



DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

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LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

April 2012

DAV Mid-Winter Conference in Washington, DC

We thank all DAV members who attended our 2012 Mid-Winter Conference in Washington. The feedback we received from your visits to elected representatives indicated DAV was a strong presence in influencing our legislative goals and objectives for this year.

Given the short legislative calendar in Washington this year, and given that it's an election year for all House Members and one-third of U.S. Senators, we renew our request that you meet with your Congressional representatives in your districts and states to impress upon them the importance of our legislative program.

Fiscal Year 2013 Budget and Appropriations

As reported in the February Bulletin, the President introduced the Administration's budget proposal on February 13, 2012, for the fiscal year beginning on October 1, 2012. While comparatively generous to VA benefits and services programs, the Administration's request falls short by our estimate of \$4 billion, mostly for construction funding. For VA medical care, and as validated by the Government Accountability Office [<http://www.gao.gov/assets/590/589760.pdf>], the budget was reduced significantly below the Veterans Health Administration's own actuarial forecast of funding needed.

Budget hearings have been held in both the House and Senate at which DAV offered testimony. The budget testimony is available at <http://www.dav.org/voters/Testimony.aspx>.

On March 19, 2012, the House passed its Budget Resolution, H. Con. Res. 112, which closely mirrors the Administration's VA discretionary funding levels, about \$4 billion below the recommendations of *The Independent Budget*, most in construction funding levels. The House budget does not include \$1 billion in mandatory funding to stimulate veterans employment, as proposed by the Administration. The resolution does include the advance appropriation for VA medical care required by Public Law 111-81.

The Senate has yet to act on the budget resolution. We will update you in future Bulletins as the budget and appropriations season continues.

Pending Legislation

H.R. 3895, the Protect VA Healthcare Act of 2012, introduced by House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Jeff Miller, would amend the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 to clarify that all veterans programs are exempt from sequestration. This bill is in line with DAV Resolution No. 144.

H.R. 4023, the Veterans' Telehealth and Telemedicine Improvement Act, introduced by Representative Kathleen Hochul, would amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the use of teleconsultation, teleretinal imaging, telemedicine, and telehealth coordination services for the provision of health care to veterans. This bill is in line with DAV Resolution Nos. 193, 194 and 203.

H.R. 4048, the Improving Contracting Opportunities for Veteran-Owned Small Business Act of 2012, introduced by Representative Bill Johnson, would amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify the contracting goals and preferences of the Department of Veterans Affairs with respect to small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans. This bill is in line with DAV Resolution No. 215.

H.R. 4051, the TAP Modernization Act of 2012, introduced by Representative Marlin Stutzman, would direct the Secretary of Labor to provide off-base transition training at locations other than military installations, for veterans and/or their spouses and includes experts in subject matters such as resume writing, job interviewing skills, and post-secondary education. This bill is in line with DAV Resolution No. 217.

H.R. 4072, the Consolidating Veteran Employment Services for Improved Performance Act of 2012, introduced by Chairman Miller, would transfer, as of October 1, 2013, to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs specified veterans-related programs of the Department of Labor, including: (1) job counseling, training, employment, and placement services; (2) administration of employment and reemployment rights of members of the reserves; and (3) homeless veterans reintegration programs. Directs the President, for FY 2014 and thereafter, to include in the budget request funding for the VA for such functions. It would also establish a Deputy Under Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training, to formulate all VA policies and procedures with respect to veterans' employment, unemployment, and training programs. Additionally, it would consolidate provisions establishing VA disabled veterans' outreach program specialists and local veterans' employment representatives into a single provision establishing veteran employment specialists, which shall perform both tasks. Provides similar eligibility and reporting requirements for such specialists. This bill would meet the goals established in DAV Resolution No. 218.

H.R. 4114, the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2012, introduced by Representative Jon Runyan, would increase, effective as of December 1, 2012, the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans. The bill is in line with DAV Resolution No. 058, with the exception of the provision providing for permanent rounding down of COLAs, which we oppose.

H.R. 4115, the Helping Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans Return to Employment at Home Act, introduced by Representative Steve Stivers, would amend title 38, United States Code, to require, as a condition on the receipt by a State of certain funds for veterans employment and training, that the State ensures that training received by a veteran while on active duty is taken into consideration in granting certain State certifications or licenses. This bill is in line with DAV Resolution No. 214.

H.R. 4142, the American Heroes COLA Act, introduced by Representative Runyan, would amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for annual cost-of-living adjustments to be made automatically by law each year in the rates of disability compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for survivors of certain service-connected disabled veterans. The bill is in line with DAV Resolution No. 058, with the exception of the provision providing for rounding down of COLAs, which we oppose.

S. 2128, the Protecting the Health Care of Veterans Act of 2012, introduced by Senator Jon Tester, would amend the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 to clarify that all veterans' programs are exempt from sequestration. This bill would meet the goals established in DAV Resolution No. 144.

S. 2130, the Veterans Conservation Corps Authorization Act, introduced by Senator Bill Nelson, would direct the Secretary of Interior to establish a veterans conservation corps to provide training and employment to eligible veterans while assisting them with transition from military service to civilian life, as well as assisting the federal government in maintaining federal land and water. Long-term employment will be one year with an additional one-year extension on a case-by-case basis. The bill also allows six weeks temporary employment of eligible student veterans. This bill would meet the employment opportunity goal of DAV Resolution No. 001.

S. 2259, the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Act of 2012, introduced by Senator Jon Tester, would provide for an increase, effective December 1, 2012, in the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans. The bill is in line with DAV Resolution No. 058, with the exception of the provision providing for rounding down of COLAs, which we oppose.

Hearings

All DAV testimony can be read in full on our website, at:
<http://www.dav.org/voters/Testimony.aspx>.

On March 8, 2012, DAV submitted testimony for the record to the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity on 10 legislative bills.

On March 28, 2012, DAV testified before the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, concerning the implementation of the Integrated Disability Evaluation System.

On April 2, 2012, DAV submitted testimony for the record to the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans' Programs concerning the FY 2013 budget for veterans' benefits.

Independent Budget for Fiscal Year 2013

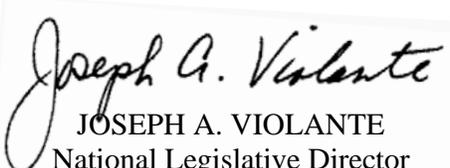
The Independent Budget and *Independent Budget Executive Summary* are available online at the DAV website, <http://www.dav.org/voters/IndependentBudget.aspx>. These

documents on CD will be sent to all DAV NSO offices, DAV Departments, DAV National Line Officers and the DAV Auxiliary.

Conclusion

To ensure the successful enactment of the legislation that we support, our DAV and Auxiliary members must become active members of DAV's grassroots—DAV CAN—and all of us must do our part to let our elected officials know about our support for legislation that builds better lives for our nation's service-disabled veterans, their families and their survivors. Please make a pledge to redouble your efforts to communicate our concerns to your elected officials. Your efforts and actions are a key to our success.

Thank you for again for your continuing support for DAV's programs of service.



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National Legislative Director

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