Legislative goals for the new year

DAV has fought in Washington, D.C., to protect veterans’ rights since its founding almost 100 years ago. No one knows better about issues veterans face than veterans themselves. Because of that, the organization’s legislative and policy goals are based directly on resolutions submitted by DAV departments and chapters across the country, with DAV members serving as the driving force behind the organization’s advocacy mission. At last year’s national convention in Orlando, Fla., members adopted resolutions ranging from improvements to veterans benefits and access to VA health care to research into toxic exposure and alternative treatments for post-traumatic stress disorder.

“For nearly a century now, DAV has responded to the changing needs of veterans by ensuring that their voices are heard by Congress,” said National Legislative Director Joy Ilem. “We fight every day in Washington to ensure Congress and the Department of Veterans Affairs hear the collective voice of DAV members. From the creation of the forerunner to the VA in the 1920s to the issues affecting veterans and their families today, our members are the driving force behind much-needed change in Washington.”

The following is a partial list of key resolutions adopted at the 2019 convention. To see the full list of resolutions, visit dav.org/learn-more/legislation/resolutions.

Disability compensation and other benefits
- Support legislation to provide for service connection for disabling conditions resulting from toxic and environmental exposures.
- Oppose reduction, taxation or elimination of veterans benefits.
- Support legislation to increase disability compensation.
- Support legislation to provide for realistic cost-of-living allowances.
- Support legislation that recognizes presumptive service connection for hypertension, bladder cancer, hypothyroidism and Parkinson-like tremors as related to exposure to Agent Orange and herbicides.
- Improve the care and benefits for veterans exposed to military toxic and environmental hazards.
- Support legislation to remove the prohibition against concurrent receipt of Survivor Benefit Plan payments and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation.
- Support legislation to remove the prohibition against concurrent receipt of military retired pay and veterans disability compensation for all longevity-retired veterans.
- Support oversight of the VA practices in evaluating disability claims for residuals of military sexual trauma.
- Support legislation for the VA to provide child care services and assistance to veterans attending VA health care, employment services and rehabilitation programs.

**Medical and health care services**

- Strengthen, reform and sustain the VA health care system for service-disabled veterans.
- Support legislation to provide comprehensive support services for caregivers of severely wounded, injured and ill veterans from all eras.
- Enhance medical services and benefits for women veterans.
- Improve service and enhance resources for VA mental health programs and suicide prevention.
- Support enhanced treatment for survivors of military sexual trauma.
- Support VA research into the efficacy of cannabis for treatment of service-connected veterans.
- Support humane, consistent pain management programs in the veterans health care system.
- Enhance long-term services and supports for service-connected disabled veterans.
- Ensure timely access to and quality of VA health care and medical services.
- Support VA medical and prosthetic research programs.
- Support sufficient funding for VA prosthetic and sensory aids and timely delivery of prosthetic items.

**General issues**

- Support sufficient, timely and predictable funding for all VA programs, benefits and services.
- Support veterans’ preference for service-disabled veterans in public employment.
- Support elimination of employment licensure and certification barriers that impede the transfer of military occupations to the civilian labor market.
- Eliminate the requirement that VA vocational rehabilitation benefits must be requested within 12 years of discharge or initial disability determination.
- Create an Economic Opportunity Administration within the VA.
- Protect veterans from employment discrimination when receiving health care for service-connected conditions.
- Support the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency.
- Account for those still missing and the repatriation of the remains of those who died while serving our nation.
- Support legislation to strengthen and protect Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses.
• Extend eligibility for mortgage protection life insurance to service-connected veterans rated permanently and totally disabled.
• Extend space-available air travel aboard military aircraft to dependents of service-connected disabled veterans having a permanent disability rated 100%.
• Support the continued growth of Veterans Treatment Courts for justice-involved veterans, particularly those with conditions related to service.