2018 Mid-Winter Conference

Benefits Protection Team/Legislative Workshop
Sunday, February 25, 2018
National Legislative Department
National Legislative Department

Joy J. Ilem, National Legislative Director
Adrian M. Atizado, Deputy National Legislative Director
Shurhonda Y. Love, Assistant National Legislative Director
Shane L. Liermann, Assistant National Legislative Director
Jeremy M. Villanueva, Associate National Legislative Director
Peter Dickinson, Senior Executive Advisor
Lisa Bogle, Sr. Legislative Support Specialist
Caren Wooley, Legislative Support Specialist
Reminders

Take Handouts
• Critical Policy Goals (big and small)
• FY 2019 IB Budget Document

Please Complete
• Legislative Hill Visit List /Headquarters Office (Alexandria Room)
• Feedback Forms – Return to NS&LH

Power Points will be posted on the Events section of the DAV website, https://www.dav.org/events/2018-mid-winter-conference/
Commander’s Legislative Presentation

Tuesday, February 27, at 2:00 p.m.
Room G-50 Dirksen Senate Office Building

*Doors open at 1:00 PM
Commander’s Presentation - Transportation

Wheelchair Accessible Transportation/Vehicles

• All Metro Stations/Trains are accessible.
• Uber - From Uber App, select UBER WAV or TAXI WAV
• Red Top Cab - Call 703-522-3333
• Yellow Cab - Call 202-544-1212

If you call one taxi cab company and their wheelchair taxis are busy, that Company will transfer your trip request to another company.
DAV 2018 Legislative Advocacy Awards

• Veterans’ Champion Award - Senator Johnny Isakson (GA), Chairman, Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee

• Outstanding Senate Legislator of the Year – Senator Tammy Baldwin (WI)

• Outstanding House Legislator of the Year – Representative Tim Walz (MN) Ranking Member, House Veterans’ Affairs Committee

• Outstanding Federal Executive of the Year Thomas Murphy, VA Acting Under Secretary for Benefits
DAV 2018 Special Recognition Awards

• Dahlia Melendrez, General Counsel, Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee
• Ray Kelley, Minority Staff Director, House Veterans' Affairs Committee
• Dr. Elizabeth Yano, Senior Research Scientist, VA HSR&D Service
• Dr. Frances Murphy, MD, MPH, Chief Executive Officer, Sigma Health Consulting
• Tom Philpott, Syndicated Columnist
National Legislative Interim Committee

• Al Labelle, Chairman
• Jim Procuiner
• Mark Aaron
• Kevin Dasing
DAV 2018 Critical Policy Goals

• Strengthen and Modernize the **VA Health Care** System
• Support Sufficient **Funding** for Veterans Benefits and Health Care
• Comprehensive Support for **Caregivers** of Veterans of All Eras
• Improve Services and Recognition for **Women Veterans**
• **Defending** Our **Benefits** and Protecting Our Future
Thank You!

Joy J. Ilem
National Legislative Director
jilem@dav.org
Strengthen and Reform the VA Health Care System

Peter Dickinson
Senior Executive Advisor
Background of VA Health Care Reform
Background of VA Health Care Reform

• 2014 Access Crisis & Waiting List Scandal
• VACAA – Veterans Choice Program
• History of Funding “Mismatch”
• Commission on Care
• DAV & IB Framework for Reform
“Setting the Record Straight”

THE HILL

‘Centers of Excellence’ for veterans; far from an excellent idea

By Garry J. Augustine

Putting "Choice" in Context

CHOICE A PART OF THE SOLUTION TO FIXING VETERANS HEALTH CARE
Choice Improvement and Extension

• Veterans Choice Program (VACAA) Originally Set to End After 3 Years (August 2017) or When Money Runs Out

• Congress Passed Fixes, Removed End Date & Added Funding to Continue “Temporary” Choice Program

• Summer ‘17 Extension Battle Over New VA Investment
VA CARE Legislation

- CARE = Community Access for Rewarding Experiences
- RFP to Create a New Integrated Choice Network
- Veterans Get Access to Choice Network When:
  - Medical Service Not Available at VA Facility
  - Determined in the Best Clinical Interest of Veteran
  - Underperforming Service Line at VA Facility
H.R. 4242: VA Care in our Community Act

• Approved by HVAC with 14 to 9 vote on December 19
• Creates Integrated Networks using Market Assessments
• All Veterans Assigned Primary Care Provider (PCP)
  • If VA PCP Not Available, Veterans Chooses Community PCP
• NO New Investment in VA Infrastructure
• NO Caregiver Expansion Provisions
S. 2193: Caring for our Heroes Act

- Bipartisan Legislation (Chairman Isakson & Sen. Tester)
  - Passed Senate VA Committee by 14 to 1 Vote on November 29, 2017
  - Strongly Supported by DAV and All Major VSOs

- VA Creates Integrated Community Care Network
  - Clinical Determinations Based on VA Access Guidelines
  - Service Line Quality Triggers Access & Facility Remediation Plan

- Includes Significant New Investment in VA

- Contains Caregiver Expansion Provision
McCain-Moran Bill (S. 2184)

- Drafted by Sen. McCain & Moran to Open Up Choice
  - VA Creates Fixed Access Standards by Regulation
- NO New Investment in VA Infrastructure
- NO Caregiver Expansion Provisions
- Offered as Amendment to S. 2193
  - Defeated by Senate VA Committee Vote
  - Introduced as Separate Bill Following SVAC Markup
White House Involvement

- Senators Moran & McCain Placed Hold on S. 2193
- White House Seeking to Broker New Agreement
- White House Issued Comments in January
  - Supported Regulating Access Standards for Choice
  - Opposed Quality Standards for Community Providers
  - Opposed Caregiver Expansion Without New Funding
What Lies Ahead?

• Senate-House Compromise on VA Health Reform & Choice Legislation

• “Choice” Legislation Could Be Part of Next FY 2018 Budget Deal

• Fate of Caregiver Expansion Provisions in “Choice” Legislation
What We Want From Congress

- Protect the VA Health Care System
- Support the Senate VA Committee Bill S. 2193, “Caring for our Veterans Act”
  - Must Keep Caregiver Expansion
  - Must Invest in IT, Infrastructure & Staff
- Congress Must **FULLY FUND** the VA Health Care System **Every** Year
Peter Dickinson
Senior Executive Advisor
pdickinson@dav.org
Sufficient Funding for Veterans
Benefits and Health Care

Adrian Atizado
Deputy National Legislative Director
Agenda

• State of Play

• Independent Budget Recommendations
State of Play

For FY 2018
- $3.4 Billion Shortfall

Two-year Budget Deal
- For what exactly?
FY 2019 IB Recommendation: Veterans Health Administration

Total VA Medical Care: $82.6 billion

- Care in the Community: $14.8 billion
- VA Healthcare system: $67.9 billion
FY 2019 IB Recommendation: Veterans Benefits Administration

VBA: $3.1 billion

• Compensation Service - 900 new FTEE
• VR&E Service Personnel - 143 new FTEE
FY 2019 VA Construction: $2.5 billion

- Major Construction: $1.73 billion
- Minor Construction: $761 million
FY 2019 IB Recommendation: Electronic Medical Record Modernization

FY 2019 EMR Replacement: $1.6 billion

"We need to be efficient and keep costs down in implementing our Electronic Health Record system. So, what shall we throw at it - more money or more meetings?"
In Short...

• FY 2018 – Short fall of $3.4 billion

• FY 2019 – VA’s total discretionary budget $96 billion
2018 CRITICAL POLICY GOAL

Sufficient Funding for Veterans Benefits and Health Care
Comprehensive Support for Caregivers of Veterans of All Eras

Adrian Atizado
Deputy National Legislative Director
2017 Legislative Activities

• April - Roundtable
2017 Legislative Activities

• April - Roundtable
• May - Hearing on S. 591
2017 Legislative Activities

- April - Roundtable
- May - Hearing on S. 591
- May - DAV caregiver survey
2017 Legislative Activities

• April - Roundtable
• May - Hearing on S. 591
• May - DAV caregiver survey
• June - 43 Org letter
2017 Legislative Activities

- April - Roundtable
- May - Hearing on S. 591
- May - DAV caregiver survey
- June - 43 Org letter
- June - Unsung Heroes Initiative launch

www.unsungheroesinitiative.org
Unsung Heroes Initiative
Unsung Heroes Initiative

**Millions Of Disabled Veterans Don’t Have Access To VA Caregiver Support**

*By JAMES CLARK on June 19, 2017*

**Survey: Veteran caregivers feel isolated, need more support**

*By: Leo Shane III  June 19, 2017*

**Veterans caregivers are unsung heroes who need equal benefits**

*By DAVID W. RILEY, OPINION CONTRIBUTOR - 06/21/17 06:00 PM EDT*
2017 Legislative Activities

- April - Roundtable
- May - Hearing on S. 591
- May - DAV caregiver survey
- June - 43 Org letter
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2017 Legislative Activities

- April - Roundtable
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www.unsungheroesinitiative.org
2017 Legislative Activities

- April - Roundtable
- May - Hearing on S. 591
- May - DAV caregiver survey
- June - 43 Org letter
- June - Unsung Heroes
- Dec - S. 2193 passed
2017 Legislative Activities

• April - Roundtable
• May - Hearing on S. 591
• May - DAV caregiver survey
• June - 43 Org letter
• June - Unsung Heroes
• Dec - S. 2193 passed
• Dec - Petition delivered
2018 Legislative Activities

- February – House oversight
  - VA proposal

- March – Roundtable
  - Legislation?
## State of Play

### 114th Congress:
- No VA proposal
- S. 425/S. 2921 passed Senate VA Committee
- No bills passed House VA Committee

### 115th Congress:
- VA expansion proposal
- S. 2193 passed Senate VA Committee
- H.R. ??? Committee draft
2018 CRITICAL POLICY GOAL

Comprehensive Support for Caregivers of Veterans of All Eras
Adrian Atizado
Deputy National Legislative Director
aatizado@dav.org
2018 Mid-Winter Conference

Improve Services & Recognition For Women Veterans
Shurhonda Love
Assistant National Legislative Director
Discussion Topics

Purpose
About last year
Today's Challenges
Women Veteran Bills 115th Congress
Veteran Suicide
Women Veteran Homelessness
DAV Web Resources
DAV Interim Women Veterans Committee
DAV In Action
Why are we here?

Why are YOU here?
Engage
Educate
Expect

Locally Elected Officials
DAV’s Legislative Priorities

Action
Last Year

• Women Veterans inability to identify as veterans & society’s perception of who a veteran is
  VA and DOD Cant do it alone, because you are here, you know the challenges women veterans face. We need you to educate your neighbors, friends and family members. Remind them to acknowledge the service of women veterans as the same as male veterans.

• Gaps in comprehensive care for women veterans
  VA is set to provide gender-specific training to many of its existing primary care physicians lacking this specialty qualification.

• Lack of knowledge about benefits and services
  Women Veteran Coordinators are located at every regional office and Women Veteran Program Managers are located at every VAMC.
Awareness Campaigns

Women Veterans Health Care

Women Veterans and Military Sexual Trauma
You are not alone.
DEPRESSION
TROUBLE SLEEPING
WEIGHT CHANGE
ANXIETY
PHYSICAL PAIN
MEMORY LOSS

Take the step...
Let VA help.

She wore these.
It's our job to give her the best care anywhere.
Today’s Challenges

There are approximately 2 million women veterans. In 2015, almost 40% of women veterans were enrolled in the Veterans Health Administration.

The number of women veterans is expected to increase at the rate of 18,000 per year for the next 10 years.
From 2005 to 2015, the number of women veterans enrolled in VA health care increased by 83.9 percent. Going from 397,024 to \textbf{729,989} with actual users during this same period increasing from 237,952 to \textbf{455,875}.

\textbf{What do these numbers mean?}
- rapid growth
- unique cohort (requiring gender specific care)
- aging infrastructure
Team DAV

3 e’s in action

Engage  Educate  Expect

DAV’s Critical Policy Goals for 2018

1. Comprehensive Support for Caregivers of Veterans of All Eras
2. Strengthen and Modernize the VA Health Care System
3. Defending Our Benefits and Protecting Our Future
4. Improve Services and Recognition for Women Veterans
5. Support Sufficient Funding for Veterans Benefits and Health Care
   (Awaiting Release of Administration’s Budget Proposal)

# 4. Improve Services and Recognition for Women Veterans
Women Veterans:
- H.R. 91, Building Supportive Networks for Women Veterans Act
- H.R. 93, A bill to improve access to gender-specific care for women
- H.R. 95, Veterans Access to Child Care Act
- S. 681/H.R. 2452, Deborah Sampson Act
- S. 804, Women Veterans Access to Quality Care Act of 2017
- S. 970/H.R. 907, Newborn Care Improvement Act of 2017
- S. 1111, Violence Against Women Veterans Act
- S. 2402/H.R. 4635, Peer to Peer Counseling Act
S. 681/H.R. 2452 The Deborah Sampson Act
To improve benefits and services provided by VA for women veterans

Peer to Peer Counseling
Legal Support Services
Reintegration counseling in group retreat settings
Increased Funding to Organizations supporting Women Veterans
Retrofit VAMCs with items which provide privacy and enhance the environment of care.

Join Our Team

Collect data from VA programs serving women
Report on the availability of Women veterans’ prosthetics.
Women Veteran Suicide

From 2001 through 2014, the suicide rate among women veterans increased to a greater degree (62.4%) than the suicide rate among male veterans at (29.7%)

The risk for suicide was 2.4 times higher among women veterans when compared to U.S. civilian adult females. (2014)

In 2014, the rate of suicide among U.S. Veteran females was 18.9 per 100,000. • Since 2001, the age-adjusted rate of suicide among U.S. Veteran females has increased by 85.2%.
In 2014, an average of 20 veterans died by suicide each day.

**NOTE:** 14 of the 20 veterans dying by suicide are not recent users of VHA services at least within the past two years.

In one year 365 X 20 = **7,300**

In 35 years 7,300 X 35 = **255,500**

In 2014, veterans accounted for 18 percent of all deaths by suicide among U.S. adults and constituted 8.5 percent of the U.S. adult population (ages 18 and older).
January 2017, 40,056 veterans were experiencing homelessness. Around 36,302 were male, and around 3,752 were women. These numbers are determined by Point In Time counts conducted on a night during a month.

According to the AHAR report to Congress, since 2016, the number of homeless women veterans increased by 7%. Between 2010 and 2017, the number of veterans experiencing homelessness was cut nearly in half. 955 were veterans who were homeless as part of a family.
What Has DAV Done for Women Veterans

In 2014 DAV released the report: *Women Veterans: The Long Journey Home*

Update Expected
Summer 2018!

https://www.dav.org/women-veterans/
The curriculum is set up in a way that fosters a non-traditional, non-medicinal approach to treating post-traumatic stress, depression, and anxiety by taking those life and military experiences that are at the root of mental illnesses like post-traumatic stress and turning them into Post-Traumatic Growth (PTG). The philosophy of PTG is making peace with the past, living in the present, and planning for a new future.

*We learned the wisdom “it’s not you, but it’s what happened to you”*

BCR showed me I can be stronger because of my experiences, not in spite of them…. “Stephanie” WP032
DAV Interim Women Veterans Committee

Serve as Committee Advisors to the DAV National Commander and National Adjutant on issues affecting women veterans.
DAV Women Veterans Landing Page

https://www.dav.org/women-veterans/
KEEPING THE PROMISE TO AMERICA’S VETERANS

“DAV has been leading the way, fighting for women veterans, for decades, including co-convening the first-ever national summit on women veterans, providing specialized training to all of our national service officers on issues unique to women veterans, and helping unprecedented numbers of females find work,” said Judy Green, DAV’s national legislative director and a disabled veteran herself.

https://www.dav.org/women-veterans/
DAV Women Veterans & Grass Roots

Please sign up for the DAV Commander’s Action Network to find out the latest on women veterans and other legislation supported by DAV

DAV Commander’s Action Network

Home > DAV Commander’s Action Network

- Advocacy Campaigns
- Find Your Officials
- Bills
- Sign Up to Receive Alerts!

Enter Your Info

Email
ZIP Code

Continue
DAV Women Veterans & Social Media

@DAVHQ
@DAVSLove
#DAVMidWinter18
#DAVMWC18
#DAVWomenVeterans18
#DAVWV18
Thank You!

Shurhonda Love
Assistant National Legislative Director
slove@dav.org
2018 Mid-Winter Conference

Defending Our Benefits

Shane Liermann
Assistant National Legislative Director
Agenda

• Appeals Modernization & Implementation
• Resolutions
• Critical Policy Goal: Defending Our Benefits
DAV Resolutions

• Start of a Resolution
• Legislative Agenda
• Resolutions for Defending our Benefits
DAV Resolutions

• Resolution No. 23—Oppose Reduction, Taxation or Elimination of Veterans Benefits

• Resolution No. 88—Oppose Long-Term Rounding Down Cost-of-Living Adjustments in Veterans Benefits
DAV Resolutions

• Resolution No. 93—Support Legislation That Would Exempt the Benefits Paid to Wartime Service-Connected Disabled Veterans From the “PAYGO/CUTGO” Provisions of the Budget Enforcement Act
2018 CRITICAL POLICY GOAL

Defending Our Benefits & Protecting Our Future
Defending Our Benefits

• Recent Bipartisan Legislation

• Proposals & Attacks on Our Benefits
Those proposals involved:

- Total Disability based on Individual Unemployability
- COLA Round-down including as PAYGO
Defending & Protecting Total Disability Based on Individual Unemployability
Total Disability based on Individual Unemployability (TDIU)

- Administration's FY 2018 Budget Proposal

- Eliminate eligibility for TDIU for veterans at 62 and to cut off anyone in receipt of SSA retirement
TDIU

DAV and other VSOs pushed back on the Administration and reminded them of these key elements:
VA regulation 38 C.F.R. § 4.19, states the VA is precluded from considering a veteran’s age in a determination of a Total Disability Based on Individual Unemployability.
TDIU

TDIU is not a retirement or pension program and is neither similar nor related to Social Security retirement benefits.
A VA determination of a Total Disability Based on Individual Unemployability is not the same nor is it similar to Federal Unemployment Insurance; it is a disability compensation benefit.
Although the Administration backed away from this proposal, the threat remains.
We urge Congress to enact H.R. 4369, the Protecting Benefits for Disabled Veterans Act of 2017. (Resolution No. 23)
Defending & Protecting Benefits from PAYGO
PAYGO

• Congressional Budget Rules require any new benefits that would increase federal spending must be offset with reductions

• Referred to as “PAYGO”
This means they must “Pay as They Go”. Each Committee is instructed to find reductions/offsets from their own programs.
PAYGO

We firmly reject the PAYGO rule that requires one group of veterans to “pay for” any new or expanded benefits for another group of veterans. (DAV Resolution No. 93)
PAYGO
We urge Congress to **exempt** veterans’ benefits and services from PAYGO rules, since these benefits should be “paid for” by all Americans, not just veterans.
Defending & Protecting Cost-of Living Adjustment (COLA) from Long-term Round-down
There have been many attempts to round down the COLA as a “pay for” for proposed new or expanded veterans’ benefits.
COLA Round-down

- November 2017
- February 11, 2018, the Administration Budget Proposal for FY 2019.
COLA Round-down

We oppose any long-term rounding down of the COLA. (DAV Resolution No 88)
Additional Attacks on Our Benefits
Proposals to Attack Benefits

• Congressional Budget Office (CBO)

• Non-partisan agency seeking budget savings

• These are only proposals/not legislation
Proposed Elimination or Reduction

Eliminate Concurrent Receipt of Military Retirement and Disability Compensation
Proposed Elimination or Reduction

Exclude Disability Compensation for Certain Disabilities “Unrelated” to Military Service
Proposed Elimination or Reduction

Include All Disability Compensation as Taxable Income
Proposed Elimination or Reduction

February 11, 2018, the Administration released its proposed budget for FY 2019. They are requesting legislation to further eliminate or reduce our benefits.
Proposed Elimination or Reduction

Redefine Agent Orange Exposure.
What’s Next?

• Awareness Campaign
• Commander’s Action Network
• Benefits Protection Teams
2018 CRITICAL POLICY GOAL

Defending Our Benefits & Protecting Our Future
Shane Liermann
Assistant National Legislative Director
sliermann@dav.org
2018 Mid-Winter Conference

Benefits Protection Team Tips

Jeremy Villanueva
Associate National Legislative Director
Benefit Protection Team

Where are my BPT?
• Be that liaison between chapter and department
• Team up with the department BPTL
• Pass the WORD!
• Keep the people back at home informed
• Be prepared to debrief your chapter
• Get on that social media!!!

- facebook.com/DAV
- youtube.com/disabledamericanveterans
- twitter.com/davhq
- instagram.com/davhq
- flickr.com/photos/thedav
- linkedin.com/company/48969
Getting Prepared For Your Hill Visits

Gather your delegates and get organized
• Organize
• Pick the spokesperson(s)
• Discuss the issues
• Confirm your meeting places
• Gather materials
• Leave behind Critical Policy Goals
Meeting Your Representatives

• Try and be early
• Know that you might not be meeting with your representative
• Have a knowledgeable spokesperson
• Review the issues
  • Please note the “By The Numbers” on the back of the Critical Policy Goals
• Be ready for questions
• Thank them for their sponsorship or advocate for their support
Workshops

- Workshops give you the tools needed for your meetings
- **Critical Policy Goals**
- **By The Numbers**
- **Legislative Program**
- **Lobbying Evaluation Form (After Action Report)**
Commander’s Testimony

- Commander’s Testimony
- Dirksen Senate Office Building, Room G50 at 2:00 PM Tuesday February 27th
  - Shows the strength of our Grassroots
  - Influence of the DAV
After Action

• How to Follow-Up
• Send a letter or email that includes:
  • Thanks
  • Promised Information
  • Brief synopsis of *Critical Policy Goals*
  • Copy of DAV Commander’s testimony
• Please remember to complete the After Action Report and return to the national legislative department
Thank You!

Questions?

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Shane L. Liermann
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National Service
& Legislative Headquarters
Washington, DC
(202)554-3501
From Adrian Atizado’s presentation, what is DAV’s number one legislative issue for 2018?

Expanding eligibility for VA’s Comprehensive Caregiver Support Program to caregivers of all eras
From Shurhonda Love’s presentation, what is the name of the most comprehensive bill for women veteran’s?? *Hint, it is the one you were asked to solicit the support of your elected officials*

*The Deborah Sampson Act, S. 681 or H.R. 2452*
From Shane Liermann’s presentation: what bill, name or number, is currently pending that will protect Individual Unemployability from being reduced due to retirement age???

H.R. 4369 or the Protecting Benefits for Disabled Veterans Act of 2017!
From Jeremy Villanueva’s presentation, when and where will the Commander’s Testimony be held???

Dirksen Senate Office Building, Room G50 at 2:00 PM Tuesday February 27th
Earlier today, Peter Dickinson talked about a number of bills being considered to strengthen and reform the VA health care system and the veterans choice program. What is the bill number or bill name of the specific legislation that DAV is supporting to reform VA health care???

S. 2193-Caring for Our Veterans Act of 2017
In Joy Ilem’s presentation, she discussed DAV’s 2018 award recipients. Please name DAV’s Veterans’ Champion Awardee of 2018!

Senator Johnny Isakson (GA), Chairman of the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee