and stability in the Western Pacific. This loss of diplomatic status prevents the President of Taiwan from receiving the same respect and courtesies afforded other Heads of State who visit the U.S.; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Administration and Congress to strictly adhere to the concepts of the Taiwan Relations Act by continuing to approve the sale of state-of-the-art military equipment, weapons, and technology to maintain an adequate defense capability; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call upon the Administration and Congress to support the admission of the Republic of China on Taiwan into the United Nations, and to provide the President of Taiwan the same respect and privileges due other visiting Heads of State.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief  
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

## Resolution No. 413

### SUPPORT THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

WHEREAS, the Republic of Korea is a historic democratic ally of the United States, a valuable trading partner, and a key link in the Northeast Asia defense chain. Numerous treaties are in force with the Republic of Korea concerning economic and technical cooperation, education, maritime matters, trade and commerce, and the Mutual Defense Treaty, that was enacted on November 17, 1954; and

WHEREAS, South Korea's immediate neighbor, however, continues to maintain an extremely large and forward-deployed military force capable of launching no-notice offensive operations against South Korea; and

WHEREAS, North Korea maintains the ability to launch nuclear-capable missiles, including a missile capable of reaching the United States, and has conducted six underground nuclear explosions since 2006, and is a known exporter of ballistic missiles and its technology to countries adversarial to the United States, most notably Iran; and

WHEREAS, the continued unpredictability of North Korea makes the presence of U.S. ground and air forces inside South Korea even more critical as a deterrent to aggression; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the U.S. Government to maintain a substantial military presence in the Republic of Korea, and to increase military aid and assistance through modern weaponry and technology to help promote peace and stability in the region.



## **Resolution No. 414**

### **SUPPORT THE STATE OF ISRAEL**

WHEREAS, the State of Israel is a historic, democratic ally of the United States of America, and has continued to be a partner withing the ongoing fight against terrorist groups in the Middle East; and

WHEREAS, since its establishment in 1948 Israel has been under constant threat of attacks from terrorist groups sponsored by nations that share Israels borders culminating with the Hamas attacking Israel on October 7, 2024, resulting in the death of over a thousand civilians, the imprisonment of 250 hostages committing rape and torture and violating humanitarian law by using the Palestinian people as human shields; and

WHEREAS, reestablishing peace between Israelis and Palestinians remains of strategic interest to the United States and other partners within the region; and

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the United States Government to continue to support the State of Israel both diplomatically and militarily and continue to work with them to ensure the safety of their borders and to emphasize regional stability in the Middle East, and elsewhere.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief  
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

## Resolution No. 415

### SUPPORT OF NATO DETERRENCE AND SUPPORT TO UKRAINE

WHEREAS, throughout a 45-year Cold War, United States military personnel, who would later become members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW), were instrumental in leading North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) efforts to deter Soviet aggression in Europe, bring about the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, and the disintegration of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics; and

WHEREAS, in the ensuing thirty-odd years, many former Warsaw Pact countries embraced democracy and flourished under a participatory form of government, becoming suppliers of commodities and technology across the globe, and have become productive members of the European Union (EU), NATO, and numerous additional international organizations aimed at ensuring world and regional peace and economic prosperity; and

WHEREAS, for the past two years Ukrainians have been fighting heroically to repel Russia's war of occupation, annexation, and indiscriminate targeting of Ukrainian civilians, the likes of which have not been seen since Adolf Hitler embarked on such power-grabs in the 1930s; and

WHEREAS, the United States and European allies have been providing Western military equipment to replace Soviet era weaponry, increasing Ukraine's reliance on US manufacturers to maintain and replace weapons, munitions, and logistical equipment; and

WHEREAS, the 90% of funds provided from the United States to support Ukraine's fight against Russian aggression are paid to United States' military industries, helping to bolster the US economy; and

WHEREAS, Russia's invasion of Ukraine serves as a precursor for Russia to occupy, annex, and subjugate other free European countries that border Russia, such as Moldova, Lithuania and stated expansionist plans bear a direct threat to the freedom of the whole of Europe, NATO, the free world economy, and, thereby, the United States; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support the people and free government of Ukraine in their fight against Russian aggression; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW urges the President and Congress to decidedly exercise our position as leader of the free world to decidedly support Ukrainian people and armed forces with necessary humanitarian and military aid and encourage all of our allies to follow suit.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief  
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

## Resolution No. 416

### DEPORTED VETERANS

WHEREAS, non-citizen United States Service members have been, and are currently being deported from the United States after serving in the United States military; and

WHEREAS, current United States Code provides that the term "national of the United States" means a citizen of the United States, or a person who, though not a citizen of the United States, owes permanent allegiance to the United States; and

WHEREAS, Federal law requires everyone who enlists or re-enlists in the Armed Forces of the United States to take the Oath of Enlistment to defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; and to bear true faith and allegiance to the same, are oaths that are performed in front of the United States Flag and other flags, such as the state flag, military branch flag and is similar to the Oath of Citizenship and of the states; and

WHEREAS, Veterans have served our nation in every war from WWII, Vietnam, Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan. We strongly believe their oath of enlistment is a permanent oath of allegiance to the United States of America. While mere subjective emotional allegiance to the United States and length of residence in the United States is insufficient to make an individual a national, we believe that raising your right hand, swearing this oath, putting on the uniform in times of both peace and war are in fact a permanent allegiance to the United States and, that the United States owes a permanent allegiance to all Veterans be they U.S. Citizens or Foreign Nationals; and

WHEREAS, when these veterans returned to civilian life without appropriate support for reintegration, psychologically, and economically, some veterans that fell into addictions and criminal activities, were arrested and, due to their legal permanent residence status, were deported regardless of their honorable service; and

WHEREAS, these exiled veterans face inherent barriers to accessing Veteran Affairs (VA) healthcare system as they earned during military service; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States that we urge Congress to amend the United States Code to clearly state "The following shall be nationals\*, but not citizens of the United States: A person who, by Conscription or enlistment, entered any branch of the United States armed forces and served honorably, and, this shall be retroactive to service members/veterans previously removed from the United States.

## **Resolution No. 601**

### **ADEQUATE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS BUDGET**

WHEREAS, there are more than 18 million living veterans; and

WHEREAS, Department of Veterans Affairs anticipates that enrollment in the Veterans Health Administration will grow to nearly 10 million veterans and more than 7.2 million of those veterans will be seen by VA for health care; and

WHEREAS, the passage of favorable legislation, such as the PACT Act, more veterans will seek to use VA for numerous other benefit programs including education programs, recipients of disability compensation, and insurance policies; and

WHEREAS, the complexity of conditions that veterans which receive VA health for care will add demands to the system for years to come; and

WHEREAS, even though appropriations for VA continues to increase, proposals to return to previous funding levels will create a disparity that is detrimental to the services VA is obligated to provide; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress of the United States to authorize appropriations for the Department of Veterans Affairs which fully fund all staffing and maintain the integrity and enhancement of veteran entitlement programs and health care system.

## **Resolution No. 602**

### **VA PHARMACEUTICAL CO-PAYMENTS**

WHEREAS, veterans, other than those with a service-connected disability rating of 50 percent or greater, those who are receiving medications for their service-connected conditions or those whose incomes fall below the nonservice-connected pension threshold, must pay a co-payment for each 30-day supply of medications obtained through the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

WHEREAS, there have been repeated proposals to change VA pharmaceutical co-payments, placing an undue hardship on many veterans; and

WHEREAS, the increase in costs of the benefit would likely place an undue burden on veterans, limit access to earned benefits, and serve to inequitably balance the federal budget on the backs of veterans; and

WHEREAS, pharmaceuticals are part of the VA's standard health benefits package and must be provided to all eligible veterans; and

WHEREAS, VA is required by current law to charge veterans for life saving preventive medicines which are cost-free under private sector insurance and other public health care options; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we oppose increases in Department of Veterans Affairs pharmaceutical co-payments; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress must exempt preventive medicines from VA pharmaceutical co-payment requirements.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief  
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

## **Resolution No. 603**

### **VA MEDICARE AND TRICARE REIMBURSEMENT**

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States views it as essential that the Department of Veterans Affairs health care system provide qualifying veterans with timely and accessible care; and

WHEREAS, VA collects third party payment for treatment, but current law prevents VA from collecting from the Medicare Trust Fund and TRICARE in certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS, a large number of VA's patients are eligible for Medicare and TRICARE; and

WHEREAS, VA medical care collections are used to supplement the appropriations VA receives from Congress to deliver efficient and effective health care at a lower cost than private sector health care providers; and

WHEREAS, with the increased demand on its health care system in association with the enactment of the PACT Act, it is now absolutely essential that VA is authorized to collect federal dollars to supplement its annual appropriations to ensure adequate funding for the Veterans Health Administration; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support enactment into law of legislation authorizing Department of Veterans Affairs to receive reimbursement for the cost of non-service connected care that is provided to veterans who are enrolled in Medicare or TRICARE.

## **Resolution No. 604**

### **NURSING HOME ELIGIBILITY**

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States has called upon Congress to enact legislation to regulate and expand eligibility for Department of Veterans Affairs health care and provide all veterans with mandated access to the full continuum of VA health care services which include nursing home care; and

WHEREAS, current VA regulations extend VA eligibility for nursing home care to those veterans who are service-connected at 70 percent or above or those seeking nursing home care for a service-connected disability; and

WHEREAS, recent reports indicate that state veteran nursing homes and non-VA contracted community nursing homes operate without strong oversight from the Department of Veterans Affairs, meaning they may often set inconsistent eligibility criteria from state to state or provide care inconsistent with VA standards, resulting in inequity among veterans that are eligible to receive services; and

WHEREAS, VA nursing home care is considered the “safety net” for VA outpatient services such as residential care, respite care, hospital-based home care, adult day health care, homemaker/home health aid services and other extended care programs; and

WHEREAS, through their own statements, VA recognizes the difference in eligibility for nursing home care and inpatient hospital care as inconsistent with the principles of sound medical practice, which support continuity of care for veterans; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge VA to ensure that Community Nursing Homes, state nursing homes, and contract nursing homes receive proper oversight and are accountable to the same high standards expected through the VA Healthcare System; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to establish a standard Department of Veterans Affairs and state veteran nursing home entitlement for all veterans enrolled in the VA health care system.

## **Resolution No. 605**

### **TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY HEALTH CARE**

WHEREAS, nearly 500,00 service members were medically diagnosed with Traumatic Brain Injuries from 2000-2023; and

WHEREAS, veterans with blast injuries, blunt trauma, motor vehicle accidents, and falls are at risk for TBI which often goes unrecognized; and

WHEREAS, even patients with mild TBI may have long-term health consequences; and

WHEREAS, veterans with severe TBI require a lifetime of intensive services to care for their injuries, yet many Department of Veterans Affairs medical facilities are neither properly staffed nor equipped to provide the necessary screening and comprehensive health care services veterans suffering from TBI require; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to provide sufficient funding to the Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure that appropriate screening, diagnostic services, treatment and life-long case management services are available to every veteran suffering from conditions associated with service-connected head trauma to include, but not limited to Traumatic Brain Injuries; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to improve research pertaining to screening methods, diagnostic tools, and treatment of conditions associated with all TBIs regardless of if they are caused by blast injuries, blunt traumas, motor vehicle accidents, falls and other related injuries to ensure veterans who have experienced a TBI receive effective health care.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief  
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS



## Resolution No. 606

### MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has indicated that treating Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and providing Mental Health Care among returning war veterans is one of its highest priorities, and the VA operates a nationwide network of nearly 200 specialized PTSD outpatient treatment programs; and

WHEREAS, the early and accurate screening, diagnosis and treatment for PTSD, depression, substance use, and other mental health disorders, yields optimal patient outcomes, and statistics have shown that these conditions, left untreated or poorly treated, can lead to increases in suicide attempts or death by suicide among a host of other negative consequences; and

WHEREAS, studies conducted by VA show that social determinants of health, like financial stability, access to housing, and pathways to a quality career serve as protective factors against suicide. Each time a veteran uses a VBA economic opportunity program or benefit is an opportunity to provide resources and treatment; and

WHEREAS, the National Center for PTSD found that there are nearly 1.5million veterans compensated for PTSD since September 2023; and

WHEREAS, available research has not sufficiently evaluated the clinical effectiveness of treatment programs for veterans diagnosed with and/or suffering from the effects of traumatic brain injuries, PTSD, or other mental health conditions, and adequate research into the brain's response to internal and external influences that could result in mental illness has yet to be undertaken; and

WHEREAS, service members and veterans are increasingly prescribed psychiatric medications and more research indicates that veterans prescribed such medications may actually be at greater risk of suicide than previously known, but they are unable to provide informed consent on the newly-learned side effects such as acute withdrawal, suicidal ideation or attempts, sexual dysfunction, potential in utero harm; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly urge the Department of Veterans Affairs to continue to adequately staff VA mental health treatment and research programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to dedicate adequate resources to address the alarming rate at which Veterans die by suicide to include moving the Office of Suicide Prevention from Veterans Health Administration to the enterprise level of the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Department of Veterans Affairs to research different treatments or practices that are most effective in helping our veterans cope with their PTSD; and

Resolution No. 606 - continued

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that VA institute strong signatory informed consent protocols on all mental health medications, implement ethical deprescribing guidelines for veterans seeking to stop psychiatric medication, train prescribers and clinicians on the emerging harm reports on psychotropic and psychiatric drugs, and to publicize all available data to inform the growing concern of overprescription and harm in the veteran community related to psychiatric drugs.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief  
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

## **Resolution No. 607**

### **VA HEALTH CARE FOR WOMEN VETERANS**

WHEREAS, the total number of women veterans continues to grow, as does the number of women utilizing the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits; and

WHEREAS, VA reports that as of FY 2023 only 44 percent of women veterans utilize VA health care facilities; and

WHEREAS, VA currently has two Women's Health Primary Care Providers (WH-PCP) at all of the VA's health care systems. In addition, there are WH-PCPs in 85 percent of the community-based outpatient clinics; and

WHEREAS, women veterans have reported that VA staff continue to confuse them for spouses or caregivers and even challenge their veteran status; and

WHEREAS, women veterans also reported concerns regarding the gender specific competencies of VA health care professionals resulting in half of women veterans enrolled in VA Healthcare often seeking reproductive services (mammograms, pregnancy care, OB/GYN) in the community; and

WHEREAS, VA reported in FY 2023 that more than 600,000 women veterans are enrolled and assigned to a Designated Women's Health Provider (DWHP), who have experience and training in women's health care; and

WHEREAS, we acknowledge that the VA has improved the care and services it provides women veterans to include Women's Mental Health Services, Sexual Health Evaluation and Treatment, etc.; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge VA to continue to improve the staffing, equipping, monitoring and consistency of health care and reproductive services available to women veterans at all VA medical facilities and expand its designated women's health program to mental health care to ensure access to mental health care providers who understand women-specific mental health conditions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Secretary of Veteran Affairs to improve outreach to women veterans, allow women to choose the gender of their VA health care providers and properly train VA's workforce to treat women veterans with the respect and dignity they have earned and deserve, to include ensuring that every VA facility has a zero tolerance policy towards sexual harassment for employees and patients.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief  
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

## **Resolution No. 608**

### **EXPAND VA CAREGIVER BENEFITS**

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers Program provides a monthly stipend, respite care, mental and medical health care, and necessary training and certifications for caregivers of veterans who were severely injured on or after September 11, 2001; and

WHEREAS, the VA Comprehensive Assistance Program has begun to expand for the caregivers of veterans of other eras, but excludes veterans who require home caregiver services as a result of serious illness; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States believes severely wounded, injured, and ill veterans of all conflicts have made incredible sacrifices, and all family members who care for them are equally deserving of our recognition and support; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense provides support to family caregivers of members of the armed forces who are catastrophically disabled through its Special Compensation for Assistance with Activities of Daily Living program, which includes disability caused by illnesses in its eligibility criteria; and

WHEREAS, the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (CAVC) through *Beaudette v. McDonough* has granted veterans appellate rights to challenge VA Caregiver Program decisions, but VA has yet to establish a framework for caregiver appeals; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to provide the accurate resources to VA for the expansion of the Department of Veterans Affairs Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers Program to veterans of all eras; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge VA to establish regulations clarifying caregiver appeal procedures allowing VA to adjudicate caregiver appeals to address the growing backlog of veterans in need of caregiver benefits; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to fully align the VA's Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers Program with the Department of Defense Special Compensation for Assistance with Activities of Daily Living program by including in its eligibility criteria veterans who require caregiver services as a result of serious illnesses incurred in the line of duty.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief  
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

## **Resolution No. 609**

### **SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY CARE OPTIONS**

WHEREAS, members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States report being satisfied with the health care they receive from the Department of Veterans Affairs and believe the VA health care system must be improved to ensure all veterans have timely access to high quality care; and

WHEREAS, the VFW has consistently worked with Congress and VA to improve the health care VA provides our nation's veterans through community care programs to ensure veterans have a seamless experience; and

WHEREAS, the veteran population is a shifting demographic with evolving health care needs, which necessitates that VA identify new and innovative ways to deliver timely access to high quality, comprehensive, and veteran-centric health care; and

WHEREAS, VA is now allowed to charge veterans copayments for service-connected care they receive from networked urgent care clinics in the community; and

WHEREAS, the networks of VA community care programs, to include dependent care delivered through CHAMPVA, are limited by factors that influence the willingness of private sector providers to participate in these programs; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that Congress must provide Department of Veterans Affairs with the oversight, appropriations and assets necessary to properly implement the VA MISSION Act as intended by Congress; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that VA comply with federal prompt payment requirements and incentivize private sector health care providers to participate in its community care programs, while ensuring veterans and eligible dependents are not held financially liable for services furnished through such programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that VA must remain the guarantor and coordinator of care for enrolled veterans and that the VFW remains opposed to privatizing VA or eroding VA's ability to provide direct care to veterans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW opposes any out-of-pocket costs for care coordinated by VA for service-connected disabilities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress and VA must furnish and conduct proper outreach to ensure veterans are fully aware of their health care options.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief  
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

## **Resolution No. 610**

### **FOREIGN MEDICAL PROGRAM (FMP) REFORM**

WHEREAS, many veterans living overseas continue to support American interests and the American military mission as either employees of the Departments of Defense and State, or as contractors supporting these agencies – yet overseas veterans are afforded a lower standard of care from Department of Veterans Affairs, which only offers reimbursement for medical care for service-connected disabilities through its outdated Foreign Medical Program; and

WHEREAS, veterans seeking treatment for service-connected disabilities must pay the cost of the care and mail a paper-based claim to VA for reimbursement or request the service provider submit a paper-based claim on their behalf and communications with FMP managers is inconsistent; and

WHEREAS, the reimbursement process takes six months to a year for resolution with VA issuing a US Treasury check and mailing it to the foreign address of the veteran or service provider if they reside overseas; and

WHEREAS, both DoD and VA contract with third-party administrators to deliver care to active-duty service members and military families and complete evaluative exams for the adjudication of VA service-connected disability claims, while VA care delivery remains unstructured and unpredictable; and

WHEREAS, the VFW views this lower standard of care and the antiquated mechanisms of reimbursement for veterans supporting American interests overseas as risks to national security; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge VA to revise its antiquated paper-based system and utilize Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT), to allow veterans and service providers to file claims and receive reimbursement from VA through electronic means; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to address the statutory loophole that restricts FMP to only providing reimbursement for service-connected care, offering similar care access for overseas veterans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge Congress and VA to provide structure to the Foreign Medical Program by potentially utilizing a third-party administrator to coordinate and deliver care for overseas veterans, similar to TRICARE Overseas, VA contract compensation and pension exams, and VA's domestic Community Care programs.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief  
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

## **Resolution No. 611**

### **ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORD MODERNIZATION (EHRM)**

WHEREAS, Department of Defense (DoD) and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) are the two largest government agencies in the United States which maintain their own medical records for the service members and veterans under their charge; and

WHEREAS, the delay of transferring medical records from DoD to VA impacts benefits veterans are eligible to receive and the transfer delay can result in lapses of medical care and the denial of veteran's benefits; and

WHEREAS, other government agencies such as the U.S. Public Health Services and Coast Guard are in the process of migrating the remainder of their medical records to Oracle Cerner, but VA's migration continues to lag caused by poor oversight and frequent leadership changes overseeing the project with failures in change management at all levels causing multiple platform deployment delays; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge VA to provide competent command and control from VHA leadership and to enforce standardization of the electronic health record (EHR) integration across VHA facilities and continued partnership and collaboration with VSO stakeholders; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Secretary of Veteran Affairs to adopt best practices from DoD to work with the vendor and VHA facilities to implement the EHR on schedule.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief  
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

## **Resolution No. 612**

### **MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA (MST)**

WHEREAS, the continued prevalence of military sexual assault continues to grow and has been the subject of numerous military reports, Congressional hearings, documentaries and media stories. Military Sexual Trauma (MST) is a heinous crime which is a disgrace to all of those who have worn the uniform of the Armed Services; and

WHEREAS, DoD and VA have made progress towards developing and implementing a policy that creates a tangible, visible deterrent to perpetrators through consistent prosecutions or other severely negative consequences to one's military careers, both departments must commit to improving their Integrated Mental Health Strategy; and

WHEREAS, the effects of untreated MST can be devastating to the overall health of veterans and in the successful transitioning back into their families and communities; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States that we call on DoD to continue to enhance its MST awareness programs, and calls on VA to continually improve its MST treatment programs and to disseminate evidence-based clinical practice guidelines to clinicians who care for veterans who have suffered from MST; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States that we call upon Congress to continue its oversight and hearings related to military sexual trauma care and benefits with the goal of improving VA and DoD collaboration and improving policies and practices for military sexual trauma care and disability compensation.

Submitted by Commander in Chief  
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS



## **Resolution No. 613**

### **TINNITUS AND HEARING LOSS PRESUMPTIVE COMPENSABLE SERVICE CONNECTION**

WHEREAS, veterans of the armed services who served in combat and certain occupational specialties have a high incidence rate of hearing loss or tinnitus as a direct result of acoustic trauma; and

WHEREAS, veterans, from earlier, were not afforded a comprehensive audiological examination upon entrance and discharge from the military services, but instead were subject to highly inaccurate test methods; and

WHEREAS, in recent years the second leading disability granted service connection by Department of Veterans Affairs was for hearing loss or tinnitus; and

WHEREAS, the VA has the authority to grant service connection for disabilities associated with combat-related diseases or injuries even if medically undocumented at the time of service; and

WHEREAS, in 2005 the Institutes of Medicine (IOM) (now referred to as the National Academy of Sciences) released a study that showed that nearly all service members are exposed to acoustic trauma at some point during their military service and that many experience hearing loss and/or tinnitus as a result, often years after service. However, "after the fact, hearing loss or tinnitus incurred as a result of military service cannot be distinguished with certainty from subsequent noise-induced hearing loss..." Given these findings, reasonable doubt must be resolved in favor of veterans who suffered acoustic trauma in service; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we urge Congress and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to grant service connection on a presumptive basis for any veteran diagnosed after discharge with hearing loss or tinnitus when the evidence shows that the veteran participated in combat or worked in a position or occupational specialty likely to cause acoustic trauma; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to amend the Schedule for Rating Disabilities to provide a minimum compensable evaluation for any service-connected hearing loss for which a hearing aid is medically indicated.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief  
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

## Resolution No. 614

### VA CLAIMS WORKLOAD

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has made significant progress in addressing claim workloads for compensation, pension, education benefits and appeals, yet submissions and appeals continues to grow; and

WHEREAS, Congress has provided increased funding for staffing at VA and improved its oversight. Yet, the attrition rate and quality of new hires and retirement of journeymen claims processors continues to challenge VA's ability to train and maintain a technically proficient workforce; and

WHEREAS, VA has attempted to increase workload production by implementing arbitrary timeliness goals that rarely account for the complexity of claims; and

WHEREAS, VA continues to order redundant and often unnecessary examinations when the evidence of record is sufficient to make a determination, or claimants submit adequate medical records and legitimate doctor's opinions; and

WHEREAS, after dozens of Congressional hearings, numerous studies, changes of VA leadership, altered workflow, amended work processes, erratic IT development, as well as fruitless pilot programs and experimental initiatives, it is clear that there are no easy, simple or quick solutions that lead to the speedy reduction of the workload; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that Congress require Department of Veterans Affairs to accept legitimate private medical evidence and opinions in lieu of VA examinations whenever they are sufficient for rating purposes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we continue to advise that Congress exercise its oversight authority and provide the vital resources necessary to sustain a sufficient workforce capable of effectively managing the workload and provide quality and timely service to those claiming benefits or appealing decisions from VA; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the VA should revisit their production goals to reduce error rates; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress bolsters its oversight and funding of VA technology initiatives to ensure that they are constructive, relevant and effective in streamlining claims processing and improving quality of entitlement decisions.

Submitted by Commander-in Chief  
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

## **Resolution No. 615**

### **TOXIC EXPOSURES**

WHEREAS, the PACT Act has acknowledged that veterans who have been exposed to toxic substances suffer from an array of conditions and diseases, and should not continue to have to undergo a burdensome claims process; and

WHEREAS, for decades VA was reluctant to establish a clear procedure for establishing additional presumptive conditions related to toxic exposures in service. VA has created a process with the National Academies to add presumptive conditions based on association with toxic exposures; and

WHEREAS, veterans of current and past conflicts were exposed to numerous environmental hazards, including open air burn pits, the anti-malaria drug mefloquine, radioactive substances, herbicides and other hazards; and

WHEREAS, the United States military has conducted testing, monitoring, and clean-up operations related to various chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear weapons resulting in exposure both within the borders of the United States and abroad; and

WHEREAS, veterans and family members stationed at Camp Lejeune who consumed contaminated water and now suffer from associated conditions and have recently benefited from the passage of the PACT Act and while VA acknowledged this fact. There are differences in what conditions are compensable and those which only receive reimbursement for medical care. Additionally, the requirement to be stationed on the base for 30 days is arbitrary and ignores thousands who graduated from training in less time; and

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to invest adequate resources to study, diagnose, and treat conditions and illnesses associated with toxic exposures; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge Congress and the Department of Veterans Affairs to grant a presumption of service connection for all conditions and illnesses that are deemed by scientific evidence to be at least as likely as not associated with or caused by exposure to a toxic substance or environmental hazard and not solely on the basis of a definitive causal link or scientific certainty; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Department of Defense to disclose known and potential toxic exposures during all military operations and at facilities within the United States and abroad; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress ensures that the Department of Defense expedites declassification efforts related to exposure events and that the Department of Veterans Affairs extends presumptive service connection to veterans suffering from conditions or illnesses found to be associated with exposure to toxic substances.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief  
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

## Resolution No. 616

### DIGITAL CLAIMS PROCESS

WHEREAS, advancements in technology have created an expectation among many Americans to conduct business in real time in a secure, digital space; and

WHEREAS, Department of Veterans Affairs now processes nearly all its workload in a digital environment; this includes claims for compensation, pension, survivor benefits and appeals, but still fails to offer timely access to this digital environment to veterans' representatives in the benefits process; and

WHEREAS, VA has committed to developing tools, such as the Automated Development Support (ADS) Tool, that allows adjudicators to process claims more efficiently using artificial intelligence. Proper training and implementation of these tools and the adjudicator's assessment are vital to ensure quality benefit decisions; and

WHEREAS, VA has created new self-service tools for veterans to file claim actions, but has failed to similarly invest in secure resources that would allow VSOs to provide quality claims assistance to veterans in real time, relying instead on its antiquated Personal Identity Verification (PIV) credentialing process, the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) has unsuccessfully tried to engage with VA to assist in developing cutting-edge digital tools for VA-accredited representatives to provide high quality assistance anytime, anywhere; and

WHEREAS, in the interim, VSOs have been forced to either contract with third-party vendors or develop internal ad-hoc solutions at substantial cost to the VSOs and without proper insight or oversight from VA; and

WHEREAS, VSOs have had to request VA's Office of General Counsel intervention in executing the same principal functions in a digital environment which VSOs previously performed with paper claims; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Department of Veterans Affairs to update regulations to authorize VSOs the same advocacy rights in the digital environment as were allowed in the paper-based claims process and honor proof of digital transmission to VA as the effective date; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW supports the use of Automated Decision Support in assisting RVSRs to accurately adjudicate claims for benefits, we encourage the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to continue to work with all VA-accredited entities to develop real-time, secure access to tools that allow advocates to provide comprehensive assistance to clients in real time.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars urges VA to integrate their current antiquated claims management systems into one modern data management system.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief  
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

## Resolution No. 617

### VA LIFE INSURANCE PROGRAM

WHEREAS, Department of Veterans Affairs has established life insurance designed to support veterans whom might otherwise be uninsurable due to service-connected disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs has expanded the VA life insurance program making it more competitive with the private sector and opening enrollment to all service-connected veterans without a time-limit to apply; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress and Department of Veterans Affairs to continue to ensure that VA life insurance rates are competitive with private insurance company rates; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to pass legislation to index for inflation the maximum coverage rate of the VA Life Insurance program.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief  
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

## Resolution No. 618

### DOMICILIARY PROGRAMS AND TEMPORARY TOTAL RATINGS

WHEREAS, Department of Veterans Affairs provides free medical treatment for service connected disabilities; and

WHEREAS, VA grants temporary total ratings for veterans hospitalized in excess of 21 days due to service connected disabilities; and

WHEREAS, veterans are not able to work while participating in VA domiciliary and day programs; and

WHEREAS, VA has mischaracterized the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims decision *Mangham v. Shinseki* and now no longer considers domiciliary and day programs as "hospital care" for temporary 100 percent disability ratings; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that Congress restore eligibility for temporary 100 percent ratings to include medical treatment provided by all domiciliary and day programs provided the program is treating a service-connected disability.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief  
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

## Resolution No. 619

### PROTECTING VA ACCREDITATION

WHEREAS, VA has established regulations ensuring claimants are able to obtain assistance from accredited representatives to assist in the preparation, presentation, and prosecution of claims for VA benefits; and

WHEREAS, VA accredits national organizations, attorneys, and claim agents to assist claimants file for VA benefits once they have completed training approved by VA's Office of General Counsel. Accredited attorneys and claim agents may only charge fees that have been deemed reasonable by VA and these fees may only be applied at specific steps within the claims process; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars provide representation to VA beneficiaries free of charge; and

WHEREAS, there is a prevalence of non-accredited companies and individuals that the VFW calls "Claim Sharks" preying on VA beneficiaries by illegally charging exorbitant fees that clearly violate federal statutes and regulations; and

WHEREAS, these non-accredited entities have lobbied congress attempting to pass legislation that would fundamentally dismantle the basic consumer protections offered through VA accreditation and legalize predatory fee structures contrary to well-established veteran consumer protection standards to the detriment of all VA beneficiaries; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to pass legislation protecting VA beneficiaries from predatory companies, organizations, agencies and individuals attempting to by-pass the VA accreditation process and monetize the wartime illnesses and injuries of our veterans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge federal law enforcement agencies to investigate and prosecute companies, organizations, agencies and individuals that prey on our nation's veterans and their dependents by charging exorbitant fees under the guise of providing claims assistance.

## Resolution No. 620

### APPEALS MODERNIZATION AND LEGACY REMANDS

WHEREAS, VA beneficiaries had to wait years to have VA review unfavorable benefits decisions under the legacy appeals process. VA implemented the Appeals Modernization Act (AMA) of 2019 designed to streamline the VA appeals process by creating different avenues claimants may use when disagree with benefit decisions; and

WHEREAS, the Appeals Modernization Act intended to reduce the appeals backlog by prohibiting claimants from continuously submitting additional evidence throughout the appeal. Claimants may still submit additional evidence if the claimant submits a supplemental claim or if the claimant provides the evidence at the time the appeal is filed; and

WHEREAS, VA has a duty to assist claimants by obtaining federal records in conjunction with claims and by providing examinations to evaluate the severity of the condition and obtain a nexus linking the claimed condition to the Veterans service when necessary; and

WHEREAS, VA is still addressing the diminishing legacy appeals backlog due to the continuous cycle of remanded claims which need additional development that was not performed when the claim was first processed and BVA is now experiencing an increased inventory in AMA appeals and still has not provided a viable appeals management system; and

WHEREAS, VA adjudicators regularly assign later effective dates negatively impacting veterans despite claims being continuously pursued withing the framework of AMA; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs enforces proper development and timely adjudication of VA claims by obtaining all pertinent records when claims are initially processed and ensuring the Board expeditiously and ethically discharges its pending workload without arbitrary bureaucratic hurdles; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States that we urge that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs enforces policies mandating that exams are requested with accurate information and eliminating biases caused by improper phrasing on exam order requests; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States that we urge that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs enforces policies authorizing the assignment of earlier effective dates when claims are continuously pursued without the veteran submitting an additional appeal for the effective date.



## **Resolution No. 621**

### **VSO INVOLVEMENT WITH VA SCHEDULE FOR RATING DISABILITIES**

WHEREAS, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs' primary strategic goal is to consistently communicate with stakeholders to assess and maximize performance, evaluate needs and build long-term relationships and trust; and

WHEREAS, proposing changes which negatively affect veterans without collaborating with Veteran Service Organizations erodes trust between the Department of Veterans Affairs and the veterans entrusted to their care; and

WHEREAS, changes to the VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities must undergo a concurrence process requiring review by over a dozen offices prior to publishing change proposals in the Federal Register; and

WHEREAS, VA must provide the public with a 60-day period to provide comments on proposed changes after which the proposed changes must undergo an additional concurrence process requiring review by over a dozen offices prior to publishing a final rule; and

WHEREAS, during the most recent proposed VASRD changes VA did not collaborate with VSO stakeholders on changes prior to drafting and publishing proposed changes; and

WHEREAS, VA received more than 2.5 thousand comments highlighting concerns of proposed changes of the rating schedule for a single body system which VA must review and address prior to publishing a final rule; now, therefore

**BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to collaborate with VSO stakeholders prior to proposing any regulation or policy changes which impact our nation's veterans; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide updates to the VSO community providing the status of proposed and final rules whenever there are significant delays in the rule making process.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief  
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

## **Resolution No. 622**

### **FAIR AND FAVORABLE EFFECTIVE DATES**

WHEREAS, by regulation VA assigns effective dates for disability compensation based on the date the entitlement arose and can be as early as the day following separation from active service if the claim is submitted within one year of separation; and

WHEREAS, if a claim is not submitted within one year following separation from active service, VA assigns effective dates based on the date entitlement arose or the date VA receives a claim for disability compensation, whichever is later; and

WHEREAS, veterans regularly suffer from disabilities and diseases for years prior to filing a claim for compensation due to myriad reasons, resulting in lost compensation from the government; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that we urge Congress pass veteran-centric legislation granting effective dates based on when the entitlement arose, regardless of the date a claim is received by VA.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief  
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

## **Resolution No. 623**

### **JUSTICE FOR ALS VETERANS**

WHEREAS, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig's Disease, is a fatal neurodegenerative disease that destroys the nerve cells that control voluntary muscle function, eventually impacting the ability to move, speak and breathe; and

WHEREAS, numerous international institutes have been unable to determine causation or cure for ALS in more than a century of research, but have concluded that the incidence of ALS impacts veterans, especially deployed veterans, at nearly twice the rate that it impacts the general populations; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has acknowledged this disproportionate affliction in the veteran population to the effect that it has established presumptive causation between ALS diagnosis and military service of as short as 90 days duration; and

WHEREAS, under Title 38, U. S. C., Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) is available to the survivors of veterans who die due to service-related disabilities; and

WHEREAS, also under Title 38, a monthly increase of DIC is available to those survivors who were married to veterans for eight (8) years prior to their death, if the VA had rated said veteran as disabled for a full eight (8) years prior to their death; and

WHEREAS, since its discovery in 1869, the prognosis for those stricken with ALS today has largely remained the same – death within an average of only two to five years; and

WHEREAS, the survival prognosis of this aggressive, presumptive service-connected disease is insufficient to meet the eight-year rule; and

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon the VA to carve out an exception to the eight-year disability rule to allow survivors of veterans who die from ALS to receive the increased monthly DIC payment; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call upon Congress to renew efforts to legislate and fund such action as a matter of extreme urgency.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief  
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

## Resolution No. 624

### IMPROVE BENEFITS FOR SURVIVORS

WHEREAS, Dependents Indemnity Compensation (DIC) provide to dependents of fallen servicemembers and veterans who succumb to service-connected conditions has not had any significant increases since 1993, and

WHEREAS, the DIC rate is paid at forty-three percent of one hundred percent permanent and total disability, while other federal survivor programs are paid at fifty-five percent; and

WHEREAS, the Survivors and Dependents Educational Assistance Program provides educational support to eligible dependents (spouse or children) of a service member who died on active duty or a veteran who died or is permanently and totally disabled due to a service-connected disability; and

WHEREAS, DEA benefits increase annually, they fail to increase at the same rate as tuition; and

WHEREAS, Congress recently increased the monthly allowance for DEA while also decreasing the amount of months to utilize the benefit; and

WHEREAS, nothing can replace the enormity of the loss and sacrifice of military survivors, increasing benefits that align with other federal programs will provide them the opportunity to build a meaningful and productive future for themselves and their children; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to increase Survivors and Dependents benefits on par with comparable federal survivor programs; and to reflect the rising costs of living and education expenses, with future increases indexed to reflect the average cost of living increase by the Department of Social Security and tuition costs as reported by the Department of Education.

## **Resolution No. 625**

### **VETERAN HOUSING AND FOOD SECURITY PRIORITIES**

WHEREAS, homelessness among veterans has significantly decreased due to coordinated efforts across multiple agencies of government and the ambitious goal of the Department of Veterans Affairs to eliminate homelessness among veterans; and

WHEREAS, a growing number of female veterans experience homelessness, many of whom have dependents in their care; and

WHEREAS, local and state homeless veteran agencies and programs are federally funded by the Department of Veterans Affairs Grant and Per Diem program and the Department of Labor Homeless Veterans Reintegration program; and

WHEREAS, programs such as VA's Supportive Services for Veteran Families and the joint Housing and Urban Development and VA's Supportive Housing program are showing signs of success in reducing homelessness; and

WHEREAS, research has found that among 18- to 64-year-olds, veterans are 7.4 percent more likely to live in a food-insecure household than nonveterans, while veterans also use food assistance programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) at lower rates than civilians; and

WHEREAS, the VA acknowledges its obligation to maintain comprehensive assistance to veterans who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness to the best of its capabilities; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the President and Congress to continue to address veterans' homelessness by increasing the availability of safe and affordable housing for veterans and their families, expanding educational and employment opportunities and training and providing gender-specific services; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Department of Veterans Affairs should periodically adjust Grant and Per Diem program rates for inflation to ensure sufficient operation of homeless veteran assistance programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that VA compensation and non-service connected pension should not be considered countable income by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and Department of Agriculture in determining program eligibility; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Department of Veterans Affairs should annually adjust grant and per diem program rates for inflation, based on separate instances for food and housing, with the latter adjusted for local variations in housing cost based on the Variable Housing Allowance Tables used by the Department of Defense to ensure sufficient operation of homeless veteran assistance programs.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief  
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

## **Resolution No. 626**

### **ENSURE VETERAN SUCCESS IN EDUCATION**

WHEREAS, our nation has consistently supported the future success of our warfighters through robust veterans' education benefits, historically molding generations of proven leaders; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States has worked to secure and preserve quality education benefits for all generations of veterans; and

WHEREAS, Department of Veterans Affairs enrolled nearly one million veterans across all G.I. Bill programs in the past academic year; and

WHEREAS, despite significant improvements to consumer resources for student veterans and increasing GI Bill rates by 2.8%, there is inconsistent access to quality consumer information and financial hardships that continue to drive perceptions in Washington that student-veterans are not succeeding in higher education; and

WHEREAS, many combat veterans do not fully qualify for the Post-9/11 GI Bill benefit; and

WHEREAS, certain schools and programs seek to circumvent benefit guidelines in order to reap significant financial benefit; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to ensure proper oversight of Department of Veterans Affairs educational benefit programs by developing quality metrics with which to demonstrate student veteran success in higher education, and close financial loopholes through which certain academic programs can exploit GI Bill reimbursement models; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress ensure veterans receive equitable access to benefits like housing payments and quality pre-enrollment educational information to ensure veterans are academically and financially prepared to succeed in higher education; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to increase stipends for books, electronic devices such as laptops and tablets, instructional support applications and cost of living adjustments to give student veterans the proper resources and tools to be successful in their pursuit of higher education; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we work to extend full GI Bill benefits for all combat veterans and preserve quality GI Bill benefits for all current conflict veterans and future conflict veterans to ensure they have access to quality education assistance programs.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief  
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

## **Resolution No. 627**

### **VETERAN READINESS AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY**

WHEREAS, the period of eligibility for Department of Veterans Affairs Veteran Readiness and Employment benefits is 12 years from the date of separation from the military or the date the veteran was first notified by VA of a service-connected disability rating; and

WHEREAS, many veterans do not understand their eligibility to VR&E services and the benefits of the program until later in life when they become so disabled that their disabilities create an employment barrier; and

WHEREAS, VR&E lacks quality performance measures that measure readiness based on the long-term effects of disability and the likelihood that a disability may require further rehabilitation; and

WHEREAS, VR&E can take more than 90 days from enrollment to the start of services; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to change the eligibility delimiting date for Department of Veterans Affairs Vocational Readiness and Employment program by eliminating the 12-year-delimiting date for eligibility to Chapter 31 benefits and allow all veterans with employment impediments or problems with independent living to qualify for VR&E services for life; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VA must restructure performance measures to emphasize long-term readiness versus the current short-term indicators of success. Furthermore, VR&E should continually follow up with veterans considered to be rehabilitated to ensure that the rehabilitation and employment placement plans have been successful and if unsuccessful, to ensure the reasons and bases are clearly communicated to the veteran; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that VA streamlines eligibility and entitlement to VR&E programs to provide more timely intervention and assistance to all disabled veterans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that VA must provide better information about VR&E during the Transition Assistance Program Class for separating service members.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief  
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

## **Resolution No. 628**

### **SUPPORT VETERANS EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS**

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars recognizes that it is in the best interest of our nation to have a strong and viable veterans employment and training system; and

WHEREAS, Congress has recognized that veterans of all eras, especially recently separated service members and veterans with service connected disabilities find it difficult to obtain meaningful employment and careers; and

WHEREAS, while there are certain employment and educational programs in place for veterans such programs must have a proactive, long-term career focus; and

WHEREAS, programs designed to encourage federal employment of veterans, assist veterans in finding employment in their communities, and encourage federal contractors to hire veterans demand reasonable funding and responsible oversight to ensure success; and

WHEREAS, state agencies who receive federal funding are not held to the same veteran hiring standards as the federal government; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support viable and effective veterans employment and training systems, such as the Jobs for Veterans State Grant program and other Department of Labor Veterans Employment and Training Service programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to improve and enforce federal veteran-hiring mandates for contractors who do business with the federal government as outlined in Title 38 USC 4212; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that federal veteran hiring initiatives and programs must be held accountable for the effectiveness of the services provided and funding should be adjusted to reflect abilities in creating long-term meaningful careers for veterans, and state agencies that receive federal funding must be held to the same standards and report to Congress on the success of veteran hiring initiatives.



## Resolution No. 629

### VETERAN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

WHEREAS, government reports consistently indicate that many federal agencies fail to reach their three-percent contracting goal for disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, many veterans and disabled veterans lack access to the necessary capital to invest in small business opportunities; and

WHEREAS, the federal government has failed to deliver adequate tools to veterans, offering the opportunity to fulfill the three-percent federal contracting mandate; and

WHEREAS, the Small Business Administration remains underfunded and understaffed to fulfill its mission of establishing and maintaining robust veterans' programs; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that Congress expand entrepreneurial education and networking programs for veterans via veterans small business centers and other entrepreneurship programs funded through the Small Business Administration; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress expand veteran's and disabled veteran's access to capital by expanding direct loan programs through the Small Business Administration; but such programs should never come at the expense of other earned veterans' benefits; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress hold Department of Veterans Affairs accountable for its duty to properly verify veteran entrepreneurs to help achieve the federal government's three-percent veterans contracting goal.

## **Resolution No. 630**

### **UNDERSERVED VETERANS**

WHEREAS, as our nation has become more diverse, so too has our military and veterans' population, and understanding a veteran's gender, race, ethnicity, and orientation can help identify high risk concerns; and

WHEREAS, women, LGBTQ+, racial, and ethnic minority veterans face barriers and challenges across different life domains and access to VA benefits; and

WHEREAS, the demographic of the United States is everchanging resulting in the need to remain fluid to ensure that all veteran demographics can access VA benefits relevant to their needs; and

WHEREAS, VA does not have sufficient data to fully understand the barriers certain veterans face and determine whether certain veteran demographics are underserved; now therefore;

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge VA to improve data collection and better analyze results to identify challenges and disparities in benefits of underserved veterans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge VA to implement favorable changes to the benefit of underserved veterans based on findings of fact and not anecdotal or arbitrary statistics.

**Resolution No. 631**

**CONSUMER PROTECTIONS FOR VETERANS**

WHEREAS, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) reports that fraudulent and predatory activities affecting service members, veterans, and their families are on the rise; and

WHEREAS, predatory companies use a plethora of discreditable tactics ranging from high-interest auto and payday loans to phishing scams and identity theft; and

WHEREAS, predatory companies and bad actors prey upon individuals that are known to have financial savings, stable income, or consistent government entitlements such as disability compensation and social security benefits; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to pursue legislation criminalizing unscrupulous business practices and fraudulent scams that prey upon service members, veterans, and their families; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Department of Justice to pursue criminal charges and convictions when deplorable business practices and scams are identified.

## Resolution No. 632

### EXPAND VETERAN TREATMENT COURTS

WHEREAS, the United States military instills a sense of honor, duty, leadership, commitment and respect, evident in the millions of veterans who have returned home to their communities as productive citizens, strengthened by their military experience; and

WHEREAS, an estimated twenty percent of veterans has symptoms of a mental disorder or cognitive impairment, and about 1 in 10 veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan seen in the VA healthcare system have a substance use disorder and there is a well-established link between substance abuse and combat-related mental illness and an unprecedented number of veterans nationwide are appearing in the courts to face charges stemming directly from these issues; and

WHEREAS, Drug Courts evolved out of the necessity for a solution-based approach to an influx of drug abusing offenders before the courts; and the Drug Court model and the Mental Health Court model are the nation's most successful, cost effective, and scientifically validated tool to deal with substance abuse and mental health issues in the criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS, Veterans Treatment Courts are hybrid Drug Courts and Mental Health Courts and have evolved out of the growing need for a treatment court model designed specifically for justice-involved veterans to maximize efficiency and economize resources while making use of the distinct military culture consistent among veterans; and

WHEREAS, Veterans Treatment Courts build upon this camaraderie by allowing participants to go through the treatment court process with people who are similarly situated and have common past experiences; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we advocate for the continued use and expansion of Veteran Treatment Courts across the country.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief  
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

## Resolution No. 633

### FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID

WHEREAS, prospective and current college students need to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) form to apply for federal student aid such as federal grants, work-study funds and loans; and

WHEREAS, dependent student must report their parent's information in addition to their own on the FAFSA® form; and

WHEREAS, the FAFSA® requires parents to disclose any untaxed income to include veteran noneducation benefits such as Disability, Death Pension or Dependency & Indemnity Compensation (DIC) and/or VA Educational Work-Study allowances; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Education utilizes this Untaxed Income to calculate the parent's Expected Family Contribution; and

WHEREAS, any increase in the parent's Expected Family Contribution reduces the amount of aid awarded to the dependent student, thereby financially harming the dependent student; and

WHEREAS, the veteran and/or surviving spouse parent was awarded these benefits for injury or death related to their service, NOT to pay for the education of their dependent children; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Department of Education to remove any questions related to a parent's Untaxed Income related to veteran benefits from the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief  
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS