

Veterans priorities continue to drive 2021 action



Every year, DAV convention delegates identify the most important issues facing the veteran community and put forth a set of resolutions for consideration at our annual national convention that is designed to improve the lives of the men and women who served and their families. Unfortunately, in an abundance of caution due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 DAV National Convention was canceled. Because of these extenuating circumstances, resolutions adopted during the 2019 national convention will remain in effect until our next annual convention, in accordance with our National Constitution and Bylaws. Existing resolutions call for improvements to veterans benefits and VA health care and specialized services, research on the long-term health impact of service-related toxic exposures and alternative treatments for post-traumatic stress disorder.

“Even amidst a global pandemic, DAV leaders fight every day in Washington to ensure Congress and the Department of Veterans Affairs hear the collective voice of DAV members,” said National Legislative Director Joy Ilem. “While this year looks a little different than years past, we stand firm in our belief that our members are the driving force of change behind the growing needs of veterans. We remain incredibly grateful for the continued advocacy efforts of our members and supporters during this extraordinary time.”

The following is a partial list of key resolutions adopted at the 2019 convention that we will continue to focus our advocacy efforts on until the 2021 national convention in

Reno, Nevada. To see the full list of resolutions, visit dav.la/2il.

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. *Editor's note: The 2021 National Defense Authorization Act passed in December adds bladder cancer, hypothyroidism and Parkinson-like symptoms to the list of VA presumptive diseases. DAV will continue to fight for the addition of hypertension.*
- 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.
- 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.