

**PROCEEDINGS
of
DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
2023 NATIONAL CONVENTION**



**August 5–8, 2023
Atlantic City, New Jersey**

NATIONAL CONVENTION PROCEEDINGS
OF DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

COMMUNICATION

FROM

THE NATIONAL ADJUTANT,
DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

TRANSMITTING

2023 NATIONAL CONVENTION PROCEEDINGS OF
DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS, PURSUANT TO
36 U.S.C. 50308 AND 44 U.S.C. 1332



January 1, 2024—Referred to the Committee on Veterans’
Affairs and ordered to be printed

U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE
WASHINGTON: 2023

LETTER OF SUBMITTAL

January 1, 2024

Speaker of the House of Representatives
Washington, DC

Dear Mr. Speaker:

As business manager of DAV (Disabled American Veterans), and as secretary of its national convention, I hereby certify as to the authenticity of the reports and proceedings of our national convention, held in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, and submit them to you through the office of this organization located in Washington, D.C., to be printed as a House document as originally authorized by 44 U.S.C. 1332 and in fulfillment of 36 U.S.C. 50308.

The national convention proceedings include an independent audit report of all receipts and expenditures as of December 31, 2022, as described in 36 U.S.C. 10101.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barry A. Jesinoski", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Barry A. Jesinoski
National Adjutant
Chief Executive Officer

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**NATIONAL OFFICERS 2023–2024
DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS**

National Commander

Nancy G. Espinosa, 1369 Country Park Drive, Kaysville, UT 84037

Senior Vice Commander

Daniel Contreras, 4702 Halbrent Ave., Sherman Oaks, CA 91403

1st Jr. Vice Commander

Coleman Nee, 1 Leeward Run, South Yarmouth, MA 02664

2nd Jr. Vice Commander

John Donovan, 135 N. Woodland Dr, Conway, AR 72032

3rd Jr. Vice Commander

Cynthia Madison, 314 Pebble Creek Drive, Suffolk, VA 23435

4th Jr. Vice Commander

James A. Procunier, 501 Deep Water Drive SE, Bolivia, NC 28422

National Judge Advocate

Michael E. Dobmeier, 404 25th Avenue South,
Grand Forks, ND 58201

National Chaplain

Debra Varner-Dancer, 404 Lorain Street, Birmingham, AL 35224

Past National Commander

Joseph Parsetich, 1801 1st Street South, Great Falls, MT 59405

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2023–2024

First District	Francis F. Whitty, Massachusetts
Second District	Israel Rivera, New York
Third District	Joyce Gaddis, Maine
Fourth District	Johnnie Walker, New Jersey
Fifth District	Leonard M. Johnson, Pennsylvania
Sixth District	John Patterson, Maryland
Seventh District	Mary Ann Keckler, Florida
Eighth District	Dave Sensat, Louisiana
Ninth District	Leon Booker, Georgia
Tenth District	Rolly D. Lee, Michigan
Eleventh District	Dennis F. Hanneman, Ohio
Twelfth District	John Polk, Wisconsin
Thirteenth District	Eric D. McGinnis, Indiana
Fourteenth District	Kevin Grantier, Montana
Fifteenth District	David C. Gerke, Missouri
Sixteenth District	Gerald Wilson, California
Seventeenth District	Jerry D. Estes, Utah
Eighteenth District	Bill Dolan, Nevada
Nineteenth District	Brigitte G. Marker, Washington
Twentieth District	Charles Edwards, Texas
Twenty-first District	Harry O. Komprood, Arkansas



Nancy Espinosa
National Commander
2023–2024
Disabled American Veterans



Joseph Parsetich
National Commander
2022–2023
Disabled American Veterans

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Debra Varner, 404 Lorain Street, Birmingham, AL 35224

Past National Commander

Andrew Marshall, 750 Tomoka Drive, Palm Harbor, FL 34683

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First District	James Follis, Massachusetts
Second District	Israel Rivera, New York
Third District	Robert Guldner, New Hampshire
Fourth District	Johnnie Walker, New Jersey
Fifth District	Philip Arnold, Pennsylvania
Sixth District	John Patterson, Maryland
Seventh District	Frank Chicollo, Florida
Eighth District	Dave Sensat, Louisiana
Ninth District	Gregory Keesee, North Carolina
Tenth District	Rolly Lee, Michigan
Eleventh District	Michael Stith, Ohio
Twelfth District	John Polk, Wisconsin
Thirteenth District	George Hall, Kentucky
Fourteenth District	Kevin Grantier, Montana
Fifteenth District	Karin Hansen, Kansas
Sixteenth District	Gerald Wilson, California
Seventeenth District	Floyd Watson, Wyoming
Eighteenth District	Bill Dolan, Nevada
Nineteenth District	JoAnn Gavin, Washington
Twentieth District	Charles Edwards, Texas
Twenty-first District	Danny Oliver, Oklahoma

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDERS

1921–22:	Robert S. Marx, Cincinnati, Ohio (deceased 1960)
1922–23:	C. Hamilton Cook, Buffalo, New York (deceased 1935)
1923–24:	James A. McFarland, Dalton, Georgia (deceased 1942)
1924–25:	Frank J. Irwin, New York, New York (deceased 1942)
1925–26:	John W. Mahan, Bozeman, Montana (deceased 1947)
1926–27:	John V. Clinnin, Chicago, Illinois (deceased 1955)
1927–28:	William E. Tate, Atlanta, Georgia (deceased 1949)
1928–29:	Millard W. Rice, Minneapolis, Minnesota (deceased 1980)
1929–30:	William J. Murphy, Santa Ana, California (deceased 1931)
1930–31:	H. H. Weimer, Chicago, Illinois (deceased 1955)
1931–32:	E. Claude Babcock, Washington, D.C. (deceased 1958)
1932–33:	William Conley, Los Angeles, California (deceased 1941)
1933–34:	Joe W. McQueen, Kansas City, Missouri (deceased 1969)
1934–35:	Volney P. Mooney Jr., Los Angeles, California (deceased 1945)
1935–36:	Marvin A. Harlan, El Paso, Texas (deceased 1970)
1936–37:	M. Froome Barbour, Cincinnati, Ohio (deceased 1985)
1937–38:	Maple T. Harl, Denver, Colorado (deceased 1957)
1938–39:	Owen Galvin, Minneapolis, Minnesota (deceased 1956)
1939–40:	Lewis J. Murphy, South Bend, Indiana (deceased 1966)
1940–41:	Vincent E. Schoeck, Detroit, Michigan (deceased 1966)
Aug. 16, 1941–	
Aug. 15, 1943:	Lawrence R. Melton, Dallas, Texas (deceased 1978)
Aug. 15, 1943–	
Sept. 20, 1943:	William J. Dodd, Jersey City, New Jersey (deceased 1957)
1943–44:	James L. Monnahan, Minneapolis, Minnesota (deceased 1980)
1944–45:	Milton D. Cohn, Buffalo, New York (deceased 1968)
1945–46:	Dow V. Walker, Newport, Oregon (deceased 1957)
1946–47:	Lloyd F. Oleson, Ventura, California (deceased 1982)
1947–48:	John L. Golob, Hibbing, Minnesota (deceased 1976)
1948–49:	Jonathon M. Wainwright, San Antonio, Texas (deceased 1953)
1949–50:	David M. Brown, Akron, Ohio (deceased 1982)
1950–51:	Boniface R. Maile, Grosse Pointe, Michigan (deceased 2002)
1951–52:	Ewing W. Mays, Little Rock, Arkansas (deceased 1994)
1952–53:	Floyd L. Ming, Bakersfield, California (deceased 1975)
1953–54:	Howard W. Watts, Indianapolis, Indiana (deceased 1977)
1954–55:	Alfred L. English, Shelbyville, Tennessee (deceased 1987)
1955–56:	Melvin J. Maas, Chevy Chase, Maryland (deceased 1964)
1956–57:	Joseph F. Burke, Bayonne, New Jersey (deceased 1970)
1957–58:	Paul E. Frederick Jr., Cincinnati, Ohio (deceased 2015)
1958–59:	David B. Williams, Boston, Massachusetts (deceased 1994)
1959–60:	Bill H. Fribley, Crestline, Kansas (deceased 1994)
1960–61:	William O. Cooper, Dallas, Texas (deceased 1990)
1961–62:	Francis R. Buono, Whitestone, New York (deceased 1977)
1962–63:	Peter L. Dye, Denver, Colorado (deceased 2013)
1963–64:	Douglas H. McGarrity, Allen Park, Michigan (deceased 1986)
1964–65:	William G. Dwyer, San Diego, California (deceased 1982)
1965–66:	Claude L. Callegary, Baltimore, Maryland (deceased 2014)
1966–67:	John W. Unger Sr., Danville, Illinois (deceased 1970)
1967–68:	Francis J. Beaton, Fargo, North Dakota (deceased 1969)
1968–69:	Wayne L. Sheirbon, Seattle, Washington (deceased 1999)
1969–70:	Raymond P. Neal, Daly City, California (deceased 1980)
1970–71:	Cecil W. Stevenson, Jonesboro, Arkansas (deceased 2013)
1971–72:	Edward T. Conroy, Bowie, Maryland (deceased 1982)
1972–73:	Jack O. Hicks, Larue, Ohio (deceased 2021)
1973–74:	John T. Soave, Detroit, Michigan (deceased 1984)
1974–75:	Walter T. Greaney, Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts (deceased 1994)

1975–76: Lyle C. Pearson, North Mankato, Minnesota (deceased 2013)
 1976–77: Frank J. Randazzo, East Meadow, New York (deceased 2010)
 1977–78: Oliver E. Meadows, Godley, Texas (deceased 2005)
 1978–79: Billy O. Hightower, Grand Junction, Colorado (deceased 2015)
 1979–80: Paul L. Thompson, Baltimore, Maryland (deceased 1993)
 1980–81: Stan Pealer, Holts Summit, Missouri (deceased 2018)
 1981–82: Sherman E. Roodzant, Santa Ana, California
 1982–83: Edward G. Galian, New York, New York (deceased 2002)
 1983–84: Dennis A. Joyner, Apollo, Pennsylvania
 1984–85: Chad Colley, Barling, Arkansas (deceased 2021)
 1985–86: Albert H. Linden Jr., Camp Springs, Maryland
 1986–87: Kenneth G. Musselmann, Huntington Beach, California (deceased 2009)
 1987–88: Gene A. Murphy, Sioux Falls, South Dakota
 1988–89: Billy E. Kirby, Clifton, Texas
 1989–90: Vernon V. Cardosi, Saugus, Massachusetts
 1990–91: Joseph E. Andry, Westerville, Ohio (deceased 2010)
 1991–92: Cleveland Jordan, Washington, D.C. (deceased 2019)
 1992–93: Joseph C. Zengerle, Washington, D.C.
 1993–94: Richard E. Marbes, Green Bay, Wisconsin
 1994–95: Donald A. Sioss, Miller Place, New York
 1995–96: Thomas A. McMasters, III, Sterling Hts., Michigan (deceased 2008)
 1996–97: Gregory C. Reed, Indianapolis, Indiana
 1997–98: Harry R. McDonald Jr., Crestview, Florida (deceased 2008)
 1998–99: Andrew A. Kistler, Franklin, Pennsylvania (deceased 2018)
 1999–00: Michael E. Dobmeier, Grand Forks, North Dakota
 2000–01: Armando C. Albarran, San Antonio, Texas
 2001–02: George H. Steese Jr., Fresno, California
 2002–03: Edward R. Heath Sr., Mechanic Falls, Maine (deceased 2005)
 2003–04: Alan W. Bowers, Royalston, Massachusetts
 2004–05: James E. Sursely, Apopka, Florida (deceased 2021)
 2005–06: Paul W. Jackson, Colorado Springs, Colorado
 2006–07: Bradley S. Barton, Tualatin, Oregon
 2007–08: Robert T. Reynolds, Alexandria, Virginia
 2008–09: Raymond E. Dempsey, Des Plaines, Illinois
 2009–10: Roberto Barrera, Del Rio, Texas
 2010–11: Wallace E. Tyson, Fayetteville, North Carolina
 2011–12: Donald L. Samuels, Gallatin, Tennessee
 2012–13: Larry A. Polzin, Sylmar, California (deceased 2020)
 2013–14: Joseph W. Johnston, Williamsburg, Ohio
 2014–15: Ron F. Hope, Clemmons, North Carolina
 2015–16: Moses A. McIntosh Jr., Hephzibah, Georgia
 2016–17: David W. Riley, Semmes, Alabama
 2017–18: Delphine Metcalf-Foster, Vallejo, California
 2018–19: Dennis R. Nixon, China Spring, Texas
 2019–21: Stephen Whitehead, Rosemount, Minnesota
 2021–22: Andrew Marshall, Palm Harbor, Florida
 2022–23: Joseph Parsetich, Great Falls, Montana

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE 101st NATIONAL CONVENTION
OF THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS HELD AT**

Atlantic City, New Jersey

August 5, 2023

Joint Opening Session

- - -

The Joint Opening Session of the Disabled American Veterans 101st National Convention and the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary 100th National Convention convened in the Wildwood Ballroom 2-7 of the Harrah's Resort Atlantic City, Atlantic City, New Jersey, on Saturday, August 5, 2023, and was called to order at 8:45 o'clock, a.m., by National Commander Joseph "Joe" Parsetich.

COMMANDER JOSEPH "JOE" PARSETICH: All right, if everybody could take their seat, please.
Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.

(Response of "Good morning.")

COMMANDER PARSETICH: I now call to order the 101st National Convention of DAV and DAV Auxiliary. (Applause) For the first time, I'm honored to invite National Adjutant Barry Jesinoski to read the Call to Convention. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and the adjutant advanced to the podium.)

ADJUTANT BARRY JESINOSKI: Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

ADJUTANT JESINOSKI: The Constitution and Bylaws of DAV, Disabled American Veterans, state that the supreme legislative powers of this organization shall be vested in an annual National Convention, composed of the national officers, and representatives of the state departments and chapters.

As national adjutant and secretary for this event, I am honored to officially declare the 101st National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans to be convened in Atlantic City, New Jersey, at 8:47 a.m., Saturday, August 5th, 2023.

Consideration and disposition of business brought before this convention shall be conducted in accordance with the National Constitution and Bylaws now in force. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the adjutant withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Ladies and gentlemen, if you will please silence your cell phones and other mobile devices at this time I would appreciate it. (Three raps of the gavel)

I will now ask the DAV Department of Massachusetts Honor Guard to deliver our national standard. Present colors.

(Whereupon, the Department of Massachusetts Honor Guard presented the national standard.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Ladies and gentlemen, here this morning to perform our National Anthem is former Ms. Veteran America, Mary Ann Hotaling.

(Whereupon, Ms. Hotaling advanced to the stage.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Mary Ann is a proud, first-generation American, born and raised right here in New Jersey. After graduating from Seton Hall University on an Army ROTC scholarship, she was commissioned into the U.S. Army Medical Services Corps where she served both stateside and overseas, to include a humanitarian mission in Bosnia.

She has also served as the Chief of Military Personnel at William Beaumont Army Medical Center.

After serving her country, she went back to school to become a teacher and earned her master's degree in Education Leadership. She has been an educator for over 20 years and is a volunteer at battered women's shelters.

She recently launched a business called "Down South Prep" that helps high school students prepare for college.

Those who are able, please remain standing and join in singing our National Anthem.

(Whereupon, the National Anthem was sung, followed by a round of applause, after which Ms. Hotaling withdrew from the stage.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Thank you, Mary Ann, for that truly beautiful, beautiful performance. Now, if you folks will join me in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

(Whereupon, the Pledge of Allegiance was recited, followed by one rap of the gavel.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in thanking the Department of Massachusetts Honor Guard for their wonderful participation in getting our 101st National Convention started the right way. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Department of Massachusetts Color Guard withdrew.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: I'm glad some of you – please remain standing. My fault. I would like to call on our national chaplain, Debra Varner, to lead us in prayer, please.

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and the chaplain advanced to the podium.)

CHAPLAIN DEBRA VARNER: Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

CHAPLAIN VARNER: May we pray.

Heavenly Creator, he who created all things, we invoke your presence into this place, once again, as we gather to receive our instruction, receiving divine wisdom and understanding. Grant us this opportunity as we give you thanks for all of those who traveled both far and near.

As we honor you with the fruit of our lips and the understanding that shall be given unto us this day we thank you. We give you praise. Now cover us in your shield of protection as the light continues to flow through our hearts as we bond together as one unit, once again.

These and all things we ask in your name. And the people said Amen.

(Response of "Amen," after which the chaplain withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Thank you, chaplain. Now you may be seated. (One rap of gavel.) Once again, welcome to the 101st National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans. (Applause) I am proud to introduce our 2023 National Convention Chairperson.

Most people think of a nice Scotch when they hear the name "Johnnie Walker" but I think of one of the best veterans advocates this nation has to offer.

The Department of New Jersey Adjutant Johnnie Walker was drafted into the Army back in 1965 and served as a Recon Scout in Korea until his discharge in 1967.

From there he went into veterans' service work in Philadelphia. And that's where he first encountered DAV's service officers – the same ones they went wherever there was a problem and they couldn't figure out how to handle it, he was right there.

And eventually Johnnie was elected commander of Chapter 44 in New Jersey, serving in that capacity from 2012 to 2015. In 2014, he began serving on the state's budget and finance committee until he was appointed adjutant in 2016, a position that he has held ever since.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure to introduce to you our 2023 National Convention chair, Johnnie Walker. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and the convention chairman advanced to the podium.)

CONVENTION CHAIRMAN JOHNNIE WALKER: Thank you, Commander Parsetich, for that very kind introduction. Good morning, DAV and Auxiliary.

(Response of "Good morning.")

CONVENTION CHAIRMAN WALKER: On behalf of the Department of New Jersey, we welcome you to Atlantic City. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Jersey String Band entered and marched around the front of the room playing music, then withdrew from the room amid a round of applause.)

CONVENTION CHAIRMAN WALKER: Ladies and gentlemen, please don't make me blue today. (Laughter) Please give another round of applause for the Jersey String Band. (Applause)

National Commander Parsetich, National Adjutant Jesinoski? – I hope I pronounced that right. I hope I didn't butcher it, Barry.

ADJUTANT JESINOSKI: Close enough, Johnnie.

CONVENTION CHAIRMAN WALKER: Our national line officers, Senior Vice National Commander Hurley, Auxiliary National Adjutant Clos, Auxiliary national line officers, distinguished guests and my fellow DAV members.

If I may, I would like to give a shout-out to my home chapter, DAV Chapter 44, Cape May, New Jersey, (Applause) and the entire Department of New Jersey. (Applause) DAV and state Auxiliary members from New Jersey, please stand, if able, and be recognized. Please stand.

(Whereupon, the member stood and were recognized with a round of applause.)

CONVENTION CHAIRMAN WALKER: Thank you. It is truly an honor to serve as convention chairperson for the 101st DAV and Auxiliary National Convention. I can't be more excited than to welcome each and every one of you to the "America's Playground." With over 27 million visitors per year, it's one of the most popular destinations in the United States.

This week, we're here to do the business of the organization we all love. But who says we can't have some fun while we're doing it. (Applause)

This city promises so much more than just gambling and nightlife, including celebrity-chef restaurants, relaxing spas, family-friendly activities, museums, and championship golf.

So while we're here, there's plenty to do at Harrah's. I highly recommend exploring what's beyond the walls. When the business day is over, there's a lot to see.

As we move forward into what will be an amazing four days here in Atlantic City, we should be excited, honored, and challenged by our mission ahead.

We have much business to take care of over the next several days, in keeping with our promise to the men and the women who served our nation and sacrificed so much.

This is an unending task, because we are an unyielding group. Let's focus on our shared goal and make this a successful convention in this beautiful city. May God bless you and may God bless America. Thank you. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the convention chairman withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

MR. JOHN "ROB" LEWIS: And now your DAV Auxiliary staff and national officers: DAV National Auxiliary Adjutant Bunny Clos of Kentucky; (Applause) National Chaplain Aura-Lee Nicodemus of New Hampshire; (Applause)

Judge Advocate Paula Raymond of Illinois; (Applause) Fourth Junior Vice-Commander Kathleen Wenthe of Louisiana; (Applause) Third Junior Vice-Commander Terry Grabowski of New York; (Applause) Second Junior Vice-Commander Melissa Pierce of Iowa; (Applause)

First Junior Vice-Commander Christopher Easley of Oklahoma; (Applause) Senior Vice-Commander AnnMarie Hurley of Massachusetts; (Applause) and Auxiliary Past National Commander Lynn Helms Prosser of South Carolina. (Applause)

And now your DAV national officers: your Past National Commander and Chairman of the Board, from Saint Pete, Florida, Andy Marshall; (Applause) hailing from Birmingham, Alabama, our National Chaplain Debra Varner;

the pride of Grand Forks, North Dakota, our National Judge Advocate Mike Dobmeier; (Applause) your Fourth Junior Vice-Commander from Portsmouth, Virginia, Cynthia Madison; (Applause) your Third Junior Vice-Commander from Conway, Arkansas, John Donovan;

your Second Junior Vice-Commander from Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, Coleman Nee; (Applause) your First Junior Vice-Commander from Sherman Oaks, California, Dan Contreras; (Applause) and, finally, welcome to the stage your Senior Vice-Commander, from Kaysville, Utah, Nancy Espinosa. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the senior vice-commander advanced to the podium.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER NANCY G. ESPINOSA: It is my great honor to formally introduce a friend and great leader. National Commander Joe Parsetich is an Air Force veteran of the Vietnam War. He has been a DAV chapter service officer since 2009 and is a past DAV Department of Montana commander.

In 2017, he was appointed by then-Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. David Shulkin to serve on the Veterans Rural Health Advisory Committee.

Commander Parsetich lives with his wife, Meg, in Great Falls, Montana, where he was a coordinator and mentor for the Veterans Treatment Court and a board member on the Mayor's Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness initiative. He also served on the board of the Cascade County Suicide Prevention Team and is a member of the Veterans Advisory Council for the Great Falls Vet Center.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is with great pleasure that I introduce your national commander, Joe Parsetich. (Standing Ovation)

(Whereupon, the senior vice-commander withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Thank you, Nancy, for that warm introduction. And thank you all for supporting me throughout one of the most important years of my life.

My term as your national commander has exceeded my greatest expectations in every regard. That's because I was able to meet so many of you and see the impact of DAV's mission from so many different perspectives.

When most people enjoy a great victory, they usually use the signature line, "I'm going to Disney World." (Laughter) And though Disney, ABC and ESPN are true partners, and I was elected in Orlando, my first trip as your national commander took me to our nation's capital. There I had the incredible honor to represent our cause as the PACT Act was being signed into law. (Applause)

You know, as you all know, the PACT Act is the most significant piece of legislation for veterans in American history. And the lion's share of the credit for this passage belongs to DAV. (Applause)

Representing you and a long line of past national commanders who fought tooth and nail on behalf of our fellow veterans was a humbling and very gratifying honor.

The magnitude of the passage of the PACT Act was put into perfect context for me shortly after it was signed. It was then that Marc Burgess and I made a trip to Hawaii to connect with our partners at the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency.

We may sadly never know what became of so many of our brothers and sisters who never returned from war, but our tireless pursuit to repatriate and bring them home is critical. And this effort speaks volumes about the commitment we must forever show the men and women we send to war. It is the heart of the promise. It is at the foundation of DAV's mission. And we shall not leave our own behind. (Applause)

And in the extreme instances where one of our own falls through the cracks, we must not stop at anything to recover them and replace inequities with justice.

It was that experience that informed our efforts at mid-winter conference in Washington, D.C. You know, in the military we are taught early-on and reminded often of the importance of strength and courage.

And even a short five years ago, the thought of standing in the glow of the lights, with all eyes on me, and laying my soul bare in front of hundreds of people would have seemed unimaginable. But it was you, my fellow veterans, who gave me the fortitude to stand before God and the world and tell my story with unflinching honesty.

I could only do that knowing that you guys had my back. You encouraged me and validated my decision. With your service and devotion to our cause as my inspiration, I could talk about my attempted suicide – one of the most traumatic moments of my life.

With all that you do for your fellow veterans, the least I could do on your behalf was to speak my truth. I did so in the hopes that someone else might hear my words and see a future behind, beyond the fog of hopelessness that follows so many of us home from war.

From there, I was off to the golf and winter sports clinics, the pinnacle events in our partnership with our friends at the Department of Veterans Affairs. I might have made John Kleindienst a little nuts with how busy I kept him on those trips, but I wanted to spend every possible moment that I could with the participants.

And like so many of you, serving veterans is how I recharge. It's what gives me peace of mind. And I do that selflessly because I have seen in my fellow DAV volunteers that giving is getting. And I get far more out of helping veterans than they ever get from me. I've learned that from you.

I come from humble beginnings. But it wasn't until I began my DAV journey that I found out the extent to which I was born disadvantaged. As some of you know, I was the orphan son of a young, displaced Puerto Rican mother.

I was plucked from a hopeless situation and given to two people who chose to raise me. They instilled in me a sense of duty and values that I carried into the Air Force.

And though I didn't learn this until I did a DNA test, the opportunity to meet many relatives I never knew had an incredibly emotional effect. Suddenly, the amount of people I could all family had more than doubled. As a matter of fact, I found out that I had five brothers, a sister, 250 first and second cousins, (Laughter) and more than a thousand third and fourth cousins. (Laughter)

And while my biological mother passed away many years ago and I was never able to meet her, I was able to meet my biological father. I was welcomed into a wonderful culture and family that I never knew I had.

But in another sense, my family had already grown more than a thousand-fold the minute that DAV came into my life. I feel as if every chapter of DAV is home to me. You who served and were forever changed, you are my brothers and sisters, my tribe, my hope. (Applause)

At my testimonial in Montana, it was an incredible honor to have past national commander and Charitable Service Trust President Dick Marbes speak on my behalf. An amputee, Dick talked about his experiences after losing his leg in service.

Where Dick's concern is, is that people not assume that he lost his limb in combat. Mine, however, was an injury of isolation and shame.

I went to war with the youthful and naïve optimism of an American who believed there was an essential goodness in the world. I believed in justice and thought that things happened for a reason, and maybe there was such a thing as "karma."

But what I saw at Tan Son Nhut Air Force Base completely changed my world view. Where before the war I would wake each day with a similar disposition, in Vietnam, however, that reality that horrible things can happen in an instant became my prevailing world view.

I expected the worst after that. When things would go well in my life, there'd be a creeping sense that the good would be replaced by something much worse. I didn't feel I deserved peace. I wasn't even sure that I deserved to live. And on one occasion I was determined to end it all.

I don't say this for your pity. I know many of you have faced unimaginable trauma that exceeds, far exceeds my own. But I say this because we are part of a community that looks out for each other.

You can never know when you encounter a fellow veteran or a family member what they're going through on the inside. You can't always sense the pain in their hearts or the extent of their sufferings. Sometimes they use humor to mask their inner turmoil. Often, they may be withdrawing right in front of you.

You can't solve all of their problems. But that doesn't mean we can't help and try to continue to help. It's our duty to introduce them to the programs and opportunities that DAV provides that can give their souls a renewed purpose.

You know, the Bible says in First Corinthians, Chapter 13, Verse 13, "And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love." (Applause)

Our DAV is a living, breathing community that can provide faith, hope and love. But we must love one another in the very true, selfless way that we love our families. And often that's enough to walk someone back from the breach when they're ready to throw in the towel.

Before I close my report to the body, I have a lot of people I need to thank. First, I want to thank our members for your faith and confidence in me. Thank you for volunteering for DAV, for giving it your all. And for ensuring that our promises are kept.

But I also want to thank Marc Burgess for his steadfast support and leadership for the better part of 30 years. Marc, you fought the good fight. We're glad you're here with us today. And you certainly deserve the peace and comfort that comes dictates your life to our cause.

And I want to thank Barry Jesinoski for making it so easy for me to make such a momentous appointment for our charity because between Marc, Barry, Cody and Randy and the teams that they've assembled, DAV is in extremely good hands. (Applause)

You know, I would, without hesitation, stack our team up against anyone in any industry in the world. And I want to thank my family – go ahead. They deserve it. (Applause)

But I want to thank my family for making DAV part of their lives. Meg, my darling, you are the greatest partner I could ever imagine. (Applause) Thanks for bailing me out there so I could get a breath. (Laughter) And you have served as First Lady of DAV with amazing grace and poise.

You've been my partner, my best friend, and you've made me a better man. D-A-V and J-O-E couldn't be luckier than to have you in our lives. Can you stand up and be recognized, please?

(Whereupon, Mrs. Parsetich stood and was recognized with a round of applause.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: And I also want to thank our partners in the Auxiliary and everyone around the nation who makes DAV an outlet for their generosity.

You know, on Wednesday, a different veteran will be getting a new cap and be named DAV's next national commander. And this momentous year for the Parsetich family will be coming to a close. But we will not be far. And DAV will remain a part of our lives.

So, as I ride off into the sunset – Montana lingo – I want (Laughter) I want to offer my deepest thanks. I encourage you all to remember what you represent when you're conducting DAV business. You never know when your DAV knowledge can transform a life, change a mind in despair, or make a connection that will replace inequity with justice.

So thank you all for empowering me to serve. And may God bless each and every one of you and may God bless our sacred cause. Thank you. (Standing Ovation) Thank you.

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and the senior vice-commander returned to the podium.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER ESPINOSA: Commander, under your leadership this has been an incredible year for DAV. Thank you. You set an inspiring example for all of us. I move to accept the national commander's report. May I have a second?

UNIDENTIFIED DELEGATE: District 21 seconds.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER ESPINOSA: Thank you. All in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the senior vice-commander withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: And now let me introduce the governing body of this fine organization, our DAV National Executive Committee. Ladies and gentlemen, please stand and be recognized, DAV members and Auxiliary both.

(Whereupon, the members of the DAV and DAV Auxiliary National Executive Committees stood and were recognized with a round of applause.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: You may be seated. And now it gives me a tremendous pleasure to introduce a friend to all our nation's veterans and their family members, Auxiliary National Senior Vice-Commander AnnMarie Hurley. (Applause)

An Auxiliary life member for more than 40 years, AnnMarie belongs to the Silver Star JFK Memorial Unit No. 3 in Dorchester, Massachusetts, where she has served as the treasurer since the unit's inception.

AnnMarie's time in the line of succession towards Auxiliary's top position has come after a career spent working as the secretary and treasurer for DAV Department of Massachusetts.

In her time in the Auxiliary she has worked with units to keep them closely focused on our shared mission of making a difference in the lives of disabled veterans and their families.

Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome DAV National Senior Vice-Commander for the Auxiliary, AnnMarie Hurley. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and the DAV Auxiliary senior vice-commander advanced to the podium amid a standing ovation.)

AUXILIARY NATIONAL SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER ANNMARIE HURLEY: Thank you very much. First, I want to thank each and every one of you for being here this morning. We really appreciate your attendance. God bless you all. Thank you. (Applause)

As all of you have noticed by now, we are without Auxiliary National Commander Darlene Spence, who could not be with us today. As many of you may already know, a triumphant year was ended by grief for Darlene with the recent death of her husband of 50 years, Percy.

He was a disabled Air Force veteran and longtime DAV leader who was serving as commander of the Department of Texas when he passed. (Applause) Yes. I ask you to keep her and her family in your prayers.

While she can't be here with us today, Darlene asked me to pass along her thoughts. Our Auxiliary commander was adamant that she is with us in heart, and that this was a busy year, filled with many accomplishments.

This past year, Darlene kept the spotlight on caregivers and the ongoing needs of military families.

So many of you who are fulltime caregivers understand the labor of love involved with caring for a veteran in the family. Darlene, herself, was a dedicated caregiver for her husband for many years.

No one knows better than those of us in the room that service members do not deploy in harm's way alone. The whole family is affected by sacrifices required of military life. While it's the military member who raises his or her hand and says, "Send me. I'll go," it's the families that get left behind.

Parents, spouses, and children all shoulder a heavy burden that very few in our nation will ever understand.

When service to our country brings life-changing effects on service members, it's often the families who are left to pick up the pieces. A spouse, parent, and sometimes even children rapidly transition into the role of caregivers.

They don't do this because there is a promise of benefits or reward but out of what I can tell you is a heartfelt commitment found only in the depths of love.

Last year, our commander talked about our necessary work to push Congress to hold the Department of Veterans Affairs accountable in implementing its Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers.

The program has been a lifeline for tens of thousands, but the unacceptably high rate of denials into and discharges from the program have been deeply troubling. There continues to be much work to do as we ensure the proper support is there for those who spend their days caring for our most ill or injured veterans.

There are still many who care for them with no support from the government that sent them into harm's way. This is wrong. This is why Darlene and I believe our focus on caregivers and their roles in veteran families is a very worthy cause, and it's a fight we will continue. (Applause)

This year, Darlene saw the great work DAV and Auxiliary members do in VA hospitals and clinics and throughout the communities nationwide. You are all out there making a difference for veterans and their families every day. (Applause)

She had the special privilege to lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington. And she met with lawmakers and legislators across the country to talk about their support for veterans' benefits.

Darlene wanted me to make sure I mentioned she will always cherish the opportunity she had to meet the many incredible people across this great nation and how it has been a pleasure to spend time working together.

She said the experience representing the Auxiliary at state conventions and in communities across the country has truly been an honor for her. She told me how her life is richer by getting to know you all. It was so wonderful for her to continuously hear all of the good reports, about the hours spent, miles traveled, and monetary donations. You are all truly amazing. (Applause)

We should never forget that DAV – excuse me – and the Auxiliary exist to provide a lifetime of support to veterans and their families. We are unified in our shared mission.

Before I conclude, I have a very important and special presentation to make. The Outstanding Auxiliary Member of the Year Award recognizes the contributions and commitment to our top Auxiliary member. Their efforts further our shared goals and exemplify a spirit of service that is above and beyond the ordinary.

I am pleased to announce that this year's recipient is Delores Roussey. (Standing Ovation)

(Whereupon, Adjutant Jesinoski escorted the Auxiliary Member of the Year to the stage.)

AUXILIARY NATIONAL SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Delores has been a dedicated member of the Auxiliary for 41 years. (Applause) She currently serves as treasurer of Unit 101 in Florida and as state treasurer. (Applause)

Over the years, she has made a difference in the lives of countless veterans and their families through her hard work, integrity and generosity.

She gives her time freely when units and chapters, especially new ones, seek guidance with annual reports and budgets. And she has been known to reach into her own purse to give her last dollars to a veteran in need of assistance. (Applause)

Her selflessness and love for our country and those who served it are an inspiration to all around her.

Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome this year's Outstanding Auxiliary Member of the Year, Delores Roussey. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Mrs. Roussey was presented with her award, at which time an official photograph was taken.)

MRS. DELORES ROUSSEY: Thank you. In the summer of 1972, two DAV members knocked on the door of our home in Ruskin, Florida. They were recruiting eligible people for Riverview Chapter and Unit 110. My dad, Leslie Lang, a World War II disabled veteran, had passed away after a very long illness related to his time in the Navy in the fall of 1971.

Of course, my mother, Ramona Lang, and I became a part of the DAV Auxiliary 110: she, the commander, and I the adjutant/treasurer. For me, this was a very challenging time in my life. Working fulltime at a college, raising four children as a single parent, and volunteering with school activities and the DAVA.

In the late '70s, I moved my family to Tampa to be closer to my employment, transferred my annual membership to the DAVA Tampa Number 4, and became a life member, spending more time in volunteering for various chairmanships, offices, and activities at Tampa 4, usually serving as adjutant/treasurer; however, I was the commander once in 1986 and '88.

I started up the line of the state department as second junior vice-commander and became the commander in 1990-'91. After that year and to this date I have been the state treasurer, putting my accounting ability and skills to the work for the organization.

In 1989, with the support of the state DAV executive director, I began the work of assisting DAV chapters and DAV units with their annual accounting requirements. This work continues today.

I have been blessed with the opportunity to assist many DAV treasurers and Auxiliary treasurers, hopefully making their volunteer task less stressful.

Most of my family belongs to the DAV Auxiliary: my mother, my daughter, my granddaughter, who is here today, 45 years and great-granddaughter, 25 years. We have been caregivers and strong supporters of the veterans and the mission to make a difference in the lives of disabled veterans and their families.

I am truly blessed, honored and humbled to be nominated and awarded the 2023 Outstanding Member of the Year Award. Thank you. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Mrs. Roussey was presented with her plaque and an official photo was taken.)

AUXILIARY NATIONAL SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: DAV Auxiliary Outstanding Member of the Year, Delores Roussey, 2022-2023. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Mrs. Roussey withdrew from the stage and the Auxiliary senior vice-commander returned to the podium.)

AUXILIARY NATIONAL SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Thank you, Delores. And thank you Commander Parsetich for your leadership. Darlene expressed that has been an honor to work with you this year in solidarity with our shared mission to serve our nation's veterans and their families.

Thank you all again. And may God continue to bless our veterans, their families, DAV and the Auxiliary. And, as always, may God bless America. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the DAV Auxiliary senior vice-commander withdrew from and DAV Commander Parsetich returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: My fellow veterans, it gives me great pleasure to introduce to you The Honorable Denis McDonough. Before coming to the VA, he served as the 26th White House Chief-of-Staff and as Principal Deputy National Security Advisor.

He believes deeply, as he testified to Congress, that "there is no more sacred obligation nor noble undertaking than to uphold our promises to our veterans, whether they came home decades ago or days ago."

Please join me in welcoming the 11th Secretary of Veterans Affairs, The Honorable Denis McDonough.

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and Secretary McDonough advanced to the podium amid a standing ovation.)

THE HONORABLE DENIS McDONOUGH: Great to see you guys. Thank you, Joe, for that kind introduction and for your unwavering leadership of DAV. What a year you've had. I heard exactly what you said about the PACT Act. And it's true, that without the veterans in this room and the work that you did that historic piece of legislation would not be the law of the land today so I thank you all. And I thank you, Joe, for that great work. (Applause)

I also am thrilled to see the turnout. It's so great to see so many veterans, members, spouses, Auxiliary members here today. We have no more important partners than you and the team here at DAV.

Every single day I see the real impact of your work, of your devotion to veterans, and your partnership with all of us at VA.

I'll give a special shout-out to Dan Clare who, almost exactly 15 years ago, first blew the whistle on the dangers of burn pits while he was deployed to Joint Base Balad in Iraq. Dan, thank you for your courage and for your continued service on behalf of your brothers- and sisters-in-arms. (Applause)

Let me also just acknowledge a couple other people real quick: Randy Reese, your fantastic executive director, who is a nice guy, except when he is not – (Laughter) and usually when he's not it's when we're screwing something up.

DAV's incredible service officers who have been working tirelessly to support the influx of vets filing PACT Act claims and, of course, each of you, the DAV members. It's so great to see so many of you here today.

Before I get into my remarks, I want to share a letter that I received last night from my boss. He says:

"I send my warmest greetings to everyone here gathered for the Disabled American Veterans 2023 National Convention.

"Every veteran is a link in a chain of honor that dates back to the very founding of our nation. For generations these heroes have helped forge and defend the very idea of America – a promise of liberty, democracy and justice.

"DAV knows more than most that 'freedom is not free' and that new battles of recovery often begin when our heroes return home.

"I remain in awe of the determination, resilience and grit your members show day-in and day-out, continuing to fight for the dignity and respect you deserve after sacrificing so much for our country. You embody the soul and spirit of our nation: brave and big-hearted, determined and devoted, selfless and steadfast.

"By providing support and services to our veterans through persistent advocacy on their behalf, DAV has dedicated itself to helping our nation fulfill our sacred obligation to prepare and equip those we send into harm's way and to care for them and their families when they return home.

"The First Lady and I take this obligation personally. It's a debt we owe to all our veterans and their families and one we can never fully repay.

"As I said to you last year during your 100th convention, we owe you. We owe your families. That is why I was so proud to sign the PACT Act into law last year, creating the most significant expansion of benefits and services for our veterans in more than 30 years.

"By funding new facilities, enabling better research, and expanding care and compensation for veterans exposed to burn pits, Agent Orange, radiation and other toxic substances during their military service, we are doing our duty to care for those who have given so much for all of us.

"This historic law is just one of the many actions my administration has taken to improve care and access for our veterans, which would not have been possible without the staunch support, advocacy of DAV.

"As commander-in-chief it is my great honor to thank all the members of DAV for their selfless sacrifice in service to our nation and for their continued support of veterans across America.

"May God bless you and may God protect our troops.

"Signed, Joseph R. Biden, President of the United States." (Applause)

When we got together last year in Orlando I talked about the promises our country makes to you. And I promised you that the year – and I promised Joe, personally, that this year would be an execution against those promises.

So, first, I know I want you to know that we are fighting like hell to end veterans' homelessness.

Second, we are fighting like hell to end veterans' suicide.

Third, we are fighting like hell to get vets timely access to world-class care. (Applause)

Fourth, we're fighting like hell to deliver for toxic exposed vets. And I just one more time underscore my strong agreement with what Joe said at the start. This law would not be law were it not for DAV. (Applause)

Now my fifth and final point in this short update is that we are fighting like hell to hire and we are hiring at an unprecedented rate. And we're able to hire because of new authorities you got us in the PACT Act. We're able to hire because of generous budgets we've gotten from Congress, which you have insisted upon. But we're able to hire, first and foremost, because people want to work for our nation's heroes. People want to work for you.

So this has been a powerful year of execution. But this execution isn't because of me. It's because of you. And it's because of the nearly 450,000 VA employees in your communities, your neighborhoods across the country, who keep vets at the heart of their care. People like my friend, LaShanda.

(Whereupon, Ms. LaShanda Carter stood in the audience and began to speak.)

MS. LASHANDA CARTER: Hello. Good morning. How are you? I am LaShanda Carter (Inaudible). I work for the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Newark Regional Office. I am the supervisor for the public contact and the rating team. I am so excited to be here.

I just want you to know that the reason why I joined this family – in order to serve you. I want to be very transparent. It's not because, oh, you know, I wanted to serve, no, my children needed to eat. I needed to – I had two children. They needed to eat.

But after I began to interact in my encounters with you, my veterans, I was able to have my – my purpose was solidified in terms of serving you. Not only was my purpose solidified, but also, my mindset and my heart was transformed in terms of who my vets are.

You're not merely veterans to me. You are – which is very powerful in itself, but you're not just veterans. Who you are to me are my babies. You are my babies who I protect, who I hold dear to my heart. Not only do I protect you and I hold you dear to my heart, but I hold your family members, your spouses, your children dear to my heart. I serve you. (Applause) I serve you.

I have worked for the Veterans Affairs for 25 years and I'm committed to continue to work for the Department of Veterans Affairs to serve you and your families. I am honored to serve you because you first served me. You first served this country. You have sacrificed. You have served. You rose to the call of duty. And so that we may have the liberties, that we may be protected, that we may eat.

So now I serve you and I serve you in the capacity of educating you in the process. I serve you so that you may eat. I serve you that homeless veterans may find a place to sleep, so that you may be heard, that you may be cared for, for honor and integrity and excellence.

I want you to know a part of my purpose is to make sure you are educated. So now we're going to talk about how important the PACT Act is. It's so important in how it impacts you, which is very important. It is one of the most important pieces.

What it has done is it has allowed us to expand our scope and create opportunities for our veterans to receive VA benefits that they were not able to receive before through the examining lense of exposure, your exposure to environmental hazards.

Our VA, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Newark Regional Office family, as well as myself, is very passionate about educating you, advocating for you and your family members to ensure that you are receiving care, support, benefits that you so richly deserve, so richly deserve.

We at the Newark Regional Office want you to know that we are hard at work. We are diligent in making sure that we process the claims. We are processing voluminous amounts of PACT Act claims. Our veterans are benefiting greatly since the onset of this law, since the implementation of this law.

I would like to share a success story because it helps bring it all in to your awareness and help you to be able to connect with the PACT Act. So there was a veteran, his name was – I'm going to call him "Ron" because his name is Ron. And we were able to grant him benefits through the PACT Act.

We were able to grant him benefits which delighted my heart so much. He is an Army veteran who was in Iraq, who served in Iraq. He has neck cancer. And he is now struggling to make sure that his health is okay, making sure that his family is okay.

Well, we were able to give him a sigh of relief, a sigh of peace so that we were able to grant him 100 percent service-connected. (Applause) Not only was we able to give him 100 percent service-connected, he was able to be able to grant benefits for his kids to go to school, which is dependency education assistance. Not only that, 100 percent exemption, tax exemption which helps him to save money on his house. Now he has one less thing that he has to worry about.

And if he should transition, he can leave his family in a secure state so he no longer has to worry about that. He can go on vacation with his family. He can enjoy them (Applause) knowing that they're going to be all right, that they're in good hands with the VA, they're in good hands with our government, that they're in good hands and he can enjoy himself.

And so I'm so delighted with his family. I was also able to speak with them, to follow up with them. We just don't leave you once we grant you. We are over to connect with sometimes after that and they know that they have, that they are, that they are loved and that it's not just about, okay, we finished with you. So they know.

So now he tells us that he's happy. He thanks us very much for our service towards him and that he is going on vacation. He is enjoying and he's able to provide for his family, even though he cannot work. So we are happy about that.

And we are excited and we continue to love all of you. You are still my babies. You will always be my babies. So thank you so much for your service. And now I'll put you in the wonderful hands of Dr. West. Thank you. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Dr. Beryl West stood in the audience and began to speak.)

BERYL WEST, M.D.: Thank you, LaShanda and good morning, DAV. I am so happy to be here. My name is Dr. Beryl West. I'm an internal medicine provider at VA New Jersey Health Care System. In addition, I'm chief of ambulatory care. I oversee a group of providers who serve you all day, every day.

Been in the VA thirty-plus years, starting as a student. I have to add that, resident, add those 30 years, and then as an attending.

I didn't know how long I was going to stay in the VA but I kept on being sought out to be involved in a lot of projects, whether it was waits and delays, access, creating workflows for acute coronary syndrome, a host of things.

But one of the projects that I'm very proud of, I was involved with the team that built, piloted and put out there across the United States the Airborne Hazard and Open Burn Pit Registry. It is homegrown in New Jersey. (Applause)

As you know, the registry program assesses veterans for their exposure issues and addresses their issues associated with that. Since the PACT Act we've increased in the number of requests for Airborne Hazard evaluation, as well as Agent Orange evaluations.

I'm from a family of veterans. My grandfather was a World War I veteran. He was a corporal in the early 1900s. That was huge for an African-American back then. He's buried here in Beverly National Cemetery. And he worked hard but he did have some issues that we felt, as a family, were associated – this was before my time – with his military career but they weren't fully addressed.

He had three sons, my uncles, all military: Air Force, Army, and Navy. They utilized the VA. One, the VA was totally his primary health care provider. But it was an uphill battle for him to get the care that he needed towards the end of his life. He did die in a veterans' home peacefully.

But now with the PACT Act I'm here to tell you, and I'm a witness, that the VA is fighting to address your issues now, anywhere, any place, so that you get the care that you need and deserve. In addition, they're educating providers like me to address your medical and psycho-social issues associated with your deployment.

This is why the VA was created. This is the care that distinguishes us, the VA, from the private sector. This is care you need, you want, and you absolutely deserve.

I'll end with a short story. I'll call my patient Mr. Jones, a 78-year old African-American Vietnam vet. He served from '67 to '69 in Vietnam proper. He has a family. He's been married for over 50 years. His daughter lives with him with her family and he works at Lowes to supplement his income.

He's 20 percent service-connected due to diabetes, reluctant to go and open a claim because he did have some presumptives. Hypertension has been a presumptive for quite some time, even before the PACT Act. But I tried to encourage him to go but as a result of the PACT Act he finally went, working with his VSO officer.

I generated, of course, a NEXUS letter. I've never generated so many NEXUS letters in my life as I have this year. Fast forward, he comes back to my clinic and I reviewed the chart. Three months he comes back and I, you know, sheepishly say, you know, "How is your claim going?" He goes, "Dr. West, I am now 90 percent service-connected." (Applause)

Not only was he service-connected for his exposure issues, he was service-connected for issues inherent to serving in the military, meaning hearing loss and musculo-skeletal issues.

So the VA is working so hard as a result of this PACT Act not only to address your exposures but to improve your overall care. And thank you for listening to my story, the story of my health care team. And I'm going to give it over to Scott. Thank you. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Scott Dadaian stood in the audience and began to speak.)

MR. SCOTT DADAIAN: Good morning, DAV. How are we? My name is Scott Dadaian. I am the community outreach specialist for VA New Jersey Health Care. I am a U.S. Navy veteran. I served from – (Applause) thank you.

I served from 2001 to 2006 onboard the U.S.S. George Washington. It's a nuclear aircraft carrier. And my job was in nuclear power. I worked down in the engine room. I had a lot of education to do the same thing as a steam plant mechanic, but that's okay.

When I got out, it was December of 2006. I remember very clearly. I got out December 15th. December 16th I went to the Regional Office in Newark. I walked up to the front desk. I said, "Hi, how you doing? I'm a veteran." And the guy said, "And?" (Laughter) No, I'm like "Today I got out yesterday, so, you know, what do you guys do for me?" "We do a lot." (Laughter) "I know that but, like –" (Laughter) Back and forth. Back and forth.

So I finally get handed up to the fourth floor which anyone from New Jersey who is aware, fourth floor is where the VSOs are. And I got to speak with a gentleman from DAV. (Applause) He helped me. Yes. He helped me to get my service connection for a shoulder injury in place. He explained to me the process of a discharge upgrade.

I got out with a general under honorable condition due to being overweight. Turned out my ship did the wrong thing; it was supposed to be honorable. So the upgrade process was – sorry the Navy screwed up; here is your new DD-214.

But, this VSO from DAV really explained to me what I was entitled to, how to go about getting those benefits, and getting me on the track to actually feeling proud of my service, because when I got out I didn't want anything to do with being called a veteran.

I didn't want my mom telling people I had just served. I was ashamed because I got removed and I was injured. So thank you to all of you that are VSOs for those who represent DAV and do that work because I'm a success story of yours. (Applause)

So, fast forward from there ten years later, someone that I went to college with messaged me and said there is an opening at the vet center in Secaucus, are you interested in? I said yes, what is it? (Laughter) And he explained to me what outreach was. I had no idea.

And it's basically exactly what I'm doing right now, going to rooms full of veterans and talking to them about their benefits, what they're entitled to. Specific to the vet center, for those who may not know, vet centers do mental health counseling for the VA, specialized to trauma-based and expanded to family therapy, as well.

So in that sense, not only was I working there, I had been a vet center client for my own issues so I believed in what I was talking about. I was a success story of the vet center, being able to go out and say this is why you may want to go and get your own issues addressed. Right?

I got partnered up with the, at the time, VA outreach team. And talking to the gentleman, Frank, who is one of my predecessors, he said, "So do you use VA for your health care?" No. Why not?

Well, when I got my service connection and I went and enrolled at Lyons in New Jersey I got bad info. The young woman who took my picture and everything said, "Now only come back here if it's for

your shoulder." I don't know any better. Okay. I didn't have a problem with my shoulder. It was hurt. It was what it was.

So for ten years I used private health care that I had for my job. And I didn't know any better. Well, Frank lost his mind and he yelled at me and he said go make a primary care appointment. So I did. And I've been using VA New Jersey for my health care ever since.

I did the Burn Pit Registry because even though in the Navy I was not on land exposed to what you consider the burn pit, I did have forced ventilation on the aircraft carrier. I was inhaling jet exhaust, diesel exhaust, ionized oil in the reactor plant.

So I went and did a workup at our War-related Illness and Injury Study Center in New Jersey, East Orange, which is the center of research for burn pit and other exposures for the Post-9-11 veterans.

And from – excuse me – from what we were able to find in that workup, I've been service-connected. It is at zero percent but, thankfully, it's there, for the allergic rhinitis. And I need to go forward with more claims to work through some of the presumptives from that exposure.

But, point of where I'm going with all of this is as a veteran and as a VA employee I see both sides of what the PACT Act did. It expanded what I am able to claim and how I'm able to be supported by the organization that I work for.

And it makes it easier for me to come out and confidently talk to veterans because I'm not selling – selling, it's free. If you don't know, it's free – I'm not selling something that is fake. I'm not "as seen on TV." I'm a success story and I'm comfortable to sell that and give that information to my fellow veterans.

So just like my peers did I'll share one quick story other than myself. In New Jersey we, as we were required to do by Secretary McDonough, we ran a PACT Act event at East Orange. And it was such a success, we had so much interest, that we said we need to keep doing these and try to get to all of our facility or all of our area in VA New Jersey.

So the second one, I'm sorry, not the second one, the fourth one was the first time we were outside of a VA facility. We did it out in the community. I had a veteran come in who is a Desert Storm vet, a Marine. He had never addressed anything because of the somewhat standard veteran response, "I came back on one piece so save it for somebody else who's in worse shape than I am."

But his wife was telling me that he really needs help. And some of my coworkers were concerned by his appearance. And those of you who know it, know exactly what I'm talking about. He was looking down. He was not comfortable. He was sitting with his back to the wall. I knew what that meant, also.

So I went over and introduced myself. I talked with him and his wife. He broke down crying, that, you know, I should be stronger than this. It's been 30 years and I'm still suffering. So I listened to him. I let him talk his way through it.

I told him about the vet center because it was something that worked for me. I shared my own story with that. I told him about VA health care. I told him what PACT Act did to expand and acknowledge what he may have gone through.

And we got him on the path for all three: VA health care, putting in a claim for everything that he may be going through, and referral to the Vet Center where I used to work in Secaucus.

So a couple of weeks later I got an email from his wife just exuding thanks and gratitude, not only that we got him connected with what he deserved and what he was owed, but that I took the time and spoke to him like a person and that I gave my own information for them to follow up. It changed the perception of the VA as it's this monolithic organization where you just go there, they do what they do and you're on your own.

It has changed. Even from the time when I first connected in 2007 it has changed. And it's because of people that have an attitude like I do, like Dr. West does, like LaShanda do, and many other of my colleagues. We do this job because we want to give back to the veterans we serve or our fellow veterans, which is my point of view.

I got bad info. I want to make sure that doesn't happen to anybody else that I meet. And that's what keeps me going. So thank you for your time. Thank you for having me here. And I'll give it back to the Secretary. (Applause)

SECRETARY McDONOUGH: Now you see – now you see why I'm so excited to be part of this team. These three people, amazing leaders, represent the very best workforce in the federal government, the most passionate, highest-performing public servants, folks who want to make a real difference in the lives of veterans, in your lives.

And I'm blessed to call them colleagues. And you heard them. They each share the same deep devotion to serving vets that characterizes DAV and that characterizes each VA employee.

The reason I come to your convention every year is to hold myself and all of VA accountable to you. (Applause) If you hear or you experience that we're not living up to the highest ideals, the ideals

exemplified by LaShanda, by Dr. West, and by Scott, I want you to let me know. Because Lord knows Randy, your executive director, is going to let me know. (Laughter)

Because vets, meaning each of you, have earned and deserve our very best. And we'll never settle for anything less.

With that let me close with a final request of you. To all you vets, your family members, caregivers and survivors in the audience, please apply for your toxic exposure benefits right now. Right now.

Applying on or before August 9th this year – that means next Wednesday – means benefits will be backdated to August 10th of last year, the day when Joe was in the White House with the president when he signed the law.

We're only a few days from that deadline. So don't wait. Apply today. Reapply if you've been denied before for the VA care and the benefits that you've earned.

There are people out there who will try to tell you that you need to pay somebody to apply for your VA benefits. That's not true. Do not pay anyone to file your initial claim with the VA. Working with VA or a VSO, like this awesome team at DAV, it's free and easy to apply.

In fact, we have a claims clinic here at this conference so please stop by the claims clinic to meet with VA claims representatives who will help you file a PACT Act claim and answer any question you have.

And between now and August 9th, please reach out to every vet you know. Reach out to your old Vietnam battle buddy with hypertension, anyone who may have been exposed to Agent Orange.

Reach out to every trooper you know who fought in Central Command over 30 years of war, members of the first division in Saudi Arabia in August of 1990, and one of the last divisions to leave Afghanistan 30 years later. Can I get an "All the way" from any of the 82nd Airborne Paratroopers in the audience?

(Response of "Airborne.")

SECRETARY McDONOUGH: Or any of the brave soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, who served at war in the many years in between. Reach out to your brothers and your sisters, your parents, your neighbors, sons, daughter.

Have every vet you know get a toxic exposure screening and file a toxic exposure claim. We need every single person in this room to help communicate with veterans and families to get the care they need and the benefits they so deserve and have so richly earned. We simply can't rest until they do.

And with your help, with your help, we're going to keep our sacred promise to those who served and sacrificed – to serve all veterans as well as you have served us.

God bless you all. God bless our nation's service members, our veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors.

Thanks so much. (Standing Ovation)

(Whereupon, Secretary McDonough withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Thank you, again, Mr. Secretary.

Every day in communities across this beautiful nation, the vehicles of DAV's Transportation Network are busy ensuring that our promises are kept to our disabled veterans.

Hospital service coordinators and volunteers work together to ensure that patients have rides to and from their VA medical appointments. Only through their heroic efforts can hundreds of thousands of ill and injured veterans receive the care that they have earned every year.

It's truly astonishing that since 1987, DAV chapters, departments and the National Service Foundation and the Columbia Trust have purchased more than 3,665 vehicles at a cost of more than \$86.5 million. (Applause) This is a significant investment for which we should all be very proud.

Last year, as the Transportation Network continued to reboot and recover after the pandemic, DAV volunteer drivers spent nearly 556,000 hours logging more than 9.2 million miles providing no-cost rides for the veterans to the VA medical facilities. (Applause)

DAV has been blessed with many supporters over our more than 100 years of existence. But only one partner has been there from the very beginning and that partner is Ford.

It is my pleasure to bring to the stage from Ford Motor Company Joe Provenzano. Help me out here. Come on out, Joe.

MR. LEWIS: Joe Provenzano is the Director of Mobility and Volunteerism at the Ford Motor Company Fund. He's focused on the intersection of transportation access, volunteerism, and social impact.

Joe is responsible for activating mobility solutions, volunteer programming, and partnerships that amplify access to essential services, education, and future of work across the Ford Fund portfolio. His experience includes a diverse background across business strategy, product development, and community engagement with expertise in mobility solutions, emerging technologies, and partnerships.

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and Mr. Provenazno advanced to the podium.)

MR. JOE PROVENZANO: Good morning, everyone.

(Response of "Good morning.")

MR. PROVENZANO: Thank you, National Commander Parsetich. I am truly honored to be here with you, the longtime supporters, members, and staff of the DAV this morning.

This is my first opportunity to be able to join you at the national convention since I've joined the Ford Motor Company Fund. I've been fortunate to spend my entire career at Ford and could not be more excited to join a partnership that has been around for more than a hundred years.

I've been incredibly impressed by the work that the DAV does day-in and day-out to improve the lives of veterans and their families. From providing thousands of rides for medical appointments, to filing claims for benefits that we've talked about today, and for consistently advocating for the rights of our service men and women, your work is so important.

As the Director of Mobility and Volunteerism at the Ford Motor Company Fund, I could not think of a better partner to collaborate and evolve a relationship around transportation access, mobility solutions, and volunteerism.

We are in the midst of a transformation in the auto industry, emerging technologies, electrification, autonomy; but these are opportunities. Opportunities for us to innovate, collaborate, and work together to solidify the next 100 years of impact, service, and partnership.

As a company, we believe in the freedom of movement, which is the same service that you bring to the men and women in uniform.

On behalf of the 87,000 Ford employees, I want to thank you for your service, your sacrifice, and your continued support to the nation's heroes and their families. I also want to thank you, the members of DAV, for supporting Ford.

We know when military families buy new vehicles, they choose Ford trucks, utilities and cars over any other brand. And we love it. (Applause)

Our partnership not only amplifies the service that you provide to veterans but provides savings to you as members. And our Ford X Partner Plan Recognition Program is just a small way that we can say thank you for all that you do.

Our 100 year partnership is really, really, really unique. The fact that this has been built on trust, collaboration, and service that started with Henry Ford and 50 Model T's is truly special.

Together, Ford and DAV have made an incredible impact in supporting veterans over the past century; and we look forward to leveraging collaboration, innovation, and mobility and technology solutions as we chart the next 100 years.

I'd like to ask National Commander Parsetich and National Adjutant Jesinoski to come up and join me at the podium.

(Whereupon, the commander and adjutant advanced to the podium.)

MR. PROVENZANO: Gentlemen, thank you for all that you do ensuring veterans to have access to transportation and medical care and other fundamental needs is so important. It embodies who we are as a company and the idea of freedom of movement. This provides so much for our service men and women.

For more than a quarter century Ford has supported the DAV Transportation Network. And we are proud to have donated a total of 264 vehicles across all 50 state and in Puerto Rico. Today, I am excited to announce that we are donating eight more new Ford Transit Connects for eight VA medical centers across the country. (Applause)

We are also really excited to continue our support for the Friday Night Dinner program for our men and women at Walter Reed National Medical Center. (Applause)

So this year's for Transit Connect donation recipients are West Haven, Connecticut; (Applause) Togus, Maine; (Applause) Cincinnati, Ohio; (Applause) Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania; (Applause) Clarksburg, West Virginia; (Applause) Wichita, Kansas; (Applause) Marion, Illinois; (Applause) and Knoxville, Tennessee. (Applause)

On behalf of every Ford Motor Company employee, I'd like to present you with this ceremonial check that represents the donation of this value of \$200,000. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a ceremonial check was presented and an official photograph was taken, after which the commander and adjutant returned to their seats.)

MR. PROVENZANO: On behalf of everyone at Ford, I just want to, again, thank everyone for your bravery, your loyalty, your service, and all that you do for our veterans. We know that our freedom depends on it. Please enjoy the rest of the convention and thank you so much. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Mr. Provenzano withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Our scholarship program helps to both teach young men and women about the importance of service but also rewards their efforts on behalf of disabled veterans.

DAV is honored to provide an incentive to these young men and women. And in 2021, we raised the scholarship amounts to \$110,000. (Applause)

The scholarships bear the name of Jesse Brown, one of DAV's most respected and revered leaders. Jesse's life is something that everyone should learn about.

This combat-wounded Marine veteran of Vietnam lived a life of service to others. After joining DAV in 1967, he became our organization's first black executive director and went on to be selected the first black Secretary of Veterans Affairs in 1993. (Applause)

With Jesse's spirit as our guidepost, we have chosen ten of the nation's outstanding young volunteers to receive assistance pursuing their education through this program.

The scholarships encourage volunteerism and connect future leaders with veterans, building a lifelong bond to our cause and the heroes that we represent.

Now, let's get to know one of these young leaders, this year's top DAV scholarship recipient.

(Whereupon, the Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship video was viewed, followed by a round of applause.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: DAV National Voluntary Services Director John Kleindienst, please join me on stage.

(Whereupon, Mr. Kleindienst joined the commander on stage.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: And now it's my extreme pleasure to introduce our top recipient, Jacob Weber of Canton, Michigan. (Standing Ovation)

(Whereupon, Mr. Weber joined the Mr. Kleindienst and the commander for the presentation.)

MR. LEWIS: Jacob Weber is a 2022 graduate of Salem High School in Canton, Michigan, and recently finished his freshman year at Michigan State University.

Five years ago he started Treats for Troops, distributing candy to veterans at the VA medical center in Ann Arbor, Michigan. That project led him to start, among other volunteer initiatives, Stockings for Soldiers and Cards that Care, distributing care packages and letters to veterans at the VA medical center.

MR. JACOB WEBER: So if I don't speak as well as that amazing video, please don't fault me. (Laughter) But, hello, and on behalf of myself and my family, thank you for having me here today. (Applause) And this scholarship is truly wonderful.

And just as the grandson of a Vietnam veteran, I'm honored to be in a room filled with what I consider heroes who were and are brave enough to stand up for our country and those around the world who can't. (Applause)

I'm humbled to be chosen as your scholarship winner because when I began my first support project for soldiers five years ago I never thought that just a couple of bags of candy would alter my direction in life, honestly.

And for a very long time, actually, I thought I wanted to be an engineer. But now, as I stand before you today as a Michigan State University student who is a proud member of the well-noted Eli Broad College of Business, like the video said, I'm pursuing supply chain management which is the number one program in the country for that.

And you know just after witnessing the impacts that items such as candy, personal cards, stockings, and shirts could bring to veterans, I realize that with my degree I can help at a deeper level by changing not only the VA health care system in the hopes of growing facilities by providing the most needed services at locations.

I also plan to use my degree and my voice to fight for the future of all those who have served and their families. (Applause) Because, as every veteran says, when one person serves, the whole family does.

So, as the grandson of a Vietnam veteran, I have not only witnessed the deterioration of my grandpa's health over the years due to Agent Orange related Parkinson's but my entire life I've witnessed my mom living daily and usually emotional pain from birth defects that include hip dysplasia and spina bifida. And these are direct results from Agent Orange.

So in an effort to bring more awareness, after everyone is done presenting and whatnot in that room out there I'm going to be having orange ribbons and bracelets to mark National Agent Orange Day, which is on August 10th. So if you get the opportunity please stop by, see me, grab some. I'd love to talk to who I could, also. (Applause)

And going back to Agent Orange Day, that day is not only important because it recognizes what Vietnam veterans had to go through, but all veterans and also with awareness for Agent Orange it brings

more awareness to things such as chemical warfare, like I heard other people talking about with burn pits and many other illnesses.

And I ask you to please take one of these items and just wear it as a sign of support – a sign of support for you guys and for those who will serve in the future.

Please know that I promise to pay forward this amazing gift bestowed upon me. And from the bottom of my heart, my parent's hearts, and my grandpa's heart, I thank you for the scholarship, your service, your sacrifice, and your love for this amazing country. Thank you. (Standing Ovation)

(Whereupon, Mr. Kleindienst and Mr. Weber were joined by the adjutant and the commander at which time an official photograph was taken, after which Mr. Kleindienst and Mr. Weber withdrew from the stage, the adjutant returned to his seat and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Gathering together as members, whether here at our national convention, in chapter meetings, or any other occasion, it is truly a special occasion that should not be taken for granted.

It reminds me of my faith. It only takes two followers joined together with a common purpose to create the energy and power that can forever change the world. (Applause)

DAV and Auxiliary members in groups large and small make this nation better, especially those who give of their free time as volunteers.

Whether in VA hospitals, on the road as Transportation Network drivers, or in countless communities across this beautiful nation, their compassion for our veterans and their continued efforts to keep our promises to those who served is what defines us as an organization.

Whether in VA hospitals – and that is why it's important that we shine our spotlight on those who volunteer many hours where they set a high-water mark.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is now my pleasure to announce the 2023 Volunteer of the Year, John Raber of Gainesville, Florida. John. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Mr. Raber and Mr. Kleindienst advanced to the stage, at which time an official photograph was taken.)

MR. LEWIS: Over the past 20 years, John Raber has logged more than six thousand lifetime volunteer hours working to improve the lives of veterans. He is a member of DAV Chapter 18 and Auxiliary Unit 18 in Bradenton, Florida, as well as a past commander of the Department of Florida.

Mr. Raber often recruits others to join him in volunteering for legislative and fundraising activities, expanding the effectiveness his chapter has on veterans in his community.

MR. JOHN RABER: I'm very thankful for this outstanding award. I want to thank the hospitality and voluntary services committee for choosing me and for my good friend, Andy, for nominating me for this prestigious award.

I've been with the DAV a long time. And when I first started in DAV I volunteered a lot, to the point where my first commander said, "You need to slow down. You're going to burn yourself out." I'm still here, working hard.

I'm a chapter service officer, department service officer. I do a lot for the – I'm on the honor guard. I'm now the captain of the honor guard. I've been on it for 12 years taking care of veteran's last rights.

I've done multiple things for veterans. One of the biggest ones we done was we refurnished a house for a veteran who was blind and we were on Military Makeover. I worked with Chapter 4 and Chapter 18. And we like to do a lot of service out of our chapter for the handicapped. So we do the wheelchair program.

And it was funny. When I was called upon and told I won this award, me and John Makis, the commander of Chapter 4, we were on our way to pick furniture up for the DAV. And it was just, it's an honorable thing and I thank you very much.

And I thank my wife who has helped me out so much over the years in volunteering. She does a lot of volunteer work too. We feed the homeless on every holiday. And she goes with me and helps distribute the food and talk to them and try to talk them into getting help through the VA.

So I thank everybody very much for everything. And I'm very appreciative of this award. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Mr. Raber and Mr. Kleindienst withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: It is now my pleasure to introduce this year's DAV Auxiliary Volunteer of the Year winner, Vickie Partridge of Yacolt, Washington. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Ms. Partridge, Adjutant Clos, and Senior Vice-Commander Hurley advanced to the stage, at which time an official photograph was taken.)

MR. LEWIS: Vickie Partridge is the commander of Auxiliary Unit 1 in Portland, Oregon, as well as the commander for the State of Oregon.

She has accumulated nearly 600 lifetime volunteer hours at the Portland VA, making it a more welcoming place by regularly providing drinks and snacks to mental health ward patients. She has also delivered personal care items, reading material, and birthday gifts to in-patient veterans. And she's organized fundraisers to support the DAV Transportation Network and its volunteer drivers.

MRS. VICKIE PARTRIDGE: Good morning, everyone. I want to thank the whole DAV for giving me this honor. I'm going to wear it proudly. I look forward to another 15-20 years of volunteering up at the hospital and being a part of the van transportation program.

Again, thank you. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Ms. Partridge and the Auxiliary members withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Before we go any further, DAV would like to take the opportunity to thank three very special friends and supporters of veterans nationwide: Chisholm, Chisholm and Kilpatrick in Providence, Rhode Island. (Applause)

You know, you say, "What's the big excitement about a law firm?" Well, this past year that law firm donated \$200,000 to support DAV's no-cost programs and services. That's what's special. (Applause)

And today we are joined by CCK's partners Scott Kilpatrick,

Robert Chisholm, and Zachary Stolz. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the CCK partners advanced to the stage.)

ZACHARY STOLZ, ESQUIRE: Hi. Thank you, National Commander Parsetich, National Adjutant Jesinoski. I began my legal career in 2005 at DAV's Judicial Appeals Office in Washington, D.C., representing disabled veterans and their families in appeals before the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. So I was fortunate to begin a legal career with the best.

Then, 15 years ago, DAV commenced an innovative program partnering with CCK to provide pro bono representation in the federal courts for DAV veterans and their families.

Today that partnership has resulted in over 15,000 appeals being filed in CAVC with an over 90 percent success rate. (Applause) Many of those cases have become precedential and made it easier for tens of thousands of veterans and their families to receive their benefits.

We are honored by our partnership and our friendship with DAV and humbled by the trust DAV has placed in CCK. Today we are proud to present this check for \$200,000, bringing CCK's total contribution to over one million dollars over the life of our partnership to support DAV – (Applause) – to support DAV in its mission serving our nation's heroes.

Thank you so much for this opportunity. (Applause)

(Whereupon, an official photograph was taken, after which the members of CCK withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: It is now my distinct pleasure to recognize an individual who has gone above and beyond through passionate advocacy on behalf of our nation's disabled veterans. Jon Stewart is a wildly successful comedian and talk show host, brought his powerful voice to Washington, D.C., to push Congress to enact real, meaningful change.

Jon leveraged his celebrity status to push our elected officials to finally address the pernicious health effects of military toxic exposures. While veterans exposed to harmful substances is nothing new, Congress passing the transformative Honoring Our PACT Act is a breath of fresh air.

And Jon has been in the fight for a long time. By partnering with DAV to pass such crucial legislation, he ensures that no veteran will be left behind, no matter where they are on their illness or injury.

Make no mistake, thanks to the large microphone that follows him wherever he's found, Jon has garnered national attention and media coverage, shining a light on an issue afflicting veterans far and wide.

Simply put, Jon helped catapult the issue of toxic exposures, including burn pits, into the hearts and minds of Americans everywhere.

Ladies and gentlemen, for consistent service to disabled veterans, it is my honor to introduce our 2023 Bugle Award winner, Mr. Jon Stewart. Jon, are you there? (Applause)

MR. JON STEWART (VIA ZOOM): I am, indeed. Thank you so much for that, that, that fantastic introduction and thank you so much to DAV for this incredible honor. I wish I could be there with you in Atlantic City but, obviously, I'm banned. (Laughter) It's a gambling issue. You don't need to hear much about it.

Although, I will say to the conventioners, if you really want to gamble tonight, leave the hotel at two in the morning. (Laughter) Mmm. Mmm. That will get yourself – the odds of you getting back to the hotel – Mmmm. All right. We won't go into any of those sorts of things. (Laughter)

This is, it's hard to believe that it was only a year ago that through the hard work of DAV and so many of the other VSOs and partner organizations and veterans all over the country that, finally, toxic exposures and the damage that it has been doing to veterans, not just in these most recently conflicts but all the way back to Agent Orange and Vietnam era are finally being recognized for the debilitating conditions that they cause.

And the good news is through your tireless efforts the claims process for veterans is way up and people are finally going to be able to take advantage of the benefits that they, themselves, have earned. And the fact that I'm getting the Bugle Award is really, first of all, a bugle. (Laughter) Thank you.

I could not be more excited to be receiving – if you had offered me a flugelhorn or a French horn I might not have accepted. (Laughter) But a bugle. Everybody knows how nobody likes to hear when the bugle is blown. Nobody likes to hear that. But I'm very excited.

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Well, Jon, we thought that the Bugle Award was very apropos because I was told by a gentlemen you were visiting with that you like to blow it. (Laughter)

MR. STEWART: You're lucky I'm not there, buddy. (Laughter) Come down there and get you. (Laughter) You know, I want to say, though, it's interesting. You were talking about getting the story out to the public. And that's a really important part.

But the Bugle Award, I think, represents something that is also important and I think we found really important during this PACT Act fight and that is getting the message out to other veterans, to those that have been suffering and getting the information to them so that they understand.

It's very important. You know, so few people serve in the military and the public is always told just go on with your lives, don't think about, don't worry about it. So getting information out to them is really important.

But I wanted to call out – there is a few people that I wanted to mention whose work was instrumental, not just in getting the information about the PACT Act and burn pits and what people were facing out to the public but to veterans, themselves: Leo Shane at the Military Times; Kelly Kennedy at War Horse; and Patricia Kinds, also Military Times. They were incredible allies during this entire fight.

And I believe that their work, not just tirelessly for years in getting burn pit exposures out to the public, but in getting the information out to other veterans, they, truly, share this Bugle Award. Too bad there is only one mouthpiece. If we could build one with four, that would be most appropriate. (Laughter)

But DAV, your incredible work at the forefront of getting this toxic exposure bill passed and implemented has been incredibly crucial. And I hope you're all incredibly proud of the hard work that your leadership and your rank and file have done, not just in passing this but in getting the word out to other veterans. So I accept this award with incredibly humility and gratitude.

If you do hear bugle music coming from somewhere in Central Jersey where I may be, just know how sad my family will be that you gave me this award (Laughter) that I can add now to my drum kit. Oh, are they going to be miserable. (Laughter)

Thank you all so much. Please enjoy the rest of your time down there in A.C. And please take care of yourselves and I hope to see you all soon in person. Thank you so much. (Applause)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Thank you, Jon. Thank you. And thank you for supporting USO, an organization that makes a lot of us feel welcomed home when we get around to the various air force.

MR. STEWART: They're the best. You know, nothing more fun than traveling around in a C-17. Can I ask you a question? Why doesn't the military ever finish the interior of the planes? (Laughter)

They spend so much on the exterior, you couldn't throw a little bit of carpet in that bad boy? (Laughter) A little soundproofing in the C-17, the C-130? Nobody? Nothing? (Laughter)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: You have a great day, sir. (Laughter) Thanks for joining us.

MR. STEWART: Thank you so much. My pleasure. You guys take care. (Applause)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: For more than two decades one restaurant has been synonymous with honoring the service and sacrifice of our nation's disabled veterans. And since the dark days following the terror attacks of 9/11, Golden Corral has been a great friend to DAV and the men and women we serve.

Setting the trend that is still being imitated to this day, Golden Corral was the very first to honor veterans nationwide with a free meal in conjunction with Veterans Day. (Applause)

Together, Golden Corral and DAV have partnered across the nation to support veterans in communities. And we are truly grateful for this two-decade partnership, during which Golden Corral has supported services offered by our chapters and departments.

What's so special about Military Appreciation Night is that not only does it provide critical financial support for DAV's mission, but it has also evolved into a massive nationwide veterans' reunion that has

introduced DAV to millions and has offered us the chance to share information and resources on the services that we provide.

In 2022, the DAV was able to reach out to more than 158,000 veterans who were provided free meals at Golden Corral restaurants. Additionally, we raised more than \$900,000. And since the program's inception, Golden Corral has served over 6 million free meals to veterans and has helped raise more than \$18 million to support state and local service programs. (Applause)

Not only that, DAV has also had the honor of joining our friends at Golden Corral in supporting Camp Corral since it was founded back in 2011. Camp Corral provides free, life-changing experiences to the children of wounded, injured or ill and fallen military heroes by providing a unique summer camp experience.

The camps have grown tremendously in scope and popularity and now they have a waiting list. So while we are excited to see this growth, we also consider it our mission to clear out the waiting list and get every military and veteran child who is interested over to camp. (Applause)

You know, to aid in this mission, DAV has established the Just B Kids program to provide scholarships for more children to be able to afford to go to Camp Corral. And so far this year DAV departments and chapters, along with the Auxiliary, have raised significant funds to get these kids to camp.

In recognition of your hard work, these funds will be matched up to \$400,000 by the national organization. (Applause) And I am happy to present a check totaling \$800,000 to Camp Corral today.

Combined, these funds will provide scholarships for more than 650 camp attendees. (Applause)

We'll now invite to the stage Golden Corral's Travis Caison and Camp Corral's Phil Kowalczyk and they will be joined at the podium by AnnMarie and the Charitable Service Trust President Dick Marbes before we send them back to the bank with this very special gift. Folks.

(Whereupon, Mr. Caison and Mr. Kowalczyk, Auxiliary Senior Vice-Commander Hurley and Charitable Service Trust and Past National Commander Marbes advanced to the stage, at which time an official photo was taken.)

MR. PHIL KOWALCZYK: Thank you, national commander, to all of the DAV, the DAV Auxiliary, all of the departments of the DAV and the chapters. On behalf of the military children we serve through summer camp opportunities across this country, 800,000 thank yous. (Applause)

You know the lives of these children are changed because of your hard work and generosity. We're grateful for your support, but just as importantly for more than 12 years of partnership with Golden Corral, DAV and Camp Corral.

We at Camp Corral know the effort that goes behind support of this magnitude. It is you spending afternoons and evenings dedicating time raising funds and asking folks to contribute. Here is just one example of a DAV chapter at a Golden Corral store on Veterans Appreciation Night that I was able to meet with in Smithfield, North Carolina. (Applause)

And you know in a world that's become very self-centered, what I see in this room is a group of dedicated people who want to make a difference for others. I am humbled by you and your vigilant support of these children and military families. And I am grateful that you continue to ask "what more can I do?"

You know you've taken as a part of your personal mission, our mission, to transform the lives of children of our nations' wounded, ill, and fallen military heroes. And we do that through camp experiences, through standing up in advocacy for them, and through enrichment programs. Every dollar you raise and contribute is a demonstration of your commitment to these kids.

You know, we've had a fantastic summer camp season in 2023. And, in fact, Camp Ernst in Burlington, Kentucky, which is just a few miles away from the DAV headquarters, starts tomorrow and will be our last week of camp for this summer season.

But with your partnership we have nearly doubled the number of kids at camp this year. (Applause) Our goal is more than 2,600 children from military families to attend 19 weeks of camp across 15 states.

We're grateful for all of the partnership with DAV and other nationally-recognized organizations like the Elizabeth Dole Foundation, Combined Arms. These groups help reach out to veteran families and tell them about Camp Corral.

You know, word-of-mouth has historically been our primary means of spreading the word and inviting new families and kids to camp. And this year more than 70 percent of the new camper families applying for the '23 season were a direct result of this outreach strategy. Do you know that 67 brand new campers learned about Camp Corral specifically through DAV chapters?

What's more, we are happy to see that there is increasing diversity among our campers and their families. In fact, there has been almost a 10 percent increase in the diversity among our first-time campers.

Several thousand kids finding adventure at camp this summer, that's amazing. But you should also know since the founding of this partnership with DAV and Golden Corral in 2011, 30,000 children have been sponsored at camp. (Applause) And 30,000 kids is great. But you know what the most important number is? One.

One child who can have a great experience and get a real break from their daily life. To connect with other children who also come from military families and build friendships with kids who understand that service involves the entire family. One child who can grow in confidence, connectedness, and coping skills through the experiences at camp.

Furthermore, we know that Camp Corral has real impact on these kids because we do thorough research with them and their parents to ensure that our programs are having the intended positive impact on these campers and their families long after camp is over.

You know, when we ask our campers, "What is the best thing about Camp Corral" – the friends they make, the ease of being with people that they now call friends is at the top of their list. Eighty-six percent of the campers responded that they made new friends at camp. And I love the last quote: "Growing up with other campers along the way and the jokes you make along the way." And isn't that really the mark of friendship, laughing together?

In addition to connection with others, camp is also an opportunity for these kids to build self-confidence. Eighty-five percent of our campers tried something new. Eighty-six percent found activities where they felt confident. "Being able to do things outside my comfort zone." "I got to the top of the Alpine Tower." These are the things that build confidence.

And that internal strength is important, but learning to cope with challenges starts with being able to discuss them with people that you trust. Our campers say that at camp it's just like a second home and that this is a safe place to be myself.

"It felt normal" "The trust and acceptance and belonging that comes here. I am safe here. I am me." I love the quote about Camp Corral being like a snow globe. Really? It's just awesome. My problems melt away and "It's like a week-long dream."

That connection with others. That confidence, the coping, just the fun that happens at camp, these are all things that make a difference.

And in our research we also asked campers, "What do you want others to know about being a part of a military family?" And here are just a few of their insights.

"Our family made a huge sacrifice for others." "They work hard to save lives and fight for others." And, "I want other military families to know there is a place like Camp Corral and it supports you and it could make a difference on them."

America's children, including our military children, are facing real challenges affecting their overall mental wellness. They want to be heard and understood for who they are. And you are making a difference because you hear them.

Through your support of Camp Corral you provide opportunities proven to strengthen mental wellness, connections with friends, connections with the outdoors, physical activities, new activities. That is camp. And that is the difference your support makes for these incredible children.

And frankly if that were enough, your support over multiple years means that many of these children have been able to attend camp for multiple years. And some of these young campers have now become counselors because they've attended for multiple years.

Last year I was able to announce the launch of a plan for 2023 called the SALUTE Program that invests in soon-to-be camp counselors. This leadership development opportunity was created for campers who have reached an age now to become counselors in training at Camp and spend time learning how to lead others and to give back.

Well, we discussed it last year. But now it's real. We have had our first class of 9 SALUTE campers across three camps. And, incidentally, we were lucky enough to have Ron Minter of DAV come and present to our SALUTE cohort and share information about how they can volunteer in the community and about the scholarship opportunities offered through DAV.

So I would like you to meet Khord Cooksey, one of this year's counselors in training. Khord is 16 years old and has been a Camp Corral camper for five years. Khord felt his experience at Camp Corral allowed him to make new friends and to try new things he wouldn't otherwise be able to. He wanted to share that.

He is from a military family with his father having served in the Army and received a significant combat-related injury.

And when we asked Khord why he wanted to participate in the SALUTE Program he said, "I would like to help campers learn self-confidence. I hope to be a teacher after college and I want the skills to teach with compassion while helping others."

We can't wait to see Khord grow as a young leader and the incredible impact he's going to make at camp and in the years to come.

So, to close, not only are we helping to transform the lives of these children through exciting, nurturing experiences that happen naturally at camp, but we also know that they're being supported at these camps as they learn how to navigate the daily challenges they face at home.

Our campers are kids who have one or more parent who wore the uniform and now carry the visible and invisible wounds of war. And you know how tough that is, both on the veteran and the child.

So for every dollar you at DAV generously provide, there is a three-fold payback on that investment. You're investing in the kids. You're investing in their families and our future communities as we build heroes together.

Your ongoing support is changing lives. And because of you they have a place to go, and they have a place to grow and every year if they choose.

You know I can say thank you. But you should really know it's the kids that say thank you. They write and draw their thanks in cards as a part of camp. And here is just one of thousand.

Thank you, DAV. We're honored to have the partnership with you and Golden Corral in serving these kids. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Mr. Caison and Mr. Kowalczyck, Senior Vice-Commander Hurley and Charitable Service Trust President and Past National Commander Marbes withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Every day, as members, we write the history of our organization. Since you have entrusted me with this post, I'm proud to have been a part of the largest benefits expansion every in the PACT Act.

And though I was honored to be a part of that moment, I recognize that it was a result that was actually in the making for 15 years, since DAV brought burn pits to the public's attention. That's what made it all come together.

You know, the easiest decision I made as national commander and the one I'm going to proudly own was my appointment of Barry Jesinoski as your DAV national adjutant. (Applause)

You know when Marc called me to announce his retirement, it was, of course, bittersweet. I was glad for him, that he would be entering a new phase in life after dedicating the majority of his existence to our cause.

Marc's decision was momentous. But, my choice of Barry as national adjutant to take his place you know would hardly be a surprise to most anyone who knows Barry and what he has been doing at our national headquarters for quite some time. Barry's strategic and thoughtful leadership has been transformative now for decades.

And like the solid, trailblazing Marine he is, Barry Jesinoski was already in the books as the first veteran to ever lead both DAV's national and Washington headquarters as the executive director.

He started on the ground level as a national service officer, and from the start his star was on the rise. He led some of our top offices until he was plucked out of the field and given greater responsibility on staff at the Washington headquarters.

Then he went to national headquarters and put his potential into action as the H-R director. When he was called back to D.C., this time as the boss, before Marc called him back to Kentucky, where, beyond a mild case of whiplash, he went straight back to work.

Along every step of his DAV journey, Barry has shown his propensity to dramatically improve operations. He brings out the best in our leaders and, in partnership with Marc, is responsible for the remarkable evolution DAV has made over the last dozen or so years.

He's enhanced the way that our national organization collaborates, both internally and with our chapters and departments.

Through his leadership, DAV's outreach efforts have quadrupled in scope and fundraising has been diversified, and every department in his purview has taken on new initiatives aimed at achieving strategic objectives and modernizing the delivery of services.

For the first of many reports he will be delivering over a new era for our great institution, please help me welcome your DAV National Adjutant Barry Jesinoski. (Standing Ovation)

(Whereupon the commander withdrew from and Adjutant Jesinoski advanced to the podium.)

ADJUTANT JESINOSKI: Thank you, Commander, for such a generous introduction. Good morning, everyone.

(Response of "Good morning.")

ADJUTANT JESINOSKI: The honor of serving as your national adjutant is humbling. And it's made more so by leaders like you, Commander Parsetich, my dear friend Marc Burgess, his predecessor Art Wilson, Dave Gorman, Ken Wolfe, the late Rick Patterson, and the many in this room who are lions on behalf of our fellow veterans.

It's been an historic year, with DAV seeing the passage of the PACT Act, the largest health care and benefit expansion in our nation's history.

And we can be proud knowing that not only was DAV a force in making it law, we are the ones who brought it to the attention of the American public to begin with, starting with our own Chief Communications and Outreach Officer Dan Clare. (Applause) Right back there in the booth.

No one fought harder or longer than all of you, our member leaders. You're all leaders if you're in this room. And you, more than anyone else anywhere, deserve tremendous credit for the act becoming law.

Like so many of you, my heroes have always been veterans. That's what inspired me to join the military. And one veteran in my life, though he has long passed, was my chief inspiration.

John Clear, my grandfather, was a veteran of the United States Army. Growing up, I was insatiable when it came to learning about World War II and all that he had experienced. He felt, as many of us do, that defending our nation was a basic obligation of citizenship. He led by example and was revered by his entire family.

He didn't often talk about the war and he never bragged. But every once in a while, particularly after a little Windsor Canadian (Laughter) and always after too many questions from me, he'd allow me to peek into his past life. And he'd share a fragment or two from his experiences.

On those rare occasions he'd start a story and for a moment a spark would touch his eye and it was as if he was there. And, in an instant, I was there, too.

He spoke about his buddies and the war with reverence. But it was never long before he'd realize that he wasn't equipped to explain to a boy what happens in combat. Or that he'd gone too far already. And he'd work his way out of it. The details would become more general, or he'd trail off into silence.

What I learned from him, and about him, is that he faced hell in Burma, serving with Merrill's Marauders. After earning the Bronze Star with Valor as a personal decoration, and a Bronze Star as a unit award, he was called back for Korea and served as a jump master at Ford Benning.

Though the Army and the war were an indelible part of him, the sacrifices he made and the things he experienced had taken a toll on his body and his soul. He literally carried the war with him in the form of enemy shrapnel, as so many of you do.

While he never complained, and refused to even let me help him with a claim, he lived with pain every day. But the example he set was far-reaching. It was my greatest gift. An inheritance. Nearly every act of his life was a case study on how to live with war, with love and loss. He was regimented and strong, proud and humble.

He had replaced his mission in the military with the task of raising a family, caring for them, protecting them, and preparing them to be people of character, albeit in an imperfect way that was sometimes marred by the actions of a man coping with severe post-traumatic stress.

I enlisted in the Marine Corps in his honor. But, like many of you, my time in uniform was cut short. So I decided to finish my enlistment by joining DAV.

(Whereupon, a picture of Trainee NSO Jesinoski was displayed on the screen.)

ADJUTANT JESINOSKI: As a trainee, as we were called back then, I was blessed – thanks for putting that up, guys. (Laughter) I tell you what. (Laughter) I was blessed to meet and in my cases advocate for some incredibly special people.

Some of them are here today. And some of them are no longer with us. When we talk about the promise we owe veterans, which is the foundation of our calling, we do so knowing that our mission represents a debt that can never be fully repaid.

But through every contribution we make, we honor the sacrifices and contributions of our fallen, like my grandfather, and like Jim Sursely, and Rick Patterson, and Garry Augustine, and Jesse Brown, and Dave Tannenbaum.

And we do so in communion with amazing, history-making people like Delphine Metcalf-Foster, the first woman to be elected DAV national commander; (Applause) like Dave Riley, the first Coast Guard and quadruple amputee national commander; (Applause) like Butch Whitehead, the first post-9/11 national commander who led us through two years during the pandemic; (Applause) and like Tori Joyner, the first female NSO to earn her 30-year ring. (Applause)

These are just a few among the many who have made our cause their life's calling.

Disabled veterans are the most creative people in America today. And going back to my grandfather, there was almost nothing he couldn't do with an engine, a home, a gadget. He always found a way to adapt and overcome. If it didn't exist, he'd make it. And that makes sense.

So many of us served in dangerous situations where nimble thinking saved lives and the rules of engagement seemed stacked against us. And we're doubly innovative for navigating beyond the limitations of our injuries and finding ways to continue our service when our time in uniform is through.

The veterans we serve deserve nothing less.

This week we were proud to host an accelerator for veteran entrepreneurs right here in Atlantic City. Entrepreneurship is the ultimate form of economic empowerment and it's perfect for disabled veterans because it allows us to build businesses around our greatest strengths and abilities.

Our acquisition of DAV Patriot Boot Camp is more than a new initiative. It sprung from our employment effort and marks an empowering way of thinking about how we can ensure promises are kept to veterans.

It's the result of an evolution that began with Art Wilson's call for us to prepare for the next century of service to veterans. While we've made tremendous progress, that evolution is not complete. It can't be if we're to meet the ever-changing needs of the heroes we serve.

The infusion of ideas and energy we're enjoying from this program and what follows is bringing incredible momentum to our charity.

In the coming months we'll be reaching out to all of you to launch a new initiative, the DAV caregiver program. The program is powered by T-Care, a service-disabled, veteran-owned small business founded by DAV Patriot Bootcamp alumnus Ali Ahmadi.

An Army veteran, Ali utilized DAV in obtaining his earned benefits. He is an innovator whose personal mission is to provide caregivers with resources, screenings, personalized care plans, and one-on-one support.

Through this program, DAV and our Auxiliary will be able to provide the life-changing service to the heroes who share in the sacrifices of those they love.

(Whereupon, a video of Ali Ahmadi was viewed, followed by a round of applause.)

ADJUTANT JESINOSKI: But this isn't the only example of how we're engaging the growing 5,000-member community we've inherited through Patriot Boot Camp.

Next month, DAV Patriot Boot Camp alumnus Keith Waldrop has organized a special way to honor the fallen among some of our nation's most elite.

(Whereupon, a video of Marine Recon Raider Remembrance Ride was viewed, followed by a round of applause.)

ADJUTANT JESINOSKI: Through the Marine Recon Raider Remembrance Ride more than 200 motorcyclists will ride from Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, to our nation's capital and back in honor of their fallen.

They'll stop along the way to pay tribute to Gold Star families. They plan to ride through Arlington and past the Marine Corps War Memorial before heading back to North Carolina.

After experiencing DAV through Patriot Boot Camp, as you can see in the video, Keith and his team at Asymmetric Solutions named DAV a benefiting charity.

Dr. Maria Luque, an Air Force veteran and health science professor, is the founder of the company Fitness in Menopause. She attended DAV Patriot Boot Camp this spring and was part of the accelerator here. She is leveraging her expertise to support our efforts to advocate for her fellow women veterans, which is yet another area where we are leading the way.

They are just two of the thousand-plus vetrepreneurs who are now part of the DAV community.

Internally, we're looking ahead at ways we can do more to serve veterans, their families and their survivors.

Through a pilot program with the Department of Veterans Affairs, at five cemeteries, DAV volunteers driving DAV carts are transporting the families of the fallen to their loved one's final resting place.

We are hopeful that this will become a new offshoot of our voluntary services program. It would allow us to go beyond providing a lifetime of support to veterans and their survivors. It's one of the most meaningful things we can do to honor the lives of those who made our freedoms possible.

Your DAV continues to be the most resourceful, substantive charity in the business of serving those who served.

As we look ahead to the future, we must look back on one of the most impactful years in our history.

(Whereupon, the video "The Year in Review" was viewed, followed by a round of applause.)

ADJUTANT JESINOSKI: There is no way that I could conclude my first report as your national adjutant without honoring our now former national adjutant who I look for whenever I hear that title, by

the way. (Laughter) He's the one who made what you just watched possible. Ladies and gentlemen, please give a round of applause for our own Marc Burgess.

(Whereupon, former National Adjutant J. Marc Burgess stood and was recognized with a standing ovation.)

ADJUTANT JESINOSKI: There are only eight people in history who have held the post of national adjutant before me. And the leadership we enjoyed under Marc, my dear friend, was singular.

Following the hard-earned stability we achieved under Art, Marc ushered in a golden age for DAV. And he, and you, our members who make it happen, deserve tremendous credit for all that was made possible during the last decade of achievement and excellence.

Just one more thing before I conclude this morning, I want to tell you that yesterday someone here came up to me and asked me what it's like to no longer have a boss. (Laughter) I said, "Well, frankly, I miss Marc." But make no mistake, I still have a boss. In fact, I have a lot of bosses.

I have more bosses today than at any other time in my nearly 30-year career. And that doesn't just start and end with our national commander, the commander who appoints me. I answer to our Board of Directors, a board which is made up mostly of members who serve in one capacity or another on our National Executive Committee, a committee comprised of 21 districts elected by you, all of you.

And I want to assure you that it is my intention to serve you to the absolute best of my ability with care and concern and passion and with integrity and with strong communication.

And now that I have essentially told you all that you're my boss, which might have been a mistake, (Laughter) who around here can tell me if I can have a day off after convention?

(Various responses were called out from the audience.)

ADJUTANT JESINOSKI: Thank you. Thank you. Thank you, commander, for the faith and confidence that you've placed in me. And thank God for our Disabled American Veterans.

Commander, this concludes my report. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Adjutant Jesinoski returned to his seat and the commander resumed his position at the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Thank you, Barry. What do you think? Not too bad for a first timer. (Applause) I will now entertain a motion to accept our national adjutant's outstanding report. May I have a second?

(Whereupon, members called out from the floor.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Thank you. All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered. (Applause)

Humana is one of the nation's leading health and well-being companies and DAV is proud to partner with an organization that provides veterans with resources to maximize their physical and mental health.

Their relationship with DAV began back in 2020, and they have championed our members ever since. Humana is DAV's exclusive national Medicare Advantage, P-D-P, and Medicare Supplement sponsor. In addition, Humana is a joint presenting sponsor of DAV's 5-K.

Joining us today from Humana is Aaron McCoy.

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from the podium and Mr. McCoy advanced to the stage.)

MR. LEWIS: Aaron is a proud Army and Army National Guard veteran and a regional executive on Humana's veteran channel team. He leads a team of veteran Community Engagement Executives who work with various veterans' service organizations to improve their health and wellness. He's also responsible for training agents on the needs of veterans in selecting health care coverage.

MR. AARON MCCOY: Thank you, commander. As a lifetime member of DAV, I am so honored to be on this stage and representing Humana today. Working for a company that makes veterans a priority every day and also allows me to serve alongside DAV is so meaningful to me, personally.

If you're not aware, Humana and DAV began our partnership journey in 2020. We are so proud to support the amazing work the DAV team does every day to improve the lives of veterans and their families.

I can tell you from personal experience, Humana deeply understands the value of DAV and the important role the organization and all of you play as advocates for veterans and their families who need assistance.

We are so proud of what we have accomplished together so far and look forward to collaborating with you to make a positive impact for veterans across the country.

We thank you for your continued partnership. Thank you very much. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Mr. McCoy withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Thank you, Aaron. Each year it is our distinct honor to recognize a veteran who gives their all, despite their illness or injuries, and who exhibits DAV's ongoing commitment to supporting their brothers- and sisters-in-arms.

In 2002, mere months after enlisting in the South Dakota Army National Guard, Kim Hubers boarded a plane headed to Kuwait and prepared to invade Iraq.

As a palletized load system driver, she drove up to 18 hours a day from Baghdad to the port of Kuwait and back. Kim saw war up close and personal. But a more daunting fight began after she came home.

Despite appearing to thrive, her health began to falter with incapacitating headaches, joint pain, and other ailments. To add insult to injury, Kim has had to fight not only for medical diagnoses and treatment, but also for recognition of her service and sacrifice.

As a loving wife and mother of four, Kim still finds time to be an active DAV member, including serving as commander of her chapter.

Now, let's get to know Kim a little bit better.

(Whereupon, a video outlining Mrs. Hubers' service was viewed, followed by a round of applause.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Ladies and gentlemen, for her consistent service to her fellow veterans across South Dakota and the nation, I am immensely proud to introduce our 2023 Disabled American Veteran of the Year and DAV life member of Chapter 1 in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, District 14, Kim Hubers. (Standing Ovation)

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from the podium as Mrs. Hubers advanced to the stage for an official photograph, after which she advanced to the podium for remarks.)

MRS. KIM HUBERS: Well, I stopped crying long enough to come up here for a second. It's really amazing to see all of you here. I've never seen it from this side and it's quite scary, to be honest. So I'm really proud of everybody who gets up here and talks. You all made it look really easy.

About 13 hours ago I was still trying to sneak out of having to come up here and talk so that didn't work. And about an hour-and-a-half ago I wrote down notes on my hand so here we go, if I can still read them from wringing my hands in the back. (Laughter)

I stand here before you guys only as a symbol of all of the millions and millions of men and women, our brothers and sisters out there, who have invisible disabilities, things we fight through that nobody can see, challenges we face nobody knows, and you just keep on going.

And I am one of millions of people who could have had this award, who could have been up on this stage. And I'm very thankful to be here and still scared. But I'm here.

There is a lot of people to thank. I'm thankful to God that I am still here. I'm thankful – and this is kind of a full circle moment – for the East Orange, New Jersey, RISK which was spoken about earlier who I credit with saving my life. (Applause) Sorry.

I'm incredibly thankful for my family who is all sitting here today, my husband and my kids for coming to support me and my kids for not falling asleep the first few hours they were sitting in here. (Laughter) They were close.

I'm incredibly thankful to my chapter for helping to bring my family here so they could be here with me and everyone who supported me and got me here. As you saw in the video but didn't necessarily hear Owen, our NCO, is the reason I'm here today.

He handled my claim. He kept shoving, I mean supporting me (Laughter) to be a part of the DAV and keep going. And all of the members of our chapter kept pushing me and supporting me. And I'm where I am today not because of me but because of each and every one of them, several of them here today. I couldn't possibly name every one of you but thank you all for being here. Thank you for supporting me and continuing to support me.

And I just want to tell you guys that I'm not alone. You're not alone. None of us can do this alone. But don't ever give up. Don't ever stop. Just keep going. There is always somebody here that will help lift you up when you need it and somebody you can lift up when they need.

So thank you. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Mrs. Hubers withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Our next guest represents a company that goes above and beyond the call of duty to serve those who served, U-S-A-A. Let us welcome to the stage Tara Leweling, U-S-A-A Chief Diversity and Sustainability Officer. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from the podium as Ms. Leweling advanced to the podium.)

MR. LEWIS: As Chief Diversity and Sustainability Officer for USAA, Tara Leweling leads the company's inclusion initiatives to drive meaningful impact for USAA's employees, members and

communities. The 22-year Air Force veteran does this by creating programs that boost innovation, increase empathy, and empower USAA employees to better serve their stakeholders.

MS. TARA LEWELING: Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

MS. LEWELING: And thank you for that warm welcome. It's an honor to speak to you today on behalf of USAA who has had the privilege of serving the U.S. military community for more than 100 years.

As you know, a key motto at USAA, as Joe said, is we know what it means to serve. And I'm here to say, first and foremost, thanks to each and every one of you for your service to our country. (Applause)

As a proud veteran of the United States Air Force, I am thrilled to be here today. There is nothing quite like the camaraderie in the military and found among military families. So many of my life-long friends and mentors are people I met during my time in the Air Force. And I treasure those relationships. It's been so nice to reconnect with people here.

I'm also not afraid to admit that after I retired from the Air Force I missed that camaraderie. That's another reason I'm glad to be here, to be together with those who have served with honor and dedication.

We also understand at USAA that service sometimes with great sacrifice. And we appreciate the sacrifices, big and small, that you and your loved ones made by being in the military. Because we all know service doesn't stop when we leave the service.

And we know that the sacrifices don't stop either. They don't, the sacrifices don't stop by you, by the person sitting next to you, and by those you know and love.

Sometimes those sacrifices and the challenges our veterans have endured can feel overwhelming. That's why I want to share a bit about a new, groundbreaking USAA-led initiative called Face the Fight.

Face the Fight launched in June and is a coalition of corporations, foundations, nonprofits and veteran-focused organizations, like DAV, that have joined together to raise awareness and support for veteran suicide prevention. (Applause)

The mission is simple. We're seeking to break the stigma of those seeking help in order to open conversation and support around veteran suicide, complement the existing and meaningful efforts at the VA, the Department of Defense, and many other organizations.

Since 2001, our nation has lost more than 120,000 service members and veterans by their own hands. That's one-and-a-half times greater than the national average. And through this coalition we're committed to doing something about it.

So if there is a veteran that you know, someone who is struggling, know it is okay to talk about it. We've seen bravery in this room today of people who have told their personal story about how they've been affected. And we know it's an incredibly tough topic to face head on. But when we face it together, there is hope.

If you're interested in learning more about what we're working toward, please visit WeFaceTheFight.org.

The sacrifices made by people who have served in the military and their loved ones are real. That's why what DAV does every single day is so important. And it's why we at USAA are so proud to work with all of you.

You help veterans navigate the complex world of benefits and you engage vets at every stage of life and their families.

So, to the men and women of DAV here today, and your counterparts back home, all the volunteers, we commend you on the amazing work you're doing, the impact that you're having on the military community, and the impact you're having for military families. Keep up the good fight. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Ms. Leweling withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: I will now ask the national adjutant to read DAV's Statement of Policy, to list committee advisors whom I have appointed and who received the approval of the National Executive Committee at its most recent meeting, and to make any further announcements.

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and the adjutant advanced to the podium.)

ADJUTANT JESINOSKI: Thank you, Commander.

"DAV was founded on the principle that this nation's first duty to veterans is the rehabilitation and welfare of its wartime disabled. This principle envisions:

"1. High quality hospital and medical care provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs for veterans with disabilities incurred in or aggravated by service in America's armed forces.

"2. Adequate compensation for the loss resulting from such service-connected disabilities.

"3. Vocational rehabilitation and/or education to help the disabled veteran prepare for and obtain gainful employment.

"4. Enhanced opportunities for employment and preferential job placement so that the remaining ability of the disabled veteran is used productively.

"5. Adequate compensation to the surviving spouses and dependents of veterans whose deaths are held to be service-connected under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

"6. Enhanced outreach to ensure that all disabled veterans receive all benefits they have earned and that the American people understand and respect the needs these veterans encounter as a result of their disabilities.

"It, therefore, follows that we will not take any action on any resolution that proposes legislation designed to provide benefits for veterans, their surviving spouses and dependents, which are based upon other than wartime service-connected disability.

"We shall not oppose legislation beneficial to those veterans not classified as service-connected disabled, except when it is evident that such legislation will jeopardize benefits for service-connected disabled veterans.

"And while our first duty as an organization is to assist the service-connected disabled, their surviving spouses and dependents, we shall within the limits of our resources assist others in filing, perfecting, and prosecuting their claims for benefits.

Since this represents the principle upon which our organization was founded and since it is as sound at this time as it was in 1920, we hereby reaffirm this principle as the policy for the Disabled American Veterans."

I would now like to read into the record National Commander Parsetich's appointed Convention Committee Advisors: for the Committee on Credentials Committee, National Membership Director Doug Wells and National Judge Advocate Mike Dobmeier;

for the Committee on General Resolutions and Membership Committee, Deputy National Service Director for Training Scott Hope and Assistant National Legislative Director Marquis Barefield;

for the Committee on Legislation and Veterans Rights Committee, National Legislative Director Joy Ilem and Deputy National Legislative Director Shane Liermann;

for the Committee on Constitution and Bylaws Committee, Inspector General Ed Hartman and Past National Commander Rob Reynolds;

for the Committee on Employment Committee, National Employment Director Ryan Burgos and Assistant National Employment Director Jeremy Yost;

for the Committee on Hospital and Voluntary Services Committee, National Voluntary Services Director John Kleindienst and Assistant National Legislative Director John Retzer; and, lastly,

for the Committee on Nomination of National Officers, Past National Commander Joe Johnston and Executive Director of the Department of Connecticut Al Church.

Advisors can pick up their Committee folders from the Resolutions Office located in Wildwood 12.

I have a few other announcements. That's why I'm speaking so quickly. I know you're ready to have some lunch.

At 2:00 o'clock this afternoon we will host the Service and Legislative Seminar, in which we'll welcome Dr. Suhh, Chief-of-Staff for the Veterans Health Administration and Mr. Mike Froo, Deputy Under-Secretary for Benefits at the Veterans Benefits Administration.

Those who are interested in attending should be in their seats by 1:45 so that the seminar can begin promptly at 2:00 o'clock. You won't want to miss that important discussion.

Tonight we will be honoring our top elected leader and your service during our National Commander's Reception sponsored by Booz Allen Hamilton, held in Avalon 10 through 17 at 7:30 p.m.

Please remember that you will need your credentials in order to gain entry. As a reminder, again, please remember to bring your credentials to gain entry to the room.

Beginning this afternoon at 4:15 convention committees are scheduled to meet. Those of you who have been elected to convention committees are asked to be on time in the room assigned for your meeting. We ask the committees to complete their work as soon as possible.

Every year A&W celebrates National Root Beer Float Day on August 6th. And in exchange for a free root beer float, A&W asks their guests to pay it forward. Together with franchise partners they have raised over \$450,000 since 2013.

Thanks to our great partners at A&W, immediately following our opening session, free root beer floats will be made available to you all in the Wildwood Ballroom Terrace, which is located outside the main entry doors to the side of the room. Don't spoil your lunch. (Laughter)

The root beer floats were also made possible by our friends at Harrah's who donated the ice cream and the labor to make it happen. Please be sure to thank them when receiving your float. We'll be trying to get as many people through as possible in the short time we have so please be courteous to other and make an effort to keep the line moving.

For Fun Night on Monday at 8:00 we are thrilled to welcome back our old friend and longtime veteran supporter, Gary Sinise and the Lieutenant Dan Band. (Applause)

Fun Night is once again being presented by TriWest. We can't thank TriWest enough for all of their dedicated support and generosity over the years. They help make this event a success and I know everyone in this room appreciates it.

Check your program or convention app on your phone for more information on events and links to view and download photos, videos, reports and other content.

On behalf of DAV, the entire DAV and DAV Auxiliary, I'd like to offer my sincere appreciation and gratitude to Heroes with Hearing Loss who generously sponsored the closed captioning for this morning's event. Thank you. (Applause)

Our first business session will convene tomorrow at 9:00 a.m. And at that time we will hear reports from our headquarters executive directors and the Board of Directors' treasurer. We will also honor our employers, our VA employees, volunteers and our top recruiters.

On Tuesday morning, as is our usual practice, we'll host a parade of donors. Those who wish to donate to any DAV entity are encouraged, in the interest of time, to fill out the form in your bags before making your way to our donation space at Wildwood Registration Desk 1 located near the will call on the first level conference center.

The staff is killing me here. (Laughter)

We are giving away three \$50 gift certificates that can be redeemed at the DAV store online or here at convention. All registered convention attendees are eligible but must be present to win. If I call your name and you are in the hall, please see Membership Director Doug Wells up here on stage as soon as we adjourn.

And the lucky winners are Angela Young, District 17; Jonas Penrose, District 4; and Joyce Roberts, District 9. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Adjutant Jesinoski returned to his seat and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Thank you, Barry. Ladies and gentlemen, if able, please rise and I will ask Chaplain Varner to lead us in a closing prayer. Chaplain.

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and the chaplain advanced to the podium.)

CHAPLAIN VARNER: May we bow our heads. Let us pray. Almighty Creator, once again we give thanks for this meeting, for our opening session. We thank you for the chores, but now we continue the work as we leave this session, go about our various workshops and various sessions.

We thank you for the wisdom and the guidance as we celebrate as being one voice and one sound in this place, lifting up, again, this great organization. These things we give thanks unto you. And the people said amen.

(Response of "Amen.")

CHAPLAIN VARNER: Thank you.

(Whereupon, the chaplain withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: This convention stands in recess until 9:00 a.m. tomorrow. Have a great rest of the afternoon.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed at 12:18 o'clock, p.m. on Saturday, August 5, 2023.)

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FIRST BUSINESS SESSION

August 6, 2023

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The First Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans 101st National Convention reconvened in the Wildwood Ballroom 2-7 of the Harrah's Resort Atlantic City, Atlantic City, New Jersey, on Sunday, August 6, 2023, and was called to order at 9:01 o'clock, a.m., by National Commander Joseph "Joe" Parsetich.

COMMANDER JOSEPH "JOE" PARSETICH: All right, may I have your attention, please. The convention will please come to order. As a reminder, I would like to ask everyone to please silence your cell phones or portable electronic devices. (Three raps of the gavel) Please join me in the Pledge of Allegiance.

(Whereupon, the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: I will ask Chaplain Debra Varner to lead us in pray as we prepare to undertake this morning's business. Uncover. Chaplain.

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and the chaplain advanced to the podium.)

CHAPLAIN DEBRA VARNER: Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

CHAPLAIN VARNER: Let us pray. Heavenly Creator, we truly thank you for another opportunity at the opening of our business session. Continue to guide us. Help us to be guided by your directions as we honor those, as we lift up the standards that are set before us, being of one mind and one voice and one sound.

These and all things that we ask in your name. And the people said Amen.

(Response of "Amen," as the chaplain withdrew from and the commander advanced to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: (One rap of gavel) Thank you chaplain. In order for a delegate to be heard at this convention you must first be recognized by the chair. Only those delegates at the microphone will be recognized. They must state their name, chapter number and the state they represent.

Comrades, the convention rules are a continuing part of our Bylaws. They are a part and parcel of Article 3 and remain in effect continually. They are subject to amendment as provided in the Bylaws and do not require re-adoption.

I would like to call on the Credentials Committee Chairman Brenda Reed for the the Credentials Committee report. Brenda.

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and the Credentials Committee chair advanced to the podium.)

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON BRENDA REED: National Commander Parsetich, National Adjutant Jesinoski, delegates, members and guests, good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON REED: The Credentials Committee met for their first meeting yesterday afternoon, August 5th, in Avalon 21, for the purpose of electing a chairperson and a secretary.

I, Brenda Reed, commander for Department of Florida, District 7, was elected as chairperson. And Cali Mullins, commander, Washington, District 19, was elected to serve as secretary.

The Credentials Committee met this morning, again, in Avalon 21, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Florida – oh, geesh, he gave me the wrong list. We're not in Florida any more. (Laughter) Darn. No wonder I'm cold. (Laughter) At Harrah's hotel in Atlantic City.

It will teach me to read this when he hands it to me. Right? Roll call showed 982 delegates and 38 alternates have registered, which includes 44 departments and 358 chapters registered. There are 7 national officers, 12 National Executive Committeemen, and 6 past national commander currently registered, for a total of 7,419 votes.

This is a partial report for informational purposes only and it reflects the registration at the close of business at 5:00 p.m. on August 5th, 2023. Remember, if you are going to register, registration is open today until 5:00 p.m. It will be open tomorrow from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., and again Tuesday morning only two hours, 8:00 a.m. until 10:00 a.m., at which time there will be no more registrations.

This completes the partial report of the Credentials Committee report. Thank you, Commander.

(Whereupon, the Credentials Committee chair withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Thank you, Brenda. At this time I would also like to introduce and recognize my National Chief-of-Staff Danny Oliver; Officer-of-the-Day Ken Weinheimer; and Sergeant-at-Arms Kevin Grantier.

(Whereupon, each officer stood as his name was called.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: I want to thank all three of these gentlemen for their support over the last year and for the jobs that they have undertaken today. And, poor Danny, what he's been undertaking for the last 12 months. (Applause)

It's now my honor and privilege to introduce the executive director of DAV's Washington headquarters, Randy Reese.

A native of Bristol, Virginia, Randy enlisted in the Army in 1984 and served as a rifle squad leader in the 82nd Airborne Division during the Persian Gulf War.

Returning stateside, Randy served as an elite "Black-Hat" instructor in the Air Movement Operations and Jump Master Courses at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. It was there that he suffered a disabling back injury while conducting a nighttime parachute jump. He separated from the Army in 1995.

Randy went on to earn his paralegal degree from Kaplan College for Professional Studies and is a nationally-recognized expert on veterans benefits and services since he joined DAV as a national service officer the year of his discharge.

In December of 2018 Randy was appointed executive director of DAV's National Service and Legislative Headquarters in Washington, D.C., where he still serves as DAV's principal spokesperson before Congress, the White House, and the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

In this role he continues to lead our advocacy efforts in Washington as others have done before him, keeping us at the forefront of the fight on Capitol Hill for veterans' rights.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in a warm welcome for my friend and the executive director of DAV's National Service and Legislative Headquarters, Randy Reese. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and the executive director of Washington headquarters advanced to the podium.)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF WASHINGTON HEADQUARTERS EDWARD "RANDY" REESE: National Commander Parsetich, National Adjutant Jesinoski, distinguished guests and delegates, I am honored once again to be with you here at the national convention to report on the activities and accomplishments of DAV's national service and legislative programs over the past year.

Since we last convened in Orlando, DAV has had another stellar year fighting to secure benefits and health care for our nation's veterans, their families and survivors, despite the bitter partisan divide in our politics, making it increasingly difficult to get meaningful legislation passed in our nation's capital.

You know, they call Atlantic City "America's playground." If that's the case, then Washington should be known as "America's daycare." (Applause) I say that because I once heard that politicians are like diapers: they need to be changed often and usually for the same reason. (Laughter)

But despite all the political turmoil in our nation's capital, DAV's legislative efforts, thanks to your advocacy efforts, resulted in the historic passage of the Honoring our PACT Act, which was signed into law the day after last year's national convention adjourned.

Commander, I'm sure you remember the first day on the job.

Now, I don't need to tell everybody else in the audience, but I spent my first day on the job filling out endless stacks of H-R paperwork, not flying to D.C. to meet the president, the VA secretary, members of the Senate and the House of Representatives. It was truly a momentous occasion. Getting to watch history being made as millions of veterans from all generations became eligible for VA's life-changing benefits and health care.

But let me just break it to our new line officer, now, whoever gets elected on Tuesday isn't going to the White House on Wednesday. (Laughter) Don't take it personal.

The PACT Act was truly a landmark bill, the culmination of more than a decade of advocacy by DAV, dating back to 2007 when Chief of Communications and Outreach Officer Dan Clare, he was deployed at the time in Iraq as an Air Force public affairs specialist, and he shared the all-important memo on the dangers of burn pits with the media.

So we've been at the forefront of military toxic exposures from Day One. And we're going to continue leading the charge in the years and coming months ahead.

As you heard the secretary outline yesterday, implementing the new law is no small undertaking. More than 800,000 PACT Act claims have now been filed through the first half of this year.

That's a significant influx of claims in a relatively short amount of time, which is why DAV will have to hold Congress accountable for providing VA the proper funding and resources that it needs to fully and faithfully implement the law. Our nation's veterans deserve no less. (Applause)

Now, let me take this opportunity to remind everyone what's happening. This coming Wednesday is the deadline for filing PACT Act-related claims in order to guarantee the earliest possible effective date. So, if you think you may be eligible for benefits based on toxic exposures covered by the PACT Act, please be sure to visit the DAV claims processing office in Avalon Rooms 8 and 9 on the second floor of the conference center and talk to one of our national service officers.

Now, as remarkable as the PACT Act is, there are still gaps that need to be addressed. In the coming year DAV will continue to advocate for legislation to eliminate the requirement for radiation dose estimates for veterans made ill by exposure to radiological materials during their service.

We're also going to focus on the expansion of benefits to veterans who served in Karshi-Khanabad Air Base, nicknamed "K2", in Uzbekistan, where service members were exposed to residuals of chemical weapons, radioactive depleted uranium, and jet fuel, among nearly 400 other compounds.

Many among us may have never heard of K2, likely due to where it is and the limited time our forces were stationed there. But toxins don't care about time or location, just ask those who served here at home.

(Whereupon, a video regarding Camp Lejeune water was viewed.)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF WASHINGTON HEADQUARTERS REESE: Sadly, there are countless others out there facing the same grim realities as the Ezells. While Keith may not have died in combat, veterans like him still made the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

Rest assured, we will not give up this fight until every veteran receives the toxic exposure benefits they have earned. (Applause) Nor will we waiver in the efforts to secure benefits for the survivors of those who served.

This past year, our national legislative team has been hard at work on Capitol Hill advocating for multiple pieces of legislation to extend benefits for dependents and survivors.

Notably, your advocacy resulted in 50,000 emails being sent to Congress through the Commander's Action Network for two critical bills: the Caring for Survivors Act and the Love Lives on Act. (Applause)

With your continued support, I hope to report at our next convention that both of these bills have been signed into law.

And, as always, translating the federal laws into tangible benefits for veterans and survivors is the job of DAV's service program, which continues to be the gold standard among all veterans service organizations, helping hundreds of thousands of veterans seeking VA benefits each year.

With over 3,700 DAV accredited or certified service officers, led by our national, transition, department, and chapter service officers, DAV last year took over 2.4 million actions to help veterans and their families. (Applause)

All told, the veterans and survivors represented by DAV obtained more than \$26.4 billion in benefits as reported by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Benjamin Franklin once said, and I quote, "An investment in knowledge always pays the best dividends," end quote, which is why we're continuing to ensure DAV's service officers are the best trained, best equipped, to assist veterans with their claims.

In fact, the American Council on Education now awards 15 college credits to those who successfully complete the DAV NSO Structured and Continuing Training Program.

It's why lawmakers in Congress and policymakers at the VA regularly refer veterans to DAV for assistance with their claims. It's also why more than 1.1 million veterans and survivors choose DAV to represent them before the Department of Veterans Affairs.

I've said it before, and I'm going to say it again, when it comes to helping veterans secure their benefits, DAV remains second-to-none. (Applause)

In fact, our service officers are often the first to have contact with a veteran or a family member, so building public awareness is essential to fulfilling our mission. That's why at free information seminars conducted across the country we continue to educate veterans and their families on the benefits and services they may be eligible to receive.

Last year, DAV held 400 information seminars with nearly 13,000 attendees, and we'll continue on that same trajectory in 2023 to make sure that we leave no veteran or family member, survivor or caregiver behind.

We're also continuing to expand our presence on the internet and through social networks, constantly looking to find innovative ways to support veterans. In our redesigned website DAV has provided veterans easy access to a myriad of tools to help educate them on the disability claims process.

One tool we've recently implemented is our disability rating calculator, which shows users how the VA combines ratings when veterans have multiple disabilities which, as you know, is quite common.

By providing easy access to tools and information about the claims process we hope to encourage more veterans to come to us for assistance in securing all the benefits they've earned through their military service.

The former governor of California, who I believe you may have seen in a movie or two, Mr. Arnold Schwarzenegger said, and I quote:

"Help others and give something back. I guarantee you will discover that while public service improves the lives and the world around you, its greatest reward is the enrichment and new meaning it will bring to your own life." End quote.

Nothing illustrates that point better than DAV's Disaster Relief Program, which continues to make a difference for those whose lives have been upended by hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, fires and other disasters.

In 2022, DAV provided approximately \$2.1 million and nearly a thousand comfort kits and supply kits to family members throughout 15 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. Veterans, like Julie Parks.

(Whereupon, a video on Hurricane Ian was viewed.)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF WASHINGTON HEADQUARTERS REESE: While we wish these disasters would stop, our care and support when they happen will not. I'm proud to say that since 1968, more than \$19.5 million have been disbursed as a result of our disaster relief efforts.

Caring for our fellow veterans is at the core of what DAV does. We honor and support those family members who care for their injured, ill and disabled veterans.

As most of you know, when Congress created the comprehensive caregiver program over a decade ago, it, too, was limited to post-9/11 heroes. In 2017, DAV launched The Unsung Heroes Initiative to change that law so that seriously disabled veterans from all eras will be eligible for the program.

Thanks to our efforts, that became a reality last October when caregivers for veterans who served before 9/11 became eligible to apply for the Comprehensive Caregiver Assistance Program.

Unfortunately, the new regulations that VA promulgated for this expansion actually tightened up the eligibility criteria. It threatened to kick out thousands of caregivers already in the program and it made actually getting access to the program significantly harder for those pre-9/11 veterans.

As a result of public outcry from DAV and other advocates and thousands of veterans and their caregivers, VA paused the implementation of the new regulations, stopped discharging veterans from the program, and they began developing new eligibility program rules to replace the ones that had failed.

While we've not yet seen the revised caregiver eligibility criteria, we are hopeful they will ultimately fix the issues that veterans and their caregivers have encountered. It has been a difficult fight. But if they don't, let me assure you that we won't give up until they do. (Applause)

DAV will also continue fighting to ensure that women veterans, the fastest segment of the veterans' population, expanded more than 19 percent, are now eligible to access VA health care benefits, including world-class, gender-specific care. We have to keep that fight up.

And during the last Congress, our advocacy efforts led to the passage of a number of new laws, including the landmark, Deborah Sampson Act, the Dr. Kate Hendricks Thomas SERVICE Act, and the Protecting Moms Who Served Act, and, last, the MAMMO Act.

Each and every one of these victories can trace their origin back to DAV's 2014 women veterans' report, The Long Journey Home, which shined a light on the many challenges women face as they leave military service. It has also provided a roadmap for legislative action.

Our 2018 follow-up report, The Journey Ahead, offered additional recommendations and kept the pressure on lawmakers to do the right thing by our sisters-in-arms.

And I am pleased to announce that DAV will be releasing a third report later this fall called The Journey to Mental Wellness, which will focus on the unique mental health issues that women veterans face.

We're incredibly excited for this new report and hope that each of you will read it and use its findings when we advocate for our women veterans. (Applause)

We are already working with the Senate and House Veterans Affairs Committees to draft new legislation that will address shortfalls in VA's mental health programs and their services for women veterans.

Together, we can and we must finally close these gaps that too many women veterans have already fallen through.

Many in this room know all too well that even after the guns go silent, the battles continue for many who witnessed the ravages of war. These invisible wounds can take years to manifest, and without proper interventions can last a lifetime, often ending up as another tragedy of war.

While it's been heartening to see the veteran suicide rate dip somewhat over the past few years, the only acceptable number is zero. That's why DAV continues pushing for policies and legislation that work toward making that goal a reality.

In fact, at our annual national Mid-Winter Conference in Washington, our own national commander revealed something that many of us had not known.

(Whereupon, a video of Commander Parsetich was viewed.)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF WASHINGTON HEADQUARTERS REESE: Commander, I've been a part of DAV for 30 years, and I've got to tell you, that's one of the bravest moments I've ever witnessed in Washington, D.C. (Applause) It was the actual personification of leadership, and we're proud to have you at the helm of this organization, Joe. Thank you, again. (Applause)

We are also proud of our national legislative team in Washington, D.C., which is unparalleled in the veterans' advocacy arena. But that's because behind them are all of you. They're the bark. You're the bite.

The grassroots advocacy of our members plays a pivotal role in how we engage with lawmakers and a major part of that is your participation in the DAV CAN. The CAN is the Commander's Action Network. It's one thing for our legislative team to go to a meeting on the Hill with some talking points. It's quite another to be able to drop 10-, 20-, 30,000 emails on someone's desk.

In fact, as of July our members have sent out over 500,000 emails to Congress advocating for dozens of life-changing veterans' health care and benefits bills. (Applause) That's a half-a-million emails in just over six months. Amazing.

To put that incredible statistic into perspective, DAV last year sent out 439,000 emails to Congress in all of 2022 and half-a-million in just the first six months. Give yourselves another round of applause for that. (Applause)

And for those of you setting out there that's not yet a part of the Commander's Action Network, signing up is easy. Just to go D-A-V-CAN.org and click "sign up" in the top right corner. That's D-A-V-CAN.org. It's quick. It's easy. And it's important.

And if you don't do it, I'm going to have Al Labelle hound you until you do. (Laughter) He's already on the job.

Finally, I wanted to share with you that our Washington Headquarters is moving to a new location, just steps away from the VA and the White House. We expect to be in the space later this year.

The move will create greater efficiency for the staff. But, rest assured the mission inside the new Washington Headquarters will remain the same: service and advocacy on behalf of our nation's veterans. That will never change.

And as you see up on the renderings up on the screen, you'll notice the quotes that will serve as daily reminders of our mission. Like this one from former VA Secretary and Past Executive Director of DAV's National Service and Legislative Headquarters, Jesse Brown who said:

"America has a solemn obligation to ensure that the men and women who have served and sacrificed for this country and the cause of freedom will never be forgotten or neglected."

Our veterans need us. And, indeed, we have a sacred obligation to keep America's promise to them. And working together, that's exactly what we'll continue to do.

Thank you. May God continue to bless DAV, the men and women who have served our great nation, their families, survivors, caregivers and, of course, this wonderful country of ours, the United States of America. (Applause)

Commander that completes my report.

(Whereupon, the Executive Director Reese withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Thank you, Randy. May I have a second to accept Mr. Reese's report? (Whereupon, someone made a motion from the floor, not using a microphone.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Step up to the microphone, I didn't hear.

MR. ALBERT LABELLE: Mic 1. Mic 1.

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Your name, Mic 1.

MR. LABELLE: Al Labelle, Chapter 57, Wisconsin, makes the motion to accept Washington Executive Director Randy Reese's report as presented.

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Al who? (Laughter) I thought you were Ansel Adams. No, no. (Laughter) May I have a second for Al's motion?

(Whereupon, the motion was duly seconded from the floor.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. The motion carried. (Applause)

And now it is now my great pleasure to introduce or reintroduce to many of you a fantastic veteran who is going very far in this organization. Cody VanBoxel, a Marine of the Iraq War, was appointed Executive Director of DAV's National Headquarters in Erlanger, Kentucky, in June of 2023, so don't touch the paint on his door. It's still drying. (Laughter) But his office is located in a facility that he played a key role in seeing come to fruition from design all the way to completion.

Cody oversees employment initiatives, voluntary services, fundraising, accounting, membership activities, administration, information technology, communications, outreach, human resources, facilities and logistics critical to DAV's mission of support for the disabled veterans and their families.

And then, in the afternoon, he – (Laughter) you know, Cody was appointed to assistant director, Barry Jesinoski, back in 2021. In that capacity he was instrumental in the acquisition of DAV's Patriot Boot Camp, among other important initiatives.

In 2017, he was appointed as national human resources director, where his responsibilities included advising the executive director and providing executive oversight for the company's human resources initiatives. He began his career as a national service officer apprentice at the national service office in Washington, D.C., back in 2011, before transferring to Philadelphia, an office where he ultimately supervised.

A native of Hambden, Ohio, Cody served his country as an electronics technician and then a Marine security guard, serving in West Africa, Eastern Europe, and Asia. He spent nearly all of 2007 on duty in Iraq providing specialized security to the Department of State and Multi-National Forces.

After his discharge in January 2009, he attended Western Governors University, earning a bachelor's of science degree in business management. He is also a Society of Human Resources Management Senior Certified Professional.

Ladies and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to welcome your friend and mine, your DAV National Headquarters Executive Director, Mr. Cody VanBoxel. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and Executive Director of National Headquarters VanBoxel advanced to the podium.)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS B. CODY VANBOXEL: Thank you, Commander, for such a warm introduction. It's a great honor to be before all of you today.

DAV is one of America's greatest institutions. In terms of serving those who have served, we're as iconic as any brand in our national lexicon. And in looking at brands, there are some comparisons we can make with one American brand that exceeds our longevity.

By the time DAV members were driving Model T Fords to our second national convention, the concept of the Ford Truck was fairly new. But to the veterans of World War I, it was something already very familiar and trusted. They were used as ambulances and transport vehicles by British and American forces in the European theater.

But a newer model, the Model TT, marked an even more ambitious turn toward creating a vehicle that could change the world. It was a vehicle that could transport a newly industrialized nation and transform the lives of laborers and Americans of every stripe.

The Model T's 177-inch four-cylinder could turn out a whopping 20 horsepower which, for a point of comparison, is well, 20 horses. (Laughter) With the hammer down that beauty could go a whopping 42 miles an hour. (Laughter) It got 13 miles to the gallon in the city and 21 in the country. (Laughter)

In comparison, the Model TT had a longer wheelbase, heavier frame and rear axle, giving it basically the rating of a one ton. It was durable and strong, but slow and plodding. It topped out around 25 miles per hour. (Laughter) At the same time, American veterans had seen how such groundbreaking feats of mechanized strength could enhance efficiencies on the battlefield.

Like the Fords that made it back from Europe, veterans faced a slow and plodding fight to find a new purpose after serving in the trenches.

The Model TTs gave way to Model As, and then in 1934, Ford customers got a new treat. The Model 50, with its legendary flathead V-8, shared the look and enhancements of the company's passenger lineup. But production of that vehicle came to a swift conclusion in 1941 when production screeched to a halt.

America was at war. And like DAV, Ford switched gears. As the largest boom in DAV membership history was underway following the war, in 1948, Ford introduced the F-series.

Following the war, America needed more muscle to rebuild the world at home and abroad. Second- and third-generation F-series vehicles followed through to 1960. Four-wheel drive came along in 1959.

In 1967 the fifth generation F-series featured F-O-R-D spelled out in block letters. These were the trucks that made Ford a favorite for so many veterans returning from Vietnam.

With very passing generation, the trucks became wider, stronger, and more comfortable for passengers and drivers. We see an evolution being made, an icon in the making.

In 1973, Ford developed the ECU engine control unit, introducing microprocessors with 12-bits of semiconductor memory. By 2009, the twelfth generation Ford was more comparable to the space shuttle than it was the original Model T. In 2015, to the shock to many, Ford makes the radical jump – wait for it – to aluminum. And soon after, electric motors.

At one time, the idea of going lighter in a Ford truck would have been considered sacrilegious. But the change to military-grade aluminum alloy made the truck more durable and rigid.

The F-150 lost 700 pounds but it's actually stronger. It can tow and haul more on less gas. Aluminum is more recyclable than steel and it makes it easier for Ford to create replacement parts. And the savings is passed on to customers, customers who, hopefully, are buying their Fords in droves using DAV's X-plan member advantage. (Applause) Thank you.

The point here is not to impress you gear heads in the audience with what I know about automobiles. You can ask my wife. When it comes to actually fixing vehicle, I don't even change my wiper blades any more. (Laughter) If I did, though, you'd find us using another DAV partner, and I'm forever grateful to our friends at USAA for their emergency roadside assistance. Thank you, USAA. (Applause)

DAV's evolution over the years is remarkable. And if you ever have a chance I encourage you to block off some time to visit our national headquarters to see how we've catalogued our existence, comparing the timeline of American history with DAV's history. It illustrates very well how our forebearers adapted to an ever-changing world.

From the sales of "The Progress of Nationals" and adoption of Forget-Me-Not flowers to Identity tags and direct mail, DAV has survived the test of time by constantly pushing ourselves to be the best organization we can be.

When we saw Vietnam veterans return from war suffering disproportionately from homelessness and disabling mental health issues, we funded the Forgotten Warrior Project, which led to recognition of PTSD in the DSM.

And anyone who has ever been a service officer knows how life-changing that has been for veterans who desperately needed the care, benefits, and of near equal value, the de-stigmatization that has replaced shame and anxiety with validation.

If we take an occasional moment to look back and take inventory of the lessons of the past, we must do so with an eye toward the changing needs of the generations of veterans we'll be serving in the decades to come. That is why I'm especially excited about the journey DAV has taken in the last decade.

The DAV team I joined as an apprentice had a different energy and ops-tempo than the one we see today. Our rebranding is comparable in many ways to Ford's dramatic shift to aluminum bodies. Though some of you, and you know who you are, are still getting used to the "new" logo – please let the record show I used air quotes when I said "new" – the effort that went into it has been transformative.

DAV PSAs have aired more than 1.1 million times on television, alone. In total, they have generated 67 billion impressions, equating to more than \$743 million in donated value.

It is an absolute honor to follow in the footsteps of someone like Barry who, under his thoughtful stewardship, has helped grow DAV's net worth by more than \$172 million. (Applause)

We've weathered a global pandemic and came out of it with a new headquarters that was completed on time and under budget, which was largely funded by the sale of two Norman Rockwell paintings and one by N.C. Wyeth, which were generously donated years ago. We are stronger now because of how we have maintained our focus on our mission.

Not only was the rebranding a commitment for DAV to hold ourselves to a more disciplined approach in our outreach, it was a statement to every member of team DAV. It was a gunmetal-grey and night-vision green way of encouraging all of us to reject the status quo.

As Barry took the helm at national headquarters, the going mantra was that we would not be doing business the way it was done in the past just because that's the way we always did it.

We would push ourselves for excellence. We would ask ourselves, foremost, if every aspect of our efforts was good for veterans. We'd be willing to take risks, but we'd measure everything we do and let impact light the direction ahead.

We enhanced our collaboration with VA in the National Disabled Winter Sports Clinic and added the National Disabled Veterans Golf Clinic to the partnership to create an adaptive sports program. And that's without mentioning how we're looking into ways we can support the families of the fallen as they lay their veterans to rest.

We're constantly pushing to create volunteer opportunities and leverage every available resource we can to improve the lives of those we serve.

Less than ten years ago we added employment. Where for years DAV had effectively promoted policy and government solutions to provide preference, training, education and equity for disabled veterans, today we are one of the most prolific resources in the nation when it comes to connecting veterans with jobs.

DAV cannot be "all things to all people." But for the people we serve, we can say with absolute confidence that we provide tremendously impactful services based on their greatest needs. Where we lack direct expertise, we find partners who can help us fill the cracks.

DAV continues to partner with entities like Save-A-Warrior, Boulder Crest Retreats, Joseph House, and others to support meaningful initiatives while introducing some of our most deserving and disabled veterans to the full scope of services we offer.

And though we can all be rightfully proud of our accomplishments, we know letting our foot off the gas would undermine all of the progress we've made. In a matter of a few years, we could see DAV's membership fall below one million members – which is a landmark we've enjoyed for many years now.

Though our membership represents the veteran community we serve, we have, throughout history skewed older. Veterans do not typically exit the military and decide to join an organization like DAV, even when we've helped them. And in their time of need we are respectfully hesitant to ask them to purchase a membership.

We do not recruit at career fairs. And we never solicit for membership while helping transitioning service members on bases. We don't require membership to receive any service. And that will never change.

But it seems, unfortunately, some of us are reluctant in other cases to follow up with the simple question we should all ask. When we say we help a million veterans a year, we say so knowing the number is likely much higher.

But those of us who leverage the power of DAV to make a life-changing difference for veterans need to also leverage our recruiting skills to bring people into the fold who can and should join DAV.

It is significantly cheaper to become a member of DAV than most organizations. We don't charge reoccurring annual dues. Though the cost is inexpensive in comparison, the value is equally significant and the benefits are life-changing.

We will absolutely survive a generational downturn in our membership, but for those of us who want the legacy of DAV chapter activities to continue, as it has for many years now, we'll need to work together to plus-up our ranks.

We need to also re-double our efforts to recruit volunteers and report on our Local Veterans Assistance Program participation. We need more drivers for our Transportation Network. At the end of the day, without drivers we know many veterans realistically aren't going to get the care they have earned.

And we need more volunteers in hospitals, and more young people to apply for recently-expanded DAV scholarships. We have \$110,000 to award every year to incentivize youth volunteers.

We need help encouraging future leaders to participate. And you'll see a continued and strong effort from your national headquarters to get more participation this year.

I'll tell you, if you want a crystal ball view of what you might expect from the first Iraq War veteran to take on this role, my goal is that you will come to experience more of the same.

Expect a national headquarters that believes in your mission at the local and department level and is willing to provide the support and resources you need to achieve your goals.

Expect a DAV that is responsive to the needs of the veterans we serve. And expect a team at DAV national headquarters that understands the sacred nature of our mission and responds with the same passion and sense of justice that compels each of you in how you conduct DAV service in your community.

This spring we traveled to the Silicon Slopes of Lehi, Utah, to host a DAV Patriot Boot Camp event. The experience was incredible. We've hosted at the new headquarters a few times but it took getting away from the office for me to remove the distractions that prevented me from fully experiencing it.

And I gotta tell you, it was something similar to what I experienced in the military. I saw a group of incredible, dynamic people with shared goals working together to lift each other up.

From our hosts at MX, a financial technology innovator, to the alumni and mentors who supported the event, we experienced the energy and hope that comes from deserving people achieving breakthroughs.

And if my experiences weren't validation enough, we had a special friend joining us. Celebrity chef Robert Irvine, host of Food Network's Restaurant Impossible, once again was there to help veterans in partnership with DAV and his foundation. Though he is now an American citizen, he served in the Royal Navy and has incredible acumen as an entrepreneur. Here's what he had to say about DAV's newest program.

(Whereupon, a video of Mr. Irvine was viewed.)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS VANBOXEL: DAV will remain the strong and undeniable leader in helping veterans achieve justice so long as we all remember the purpose that draws us together. I want to thank all of you for the work you do to make your DAV the incredible organization it is today.

Keep up the great work you are doing and let us know if we can be of assistance. I thank you all. (Applause)

Commander, this concludes my report.

(Whereupon, executive director of national headquarters withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Thank you, Cody, for that outstanding report.

COMMANDER PARSETICH: May I have a motion to accept Mr. VanBoxel's report?

MR. PAUL HARMON: Mic 3.

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Mic 3.

MR. HARMON: Paul Harmon, Department of Louisiana, makes the motion to accept Cody's report.

COMMANDER PARSETICH: May I have a second.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: DAV Chapter 7, Lakewood Colorado.

COMMANDER PARSETICH: I need you up at a mic, Buddy.

MR. MICHAEL VALILA: Commander, Mike Valila, District 1, Massachusetts, I second that motion.

COMMANDER PARSETICH: I have a motion and a second. All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. The motion is carried. (Applause)

(Whereupon, executive director of national headquarters withdrew from the stage.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Once again, this year's Arthur H. and Mary E. Wilson Award for Top Venture Impacting Veterans will be awarded to a veteran-owned operation that did exceptionally well at the Veterans Entrepreneurship Success Summit last year in Washington, D.C.

The summit was hosted by Syracuse University's D'Aniello Institute for Veterans and Military Families.

The summit's purpose mirrors DAV's mission of empowering veterans to live high-quality lives with respect and dignity.

Sharing in that same vision, DAV is proud or we are very proud to support this competition by offering a financial award for the specialty category of Top Venture Impacting Veterans, which is made possible by a contribution and ongoing commitment from one of the organization's true friends Rich Fenstermacher, who was instrumental in helping to erect the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial.

And this award recognizes a disabled veteran who has taken on the challenge of starting their own business and has set an example for others. I'm happy to announce that this year's winner is Carrie Roeger of Semper Fi Bar and Grille in Woodstock, Georgia. Carrie.

(Whereupon, Ms. Roeger advanced to the stage, at which time an official photograph was taken.)

MR. LEWIS: Carrie Roeger is a Marine Corps veteran who owns and operates the Semper Fi Bar and Grille outside of Atlanta with her husband, Ralph, who is also a Marine veteran.

Filled with walls of military memorabilia and photos donated by locals, their restaurant fosters an atmosphere where veterans feel comfortable sharing stories of service with friends and family.

A member of DAV Chapter 6 in Marietta, Georgia, Carrie has taken on the new mission of franchising their restaurant under the name Rally Point Grille.

MRS. CARRIE ROEGER: I'd just like to say thank you so much for this award. It means a tremendous amount to me. I'm humbled and honored to be the recipient of this.

As we adventure on this journey called Rally Point Grille, we have the opportunity of impacting our communities through restaurants that create environments where veterans like you and I feel welcome and feel like we belong.

Not only that, we have the opportunity through our franchising model and our pathway to ownership model to be able to empower other veterans who want to be in the restaurant business and open these restaurants to help us complete this mission and spread this so that we have places all across the country where veterans feel like they fit in and they belong.

In order to do this, we're working on multiple campaigns to be able to raise funds so that we actually can do the funding for the restaurants to get started.

I can't – I don't have enough time to tell you how excited I am and how passionate we are about the mission that we have. I just truly want to say thank you for this contribution to help us to be able to pursue our dreams. We appreciate it so much. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Mrs. Roeger withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Congratulations, Carrie. National Employment Director Ryan Burgos will please join me on stage.

(Whereupon, Mr. Burgos joined the commander on stage.)COMMANDER PARSETICH: It is now my pleasure to recognize the Outstanding Local Veterans Employment Representative and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist recipients of 2023.

These awards recognize the commitment and compassion of two individuals who are dedicated to serving our nation's heroes. The recipients here today are outstanding examples of veterans helping veterans, and we are more than proud to honor them for their dedication and selfless service.

This year's award for Outstanding Local Veterans Employment Representative is presented to Army veteran Eric Brown. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Mr. Brown advanced to the stage, at which an official photograph was taken.)

MR. LEWIS: Eric Brown has been with the Texas Veterans Commission for almost three years. He has been recognized by his supervisors for his commitment, effectiveness as a mentor, and persistent effort to provide employment opportunities to veterans.

In addition to the high-quality service and referrals he gives to the veterans he works with, he has established strong relationships with local employers, regularly participates in job fairs, and speaks at local Chamber of Commerce events to educate employers about hiring veterans.

MR. ERIC BROWN: Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. It's a very humbling experience just to be able to go out and do all the things that we do for our veterans.

What I want to say is this, it's – once I was standing on the other side. As we transition I think we all remember those days. I did 25 years at a U.S. Army. For all those out there hoo-ah. (Hoo-ah) There you go.

And I will tell you like this, it's real easy and real simple to let the employers know that we have all our sheroes and heroes with all the skillsets that you all have to just bring and present to them and let them know that, hey, if you just give them opportunity we're going to be here and we're going to do what we do.

And all I want to do is say thank you. It's truly a humbling thing to just be able to be up here with you all. And you all keep doing what you all do because you brand it and you make it happen for our people. You all take care. Have a good one. Be blessed and enjoy your convention. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Mr. Brown withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Well done, Eric. And thank you for your commitment to your fellow veterans. The 2023 Outstanding Disabled Veteran's Outreach Program Specialist is a passionate advocate for Marine veterans. This year's recipient is Navy veteran Bradley Bean. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Mr. Bean advanced to the stage, at which time an official photograph was taken.)

MR. LEWIS: Bradley Bean has been with the Augusta Career Center of Maine's Department of Labor since 2020 and has been an integral member of the Maine Hire-A-Vet Campaign Planning Committee.

He also has worked diligently to build relationships through community military networking groups to educate veterans on what employment opportunities exist. His leadership and efforts have led to many veteran success stories.

Just in the past year, he provided individualized career services to 110 eligible veterans and assisted 48 veterans with finding gainful employment in Maine.

MR. BRADLEY BEAN: I'd like to start by thanking the commander and everyone from the DAV for this opportunity. It is certainly an honor to come down here from Maine. How many have visited Maine before? Anybody? All right.

So some things you may not know about Maine if you are not from the Northeast. Maine is the largest state in New England. And all five other states will fit into it. But we have a population of only 1.3 million. And in that population we are the oldest state in the country. And we have the highest level or highest percentage of veterans at 10 percent.

So two years ago when I took this job I kind of took it with kind of mixed emotions. The first thing is I didn't want to be a job app. I can show you how to download Indeed on your phone. (Laughter) But I did want to help the veterans.

And the last two years have certainly been educational in helping veterans because, as I said, Maine is a large state. And there is a lot of unorganized territories. And what I'm finding out is there is a lot of veterans that after their service went back up into the woods. And a lot of them haven't come back down yet.

But the part I love about my job is the outreach, the outreach to all the people that, to all the veterans that I can go to. I go to colleges, universities, county jails, state prison. I go anywhere the veterans are. And I'm able to serve them and meet them where they are and help them to overcome barriers to employment.

And the last thing I'll say is that this weekend has been educational for me. I knew of the DAV. But I must say this convention is, was an education in and of itself. And I want to say God bless the DAV, God bless our veterans, and God bless the United States of America. Thank you. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Mr. Bean withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Thank you, Brad, for all you do for veterans.

Each year DAV recognizes companies that go out of the way to recruit, hire, and invest in veterans. These companies are crucial in our mission to ensure that the veterans can lead fulfilling lives after their service.

So it is my pleasure to announce the DAV Patriot Employer of the Year Awards for three outstanding organizations.

The 2023 DAV Small Patriot Employer of the Year Award goes to a ZeroEyes, Incorporated, in Conshohocken, Pennsylvania. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome ZeroEyes CEO Mike Lahiff to the stage.

(Whereupon, Mr. Lahiff advanced to the stage, at which time an official photograph was taken.)

MR. LEWIS: ZeroEyes was founded in 2018 by a team of former Navy SEALs and technology experts. The company has since grown to become a nationally-recognized leader in the use of artificial intelligence to prevent mass shootings.

Its technology uses existing digital security cameras and sends potential threats through an operations center for verification. If the threat is verified, the appropriate first responder agencies are notified within seconds.

Of its 140 employees, an astounding 70 percent are veterans, transitioning service members, reservists, National Guard members, and military spouses.

ZeroEyes also partners with the Department of Defense SkillBridge program and various veterans organizations to recruit and retain the best veteran talent. That includes working with DAV's Philadelphia National Service Office to help veterans with their benefit claims.

Let's give another round of applause for CEO Mike Lahiff. (Applause)

MR. MIKE LAHIFF: Thank you. It's an honor to be here. I'm very proud of this award. As you heard from the introduction, I'm also a veteran. I did ten years active duty in the SEAL teams. When I left active duty in 2013 I fell on some hard times. It was tough. I didn't have my mission and I didn't have my team any more.

But then a few years later me and a couple of my brothers from the teams, we founded ZeroEyes. And we had humble beginnings, starting in my basement. And we had that new mission. And our mission is to save lives. And we do that to prevent and mitigate active shooters and mass shootings.

We do that by using artificial intelligence over security cameras to detect guns. And when a gun is detected we send out an alert to first responders and local security so they know what that person looks like, what type of weapon they have, and where they are located so we can focus on decreasing the response time.

As the years have gone on, we've been growing very fast. And so in the last five years we're now in 37 states. We're in hundreds of school districts and places of business. And we're also installed on military bases. (Applause)

We have over 150 employees now. Thank you. We have over 150 employees now and roughly 80 percent of them are veterans, many disabled vets. And the services that are provided here from the DAV is instrumental to them as they take their next steps.

And we love it that they have a place and a new mission at ZeroEyes. So thank you. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Mr. Lahiff withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Thank you, Mike, for all that you and your company do to support veterans and to make our communities much safer.

Our 2023 DAV Midsize Patriot Employer of the Year goes to California-based IT infrastructures and services company NTT Global Data Centers Americas. Please welcome to the stage Dr. Ben Stewart, senior vice-president of operations.

(Whereupon, Dr. Stewart advanced to the stage, at which time an official photograph was taken.)

MR. LEWIS: NTT is an industry leader in networks, data centers, cloud, security and managed services, as well as an innovator in private 5G. The company serves 65 percent of the Fortune Global 500 and more than 75 percent of the Fortune Global 100. It also works closely with leading sports organizations, including INDYCAR and the Tour de France.

Of its 581 employees, nearly 25 percent are veterans. In an effort to retain and attract even more veterans, the company has a robust Veterans Employee Resource Group that provides support, mentorship, and professional development. It has also utilized DAV job fairs and partners with numerous veterans initiatives to raise money and awareness for the veteran community.

We are grateful for NTT's efforts and thank Dr. Stewart for being here.

DR. BEN STEWART: Well, thank you very much. I mean thank you from myself, thank you from NTT, and thank you from our veteran employees. You know hiring a veteran, it's a "feel-good" moment. You know giving back to those who have given us so much, shepherding them from military service to industry, helping them retain their standard of living, hopefully improve it for themselves and their families. But that's just the icing on the cake.

These guys are good. You look at their teamwork, their leadership, their commitment. You take a look at – they run to a crisis. They sink their teeth into a problem and they don't get go until they solve it. They are just so good.

When you talk diversity, equity, inclusion, you're talking about a veteran. NTT has seen some of its best corporate years, even through the COVID period. And we can directly tie that performance back to our veterans. They're just terrific.

The biggest tool kit we have in our box to hire veterans are our veterans. And then when we hire the veterans and they get together in an employee resource group, and they put together benefits or proposed benefits and programs to help us retain those veterans.

So I thank you, NTT thanks you, but mostly this is direct recognition of our veterans and the wonderful things they do for us. So, again, thank you very much for this recognition. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Dr. Stewart withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Don't we have some great employers here? (Applause) I mean, that's awesome.

The 2023 DAV Large Patriot Employer of the Year is a company that, has very likely touched all of your lives with at least one of its popular brands.

Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Kimberly-Clark Corporation's Bryson Dumas, Training for Excellence Leader, to accept the DAV Large Employer of the Year Award. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Mr. Dumas advanced to the stage, at which time an official photograph was taken.)

MR. LEWIS: Founded in 1872, the Kimberly-Clark Corporation is known for brands like Huggies, Kleenex, and Cottonelle, to name just a few. The company employs more than 45,000 people worldwide and sells products in more than 175 countries.

Dedicated to providing "better care for a better world," Kimberly-Clark understands the immense value veterans bring to mission-driven work.

The company has a robust employee resource group for veterans and their supporters called Service Alliance Uniting Together, or SALUTE. With more than 825 members across the United States, SALUTE aims to improve the lives of veterans, strengthen veteran hiring and retention efforts, honor military service, provide benefits education and create opportunities for community service.

In 2019, SALUTE sites raised more than \$63,000 in support of veterans' causes. How about another round of applause for Mr. Dumas and the entire Kimberly-Clark team. (Applause)

MR. BRYSON DUMAS: Thank you. Thank you for recognizing Kimberly-Clark for the work we've done to support fellow veterans in our communities and or workplace. We're so proud of the relationship we formed with the DAV, including the golf outing we executed by our Chester Facility where we raised over \$2,700 and a similar event in Owensboro, Kentucky, where we raised more than \$7,000 in one day and donated it to the DAV. (Applause) Thank you.

Additionally, we're making strides on multiple fronts to attract and hire more veterans. We're already witnessing an uptick in veteran hiring through the second quarter and expect that trend to continue through 2023. Our H-R, recruiting and senior leadership teams are aligned with the vision of purposefully targeting veterans through our hiring efforts.

Programs are now in place that include an industry-leading military leave policy for guards and reservists, external communications targeting veterans via our social media and corporate web pages and, most recently, inclusion into the U.S. Army Pays Program.

We look forward to a continued partnership with the DAV and, most importantly, supporting veterans in communities across this great nation of ours. Thank you. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Mr. Dumas withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Through our substantial outreach and collaboration with companies who participate in career fairs every year DAV receives numerous submissions to the Patriot Employer program.

We ask anyone who knows a company that makes hiring veterans a priority to nominate them or encourage them to nominate themselves, at our PatriotEmployers.org site.

In addition to our top award recipients, we've added categories for additional ventures who excelled in specific categories, including: hiring and recruiting; career building and retention; excellence in community support.

The names of these outstanding employers will be submitted for the record. Also, they and all who are recognized through PatriotEmployers.org will receive digital badges to promote their excellence in hiring our nation's heroes.

Please give these and all employers who support our community one more round of applause, if you would. (Applause)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: In 2007, DAV created the Local Veterans Assistance Program, or, as we know it, L-VAP, providing volunteers with a seemingly unlimited number of opportunities to serve while receiving the same recognition and incentives as those available to traditional VA and Transportation Network volunteers.

Under L-VAP the opportunities to assist veterans and their families are formed by the needs of local veterans. From yard clean-up and landscaping to serving as companions for veterans in long-term care facilities and hospice units, volunteers perform any task that may help improve a veteran's life.

I'll ask National Voluntary Services Director John Kleindienst and National Headquarters Executive Director Cody VanBoxel to join me on the stage, please.

(Whereupon, Mr. Kleindienst and Mr. VanBoxel joined the commander on the stage.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Ladies and gentlemen, it is my extreme pleasure to recognize our top DAV state-level departments in the area of L-VAP service, starting with Division 1.

MR. LEWIS: The Division 1 Local Veterans Assistance Program recipient is the Department of Virginia, (Applause) Past Department Commander Francis Mitchell, with 229,929 hours. Here to accept the award is Assistant Department Adjutant Lisa Gregory. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Assistant Adjutant Gregory advanced to receive the Commander's Award, at which time an official photograph was taken, after which Assistant Adjutant Gregory withdrew from the stage.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: All right. For Division 2.

MR. LEWIS: The Division 2 Local Veterans Assistance Program Winner is the Department of South Carolina, Past Department Commander Larry Long, with 307,364 hours. (Applause) Here to accept the award is Department Adjutant Joyce Roberts. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Adjutant Roberts advanced to receive the Commander's Award, at which time an official photograph was taken, then Adjutant Roberts withdrew from the stage.)

MR. LEWIS: The Division 3 Local Veterans Assistance Program winner is the Department of Wisconsin, Department Commander Rob Hilliard, with 79,252 hours. Here to receive the award is Department Adjutant Matt Kampainen. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Adjutant Kampainen advanced to receive the Commander's Award, at which time an official photograph was taken, after which Adjutant Kampainen withdrew from the stage.)

MR. LEWIS: The Division 4 Local Veterans Assistance Program winner is the Department of Iowa, Past Department Commander David Thornburg, Jr., with 60,857 hours. Here to bring home the award is Department Adjutant Chris Salladay. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Adjutant Salladay advanced to receive the Commander's Award, at which time an official photograph was taken, then Adjutant Salladay withdrew from the stage.)

MR. LEWIS: The Division 5 Local Veterans Assistance Program winner is the Department of South Dakota, Past Department Commander Dan Francis, with 38,806 hours. Here to receive the award is Department Adjutant Martin Pennock. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Adjutant Pennock advanced to receive the Commander's Award, at which time an official photograph was taken, then Adjutant Pennock withdrew from the stage, along with Mr. Kleindienst and Mr. VanBoxel, and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: You know, I cannot say enough to express the gratitude of our organization for all of the incredible volunteers in VA hospitals, our Transportation Network drivers, and

participants in the Local Veterans Assistance Program for their heartfelt service to the veterans and their families. What do you say, huh? (Applause)

And I want to thank you for giving of your time and energy to help DAV keep our promise to the men and women who have served our great nation. How about having all of our volunteer drivers, LACs and HSCs stand up, would you please, and be recognized?

(Whereupon, the volunteers stood and were recognized with a round of applause.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Thank you all.

For our next order of business I'll be joined by Washington, D.C., Headquarters Executive Director Randy Reese and National Legislative Director Joy Ilem to the stage for our next important presentation.

(Whereupon, Mr. Reese and Ms. Ilem advanced to the stage.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: DAV continues to partner with thousands of passionate VA employees nationwide to ensure that the promises to our men and women who have served are kept. Together, we ensure that the veterans get the resources that they need and the assistance that they have earned.

We stand together to improve the delivery of services wherever they are needed for the benefit of all veterans.

And I am pleased to present the National Commander's Outstanding VA Employee of the Year award to three remarkable VA staff members. These awards will recognize their leadership, compassion, and dedication to supporting all our ill and injured veterans who have given so much for our nation.

The 2023 Outstanding Veterans Health Administration Employee of the Year is Rhonda Sanford.

(Applause)

(Whereupon, Mrs. Sanford advanced to the podium, at which time an official photograph was taken.)

MR. LEWIS: Mrs. Sanford is a veterans' justice outreach coordinator with the Veterans Treatment Court at the Coatesville VA Medical Center. She has been a social worker at the medical center for over 15 years. Currently, she is their Veterans Justice Outreach Social worker and coordinates services for veterans, provides clinical support, referrals, and education to veterans at the Montgomery County Correctional Facility in Pennsylvania.

In 2022, Mrs. Sanford was pivotal in establishing Veterans Response Teams with local law enforcement. She provided crisis intervention training for veteran peer police officers to de-escalate and link veterans to clinical services rather than the criminal justice system. In the first 10 months of the program, nearly three dozen veterans were linked to the appropriate VA and community-based veterans' services.

MRS. RHONDA SANFORD: Wow. There is a lot of you out here. (Laughter) I made it across the stage without tripping so that's a good thing. Let's see if I can remember everything I was going to say.

First of all, from the bottom of my heart, this is the hugest honor to represent all the VA employees across the nation. There are so many VA employees who do great work and deserve this award, so to be representing them is a huge honor.

And to serve all of you is a huge honor, as well. It's a privilege to serve with my colleagues at the Coatesville VA. None of this work can be done alone, as we all know. And the colleagues that work every day for veterans, they are amazing. So if you ever get a chance to come to Coatesville, stop by and say hi.

As a VJO, a Veterans Justice Outreach Social Worker, I cover a county named Montgomery County in Pennsylvania. And I support the Veterans' Treatment Court and the court system, in general, as well as provide referrals for veterans who may be ready for release from jail. I'm incredibly proud of that work. Getting veterans who are the most vulnerable into care where they can have a better quality of life is an amazing feeling.

The other program that I'm incredibly proud of is fairly new in Montgomery County. It's a veterans' response team. And it's made up of 17-plus agencies in the community as well as law enforcement who are also veterans. And our goal is to keep veterans out of the criminal justice system by providing resources early-on in a crisis.

There are hundreds of VJOs and re-entry staff across the United States, at every VA. And if you ever, if you know a veteran who may be in the justice system and needs some support, please reach out to the VJO at your local facility.

If you have a veteran who is involved in or is ready for release from a state facility, there are re-entry staff, as well, who can support that veteran in getting care once they are released.

Again, thank you so much. I probably forgot a lot of the things that I should have said but thank you so much for the honor. I really appreciate it. Have a great day. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Mrs. Sanford and Ms. Ilem withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in congratulating the 2023 Outstanding Veterans Benefit Administration Employee of the Year, Christopher Gaylord. (Applause)
Unfortunately, Mr. Gaylord couldn't make it to Atlantic City to be with us today, but nonetheless we are recognizing him for his tireless efforts as a program support assistant at the VA Regional Office in North Little Rock, Arkansas.

Mr. Gaylord has been a dedicated employee of the Veterans Benefits Administration for more than 14 years and has shown compassion when serving his fellow veterans.

An Army veteran himself, he continues to ensure daily operations at the VA Regional Office run smoothly despite the pandemic. And he prevented a facility issue that could have devastated service at the office.

He has maintained an open and friendly relationship with the DAV national service office and all other VSOs at the office. His spirit of cooperation and leadership have contributed significantly to continuously processing veterans' claims and benefits. He is a prime example of selfless service to his fellow veterans. Let's give him a round of applause. (Applause)

Now, I ask DAV National Service Director Jim Marszalek to the stage for our next important presentations. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Mr. Marszalek joined the others on the stage.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Ensuring our fallen are honored and their survivors are supported during their grief is a sacred job. Our next honoree has enabled many to say goodbye in their own words. Please welcome to the stage the 2023 VA National Cemetery Administration Employee of the Year Nathan Hooker. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Mr. Hooker advanced to receive the Commander's Award, at which time an official photograph was taken.)

MR. LEWIS: Mr. Hooker is honored for going above and beyond as a Cemetery Representative for the National Cemetery Administration at Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Illinois.

Mr. Hooker is also an Illinois Army National Guard staff sergeant, part-time civilian police officer, and funeral honor guard presenter. He has led the planning of hundreds of funeral services and ensured an honorable and respectable burial of the veteran and their family and friends.

Mr. Hooker also routinely volunteers for events and conducts outreach to veterans and their families to inform them about their benefits.

In July 2021, Mr. Hooker sprang into action when a widow visiting her husband's grave had collapsed and stopped breathing. Upon arrival he quickly assessed the situation and performed CPR until she regained consciousness and paramedics arrived. Thanks to his quick decision-making everything turned out okay. We are grateful for his outstanding efforts and dedication.

MR. NATHAN HOOKER: Thank you, commander. Thank you for the award. What an honor it is to be here in Atlantic City and to be among all you honorable veterans out here.

Working for the NCA, our main priority is to care for our veterans and their loved ones in their final resting place. We get one chance to do that and we do it well. If you ever visited a national cemetery, you know what I'm talking about.

And that care doesn't stop after the services. We do that each and every day with the visitors and the families that come out there. And for one lady that was somebody we took care of that day.

As many of you know, Army training, military training, it stays with you forever. It doesn't go away. It keeps you cool, calm, and collected in stressful situations. All the tactics you learned, it doesn't go away, it sticks with you forever.

And that day myself and a couple other veterans, that training kicked in. We reverted back to that training and we were able to conduct CPR and bring that lady back. And what a remarkable feeling that is. And that military training, it's there with you forever.

So what an honor it is to be here today. If you ever need to, come out and visit a national cemetery. We're always here for you and your families forever. Again, thank you. It's an honor to be here. And enjoy the rest of your day. Thank you. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Mr. Marszalek, Mr. Reese, and Mr. Hooker withdrew from the stage and the commander returned to the podium amid a round of applause.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Thank you, Nathan. And thank you for all of the fliers you have been sending me through the mail. I guess I'm getting closer. (Laughter)

You know, DAV's strength is fostered by the unyielding efforts of nearly 2,000 members dedicated to showcasing our organization to veterans in order to recruit them into the organization.

Without them, DAV would be at a loss to maintain our strong voice with lawmakers and to remain at the pinnacle of excellence as our nation's premier veterans group.

As with every other aspect of the way we conduct DAV business, technology and changing demographics place an added stress on our dedicated recruiters in order to stay ahead of the curve.

It's important that we take time to honor their dedication towards ensuring DAV lives on for the future generations of veterans who will also need our help.

I would like to invite Executive Director Cody VanBoxel and National Membership Director Doug Wells to the stage as we recognize our top division winners in recruiting for 2022 and 2023.

(Whereupon, Mr. VanBoxel and Mr. Wells joined the commander on the stage.)

MR. LEWIS: The Division 1 winner is the DAV Department of New York. Please give a round of applause for Past Department Commander Scott Stephenson. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Past Department Commander Stephenson advanced to the stage to receive the Commander's Award, at which time an official photograph was taken, after which he withdrew from the stage.)

MR. LEWIS: The Division 2 winner is the DAV Department of Missouri. Please give a warm welcome to Past Department Commander David Gerke. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Past Department Commander Gerke advanced to the stage to receive the Commander's Award, at which time an official photograph was taken, after which he withdrew from the stage.)

MR. LEWIS: The Division 3 winner is the DAV Department of Puerto Rico. Please give a warm welcome to Department Commander Delvis Collazo Rivera. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Department Commander Rivera advanced to the stage to receive the Commander's Award, at which time an official photograph was taken, after which he withdrew from the stage.)

MR. LEWIS: The Division 4 winner is the DAV Department of Connecticut. Please give a warm welcome to Past Department Commander Juliet Taylor. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Past Department Commander Taylor advanced to the stage to receive the Commander's Award, at which time an official photograph was taken, after which she withdrew from the stage.)

MR. LEWIS: The Division 5 winner is the DAV Department of Wyoming. Please give a warm welcome to Department Adjutant Floyd Watson. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Department Adjutant Watson advanced to the stage to receive the Commander's Award, at which time an official photograph was taken.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Don't go anywhere, Floyd. (Laughter) Stay right up here with us because the next award is the General Jonathan M. Wainwright Award. And it is presented to the Department that closes the year with the largest percent of increase in total new members. And, wouldn't you know it, the winner is DAV Department of Wyoming. And here is Department Adjutant Floyd Watson, once again. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Department Adjutant Watson received the Commander's Award, at which time an official photograph was taken.)

MR. LEWIS: The General Jonathan M. Wainwright Award is named after a past DAV national commander and Medal of Honor recipient who served with distinction as the commander of allied forces in the Philippines at the time of their surrender to Japan in World War II.

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Now our founder's award, the Judge Robert S. Marx Award is presented to the Department that completes the year with the highest percentage increase of fully-paid life members over the goal. This year's winner is the Department of South Dakota. Please welcome Past Department Commander Dan Francis. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Past Department Commander Francis received the Commander's Award, at which time an official photograph was taken, after which he withdrew from the podium.)

MR. LEWIS: The Judge Robert S. Marx Award is named after DAV's founder. Marx served in the Army in World War I. He earned the Distinguished Service Cross and was injured in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive in 1918. He later became a superior court judge and law professor.

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Perhaps no veterans know more about the value of DAV when it comes to those who have been assisted by our world-class service officers. So it should come as no surprise to learn that these same veterans are more likely to join as members as a result of the no-cost assistance that they have already received.

So in addition to the myriad of ways that our NSOs strengthen, they are also in the unique position to provide a testimonial about the life-changing value of our organization. Still, the advantage of their position only goes so far. It still takes a skilled and driven communicator to convert these new allies into lifetime DAV members.

Our next award recognizes those men and women who go above and beyond to ensure the strength of DAV by bringing in new members into our ranks. And I'm so honored to recognize the top recruiter from our NSO corps who, remarkably, recruited 349 veterans to join our ranks. (Applause)

Ladies and gentlemen, please provide a warm round of applause for Hank Meyers of the Wyoming National Service Office. (Applause)

(Whereupon, NSO Myers advanced to receive the Commander's Award, at which time an official photograph was taken, after which he withdrew from the stage.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Our top recruiting member of the year is Michael Crowe from DAV Chapter 8 in Mesa, Arizona. He recruited 185 new members. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Mr. Crowe advanced to receive the Commander's Award, at which time an official photograph was taken, after which he withdrew from the stage.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Since 1994, DAV has recognized the success of its members who have signed 100 or more new members for three consecutive membership years with a gold lapel pin and by entering their names into the Membership Recruiters Hall of Fame.

This year's inductee is Daniel Knabe who recruited a total of 122 new members. Boy did I butcher your name, Dan. Forgive me. (Applause) Knabe. Thank you. Knabe. Okay, Daniel Knabe.

(Whereupon, Mr. Knabe advanced to the stage to receive his pin, at which time an official photograph was taken, then he, along with Mr. VanBoxel and Mr. Wells, withdrew from the stage.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: As always, thank you to all of our recruiters for another incredible year. (Applause)

All right, now to try and lighten things up. No, I'm just kidding. (Laughter) It's now my privilege to introduce someone who has dedicated his post-service career to providing the fullest possible accounting of our missing personnel to their families and the nation.

A retired Major General with 34 years of service in the Air Force, Kelly McKeague serves as the Director of Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, or the D-P-A-A. While he has been in his current position since 2017, this was not his first position within the agency.

General McKeague served as the first-ever Deputy Director of the D-P-A-A and, before that, as Commander of the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii.

He commissioned into the Air Force commission in 1981, after graduating from Georgia Institute of Technology, and served as a civil engineering officer until his retirement in 2015.

Please join me in welcoming to the stage retired Air Force Major General Kelly McKeague. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and retired Major General McKeague advanced to the podium.)

MAJOR GENERAL KELLY MCKEAGUE: National Commander Parsetich, National Adjutant Jesinoski, distinguished DAV members, good morning to each of you.

(Response of "Good morning.")

MAJOR GENERAL MCKEAGUE: Thank you for the opportunity to, again, participate in your national convention. And, most importantly, thank you for steadfastly championing the POW/MIA mission. I love what Randy Reese said, "You are the bite."

DAV's priority to keep our promise, the promise made to our nation's veterans mirrors DPAA's mission which is fulfilling our nation's promise. You help veterans in extraordinary ways. We work to bring unreturned veterans home.

DPAA's mission involves historical research, archaeological excavations and forensic identifications to find and repatriate Americans missing from past wars. Beyond being a national commitment, our mission is a sacred obligation because these are your comrades in arms who made the last full measure of devotion. And it's a moral imperative because they did so for the nation we all love.

DPAA's global mission takes us all over the world to wherever American's went missing in battle. And it serves Gold Star families who have had to generationally bear a void in heart and mind in their quest for answers.

Ladies and gentlemen, the numbers of MIAs are staggering, even with 38,000 that we estimate to be recoverable. These numbers, together with the passage of time, are the enemies we battle today. So DPAA must balance our efforts across all major wars.

We are fortunate that 45 countries recognize, cooperate, and collaborate with the United States on this humanitarian work. Regrettably, there is one exception: North Korea. This very day, DPAA teams are deployed to Belgium, Croatia, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, South Korea, Palau, Guam and the Solomon Islands.

And here at home, the POW/MIA issue still generates interest and visibility in the halls of Congress and in American communities throughout the country. That's due in no small part to committed veterans like yourselves – the bite.

While the work is complex and difficult, the number of MIAs are daunting. They are just much more than figures. In fact, most of all the fallen cannot be found in history books or documentaries, and their own acts of valor and sacrifice are lost to time.

However, each one has a unique story with memories that transcend generations. Memories that their families still carry and treasure. To give you a sense of why this mission matters, I will share three such stories of an MIA who is now home.

This is Navy Commander Frederick Schrader. Flying off the U.S.S. Hornet in a Hellcat, he was shot down during the Battle of Formosa in October 1944. A set of remains buried by the Japanese Army was unidentifiable after the war and moved to the National Cemetery, the VA National Cemetery, in Honolulu.

Through the dogged efforts of Matthew Robbins, a private researcher whose grandfather also served aboard the Hornet, a connection was made to the Unknown who we disinterred and identified last September. Commander Schrader left behind his wife, Lucille, and two daughters, four-year old Judith and two-year-old Barbara.

At her dad's full military honors burial in April, that you see here, was a 99-year old former Chief Petty Officer Richard Miralles, who served under Commander Schrader. Also, there, as you see in this picture, was Barbara, his youngest daughter, who is now 80 years old.

You might not be able to see in the picture but next to her left arm is a teddy bear. The teddy bear bears Naval Aviator wings. Her dad bought her and her sister each a teddy bear, this very same teddy bear, before he went off to war as a Christmas gift for them later in that year.

Here is what Barbara said, and I quote, "I used to have dreams as a child that my teddy would become a real bear and we would go on adventures to try to find my dad." That is Commander Frederick Schrader, home at last. (Applause)

Also buried as an Unknown at that same Honolulu national cemetery was Corporal Luther Story who enlisted in the Army at the age of 16 because his mother fudged his enlistment papers.

Corporal Story was killed in a fierce battle and posthumously awarded – at the age of 19 – the Medal of Honor. When you read his citation you cannot help but be struck and amazed that the gallantry and valor exhibited on that battlefield was done by a 19-year old soldier from a tiny town of Americas, Georgia.

Among his gallant actions, he selflessly repelled multiple attacks while wounded and singularly covered the withdrawal of his unit.

President Biden and South Korean President Yoon jointly announced the identification of Corporal Story during the latter's April visit to the United States, in the 70th anniversary of the Armistice signing, bringing an end to hostilities from the Korean War.

The Bidens and the Yoons met with the corporal's niece, Judy, at the Korean War Veterans Memorial. Her mother was the older sister of Corporal Story. And Judy said that her uncle was the youngest child of sharecroppers who worked the land that was owned by President Carter's father.

When told of our identification of Corporal Story, President Carter, who is in hospice care, was very excited to know that a hero was coming home.

This is what Judy said. "In my family we always believed that he would never be found. But now I don't have to worry about him anymore. He's home."

Corporal Story was buried on Memorial Day at Andersonville National Cemetery in Georgia. And over one thousand people came from throughout the state and region to pay their respects.

Lastly, a passenger aboard a Chinook helicopter that crashed in inclement weather during the Vietnam War was Army Staff Sergeant Sanford Finger who was one of six soldiers missing for 51 years.

A DPAA underwater recovery found his remains in 2021 and he was later identified last August. Two months ago he was laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery. I love this photo. And let me tell you about this photo.

It's of his family and friends who attended. And within this photo are two incredible stories. The woman in the wheelchair that you see there recounted how they met Staff Sergeant Finger when he was stationed at Fort Bragg and returned their lost dog to their home, after which he became a friend and mentor to her three sons and the boys in the neighborhood.

These boys are now in their 50s and 60s but they drove from Texas, Georgia, and North Carolina to honor their friend, their mentor, Staff Sergeant Finger.

Marissa, the daughter of Staff Sergeant Finger's last sibling, used "23 and Me" and she found that she was related to the man behind the lady in the wheelchair. Who is that man? Staff Sergeant Finger's

son who was put up for adoption and not known by his father that he had a son. So being at the funeral for the very first time he was with his biological father and you can imagine what incredible joy that was for him.

Distinguished veterans, members of the DAV and Auxiliary, these are just three examples of many why this sacred mission matters and how DAV advocacy enables us to provide MIA families with answers they have long sought. The fact that the United States of America vigorously searches for, finds and accounts for our MIAs is the right thing to do.

I'll leave you with a powerful point President Regan made in his 1982 Memorial Day speech at Arlington. I quote:

"If words cannot repay the debt we owe them, surely our actions must strive to keep faith with them and with the vision that led them to battle and to final sacrifice."

The actions DPAA undertakes daily around the world help to repay those debts. And in keeping the promise to those veterans who have yet to return home, DAV is also repaying those debts.

On the iconic black and white POW/MIA flag are the words "You Are Not Forgotten." I can assure you that the Department of Defense has not forgotten. And thank you to DAV for also not forgetting.

In keeping your promise to America's veterans you also help fulfill the promise made to them and their families.

May God bless our MIAs and their families. And may He shed his grace upon each of you, the DAV, and our great country.

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished DAV veterans, I salute you. (Standing Ovation)

I thank your national commander because in December he and a national delegation, as well as state department leaders in Hawaii, visited our forensic identification laboratory in Honolulu. That, to me, was an example of DAV's staunch commitment to this noble mission. And as I told him, and as I told Barry, our doors are always open to you should you ever find yourself in Honolulu or in Omaha, Nebraska. God bless you all.

I will be followed by my good friend, I found out this morning, a fellow Hawaiian, the Secretary of the American Battle Monuments Commission, my friend, Charles Djou. Commander, thank you, again. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the general withdrew from the stage and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Thank you, general. And just as the general underscored, our great nation is committed to ensuring a full accounting for those taken prisoner or lost in war.

And for those who made the ultimate sacrifice and were interred on the battlefields around the globe, one agency is there to honor their service and achievements: the American Battle Monuments Commission. And I now have the privilege of introducing to you the secretary of the A-B-M-C, Charles Djou.

Secretary Djou is a 20-year Army Veteran who served in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in 2011 and 2012, in addition to his many other assignments.

Secretary Djou also represented Hawaii's first congressional district as a member of Congress, serving on the House Armed Service Committee, and the House Budget Committees. He has been an active civic leader in the Hawaii State House of Representatives and Honolulu City Council, and has served as an educator at both the University of Hawaii and Hawaii Pacific University.

Since his appointment, Secretary Djou has worked to set the agency on the path for a new century of service, focused on the seamless integration of the A-B-M-C's core mission with emerging technology and focused engagement.

Ladies and gentlemen, American Battle Monuments Commission Secretary Charles Djou.

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and Secretary Djou advanced to the podium.)

THE HONORABLE CHARLES DJOU: Ladies and gentlemen of the DAV, thank you very, very much for a few minutes of your time and for inviting me here today. Commander, thank you very much for those kind words.

It is also a delight for me to have followed Director McKeague, the director of the DPAA, the ABMC's sister agency, and an agency the American Battle Monuments Commission is so very proud to work with. And as a side note for myself, personally, an absolute delight that we have two Hawaii folk running the DPAA and the ABMC.

Ladies and gentlemen, the ABMC, the American Battle Monuments Commission, is delighted and honored to be with all of you here at the DAV today. This year, 2023, is the 100th anniversary of the ABMC.

My agency runs 26 cemeteries, 32 memorials across 17 countries around the world. We have the humble and sacred mission of ensuring the memory of the service and sacrifice of America's armed services around the world.

The ABMC, since 1923, in the wake of the First World War, has taken care of, managed and overseen America's overseas cemeteries and battlefield memorials.

The ABMC, from my vantage point as the agency secretary, we show the very best and the very finest of what the United States of America is all about. Now, I know, I know the United States, we have not necessarily always been 100 percent perfect. But I also know that America at its very best is a good country with good people. And you can see that in our ABMC sites.

Our ABMC sites are proof-positive that when the United States of America sends its young people abroad, when we send our young to go to fight and, yes, sometimes make the ultimate sacrifice, the United States of America, we do not send our young for plunder. We do not send them for conquest. And we most certainly do not send our best, brightest and finest to enslave another people.

No, when the United States sends its young abroad we send them for words, the words freedom, liberty, democracy. And when the job is done, the United States goes home. All that America asks for in return for our service and our sacrifice are small plots of land to bury our dead.

Those small plots of land from France to the Philippines, from Belgium to Tunisia, are the responsibility of the American Battle Monuments Commission. My agency manages, runs, and oversees these sites and these battlefields around the world.

Now, ladies and gentlemen of the DAV, I know there are many out there who still question, who wonder, who ponder, is this still relevant. Does this have any meaning here today? In this world, in the 21st Century, does this really mean anything?

I say to all who question, to all who doubt, to all who wonder, I say come. Come to our American cemeteries around the world. Come and see those white marble crosses and Stars of David. Come walk among the hallowed grounds around the world that the American Battle Monuments Commission manages. Come and see what American service and sacrifice really, truly means.

And when you come to our sites around the globe you can come and understand the true meaning of American service. And, ladies and gentlemen, to all those who question and wonder and doubt, I respond to all of you that the world's most powerful weapon system is not a Russian Hind E attack helicopter. It is not a Chinese Shandong aircraft carrier. It is most certainly not a Wagner Group mercenary.

No, the world's most powerful weapon system has been, is today, and will, forever be, a free people willing to fight for freedom. And these sites you see on the screen, at Brittany, at (Inaudible), at the Normandy Landing Fields, in Manila and Mexico City, and the Netherlands, and Tunisia and Belgian and France and in Italy remind us.

They are proof positive of the power of American service and sacrifice and, yes, a reminder to our communities, to our people, and to humanity of the goodness of the American soul.

Ladies and gentlemen of DAV, I invite you, come. Come visit our sites around the world. If you are unable to visit, I invite you to visit our website at ABMC.gov. And I invite you to remind your friends, your family, your community, your fellow Americans and this world about the true magnificence of our country, our people, our service members.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much for giving me a few minutes of your time. I appreciate you allowing me to speak about the hundredth anniversary of the ABMC. May the Good Lord bless each and every one of you, the DAV, and the United States of America. Thank you. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Secretary Djou withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Thank you, Secretary Djou, for your wonderful report. I would now like to call on the Board of Directors' Treasurer Floyd Watson for his report.

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and the Board of Directors treasurer advanced to the podium.)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS TREASURER FLOYD WATSON: National Commander Parsetich, fellow members of the National Executive Committee, DAV members and guests, good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

BOARD OF DIRECTORS TREASURER WATSON: Let me begin by recognizing those with whom I've served on the Board of Directors: Chairman Andrew Marshall of Florida; Vice-Chairman Nancy Espinosa, Utah; Secretary and National Adjutant Barry Jesinoski, Kentucky; Director and NEC Twentieth District, Charles W. Edwards, Sr., of Texas; Director and NEC Eighteenth District Director William "Bill" Dolan, Nevada; Director and NEC Seventh District, Frank Chicollo of Florida.

It is my honor and privilege to present a report on the financial affairs of our organization for the six-month period ending June 30th, 2023. DAV's total fundraising support through that date was \$55 million. Contributions were in excess of \$46 million; and bequests were just over \$8 million.

Under the Department Fundraising Program payouts to departments in December 2022 and June 2023 totaled just about \$3 million. Since the program began in 1994, more than \$116 million have been distributed to departments for their service programs.

The Board would like to thank all of our departments for their continued participation in these programs, and especially our members for their generosity.

As of June 2023, DAV has received a total support and revenue from all sources of roughly \$165 million. The total support and revenue is greatly affected by the securities market performance rebound from its steep marked decline experienced in 2022.

Also through June 2023, DAV had a total expenditures of \$145 million, of which almost \$121 million were for service programs, which is 83 percent of total expenses.

Over the same period, fundraising expenditures were roughly \$19 million, comparable to 2022.

Administrative outlays were a little less than \$5 million.

As of June 30th, 2023, the market value of our general fund long-term investment portfolio is roughly \$453 million.

DAV's net assets or net worth increased from slightly more than \$399 million at this time last year to in excess of \$439 million, a \$40 million increase, or 10 percent.

On June 30th, 2023, the Life Membership Fund Reserve was a little under \$50 million.

Commander, it is my privilege to present DAV's proposed 2024 Annual Budget for ratification by the Convention.

At the May 31st, 2023, meeting of the Board of Directors, the Board presented the 2024 proposed budget. The budget was unanimously approved at that time, a copy of which was provided to all Convention attendees at registration.

I would like to thank National Adjutant Barry Jesinoski and his staff for all their hard work which made this report possible. Let me thank you, Commander Parsetich, for the support I received in my role as the Board of Directors' treasurer. It has been a pleasure and a privilege to hold this position.

Commander, this concludes my report to the National Convention, a report I feel honored to offer to our delegates. I thank you and move for the adoption of my report and approval of the proposed 2024 annual budget. Thank you. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the treasurer withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Thank you, Floyd. All right, I have a motion to accept the report. May I have a second.

MR. S. WAYNE WALKER: Mic 3.

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Mic 3.

MR. WALKER: Wayne Walker, Department of Tennessee, Chapter 25, so moves.

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Okay, I have a motion and a second to accept the Board of Directors' financial report. All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. Carried.

(Whereupon, the treasurer withdrew from the podium.)

I would like to call on Chairman Rob Reynolds for the report of the Committee on Constitution and Bylaws. This will be the first reading of the proposed Bylaw changes.

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and Convention Chairman and Past National Commander Robert Reynolds advanced to the podium.)

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER ROBERT REYNOLDS: Comrade Commander and delegates. The National Convention Committee on Constitution and Bylaws was called to order on August 5th, 2023, by the Committee Advisors, Ed Hartman and Rob Reynolds.

The first order of business was the election of a Convention Committee chairman and secretary. Rob Reynolds was elected as chairman and Thomas Ayala was elected as secretary.

The Committee then proceeded to review the resolutions submitted. And I now will report to you the resolutions recommended for adoption by this national convention. For the purposes of saving time I will read only the number and the purpose of the resolution.

Resolution Number 521, amend Article XI, Section 11.9, Paragraph 2 of the Bylaws to increase life membership dues from \$300 to \$325 effective January 1st, 2024, in order to maintain the viability of the Life Membership Fund, which provides necessary funding to DAV entities to provide service programs. Free membership will still be offered to those eligible over the age of 80.

Resolution Number 522, amend Article VIII, Section 8.3, Paragraph 3 of the Bylaws to allow for the electronic submission of department officer reports.

Resolution Number 523, amend Article IX, Section 9.2, Paragraph 3 of the Bylaws to allow for the electronic submission of chapter officer reports.

Resolution Number 524, amend Article VIII, Section 8.5, Paragraph 2 of the Bylaws to include the reference to Article VI, Section 6.4, Paragraph 8 in department Bylaws. This is a housekeeping change to facilitate the adoption of Resolution Number 217 during the 2016 national convention.

Resolution Number 525, amend Article IX, Section 9.1, Paragraph 2 of the Bylaws to include the reference to Article VI, Section 6.4, Paragraph 8 in chapter Bylaws. This is a housekeeping change to facilitate the adoption of Resolution Number 217 during the 2016 national convention.

Resolution Number 526, amend Article VI, Section 6.4, Paragraph 1D of the Bylaws to not allow a subordinate DAV entity whose charter was revoked due to their loss of IRS tax exemption the ability to appeal to the national commander's revocation to the National Executive Committee. IRS regulations supersede any decision of the NEC specific to charters of DAV entities and their ability to operate.

Comrade Commander, this completes the first reading of the report of the Committee on Constitution and Bylaws and the recommended changes to the Constitution and Bylaws.

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Thanks, Rob.

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER REYNOLDS: Thank you. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Constitution and Bylaws Committee chair, Past National Commander Reynolds, withdrew from the stage and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Thank you, Rob. There will be no action taken at this time. We will hear the final report of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee at the final business session on Tuesday.

National Adjutant Jesinoski, do you have any announcements?

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and Adjutant Jesinoski advanced to the podium.)

ADJUTANT BARRY JESINOSKI: Once again, thank you to Heroes with Hearing Loss for sponsoring the closed captioning of this business session this morning.

Join us right here in the Wildwood Ballroom for Fun Night tomorrow at 8:00 p.m. for the return of Gary Sinise and the Lieutenant Dan Band. (Applause) This year's concert is sponsored, once again, by our good friends at TriWest who have generously donated to bring Gary and the team back to us right here at Atlantic City to perform.

Don't forget that today at 4:00 p.m., or 1600 for you hard chargers who still keep military time, (Laughter) is the cut-off for you to make reservations to attend the Line Officer Dinner. You will need tickets to enter. And there will be assigned seating.

Our regular business will begin again Tuesday morning at 8:30. We will start off with Committee reports, including the final report of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee. We will hear reports of the Charitable Service Trust and the National Service Foundation, plus an update on our Memorial in Washington.

All who wish to donate to any DAV entity, in the interest of time, are encouraged to fill out the donation form in your bags before making your way to our donation space located near will call.

On Tuesday afternoon we will hold our final business session and conclude with nominations and elections of national officers.

We are once again giving away three \$50 gift certificates that can be redeemed at the DAV store online or here at convention. You must be present to win. That's how we get you. (Laughter) If I call your name and you are in the hall, please see Membership Director Doug Wells up here on stage as soon as we adjourn.

The lucky winners are Doris Downer, (Applause) I guess Doris is here; (Laughter) David Thornburg; and Toye Jarvis. (Applause) Congratulations, all.

(Whereupon, Adjutant Jesinoski returned to his seat and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Thank you, Barry. Ladies and gentlemen, if able, please rise. I ask Chaplain Varner to please lead us in a closing prayer. Chaplain.

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and the chaplain advanced to the podium.)

CHAPLAIN VARNER: Let us pray. Almighty Creator, truly we thank you. As we depart this place help us to be mindful of the love, the care, and the respect that we have one for another. Help us to be mindful and reminded that your presence is ever with us as we continue now we've done our chores. Now we pick up and continue the work, a great work, as we go on throughout this convention.

These and all things that we ask in your name. And the people said amen.

(Response of "Amen.")

CHAPLAIN VARNER: Amen. Thank you.

(Whereupon, the chaplain withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Thank you, chaplain. The Convention stands in recess until 8:30 a.m. Tuesday morning. Have a great day.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed at 11:18 o'clock, a.m., on Sunday, August 6, 2023.)

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National Service Offices Monetary Stats 2022	
Compensation	\$24,089,235,801
DIC	\$767,163,425
Veteran Pension	\$247,130,642
Survivor Pension	\$28,163,871
Education Benefits	\$1,219,614,652
Special Entitlements (Clothing Allowance)	\$54,993,653
Total Benefits	\$26,406,302,044

Disabled American Veterans

Financial Statements as of and for the
Year Ended December 31, 2022, and
Independent Auditor's Report

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Board of Directors of
Disabled American Veterans

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Disabled American Veterans (DAV), which comprise the statement of financial position as of December 31, 2022, and the related statements of activities, functional expenses, and cashflows for the year then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements (collectively referred to as the "financial statements").

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of DAV as of December 31, 2022, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAS). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are required to be independent of DAV and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audit. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, and for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is required to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about DAV's ability to continue as a going concern for one year after the date that the financial statements are issued.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with GAAS will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery,

intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Misstatements are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

In performing an audit in accordance with GAAS, we:

- Exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of DAV's internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements.
- Conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about DAV's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings, and certain internal control-related matters that we identified during the audit.

Deloitte + Touche LLP

April 12, 2023

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2022**

ASSETS		LIABILITIES	
CASH	\$ 17,119,086	LIABILITIES:	
ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE	4,620,617	Accounts payable	\$ 12,265,581
INTEREST AND DIVIDENDS RECEIVABLE	206,899	Accrued expenses	6,662,564
PREPAID EXPENSES AND OTHERS	6,839,470	Pension liability	7,758,135
INVESTMENTS	439,777,222	Postretirement benefit obligation	36,315,945
PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT—Net	23,065,116	Other liabilities	-
OTHER ASSETS	2,630,659	Deferred revenue	300,671
LIFE MEMBERSHIP:		Loans payable	9,749,995
Cash	2,531,451	Life membership:	
Accounts receivable	315,243	Accounts payable	155,354
Interest and dividends receivable	5,621	Reserve for future distribution of	
Investments	41,036,350	life membership dues	<u>43,733,311</u>
		Total liabilities	<u>116,941,556</u>
		NET ASSETS:	
		Without donor restrictions—undesignated	406,270,631
		With donor restrictions:	
		Purpose restrictions	3,221,430
		Endowment funds	<u>11,714,117</u>
		Total net assets	<u>421,206,178</u>
TOTAL	<u>\$538,147,734</u>	TOTAL	<u>\$538,147,734</u>

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2022

	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions		Total
		Purpose Restrictions	Endowment Funds	
SUPPORT AND REVENUE:				
Support:				
Contributions received primarily from				
direct mail solicitations	\$108,987,517	\$ 13,266,179	\$ 72,605	\$122,326,301
National per capita dues	<u>3,870,445</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3,870,445</u>
Contributions of cash and other financial assets	112,857,962	13,266,179	72,605	126,196,746
Contributed services and				
facilities—primarily services	28,370,137	-	-	28,370,137
Contributed media and	<u>132,609,467</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>132,609,467</u>
materials—primarily media				
Contributions of nonfinancial assets	160,979,604	-	-	160,979,604
Total support	273,837,566	13,266,179	72,605	287,176,350
Revenue:				
List royalties	524,462	-	-	524,462
Miscellaneous revenue	<u>385,690</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>385,690</u>
Total revenue	<u>910,152</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>910,152</u>
NET INVESTMENT RETURN	<u>(67,423,176)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(2,024,392)</u>	<u>(69,447,568)</u>
NET ASSETS RELEASED FROM DONOR RESTRICTIONS	<u>13,991,088</u>	<u>(13,991,088)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Total support and revenue	<u>221,315,630</u>	<u>(724,909)</u>	<u>(1,951,787)</u>	<u>218,638,934</u>
EXPENSES:				
Program services:				
Service program	41,706,742	-	-	41,706,742
Employment program	2,709,294	-	-	2,709,294
Entrepreneurial services	538,070	-	-	538,070
Legislative service program	2,033,051	-	-	2,033,051
Voluntary service program	29,152,348	-	-	29,152,348
State services and disaster relief	6,393,493	-	-	6,393,493
Communications program	9,732,921	-	-	9,732,921
Public service announcement				
program—primarily contributed media	134,061,478	-	-	134,061,478
Membership program	7,195,446	-	-	7,195,446
Public awareness outreach	<u>27,701,945</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>27,701,945</u>
Total program services	<u>261,224,788</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>261,224,788</u>
Supporting services:				
Fundraising costs	38,878,614	-	-	38,878,614
Administrative and general	<u>9,686,790</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>9,686,790</u>
Total supporting services	<u>48,565,404</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>48,565,404</u>
Total expenses	<u>309,790,192</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>309,790,192</u>
EXCESS OF EXPENSES OVER SUPPORT AND REVENUE	<u>(88,474,562)</u>	<u>(724,909)</u>	<u>(1,951,787)</u>	<u>(91,151,258)</u>
OTHER CHANGES IN NET ASSETS:				
Change in fair market value of interest rate swap	624,954	-	-	624,954
Other	(750,000)	-	-	(750,000)
Pension liability and other postretirement				
benefit obligation adjustment	<u>13,835,640</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>13,835,640</u>
Total other changes in net assets	<u>13,710,594</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>13,710,594</u>
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	<u>(74,763,968)</u>	<u>(724,909)</u>	<u>(1,951,787)</u>	<u>(77,440,664)</u>
NET ASSETS—Beginning of year	<u>481,034,599</u>	<u>3,946,339</u>	<u>13,665,904</u>	<u>498,646,842</u>
NET ASSETS—End of year	<u>\$406,270,631</u>	<u>\$ 3,221,430</u>	<u>\$11,714,117</u>	<u>\$421,206,178</u>

See notes to financial statements.

**STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2022**

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2022

CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:

Change in net assets	\$ (77,440,664)
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash used in operating activities:	
Noncash contributions	(1,037,558)
Pension liability and other postretirement benefit obligation adjustment	(13,835,640)
Change in fair market value of interest rate swap	(624,954)
Depreciation	2,207,928
Loss on disposal of property and equipment	(4,822)
Contributions restricted for endowment	(72,605)
Net change in appreciation of investments	98,363,923
Net gain on sale of investments	(10,302,472)
Changes in operating assets and liabilities:	
Accounts receivable	2,515,284
Interest and dividends receivable	(176,532)
Prepaid expenses and others	2,081,423
Other assets	(204,692)
Accounts payable	(1,376,403)
Accrued expenses	10,513
Pension liability and other postretirement benefits obligation	(6,281,823)
Deferred revenue	(3,718)
Reserve for future distribution of life membership dues	(7,580,358)
Net cash used by operating activities	<u>(13,763,170)</u>

CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:

Payments for property and equipment	(535,641)
Proceeds from the sale of property and equipment	7,601
Purchases of investments for endowments	(3,483,245)
Proceeds from the sale of investments for endowment	3,293,488
Purchases of investments	(89,652,940)
Proceeds from the sale of investments	<u>99,533,694</u>
Net cash provided by investing activities	<u>9,162,957</u>

CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES:

Proceeds from contributions restricted for investment in endowment	72,605
Payments on term loan	<u>(2,600,004)</u>
Net cash used by financing activities	<u>(2,527,399)</u>

NET DECREASE IN CASH	(7,127,612)
CASH—Beginning of year	<u>26,778,149</u>
CASH—End of year	<u>\$ 19,650,537</u>

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

AS OF AND FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2022

1. ORGANIZATION

Disabled American Veterans (DAV) is a Congressionally chartered, not-for-profit service organization. DAV is dedicated to a single purpose: empowering veterans to lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity. DAV accomplishes this by ensuring that veterans and their families can access a full range of benefits available to them; fighting for the interests of America's injured heroes on Capitol Hill; and educating the public about the great sacrifices and needs of veterans transitioning back to civilian life.

- Providing free, professional assistance to veterans and their families in obtaining benefits and services earned through military service and provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and other agencies of government
- Providing outreach concerning its program services to the American people, generally, and to disabled veterans and their families, specifically
- Representing the interests of disabled veterans, their families, their widowed spouses, and their orphans before Congress, the White House, and the judicial branch, as well as state and local governments
- Extending DAV's mission of hope into the communities where these veterans and their families live through a network of state-level departments and local chapters
- Providing a structure through which disabled veterans can express their compassion for their fellow veterans through a variety of volunteer programs

2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Financial Statements—The accompanying financial statements have been prepared on the accrual basis of accounting in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAP).

New Accounting Standards—In February 2016, the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) issued Accounting Standards Update (ASU) No. 2016-02, *Leases (Topic 842)*. This standard amends the existing guidance and requires lessees to recognize on the balance sheet assets and liabilities for the rights and obligations created by those leases with lease terms longer than 12 months. This update is effective for annual financial statements issued for fiscal years beginning after December 15, 2021, and is to be applied using a modified retrospective approach; early adoption is permitted. The adoption of ASU No. 2016-02 did not have a significant impact on the financial statements or the financial statement disclosures.

In September 2020, the FASB issued ASU No. 2020-07, *Not-for-Profit Entities (Topic 958): Presentation and Disclosures by Not-for-Profit Entities for Contributed Nonfinancial Assets*. The amendments require not-for-profit entities to present contributed nonfinancial assets as a separate line item in the statement of activities, apart from contributions of cash and other financial contributions. The standard

also requires additional disclosure related to contributed nonfinancial assets. The amendment, which requires retrospective application, is effective for annual periods beginning after June 15, 2021. The adoption of ASU No. 2016-02 did not have a significant impact on the financial statements or the financial statement disclosures.

In June 2016, the FASB issued ASU No. 2016-13, *Financial Instruments—Credit Losses*, which is included in ASC Topic 326, *Measurement of Credit Losses on Financial Instruments*. The new standard requires a financial asset (or group of financial assets) measured at amortized cost basis to be presented at the net amount expected to be collected. The new standard revises the accounting requirements related to the measurement of credit losses and will require organizations to measure all expected credit losses for financial assets based on historical experience, current conditions, and reasonable and supportable forecasts about collectability. Assets must be presented in the financial statements at the net amount expected to be collected. The expected increases or decreases of expected credit losses that have taken place during the period, is reflected in the statement of activities. Management is in the process of evaluating the impact on the financial statements.

Cash—DAV maintains its cash in bank deposit accounts, which, at times, exceed federally insured limits. DAV has not experienced any losses in such accounts.

Accounts Receivable—Amounts recorded as accounts receivable are reduced to their net realizable value, as appropriate.

Investments—Investments are carried at fair value, and realized and unrealized gains and losses are reflected within net investment return, in the statement of activities. The fair value of DAV's investments is determined based on the quoted market prices of the related securities or quoted prices in active markets for instruments that are similar, or model-derived valuations in which all significant inputs and significant value drivers are observable in active markets. Gains and losses on the sale of investment securities are recognized based upon the specific identification method and are reflected in net investment return. DAV's policy is to report cash equivalents, which include money market funds, within its trust accounts as investments.

Property and Equipment—Property and equipment are stated at cost, less accumulated depreciation, and, at December 31, 2022, are composed of the following:

	Cost	Accumulated Depreciation	Net Book Value
Land and improvements	\$ 3,000,974	\$ 301,164	\$ 2,699,810
Buildings and improvements	23,579,657	5,793,713	17,785,944
Machinery and other equipment	14,674,947	12,180,333	2,494,614
Construction in process	84,748	-	84,748
Total	<u>\$41,340,326</u>	<u>\$ 18,275,210</u>	<u>\$ 23,065,116</u>

Depreciation is computed generally on the straight-line method over the estimated useful life of assets, which range from three to 50 years.

Contributions—DAV recognizes contributions when cash, securities, or other assets; an unconditional promise to give; or a notification of a beneficial interest is received. Conditional promises to give—that is, those with a measurable performance or other barrier and a right of return—are not recognized until the conditions on which they depend have been met.

Contributions received are recorded as support with or without donor restrictions depending on the existence and the nature of any donor restrictions. All contributions are considered available for unrestricted use, unless specifically restricted by the donor. Support that is restricted by the donor is reported as an increase in net assets with donor restrictions. Donated assets are recorded at their fair market value at the time of the gift.

Revenue Recognition from Exchange Transactions—DAV has multiple revenue streams that are accounted for as exchange transactions including sponsorships, cause marketing revenue, rental income, recycling income, and royalties. Revenue from these sources is recognized as services are performed or once the performance obligations are complete. Such amounts are included within the total revenue line within the statement of activities.

Net Assets without Donor Restrictions—All contributions and bequests without donor restrictions are resources available to support DAV's operations.

Net Assets with Donor Restrictions—Net assets with donor restrictions consist of assets whose use is limited by donor-imposed, time, and/or purpose restrictions.

DAV reports gifts of cash and other assets as revenue with donor restrictions if they are received with donor stipulations that limit the use of the donated assets. When a donor restriction expires, that is, when a stipulated time restriction ends or purpose restriction is accomplished, the net assets are reclassified as net assets without donor restriction and reported in the statement of activities as net assets released from restrictions.

Some net assets with donor restrictions include a stipulation that assets provided be maintained in perpetuity while permitting DAV to expend the income generated by the assets in accordance with the provision of additional donor-imposed stipulations.

Contributed Nonfinancial Assets—For the year ended December 31, 2022, contributed nonfinancial assets included contributed services and facilities and contributed media and materials. See respective accounting policy below for details on valuation techniques and inputs. Should additional material nonfinancial assets be received, they would be separately recognized within the statement of activities and disclosed within the notes to the financial statements.

Contributed Services and Facilities—DAV operates extensive programs through which volunteers contribute many hours of service to veterans. The 841,088 hours that are donated to DAV's Transportation Network at the VA during 2022, and the 2022 donated hours of Department and Chapter Service Officers through the Local Veterans Assistance Program (LVAP) are used to tabulate contributed services. Using a value per hour of \$29.95 developed by Independent Sector, an organization that provides oversight to nonprofit organizations in America, the value of these hours contributed to the DAV's Transportation Network and LVAP program is \$25,190,579. This value, together with the value of certain contributed facilities of \$3,179,558, the value of which is estimated based on the average national office rental cost per square foot, are nonfinancial asset contributions, and are recorded as support and expenses in the accompanying statement of activities and statement of functional expenses. Based on the nature of these contributions, they did not contain an associated donor restriction.

Contributed Media and Materials—DAV produces public service announcements through various mediums (television, radio, digital, print, out of home), of which approximately \$133 million was donated and aired through independent third parties during 2022. The value of the donated media is

provided through an independent third party utilizing an estimated market value for each type of medium. The most significant medium is television. Estimated market values for television announcements are determined using various inputs, including length of spot, city, station, day part, and industry media cost data. The value of contributed media and materials, which is a nonfinancial asset contribution, is recorded as support and expenses in the accompanying statement of activities and statement of functional expenses. Based on the nature of these contributions, they did not contain an associated donor restriction.

Salaries Expense—The salaries expense in the accompanying financial statements includes the cost of all national service officers and their support staff who work directly with veterans and their dependents in providing counseling and representation in obtaining benefits and services. This expense also includes DAV's administrative and support staffs.

Income Taxes—As a not-for-profit service organization, DAV has received a determination from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) that it is exempt from federal income tax as a 501(c)(4) organization. Contributions made to DAV are tax deductible by the contributor as provided in Section 170 of the Internal Revenue Code.

Use of Estimates—The preparation of the financial statements in accordance with GAAP requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities, disclosures of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements, and the reported amounts of support, revenues, and expenses during the reporting period. Actual amounts could differ from those estimates.

Allocation of Expenses—The financial statements report certain categories of expenses that are attributable to one or more programs or supporting services of DAV. Those expenses include building maintenance, information technology and general administrative services. Building maintenance expenses are allocated based on a square footage basis; the information technology and general administrative services expenses are allocated based on the percentage of time tracked by department utilized.

Allocation of Joint Costs—The allocation of joint costs is based on the specific content of the qualifying material or media. In 2022, DAV incurred joint costs of \$54,965,230 for informational materials and activities that included fund-raising appeals. Of those costs, \$27,379,842 were allocated to public awareness outreach (program services) and \$27,585,388 were allocated to fund-raising costs.

3. LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Under the bylaws of DAV, any eligible person may become a life member. Amounts paid for membership are placed in separate life membership accounts and invested; the only withdrawals permitted from these accounts are amounts required to pay chapter, department, and national (DAV) per capita dues for services to be provided to the life members. Generally, life membership assets for DAV National Headquarters per capita dues are transferred to the general assets of DAV at the beginning of the membership year (July 1) and recognized as revenue in the statement of activities. The per capita chapter and department dues are distributed at the beginning of the membership year. The reserve for future distribution of membership dues represents the liability for the future life membership distributions to DAV National Headquarters, departments, and chapters to assist with providing member services.

The changes during 2022 in the reserve for future distribution of life membership dues are summarized below:

Balance—January 1, 2022	<u>\$ 51,313,669</u>
Additions:	
Membership dues received	5,177,834
Other income	<u>318,493</u>
Total additions	<u>5,496,327</u>
Distribution of membership dues:	
National headquarters	(3,870,445)
Local chapters	(1,274,710)
State departments	(1,111,488)
Other expense	<u>(137,357)</u>
Total distribution of membership dues	<u>(6,394,000)</u>
Net investment return	<u>(6,682,685)</u>
Balance—December 31, 2022	<u><u>\$ 43,733,311</u></u>

4. FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS

ASC 820, *Fair Value Measurements and Disclosures*, provides a framework for measuring fair value. This framework provides a fair value hierarchy that prioritizes the inputs to valuation techniques used to measure fair value, as follows: Level 1, which refers to securities valued using unadjusted quoted prices from active markets for identical assets; Level 2, which refers to securities not traded on an active market but for which observable market inputs are readily available; and Level 3, which refers to securities valued based on significant unobservable inputs. Assets are classified in their entirety based on the lowest level of input that is significant to the fair value measurement.

Asset Valuation Techniques—Valuation techniques used maximize the use of observable inputs and minimize the use of unobservable inputs. The following is a description of the valuation methodologies used for general fund, life fund, and pension plan assets recorded at fair value. There have been no changes in the methodologies used at December 31, 2022.

Cash equivalents, composed of money market funds, are categorized as Level 1. Such investments are valued at cost, which approximates fair value. The money market fund represents DAV's shares in a registered investment company's fund.

US government securities (US Treasury notes), common stocks, and exchange-traded funds (ETFs), categorized as Level 1, are valued at the closing price reported in the active market in which the individual security is traded.

Commercial paper, categorized as Level 2, is valued at fair value, which approximates amortized cost.

Municipal and corporate bonds, categorized as Level 2, are valued using third-party pricing services. These services may use, for example, model-based pricing methods that utilize observable market data as inputs. Broker-dealer bids or quotes of securities with similar characteristics may also be used.

Shares of registered investment companies (mutual funds), categorized as Level 1, are valued at quoted market prices that represent the net asset value of shares held at year-end.

Interest rate swap agreement is classified within Level 2 of the valuation hierarchy. The fair value is estimated using forward-looking interest rate curves and discounted cash flows that are observable or can be corroborated by observable market data.

Private equity funds are classified within Level 3 of the valuation hierarchy due to a lack of trading in active markets and a lack of observable inputs in measuring fair value.

The major categories of general fund financial assets measured at fair value on a recurring basis as of December 31, 2022, are as follows:

Asset Category	Fair Value Measurements Using			
	Quoted Prices in Active Markets for Identical Assets (Level 1)	Significant Observable Inputs (Level 2)	Significant Unobservable Inputs (Level 3)	Total
Cash equivalents	\$ 4,786,297	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4,786,297
Commercial Paper	-	1,021,920	-	1,021,920
US government securities	8,366,031	-	-	8,366,031
Corporate bonds	-	62,652,165	-	62,652,165
Municipal bonds	-	2,475,702	-	2,475,702
Common stocks	56,770,849	-	-	56,770,849
Private equity funds	-	-	899,612	899,612
Mutual funds/ETFs:				
Domestic fixed-income funds	64,267,307	-	-	64,267,307
Domestic equity funds/ETFs	161,891,170	-	-	161,891,170
International equity funds	68,186,084	-	-	68,186,084
International fixed income funds	3,214	-	-	3,214
Real estate equity funds	8,456,871	-	-	8,456,871
Total mutual funds/ETFs	302,804,646	-	-	302,804,646
Total general fund assets	<u>\$ 372,727,823</u>	<u>\$ 66,149,787</u>	<u>\$ 899,612</u>	<u>\$ 439,777,222</u>
Interest rate swap agreement	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 609,488</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 609,488</u>

The major categories of life membership fund financial assets measured at fair value on a recurring basis as of December 31, 2022, are as follows:

Asset Category	Fair Value Measurements Using		
	Quoted Prices in Active Markets for Identical Assets (Level 1)	Significant Observable Inputs (Level 2)	Total
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 174,465	\$ -	\$ 174,465
Corporate bonds	-	4,760,869	4,760,869
Common stocks	5,050,516	-	5,050,516
Mutual funds/ETFs:			
Domestic fixed-income funds	6,685,229	-	6,685,229
Domestic equity funds/ETFs	15,540,622	-	15,540,622
International equity funds	7,639,925	-	7,639,925
Real estate equity funds	1,184,724	-	1,184,724
Total mutual funds/ETFs	31,050,500	-	31,050,500
Total life membership fund assets	<u>\$ 36,275,481</u>	<u>\$ 4,760,869</u>	<u>\$ 41,036,350</u>

5. PENSION PLAN, POSTRETIREMENT BENEFITS AND OTHER BENEFITS

Pension Plan—DAV has a defined benefit pension plan covering substantially all of its employees and certain employees of Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary (DAVA). Benefits are based on years of service and employees' compensation. Contributions are intended to fully fund, over a period of seven years, the benefits attributed to service to date based on market interest rates established by the IRS. In 2022, DAV funded amounts in accordance with the recommended actuarially determined contribution amount. Contributions to the plan are based on the unit credit actuarial cost method.

Other Postretirement Benefit Plans—DAV provides certain health care and life insurance benefits (other postretirement benefits) for its retired employees and their spouses as well as certain retired employees and their spouses of DAVA. Substantially, all of DAV's employees may become eligible for these benefits if they have completed 20 years of service upon retirement. The post-Medicare retiree medical benefits are now a health reimbursement account (HRA).

DAV offers Medicare-eligible retirees access to health care coverage through a private exchange and provides an HRA to subsidize benefits. DAV established a catastrophic HRA with \$75,000 aggregate limit to cover catastrophic prescription drug expenses incurred by qualifying participants.

Summarized information for the plans as of December 31, 2022, measurement date is as follows:

	Pension	Other Postretirement Benefits
Accumulated benefit obligation	<u>\$ 60,612,031</u>	<u>\$ -</u>
Projected benefit obligation (PBO)	\$ 66,619,072	\$ -
Accumulated postretirement benefit obligation (APBO)	-	36,315,945
Fair value of plan assets	<u>(58,860,937)</u>	<u>-</u>
Unfunded status recognized	<u>\$ 7,758,135</u>	<u>\$ 36,315,945</u>

Summarized information of the pension and other postretirement benefits plans for the year ended December 31, 2022, is as follows:

	Pension	Other Postretirement Benefits
Components of net periodic benefit cost:		
Service cost	\$ 3,468,863	\$ 1,408,186
Interest cost	1,781,208	1,181,363
Expected return on assets	(3,752,549)	-
Amortization of net loss	981,064	73,387
Amortization of prior service cost (benefit)	31,964	(4,119,683)
Recognized settlement loss	<u>2,755,352</u>	<u>-</u>
Net periodic benefit cost (benefit)	<u>\$ 5,265,902</u>	<u>\$ (1,456,747)</u>
Components of pension and postretirement benefit obligation adjustment:		
Amortization of prior service cost (benefit)	\$ 31,963	\$ (4,119,683)
Amortization of net loss	981,064	73,387
Actuarial net (gain)/loss during the year	(1,907,439)	16,020,996
Pension settlement loss	<u>2,755,352</u>	<u>-</u>
Pension and postretirement benefit obligation adjustment	<u>\$ 1,860,940</u>	<u>\$ 11,974,700</u>

Net periodic benefit cost of \$5,265,902 (offset by \$28,620 reimbursed by DAVA) is included in expenses and pension and postretirement benefit obligation adjustment of \$13,835,640 is included in other changes in net assets in the accompanying statement of activities.

For purposes of year end disclosure, the following changes were made to the actuarial assumptions used in the valuation of the Pension Plan:

- The single equivalent discount rate changed from 2.70% to 5.18% based on the pension plan's expected benefit payouts and was the Financial Times Stock Exchange (FTSE) above median yield curve as of December 31, 2022.
- PEP conversion interest rates were updated to the same yield curve rates used to determine the obligation under the spot rate method.

These changes had the cumulative impact of decreasing the recorded projected benefit obligation by \$13,623,000.

For purposes of year end disclosure, the following changes were made to the actuarial assumptions used in the valuation of the Other Postretirement Benefits Plan - the discount rate was updated to 5.25% for the January 1, 2023 actuarial valuation. Previously, a discount rate of 2.87% was used. This change had the cumulative effect of decreasing the recorded projected benefit obligation by \$15,296,591.

Amounts not yet recognized as a component of periodic pension and other postretirement benefits cost at December 31, 2022, are as follows:

	Pension	Other Postretirement Benefits
Prior service cost (benefit)	\$ 31,964	\$(22,883,921)
Net actuarial loss (gain)	<u>16,195,043</u>	<u>(8,257,504)</u>
Amounts recognized as reduction (increase) in unrestricted net assets	<u><u>\$ 16,227,007</u></u>	<u><u>\$(31,141,425)</u></u>

	Pension	Other Postretirement Benefits
For the year ended December 31, 2022:		
Benefit expense (net periodic pension benefit cost of \$5,265,901, offset by \$28,620 reimbursed by DAVA)	\$ 5,237,281	\$(1,456,747)
Actual return/(loss) on plan assets	(9,075,851)	-
Employer contribution	8,335,693	1,755,284
Plan participants' contributions	-	67,472
Benefits paid	13,095,745	1,822,756

Weighted-average rate assumptions used for the
December 31 valuation—for year-end benefit
obligation:

Discount rate	5.18 %	5.25 %
Rate of compensation increase	4.50 %	4.50 %

For the year-end benefit obligation, the Pri-2012 Total Employee and Retiree Mortality Table with Mortality Improvement Scale MP-2021 was utilized.

	Pension	Other Postretirement Benefits
For annual benefit cost:		
Discount rate	2.68 %	2.87 %
Discount rate—PBO normal cost	2.73	N/A
Rate of compensation increase	4.50	4.50
Expected return on plan assets	5.25	N/A

For the annual benefit cost, the Pri-2012 Total Employee and Retiree Morality Tables (base year 2012) with Mortality Improvement Scale MP-2021 was utilized.

The APBO and related benefit costs are determined through the application of relevant actuarial assumptions. DAV anticipates the increase in its health care cost-trend rate to slow from 6.5% in 2022 to 4.5% in 2026, after which the trend rate is expected to stabilize.

DAV expects to contribute \$3.5 million to its pension plan in 2023.

DAV’s pension plan investment allocation at December 31, 2022, is as follows:

Asset Category	Percentage of Plan Assets
Equity-based securities	55 %
Fixed-income securities	25
Real assets	2
Alternative	13
Cash and cash equivalents	<u>5</u>
Total	<u>100 %</u>

The primary objective of the investment policy is preservation of capital with an emphasis on long-term growth without undue exposure to risk and in recognition of the cash flow needs of the plan. The asset allocation ranges are: 42% to 59% equities, 20% to 35% fixed-income securities, 0% to 10% real assets, and 5% to 20% alternative strategies. Approximately, 0% to 13% of the combined investments are to be in money market or other liquid funds (cash requirements).

Pension plan financial assets are recorded at fair value using the measurement techniques outlined in Note 4. The major categories of pension plan financial assets measured at fair value on a recurring basis as of December 31, 2022, are as follows:

Asset Category	Fair Value Measurements Using		
	Quoted Prices in Active Markets for Identical Assets (Level 1)	Significant Observable Inputs (Level 2)	Total
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 2,816,139	\$ -	\$ 2,816,139
US government securities	448,609	-	448,609
US government agency notes	-	1,403,522	1,403,522
Municipal bonds	-	447,077	447,077
Corporate bonds	-	6,217,772	6,217,772
Common stocks: Real assets	<u>1,135,215</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,135,215</u>
Total common stocks	<u>1,135,215</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,135,215</u>
Mutual funds/ETFs:			
Equity-based securities	32,369,600	-	32,369,600
Fixed income	6,096,793	-	6,096,793
Alternative	<u>7,926,210</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>7,926,210</u>
Total mutual funds/ETFs	<u>46,392,603</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>46,392,603</u>
Total pension plan assets	<u>\$ 50,792,566</u>	<u>\$ 8,068,371</u>	<u>\$ 58,860,937</u>

In selecting the expected rate of return on pension plan assets, DAV considers historical rates of return for the type of investments the plan holds, as well as future market expectations. Expectations are then applied to the target asset allocation to arrive at a weighted average of expected returns for the pension plan's portfolio of assets.

The pension plan benefit payments, which reflect expected future service, as appropriate, are expected to be paid as follows:

Fiscal Years Ending	Benefit Payments
2023	\$ 2,639,518
2024	4,104,459
2025	4,015,528
2026	4,886,058
2027	4,516,439
2028–2032	32,750,968

DAV offers retirees access to health coverage through a private exchange and provides an HRA to subsidize benefits.

The other postretirement benefit payments, which reflect expected future service, as appropriate, are expected to be paid as follows:

Fiscal Years Ending	Benefit Payments
2023	\$ 2,380,894
2024	1,995,732
2025	2,017,655
2026	2,137,595
2027	2,172,145
2028–2032	11,698,626

DAV also maintains a defined contribution salary savings and investment plan for its employees. For qualified participating employees, DAV contributes a percentage of the employees’ base salary. DAV’s contributions in 2022 were \$2,570,655 and are included in employee benefits expense in the accompanying statement of functional expenses.

Paid Time Off (PTO) Plan and Trust—The PTO Plan is a welfare benefit plan. The Plan established a trust to fund paid time-off benefits for eligible employees of DAV. DAV Benefit Plan Administration Committee serves as the Plan administrator. Fifth Third Bank serves as the trustee of the Plan. The Plan is subject to the provisions of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA). PTO benefits are funded by the Sponsor contributions to the Plan’s trust and are recorded upon distribution. PTO participants can be part-time employees, which is anyone that works a minimum of 30 hours, and the benefit is prorated as compared to a full-time 40-hour employee. Remaining balances up to 40 hours of PTO are paid out at the end of each year. The Sponsor funds the Plan in sufficient amounts to cover currently payable benefits and estimated future benefits. Contributions to the Plan are deposited with a trustee. The PTO liability at December 31, 2022 was \$3.6 million and is included in accrued expenses in the statement of financial position.

PTO plan financial assets, included in prepaid and others in the statement of financial position, are recorded at fair value using the measurement techniques outlined in Note 4. The major categories of the PTO plan financial assets measured at fair value on a recurring basis as of December 31, 2022, are as follows:

Asset Category	Fair Value Measurements Using		
	Quoted Prices in Active Markets for Identical Assets (Level 1)	Significant Observable Inputs (Level 2)	Total
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 31,274	\$ -	\$ 31,274
Mutual funds/ETFs:			
Equity-based securities	2,000,253	-	2,000,253
Fixed income	661,244	-	661,244
Real assets	<u>31,012</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>31,012</u>
Total mutual funds/ETFs	<u>2,692,509</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,692,509</u>
Total PTO plan assets	<u>\$ 2,723,783</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 2,723,783</u>

6. LOANS PAYABLE

On May 7, 2020, DAV entered into a loan agreement with a bank for a draw note in the amount of \$13 million to fund the construction of a new headquarters building. On the conversion date, September 30, 2021, the entire outstanding principal balance and all accrued and unpaid interests was converted to a term loan. The term loan is payable in monthly principal payments of \$216,667 plus interest starting November 1, 2021 through October 1, 2026, the maturity date. Interest is paid at a monthly variable rate of prime less 2.00% per annum. The outstanding balance on the note at December 31, 2022 was \$9,749,995.

The annual maturities of the loan for the years ending December 31 are as follows:

Fiscal Years Ending	
2023	\$ 2,600,004
2024	2,600,004
2025	2,600,004
2026	<u>1,949,983</u>
Total	<u>\$ 9,749,995</u>

DAV is required under the loan agreement to comply with certain covenants, the most restrictive of these are to maintain its primary operating accounts with the bank and to maintain liquid assets of at least \$16 million. DAV is in compliance with all covenants as of December 31, 2022.

The fair value of the loans payable approximates the balance of \$9,749,995 as of December 31, 2022 and is classified as Level 2 within the fair value hierarchy.

7. DERIVATIVE AND HEDGING ACTIVITIES

DAV has entered into an interest rate swap agreement with a commercial bank, effective April 30, 2020, to reduce the impact of changes in interest rates on its floating rate bonds (see note 6). The agreement effectively changes DAV’s interest rate exposure on its floating rate bonds due October 1, 2026 to a fixed 2.00% rate. The interest rate swap agreement matures at the same time the related loan matures.

Derivatives are held only for the purpose of hedging such risks, not for speculation. Generally, DAV enters into a hedging relationship such that changes in the fair values or cash flows of transactions being hedged are expected to be offset by corresponding changes in the values of the derivative. At December 31, 2022, hedging relationships exist for loan indebtedness and the exposure to variable cash flows related to variable rate debt. The fair value of the interest rate swap agreement is based on quotes provided by derivative specialists at DAV’s bank with whom these agreements were made.

The increase in the fair value of the interest rate swap agreement of \$624,954 for the year ended December 31, 2022 is included in other changes in net assets in the statement of activities, increasing net assets without donor restrictions.

8. COMPOSITION OF NET ASSETS WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS

Net assets with donor restrictions as of December 31, 2022, are restricted for the following purposes:

Subject to expenditure for a specified purpose:	
National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic	\$ 982,770
Service program	559,805
Capital campaign	800,000
Transportation Network	187,171
Scholarship program	65,913
National Disabled Veterans Golf Clinic	21,580
Other	<u>604,191</u>
Total subject to expenditure for a specified purpose	3,221,430
Endowments subject to DAV’s spending policy and appropriation	<u>11,714,117</u>
Total net assets with donor restrictions	<u>\$ 14,935,547</u>

9. NET ASSETS RELEASED FROM DONOR RESTRICTIONS

Net assets were released from donor restrictions by incurring expenses satisfying the restricted purposes or by occurrence of the passage of time or other events specified by donors. The net assets released from restrictions for the year ended December 31, 2022, are as follows:

Purpose restriction accomplished:	
Purpose restrictions funds:	
Service program	\$ 7,847,644
Employment program	1,730,105
Disaster relief	1,578,561
Transportation network	569,556
Camp Corral	558,274
National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic	490,166
National Disabled Veterans Golf Clinic	284,836
DAV 5K events	240,390
Patriot Boot Camp	85,250
Other	606,306
	<hr/>
Total purpose restrictions funds	<u>\$ 13,991,088</u>

10. LIQUIDITY AND AVAILABILITY OF FINANCIAL ASSETS

DAV intends to operate within a prudent range of financial soundness and stability. DAV regularly monitors liquidity required to meet its operating needs and other contractual commitments, while also striving to maximize the investment of its available funds. DAV has various sources of liquidity at its disposal, including cash and cash equivalents and readily marketable debt and equity securities.

DAV forecasts its future cash flows annually and monitors actual activity monthly. For purposes of analyzing resources available to meet expenditures over a 12-month period, DAV considers all expenditures related to its ongoing program, fund-raising, general and administrative activities, and capital purchases. DAV's working capital and cash flows have seasonal variations during the year attributable to the timing of contribution solicitation campaigns. Campaign expenses paid and contributions received fluctuate monthly with a heavier concentration near calendar year-end. Bequests also vary from year to year.

DAV's investments are primarily unrestricted. DAV has an investment policy with primary goals of safeguarding its assets; maximizing return on the investments through interest, dividends, and appreciation of capital; and avoiding undue interest rate risk in the fixed-income portion of the portfolio. The overall asset allocation is 70% equities and liquid alternative investments and 30% fixed-income investments and cash equivalents.

The following reflects DAV’s financial assets at December 31, 2022, reduced by amounts not available for general use within one year of the statement of financial position date due to donor and purpose restrictions:

Total assets, excluding nonfinancial assets	\$ 505,612,489
Subtract: Life Membership Fund	(39,888,665)
Subtract: Donor-Restricted Endowment Fund, excluding \$288,926 available for general spending based on endowment usage policy (see Note 11)	(11,425,191)
Subtract: Investments not available for general expenditures	<u>(1,315,182)</u>
Financial assets available to meet cash needs for general expenditures within one year	<u>\$ 452,983,451</u>

11. ENDOWMENT

DAV’s endowment (the “Endowment”) consists of approximately 25 individual funds established by donors to provide perpetual source of support for DAV’s activities. As required by GAAP, net assets associated with Endowment funds are classified and reported based on the existence of donor-imposed restrictions.

DAV’s Board of Directors has interpreted the KY Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act (UPMIFA) as requiring the preservation of the fair value of the original gift as of the date of the donor-restricted endowment funds, unless there are explicit donor stipulations to the contrary. At December 31, 2022, there were no such donor stipulations. Because of this interpretation, DAV retained in perpetuity (a) the original value of initial and subsequent gift amounts donated to the endowment and (b) any accumulations to the endowment made in accordance with the direction of the applicable donor gift instrument at the time the accumulation is added. Donor-restricted amounts not retained in perpetuity are subject to appropriation for expenditure by DAV in a manner consistent with the standard of prudence prescribed by UPMIFA. DAV considers the following factors in making a determination to appropriate or accumulate donor-restricted endowment funds:

- The duration and preservation of the endowment
- The purposes of DAV and the donor-restricted endowment
- General economic conditions
- The possible effect of inflation and deflation
- The expected total return from income and the appreciation of investments
- Other resources of DAV
- The investment policies of DAV

As of December 31, 2022, DAV had \$11,714,117 of donor-restricted, perpetually endowed net assets.

Investment and Spending Policies—DAV has an investment policy specific to its endowment, which is monitored by DAV’s management team and implemented by the investment manager. The investment policy statement describes the objective for the fund and sets ranges for asset allocation. The objective of the endowment is to preserve and enhance the real (inflation adjusted) purchasing power of the endowment assets consistent with agreed-upon levels of risk that a prudent person would take under various economic conditions. At a minimum, long-term rates of return should be equal to an amount sufficient to maintain the purchasing power of the endowment fund assets, to provide necessary capital to fund the spending policy, and to cover the costs of managing the endowment fund

investments. The desired total return over a long-term basis (as measured on a five-year rolling period and full market cycle) is expected to exceed the rate of inflation, as measured by the Consumer Price Index, plus the spending rate plus investment expenses. Actual returns in any given year may vary from this amount. In light of this return requirement, the portfolio is constructed using a total return approach with a significant portion of the funds invested to seek growth of principal over time. The assets are invested for the long term, and a higher short-term volatility in these assets is expected and accepted. DAV limits its investment in so-called alternative investments to those that have daily liquidity (mutual funds and ETFs).

The following is a summary of the asset allocation guidelines, with allowable ranges for each asset type.

Asset Class	Lower Range	Target Weight	Upper Range
Equity	55 %	65 %	75 %
Fixed income	5	15	25
Real assets	3	10	15
Alternatives	3	7	11
Cash equivalents	-	3	13

DAV uses an endowment-spending formula based on total return of the investments for determining the amount to spend from the endowment fund each year. The appropriation is a maximum of 3% of the average market value of the trailing 12 quarters, calculated annually as of December 31 of each year. In establishing this policy, DAV considered the long-term expected return on its endowment fund investments and set the rate with the objective of maintaining the purchasing power of its donor-restricted permanent endowment funds over time. The endowment investment fund earned a negative return in 2022.

From time to time, certain donor-restricted endowment funds may have fair values less than the amount required to be maintained by donors or by law (underwater endowments). We have interpreted UPMIFA to permit spending from underwater endowments in accordance with prudent measures required under law. At December 31, 2022, funds with original gift values of \$9,886,012, fair values of \$11,714,117, and deficiencies of \$0 were reported in net assets with donor restrictions.

Changes in endowment net assets for the year ended December 31, 2022, are as follows:

	With Donor Restriction
Endowment net assets—January 1, 2022	\$ 13,665,904
Contributions	72,605
Investment return—net	<u>(2,024,392)</u>
Endowment net assets—December 31, 2022	<u><u>\$ 11,714,117</u></u>

12. RELATED-PARTY TRANSACTIONS

DAV (Disabled American Veterans) National Service Foundation—Some members of DAV’s Board of Directors also serve on the Board of Directors for the DAV National Service Foundation (the “Foundation”). DAV also provides services to the Foundation, which puts DAV in the position to influence operating policies of the Foundation. The accompanying financial statements do not include the net assets (or changes therein) of the Foundation, which are held by the Foundation and available to DAV only through appropriation by the Foundation’s Board of Directors. The Foundation is a separate entity from DAV, operating under its own bylaws. Based upon financial statements at December 31, 2022, net assets of the Foundation were \$154,572,457. During 2022, DAV personnel assisted the Foundation on a limited basis in administering its business operations and fundraising program. For these services, DAV charged the Foundation \$122,567. DAV provides the Foundation with the use of facilities, equipment, and occasional magazine space at no charge.

In 2022, DAV contributed \$104,475 to The Columbia Trust, a fund with donor restrictions established by the Foundation, to provide funds for the service programs of needy DAV state departments and local chapters.

In 2022, the Foundation appropriated \$5,390,800 in support of DAV service program.

At December 31, 2022, the Foundation owed \$121,613 to DAV, which is recorded as accounts receivable in the accompanying statement of financial position.

DAV (Disabled American Veterans) Charitable Service Trust—Some members of DAV’s Board of Directors also serve on the Board of Directors for Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Charitable Service Trust (the “Trust”). DAV also provides services to the Trust, which puts DAV in the position to influence operating policies of the Trust. The accompanying financial statements do not include the net assets (or changes therein) of the Trust, which are held by the Trust and available to DAV only through grants approved by the Trust’s Board of Directors. The Trust is a separate entity from DAV, operating under its own bylaws. Based upon financial statements at December 31, 2022, net assets of the Trust were \$53,021,450. DAV personnel assist the Trust on a limited basis in administering its business operations, fund-raising, and grant programs. For these personnel services, DAV charged the Trust \$180,565. DAV provides the Trust with the use of facilities, equipment, and occasional magazine space at no charge.

In 2022, the Trust appropriated the following in support of DAV programs and services which are recorded as support and revenue in the accompanying statement of activities:

Assistance to disabled veterans and their families	\$ 1,696,798
DAV Employment Program	1,600,000
DAV “Just B Kids” Scholarship	310,000
Transportation Network	200,000
Veterans retreats	150,000
DAV Capital Campaign	83,333
Jesse Brown Youth Scholarship Program	45,000
DAV Disaster Relief	23,500
DAV National Convention	15,000
National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic	7,500
DAV 5K Program	5,000

At December 31, 2022, the Trust owed \$24,717 to DAV, which is recorded as a receivable in the accompanying statement of financial position.

Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary—DAV provides services to the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary (the “DAVA”), which puts DAV in the position to influence operating policies of DAVA. The accompanying financial statements do not include the net assets (or changes therein) of DAVA, which are held by DAVA. DAVA is a separate entity from DAV, operating under its own bylaws. Based upon financial statements at December 31, 2022, net assets of DAVA were \$8,314,606. DAVA occupies space in the DAV National Headquarters’ building and also uses certain office equipment owned by DAV. No fees are charged for such usage. The value of these contributed facilities is estimated to be \$20,659 in 2022.

Certain costs are paid by DAV on behalf of DAVA. In addition, DAV collects contributions on behalf of DAVA. At December 31, 2022, DAVA owed DAV \$58,935, the net of such costs less contributions of \$4,214, which is recorded as accounts receivable in the accompanying statement of financial position.

Disabled Veterans’ LIFE Memorial Foundation—Some members of DAV’s Board of Directors also serve on the Board of Directors for the Disabled Veterans’ LIFE Memorial Foundation (the “DVLMF”). DAV also provides services to the DVLMF, which puts DAV in the position to influence operating policies of the DVLMF. The accompanying financial statements do not include the net assets (or changes therein) of the unaudited DVLMF. The DVLMF is a separate entity from DAV, operating under its own bylaws. Based upon financial statements at December 31, 2022, net assets of the DVLMF were \$6,538. During 2022, DAV personnel assisted the DVLMF on a limited basis in administering its business operations, as well as providing the use of facilities and equipment at no charge.

13. COMMITMENTS AND CONTINGENCIES

DAV is involved in certain legal actions arising in the ordinary course of its activities. Management believes that the ultimate liability, if any, with respect to these matters will not materially affect the financial position of DAV.

In September 2021, DAV entered into a real estate purchase agreement to sell its National Headquarters in Washington D.C. for a purchase price of \$14,625,000, and subject to an increase of up to \$16,125,000 if certain zoning approvals are received. This sale is expected to close in 2023, contingent upon various events outlined in the real estate purchase agreement. As of December 31, 2022, the property has a net book value of approximately \$372,408. A gain on the sale is expected to be recorded upon the completion of the sale.

In January 2023, DAV entered into an office lease agreement for its new National Headquarters in Washington, DC. The lease commences in June 2023 and has an initial term of 210 months. The present value of the future minimum lease payments is \$13,945,591.

14. SUBSEQUENT EVENTS

No other events have occurred after December 31, 2022, but before April 12, 2023, the date the financials were available to be issued, that require consideration as adjustments to, or disclosures in, the financial statements.

* * * * *

Committee on Credentials

Advisor: Douglas K. Wells Jr. and Michael Dobmeier

DISTRICT	MEMBER NAME	TITLE	DEPARTMENT	CHAPTER
1	Williams, Jermeal	Delegate	MASSACHUSETTS	3
	Nadeau, Philip	Alternate	MASSACHUSETTS	11
2	Du, Philip	Delegate	NEW YORK	144
	Russell, Judith	Alternate	NEW YORK	126
3	Brunelle, Richard	Delegate	MAINE	19
	Backus, Denis	Alternate	VERMONT	3
4	Donberger, Mark	Delegate	DELAWARE	1
	Muffley, William	Alternate	DELAWARE	1
5	Noel, Kevin	Delegate	PENNSYLVANIA	76
	Borders, Amber	Alternate	PENNSYLVANIA	76
6	Sabree, Joan	Delegate	MARYLAND	36
	Lopez Comas, Angel	Alternate	PUERTO RICO	3
7	Reed, Brenda	Delegate	FLORIDA	4
	Jackson, Jo Ann	Alternate	FLORIDA	32
8	Budd, Franklin	Delegate	TENNESSEE	3
	Davis, Carroll	Alternate	MISSISSIPPI	11
9	Hunter, James	Delegate	NORTH CAROLINA	26
	Downer, Doris	Alternate	GEORGIA	92
10	Bowens, Rodney	Delegate	MICHIGAN	1
11	Hanneman, Dennis	Delegate	OHIO	77
	Pollock, Steve	Alternate	OHIO	54
12	Huckaby, Eric	Delegate	ILLINOIS	17
	Koehler, Tiffany	Alternate	WISCONSIN	19
13	Rachuba, Robert	Delegate	INDIANA	3
	Greer, DeAndre	Alternate	INDIANA	3
14	Tobin, Warren	Delegate	NORTH DAKOTA	31
	Colling, Bradley	Alternate	SOUTH DAKOTA	3
15	Shuey, James	Delegate	NEBRASKA	49
	Chevalier, Shala	Alternate	IOWA	5
16	Mendoza, Jose	Delegate	CALIFORNIA	12
	Baratta, Jeremy	Alternate	CALIFORNIA	1
17	Carmona, John	Delegate	COLORADO	50
	Greer, Charles	Alternate	WYOMING	1
18	Cooper, Lori	Delegate	ARIZONA	20
	Samuel, Redell	Alternate	NEVADA	15
19	Mullins, Cali	Delegate	WASHINGTON	2
	Rhodes, Korby	Alternate	IDAHO	22
20	Reed, Janet	Delegate	TEXAS	240
	Moreland, Harold	Alternate	TEXAS	17
21	Halford-Pandos, Jerletta	Delegate	OKLAHOMA	32
	Dech, Alicia	Alternate	OKLAHOMA	32

Committee on General Resolutions and Membership

Advisor: Marquis Barefield and Shawn Hope

DISTRICT	MEMBER NAME	TITLE	DEPARTMENT	CHAPTER
1	Gayle-Bennett, Andrea	Delegate	MASSACHUSETTS	64
	Boyd, David	Alternate	MASSACHUSETTS	29
2	Sander, Shannon	Delegate	NEW YORK	15
	Trulio, Joe	Alternate	NEW YORK	118
3	Borrazas, Richard	Delegate	NEW HAMPSHIRE	18
	Cvelbar, William	Alternate	VERMONT	3
4	Werlich, Ronald	Delegate	CONNECTICUT	47
	Ballou, Elisa	Alternate	DELAWARE	1
5	Arnold, Phil	Delegate	PENNSYLVANIA	81
	Donadini, James	Alternate	PENNSYLVANIA	81
6	Elkins, William	Delegate	WEST VIRGINIA	56
	Colon-Ayala, Pedro	Alternate	PUERTO RICO	1
7	Dunn, Michael	Delegate	FLORIDA	109
	Hamilton, Michael	Alternate	FLORIDA	109
8	Emerson, Lisbeth	Delegate	ALABAMA	102
	Cluff, Christian	Alternate	ALABAMA	12
9	Dula Sultan, Tresa	Delegate	NORTH CAROLINA	1
	Forsberg, Philip	Alternate	GEORGIA	6
10	Davis, Natadjah	Delegate	MICHIGAN	1
11	Gidden, Lee	Delegate	OHIO	35
	Crawford, James	Alternate	OHIO	52
12	Kempainen, Matthew	Delegate	WISCONSIN	3
	Melone, Carlo	Alternate	ILLINOIS	42
13	Johnson, Penny	Delegate	INDIANA	3
	Auld, Crystal	Alternate	INDIANA	3
14	Walker, John	Delegate	MINNESOTA	2
	Knutson, Eldred	Alternate	NORTH DAKOTA	24
15	Harris, Carl	Delegate	MISSOURI	2
	Lee, Fredric	Alternate	NEBRASKA	11
16	Hernandez, Armando	Delegate	CALIFORNIA	1
	Robinson, Jacquelyn	Alternate	CALIFORNIA	158
17	Feldt, Scott	Delegate	COLORADO	7
	Portillo, Maurice	Alternate	NEW MEXICO	5
18	Nogar, Bruce	Delegate	ARIZONA	14
	McCoy, Thomas	Alternate	ARIZONA	1
19	Oehler, W.D.	Delegate	IDAHO	2
	Saxon, Louis	Alternate	WASHINGTON	2
20	Green, James	Delegate	TEXAS	187
	Franklin, Anita	Alternate	TEXAS	128
21	Chisum, Scott	Delegate	OKLAHOMA	88
	Williams, Deborah	Alternate	ARKANSAS	13

Committee on Legislation and Veterans Rights

Advisor: Joy Ilem and Shane Liermann

DISTRICT	MEMBER NAME	TITLE	DEPARTMENT	CHAPTER
1	Bronson, Robert	Delegate	MASSACHUSETTS	30
	Levy, Philip	Alternate	MASSACHUSETTS	11
2	Quinones, Pedro	Delegate	NEW YORK	120
	Bergmann, David	Alternate	NEW YORK	15
3	Florey, Craig	Delegate	MAINE	6
	Douglass, Joshua	Alternate	MAINE	1
4	Flynn, Benjamin	Delegate	DELAWARE	1
	Schnepf, George	Alternate	NEW JERSEY	56
5	Fiumara, Philip	Delegate	PENNSYLVANIA	76
	Price, Susan	Alternate	PENNSYLVANIA	15
6	Lemay, Joseph	Delegate	DC	14
	Cruz, Jorge	Alternate	PUERTO RICO	4
7	Rose, Laymond	Delegate	FLORIDA	16
	Reed, Gregory	Alternate	FLORIDA	4
8	Walker, Stuart	Delegate	TENNESSEE	25
	Frazier, Earl	Alternate	ALABAMA	12
9	King, Karen	Delegate	GEORGIA	90
	Hill, Sadie	Alternate	GEORGIA	6
10	Mudgett, Russell	Delegate	MICHIGAN	14
11	Cunningham, Aaron R	Delegate	OHIO	1
	MacCutcheon, Em Ginger	Alternate	OHIO	116
12	Labelle, Al	Delegate	WISCONSIN	57
	Baird, David	Alternate	ILLINOIS	33
13	Black, Jason	Delegate	INDIANA	103
	Bunting, Randy	Alternate	KENTUCKY	173
14	Dilks, Trent	Delegate	MINNESOTA	12
	Medhaug, Michael	Alternate	MINNESOTA	37
15	Fisher, Richard	Delegate	KANSAS	11
16	Wilson, Gerald	Delegate	CALIFORNIA	154
	Sabatino, Nicole	Alternate	CALIFORNIA	2
17	Mitchell, Edward	Delegate	NEW MEXICO	5
	Finley, Maria	Alternate	COLORADO	11
18	Brown, Penni	Delegate	NEVADA	13
	Cooper, Kevin	Alternate	ARIZONA	20
19	Wilkins, Michael	Delegate	OREGON	1
	Echols, Anginette	Alternate	OREGON	8
20	Cosby, Terrance	Delegate	TEXAS	240
	Brewer, Charles	Alternate	TEXAS	169
21	Plunk, Bobby	Delegate	ARKANSAS	10
	Kirk, Darlene	Alternate	OKLAHOMA	94

Committee on Constitution and Bylaws

Advisor: Edward Hartman

DISTRICT	MEMBER NAME	TITLE	DEPARTMENT	CHAPTER
1	McGreevy, Eugene	Delegate	MASSACHUSETTS	11
	Bryant, Walker	Alternate	MASSACHUSETTS	68
2	Wohlrab, Thomas	Delegate	NEW YORK	144
	Quinones, Pedro	Alternate	NEW YORK	120
3	Viveiros, Edward	Delegate	RHODE ISLAND	12
	Marino, Robert	Alternate	RHODE ISLAND	21
4	Pope, Leonard	Delegate	NEW JERSEY	41
	Maebry, Ronnie	Alternate	CONNECTICUT	2
5	Alexander, Timothy	Delegate	PENNSYLVANIA	15
	Robinson III, Samuel D	Alternate	PENNSYLVANIA	15
6	Smith, James	Delegate	VIRGINIA	22
	Forney, Nigel	Alternate	MARYLAND	22
7	Ayala, Thomas	Delegate	FLORIDA	1
	Slowey, Standley	Alternate	FLORIDA	1
8	Boulton, Jane	Delegate	TENNESSEE	28
	Givens, Linda	Alternate	LOUISIANA	23
9	Reynolds, Robert	Delegate	SOUTH CAROLINA	30
	Moffett, Jeffrey	Alternate	SOUTH CAROLINA	44
10	Lee, Rolly	Delegate	MICHIGAN	102
11	Martyn, Nolan	Delegate	OHIO	35
	Shaw, Michael	Alternate	OHIO	42
12	Felten, David	Delegate	WISCONSIN	3
	Gonyer, Jeremy	Alternate	WISCONSIN	19
13	Wallace, Jeremy	Delegate	KENTUCKY	118
	Cardinale, Scott	Alternate	KENTUCKY	173
14	Grantier, Kevin	Delegate	MONTANA	3
	Onsager, Lyle	Alternate	MONTANA	2
15	Kempisty, Timothy	Delegate	KANSAS	11
	Wilson, Amanda	Alternate	MISSOURI	11
16	Maddox, Clyde	Alternate	CALIFORNIA	28
17	Patten, James	Delegate	UTAH	8
	Lousberg, Nathanial	Alternate	COLORADO	41
18	Torres-Ireland, Rexana	Delegate	ARIZONA	14
	Billy, Lorrie	Alternate	ARIZONA	26
19	Gunno, Stanley	Delegate	WASHINGTON	2
	Clark, Maurace	Alternate	WASHINGTON	47
20	Brown, James	Delegate	TEXAS	128
	Beason, Betty	Alternate	TEXAS	240
21	Jackson, Donald	Delegate	ARKANSAS	7
	Schermer, Anna	Alternate	OKLAHOMA	94

Committee on Employment

Advisor: Ryan Burgos and Jeremy Yost

DISTRICT	MEMBER NAME	TITLE	DEPARTMENT	CHAPTER
1	Blonder, Jeffrey	Delegate	MASSACHUSETTS	64
	Sullivan, Mason	Alternate	MASSACHUSETTS	30
2	Steinwandel, Norbert	Delegate	NEW YORK	135
	Sander, George	Alternate	NEW YORK	15
3	Boisvert, Ernest	Delegate	RHODE ISLAND	12
	Sloan, Lisa	Alternate	VERMONT	4
4	Walker, Michael	Delegate	NEW JERSEY	24
	Guio, Susan	Alternate	NEW JERSEY	24
5	Butler, Jesse	Delegate	PENNSYLVANIA	15
	Smith, Marcia	Alternate	PENNSYLVANIA	15
6	Gregory, Lisa	Delegate	VIRGINIA	7
	Cancel, Ramon	Alternate	PUERTO RICO	4
7	Bueno, Eduard	Delegate	FLORIDA	4
	Perez, Liza	Alternate	FLORIDA	13
8	Durand, Barney	Delegate	LOUISIANA	7
	Hill, Belinda	Alternate	LOUISIANA	23
9	Boudy, Albert	Delegate	GEORGIA	10
	Bernadel, Grace	Alternate	GEORGIA	90
10	Zielke, Jason	Delegate	MICHIGAN	125
11	Wittneben, Jeffrey	Delegate	OHIO	9
	Hutchinson, Raymond	Alternate	OHIO	63
12	Corsello, S	Delegate	ILLINOIS	86
	Kogutkiewicz, Stanley	Alternate	WISCONSIN	44
13	Freeman, Steven	Delegate	KENTUCKY	89
	Jarvis, Toye	Alternate	KENTUCKY	89
14	Hall, Joseph	Delegate	NORTH DAKOTA	3
	Walsh, Timothy	Alternate	SOUTH DAKOTA	1
15	Alston, Arthur	Delegate	NEBRASKA	18
	Oliver, Jennifer	Alternate	IOWA	20
16	Skoda, Joseph	Delegate	CALIFORNIA	82
	Acosta, LeRoy	Alternate	CALIFORNIA	2
17	Schievelbein, Michael	Delegate	COLORADO	7
	McGinnis, Carmen	Alternate	COLORADO	7
18	Armenta, Travis	Delegate	NEVADA	1
	Samuel, Leon	Alternate	NEVADA	15
19	Hamel, Henry	Delegate	OREGON	17
	Walker, Ross	Alternate	WASHINGTON	5
20	Harrison, Joseph	Delegate	TEXAS	5
	Holman, Donna	Alternate	TEXAS	194
21	Thomas, Samantha	Delegate	OKLAHOMA	44
	Moores, Ronald	Alternate	OKLAHOMA	88

Committee on Hospital and Voluntary Services

Advisor: Jon Retzer and John Kleindienst

DISTRICT	MEMBER NAME	TITLE	DEPARTMENT	CHAPTER
1	Devine, Dennis	Delegate	MASSACHUSETTS	3
	Fitzgerald, David	Alternate	MASSACHUSETTS	90
2	Russell, Judith	Delegate	NEW YORK	126
	Rangel, Michelle	Alternate	NEW YORK	23
3	Gaddis, Joyce	Delegate	MAINE	6
	Coffin, Donna	Alternate	RHODE ISLAND	21
4	Taylor, Juliet	Delegate	CONNECTICUT	13
	Newell, Harry	Alternate	CONNECTICUT	47
5	Johnson, Leonard	Delegate	PENNSYLVANIA	15
	Hargrove, Marion	Alternate	PENNSYLVANIA	15
6	Greathouse, Adam	Delegate	WEST VIRGINIA	2
	Almaraz, Amanda	Alternate	VIRGINIA	10
7	Keckler, Mary Ann	Delegate	FLORIDA	67
	Taylor, James	Alternate	FLORIDA	4
8	Johnston, Rebecca	Delegate	TENNESSEE	22
	Ferguson, Tom	Alternate	ALABAMA	9
9	Small, Carolyn	Delegate	GEORGIA	33
	Cunningham, Willard	Alternate	SOUTH CAROLINA	13
10	Deck, Dwayne	Delegate	MICHIGAN	1
11	Plahovinsak, John	Delegate	OHIO	63
	Mitchell, Arlinda	Alternate	OHIO	35
12	Couture, Kenneth	Delegate	ILLINOIS	42
	Palo, Gregory	Alternate	WISCONSIN	2
13	Vierck, Roy	Delegate	INDIANA	40
	McCullough, David	Alternate	INDIANA	40
14	Weinheimer, Kenneth	Delegate	MONTANA	2
	Francis, Dan	Alternate	SOUTH DAKOTA	1
15	Elmore, Michael	Delegate	MISSOURI	48
	Jakub, Krista	Alternate	NEBRASKA	20
16	Johnson, Kirk	Delegate	CALIFORNIA	85
	Cooper, Kinyatta	Alternate	CALIFORNIA	2
17	Cardenas, Agnes	Delegate	NEW MEXICO	5
	Adkins, Deeno	Alternate	NEW MEXICO	3
18	Forkner, Carl	Delegate	ARIZONA	8
	Brewer, Shawn	Alternate	NEVADA	1
19	Porter, Donna	Delegate	IDAHO	17
	Hamilton, Alice	Alternate	OREGON	1
20	Nious, Donna	Delegate	TEXAS	5
	Phillips, Samuel	Alternate	TEXAS	169
21	Dunning, William	Delegate	OKLAHOMA	32
	Williams, Deborah	Alternate	ARKANSAS	13

Committee on Nomination of National Officers

Advisor: Albert Church and Joseph Johnston

DISTRICT	MEMBER NAME	TITLE	DEPARTMENT	CHAPTER
1	Stack, Daniel	Delegate	MASSACHUSETTS	3
	Valila, Michael	Alternate	MASSACHUSETTS	4
2	Stephenson, Scott	Delegate	NEW YORK	158
	Castellano, Richard	Alternate	NEW YORK	23
3	Santos, Stephen	Delegate	MAINE	19
	Apega, Stephen	Alternate	MAINE	1
4	Walker, Johnnie	Delegate	NEW JERSEY	44
	Pescatore, Richard	Alternate	CONNECTICUT	6
5	Kauffman, Joseph	Delegate	PENNSYLVANIA	113
	Komninos, Helen	Alternate	PENNSYLVANIA	15
6	Whitfield, Mattie	Delegate	MARYLAND	33
	Heitz, Michael	Alternate	WEST VIRGINIA	2
7	Joyner, Dennis	Delegate	FLORIDA	16
	Wolfe, Kenneth	Alternate	FLORIDA	101
8	Hermann, Hilmer	Delegate	LOUISIANA	50
	Walker, Deborah	Alternate	ALABAMA	7
9	Walls, Thomas	Delegate	SOUTH CAROLINA	4
	Swint, Freddie	Alternate	GEORGIA	10
10	Tucker, Lolita	Delegate	MICHIGAN	114
11	Uetterling, David	Delegate	OHIO	36
	Bailey, James	Alternate	OHIO	117
12	Hilliard, Robert	Delegate	WISCONSIN	27
	Reynolds, Alfred	Alternate	ILLINOIS	17
13	McGinnis, Eric	Delegate	INDIANA	3
	Burgess, John	Alternate	KENTUCKY	19
14	Whitehead, Stephen	Delegate	MINNESOTA	10
	Litzinger, Joseph	Alternate	NORTH DAKOTA	2
15	Bahl, Amy	Delegate	IOWA	6
	Bunker, James	Alternate	KANSAS	3
16	Anastasia, Guy	Delegate	CALIFORNIA	70
	Boatwright, David	Alternate	CALIFORNIA	154
17	Estes, Jerry	Delegate	UTAH	14
	Carmona, John	Alternate	COLORADO	50
18	Girard, Cathryn	Delegate	NEVADA	15
	Hohman, Glenn	Alternate	ARIZONA	14
19	Hack, Saranna	Delegate	ALASKA	2
	Sellers, Robert	Alternate	IDAHO	6
20	Johniken, Teresa	Delegate	TEXAS	3
	Brown, Daria	Alternate	TEXAS	187
21	Plunk, Bill	Delegate	ARKANSAS	7
	Brown, Vici	Alternate	OKLAHOMA	43

National Executive Committee

DISTRICT	MEMBER NAME	TITLE	DEPARTMENT	CHAPTER
1	Whitty, Francis	Delegate	MASSACHUSETTS	3
	Olson, Debora	Alternate	MASSACHUSETTS	85
2	Rivera, Israel	Delegate	NEW YORK	118
	Martin, Michael	Alternate	NEW YORK	178
3	Gaddis, Joyce	Delegate	MAINE	6
	Sloan, Lisa	Alternate	VERMONT	4
4	Walker, Johnnie	Delegate	NEW JERSEY	44
	Donberger, Mark	Alternate	DELAWARE	1
5	Johnson, Leonard	Delegate	PENNSYLVANIA	15
	Gui, David	Alternate	PENNSYLVANIA	48
6	Patterson, John	Delegate	MARYLAND	36
	Miller, Nachee	Alternate	DC	3
7	Keckler, Mary Ann	Delegate	FLORIDA	67
	Ayala, Thomas	Alternate	FLORIDA	1
8	Sensat, Dave	Delegate	LOUISIANA	17
	Causey, Mason	Alternate	LOUISIANA	20
9	Booker, Leon	Delegate	GEORGIA	1
	Solomon, Robert	Alternate	GEORGIA	1
10	Lee, Rolly	Delegate	MICHIGAN	102
	Gonzales, Beth	Alternate	MICHIGAN	102
11	Hanneman, Dennis	Delegate	OHIO	77
	Bailey, James	Alternate	OHIO	117
12	Polk, John	Delegate	WISCONSIN	19
	Johnson, Kevin	Alternate	WISCONSIN	3
13	McGinnis, Eric	Delegate	INDIANA	3
	Carnagey, Robert	Alternate	INDIANA	17
14	Grantier, Kevin	Delegate	MONTANA	3
	Onsager, Lyle	Alternate	MONTANA	2
15	Gerke, David	Delegate	MISSOURI	2
	Jakub, Jamie	Alternate	NEBRASKA	20
16	Wilson, Gerald	Delegate	CALIFORNIA	154
	Kerr, Michael	Alternate	CALIFORNIA	1
17	Estes, Jerry	Delegate	UTAH	14
	Carmona, John	Alternate	COLORADO	50
18	Dolan, Bill	Delegate	NEVADA	15
	Jones, Carl	Alternate	NEVADA	15
19	Marker, Brigitte	Delegate	OREGON	12
	Janus, Wanda	Alternate	OREGON	1
20	Edwards, Charles	Delegate	TEXAS	128
	Johniken, Teresa	Alternate	TEXAS	3
21	Komprood, Harry	Delegate	ARKANSAS	27
	Schermer, Anna	Alternate	OKLAHOMA	94

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

SECOND BUSINESS SESSION

August 8, 2023

- - -

The Second Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans 101st National Convention reconvened in the Wildwood Ballroom 2-7 of the Harrah's Resort Atlantic City, Atlantic City, New Jersey, on Tuesday, August 8, 2023, and was called to order at 8:29 o'clock, a.m., by National Commander Joseph "Joe" Parsetich.

COMMANDER JOSEPH "JOE" PARSETICH: Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

COMMANDER PARSETICH: The convention will please come to order. As a reminder I would like to ask everyone to please silence your cell phone and portable devices. (Three raps of the gavel) At this time we will pay our respects to the flag. Join me in the Pledge of the Allegiance. Hand salute.

(Whereupon, the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Two. I would like to call on Chaplain Varner to lead us in prayer.

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and the chaplain advanced to the podium.)

CHAPLAIN DEBRA VARNER: Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

CHAPLAIN VARNER: Let us pray. Oh, Heavenly Creator, once again we are truly grateful and thankful that you have allowed us in your presence once again. We give thanks for all of our sisters, our brothers, our comrades and our friends for being able to be with us today.

Now help us to walk in the spirit of humility and thanksgiving as we continue to do the work that is set before us for and through this great organization. These and all things we ask of you. And the people said Amen.

(Response of "Amen;" whereupon, the chaplain withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: (One gavel rap) Thank you, chaplain. I remind each of you that in order for a delegate to be heard at this convention you must be recognized by the chair. Only those delegates at a microphone will be recognized. Upon being so recognized delegates must state their name, chapter number, and the department that they represent.

I would like to call on Credentials Committee Chairman Brenda Reed for a report.

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and the Credentials Committee chair advanced to the podium.)

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON BRENDA REED: National Commander Parsetich, National Adjutant Jesinoski, delegates, members and guests, good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON REED: We are still in New Jersey, right?

(Response of "Yes.")

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON REED: I wasn't sure with all that wind last night if one of Doug's Star Wars cruisers had picked us up and moved us back to Orlando. (Laughter)

The roll call shows 1,010 delegates, and 41 alternates have registered, which includes 44 departments and 363 chapters registered. There are 7 national officers, 12 National Executive Committeemen, and 6 past national commanders currently registered for a total of 7,536 votes.

This is a partial report and is for informational purposes only. And it reflects registration at the close of business at 5:00 p.m. on August 7th, 2023. Commander, this completes the partial report of the Credential Committee.

(Whereupon, the Credentials Committee chair withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Thank you, Brenda. Next, I would like to call upon Chairman Joe Hall for the report of the Committee on Employment.

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and the Committee on Employment chair advanced to the podium.)

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN JOE HALL: Comrade Commander and delegates. The National Convention Committee on Employment was called to order on August 5th, 2023, by the Committee advisors Ryan Burgos and Jeremy Yost.

The first order of business was the election of a Convention Committee chairman and secretary. Joe Hall was elected as chairman and Lisa Gregory was elected as secretary.

The Committee then proceeded to review the resolutions submitted and I will now report to you those resolutions recommended for adoption by this national convention. For the purpose of saving time I will read only the number and purpose of the resolution.

- Number 19, support licensure and certification of active-duty service personnel;
- 020, support outreach and employment for women veterans;
- 021, eliminate the 12-year rule to request VR&E benefits under Chapter 31, leaving the date to apply for the benefit open-ended;
- 022, provide educational benefits for dependents of service-connected veterans rated 70 percent or more disabled;
- 023, support veterans' preference in public employment;
- 056, adequate staffing levels of the VR&E service;
- 095, support verification improvements for veteran-owned businesses within the VA;
- 096, oppose using D-VOP and L-VER to work with or process assistance programs unrelated to veterans;
- 113, monitor activities of the mandatory transition GPS program;
- 114, provide adequate funding and permanency for veterans' employment and/or training programs;
- 115, support extension of a period of employment services under VR&E services;
- 122, support legislation to strengthen and protect service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses;
- 123, support legislation to create, improve and reform federal programs for service-disabled programs entrepreneurship
- 154, remove requirement that VA compensation to service-connected veterans is counted as income for purposes of federal financial aid determinations;
- 155, support prompt payment of contracts to service-disabled veteran-owned businesses;
- 156, support legislation enhancing government-wide goals for participation by small businesses owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans;
- 157, support legislation to improve and protect education and employment benefits for disabled veterans and their survivors;
- 158, support legislation to reimburse, replace, and extend VR&E benefits for disabled veterans and their survivors for education and training impacted by a national emergency;
- 192, the VA should institute outreach program to businesses that hire veterans and want to maintain their workforce;
- 297, create an economic opportunities administration within the Department of Veteran Affairs;
- 327, protect veterans from employment discrimination when receiving health care for service-connected conditions;
- 434, support legislation to strengthen the veterans' employment emphasis under federal contract statute;
- 437, support legislation to remove the restriction against the transferring of education benefits of the post-9/11 GI bill directly to any dependent of the veteran at any time;
- 539, support legislation to extend, expand and reform the work opportunity tax credits and other employer incentives to hire and retain veteran employees;
- 540, require the United States Congress to create a work projects program which guarantees federal employment to service-disabled veterans;
- 541, support legislation to extend the duration of VR&E benefits beyond 48 months;
- 542, support the adoption of programs and legislation to reduce barriers to employment, education and full use and access to other benefits earned in your service in the military;
- 543, support legislation to provide a reasonable transition period for service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses to retain federal protected status following the death of the disabled-veteran owner; and
- 544, supporting fraud prevention controls – excuse me, supporting fraud prevention controls over service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses program.

Comrade Commander, this completes the report on the Committee on Employment. On behalf of the Committee I move the adoption of these resolutions and that the Committee be discharged with the thanks of the National Convention. (Applause)

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RESOLUTION NO. 019
SUPPORT LICENSURE AND CERTIFICATION OF
ACTIVE DUTY SERVICE PERSONNEL

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense (DOD) establishes, measures and evaluates performance standards for every occupation within the armed forces, providing some of the best vocational training in the nation to its military personnel; and

WHEREAS, that training is not recognized as fulfilling the certification and licensure requirements of applicable civilian equivalent occupations by all of the states; and

WHEREAS, many former military personnel, certified as proficient in their military occupational specialty are not certified or licensed to perform a comparable job in the civilian workforce once they leave the military; and

WHEREAS, many occupational career fields in the armed forces could translate to civilian occupations if DOD, in collaboration with states, unions and certifying/licensing entities, would expand its training curriculum to meet the various certification and licensure requirements of applicable civilian equivalent occupations, or forge some other path to do so; and

WHEREAS, once DOD expands its training approaches to meet the requirements of civilian equivalent career paths, service members could take certification or licensure equivalency examinations to gain journeyman status on par with the military occupation level of proficiency for the state in which they plan to reside; and

WHEREAS, the state in which the military service member plans to reside could then confer the appropriate journeyman equivalent status; and

WHEREAS, as military service members continue to serve, additional training or education could be counted as continuing training or education credits, thereby allowing them to retain certification and/or licensure status; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 112-56, the VOW to Hire Heroes Act, mandates the Department of Labor's (DOL) Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training to carry out a demonstration project on credentialing to facilitate the seamless transition of members of the armed forces to civilian employment by selecting up to five military occupational specialties with a skill or set of skills that are required for civilian employment in industries with high career demand; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports the elimination of employment barriers that impede the transfer of military occupations to the civilian labor market; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV urges Congress to engage in a national dialogue, working closely with the Administration generally, and DOD, Department of Veterans Affairs and DOL specifically, as well as state governments, employers, trade unions, and licensure and credentialing entities, to establish a clear process so that military training meets civilian certification and licensure requirements for the states in which veterans choose to live once they leave military service.

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RESOLUTION NO. 020
SUPPORT OUTREACH AND EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN VETERANS

WHEREAS, many women who have served in the military are not aware of services available to them through State Employment Security Agencies/State Workforce Agencies and therefore are less likely to obtain employment and training assistance than their male counterparts; and

WHEREAS, over the past decade, a significant increase has occurred in the number of women veterans in need of employment and training services; and

WHEREAS, because of the reduction in federal programs and the reduction of jobs for women in the private sector, the number of unemployed women veterans continues to increase; and

WHEREAS, workforce trends indicate only job-ready and highly skilled women veterans are able to find career employment; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, urges Congress to enact legislation to establish and fund special programs and outreach to women veterans, especially service-disabled women veterans, in need of employment assistance from the nation's basic labor exchange system and training assistance through programs operated under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV calls for additional training to be provided to service providers to address the delivery of services to, and the under-representation of, women veterans in career employment.

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RESOLUTION NO. 021
ELIMINATE THE 12-YEAR RULE TO REQUEST DEPARTMENT
OF VETERANS AFFAIRS VETERAN READINESS AND EMPLOYMENT
BENEFITS UNDER CHAPTER 31, FOR ALL VETERANS, LEAVING
THE DATE TO APPLY FOR THAT BENEFIT OPEN-ENDED

WHEREAS, not all disabled veterans are aware of their possible entitlements to Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) programs at the time they are awarded service connection for disabilities; and

WHEREAS, not all awards of service connection are rated high enough to enable veterans to be awarded chapter 31 benefits; and

WHEREAS, not all disabled veterans are under the impression that they need vocational rehabilitation until later, often after the current 12-year rule excludes them from the benefit they need and would otherwise have been entitled to; and

WHEREAS, the VA puts no time limit on when a veteran may claim his or her disability, and the VA also does not put a time limit on requesting another service-connected benefit; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 116-315 removed this period of eligibility but only for veterans who were discharged after January 1, 2013; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, seeks legislation to eliminate the 12-year limitation to apply for VR&E benefits for all veterans, leaving a veteran's date of entitlement open ended without time limit.

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RESOLUTION NO. 022
PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS FOR DEPENDENTS OF
SERVICE-CONNECTED VETERANS RATED 70% OR MORE DISABLED

WHEREAS, chapter 35, title 38, United States Code, extends educational assistance to the dependents of service-connected veterans who are evaluated as permanently and totally disabled; and

WHEREAS, many service-connected veterans rated 70%, 80% and 90% disabled have reduced earning ability and cannot afford to assist dependents with the cost of attending higher learning or pursuing vocational training; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, seeks the enactment of legislation which would extend educational assistance under chapter 35, title 38, United States Code, to the dependents of veterans who have service-connected disability ratings of 70% or more.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 023
SUPPORT VETERANS' PREFERENCE IN PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT

WHEREAS, DAV strongly supports federal, state, and local veterans' preference laws; and

WHEREAS, under section 2108, title 5, United States Code, qualified veterans with military service in periods of conflict receive a five-point preference in federal hiring, and service-disabled veterans receive a 10-point preference; and

WHEREAS, numerous special hiring authorities exist in federal law for veterans and service-disabled veterans, including the veterans recruitment appointment authority, Veterans Employment Opportunities Act of 1998 hiring authority and the 30% or more disabled veterans hiring authority; and

WHEREAS, the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, as amended, requires most federal contractors to have an "Affirmative Action" plan for employment of service-disabled veterans, veterans who served during periods of conflict, and recently separated veterans; and

WHEREAS, the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act was enacted to protect veterans from job discrimination and ensure their right to re-employment after an absence due to service in the uniformed services, to include protection for seniority, health insurance and retirement benefits; and

WHEREAS, federal agencies generally have not taken a proactive position on identifying patterns and practices of veterans' preference employment discrimination violations; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports veterans' preference in federal, state and local employment, greater enforcement provisions and increased accountability for veterans hiring compliance; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports appropriate enforcement against systemic veterans' preference discrimination; broader utilization of veterans and service-disabled veterans hiring preference; and substantive improvement of recruitment and hiring of veterans generally and service-disabled veterans specifically.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 056 **SUPPORT ADEQUATE STAFFING LEVELS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF** **VETERANS AFFAIRS VETERAN READINESS AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICE**

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) service is charged with preparing service-disabled veterans for suitable employment or providing independent-living services to those veterans with disabilities severe enough to render them unemployable; and

WHEREAS, transition of service-disabled veterans to meaningful employment relies heavily on VA's ability to provide vocational rehabilitation and employment services in a timely and effective manner, but the demands and expectations being placed on the VR&E service are exceeding the organization's current capacity to effectively deliver a full continuum of comprehensive programs; and

WHEREAS, the VR&E service has been experiencing a shortage of staff nationwide because of insufficient funding, which, as a result, has caused delays in providing VR&E services to service-disabled veterans, thus reducing their opportunities to achieve successful and timely rehabilitation; and

WHEREAS, to increase emphasis on employment, the VR&E service has begun an initiative entitled "Coming Home to Work," an early outreach effort to provide VR&E services to eligible service members pending medical separation from active duty at military treatment facilities, which will require additional staff to maintain efforts nationwide; and

WHEREAS, even though the focus of the VR&E service has drastically changed to career development and employment, it is not clear, despite VR&E's additional 80 employment coordinators, whether VA is able to meet the current and future demand for employment services; and

WHEREAS, in addition, the current 60 days of employment as the standard for a veteran to be considered fully employed is insufficient given that employers typically require longer probationary employment timeframes; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports strengthening of VA's VR&E service to meet the demands of service-disabled veterans by providing increased staffing and funding, a more timely and effective transition into the workforce, and placement follow-up with employers for at least six months.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 095 **SUPPORT VERIFICATION IMPROVEMENTS FOR VETERAN-OWNED** **BUSINESSES WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

WHEREAS, the military is downsizing, and thousands of former military personnel who have honorably served their country could become unemployed when they leave the military; and

WHEREAS, small business development assistance to veterans who have honorably served this country is a veterans' benefit that dates back to the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is authorized under the Veterans First program to enter into contracts first with Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSB) and then with Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (VOSB); and

WHEREAS, Congress has found that VA has entered into contracts pursuant to the Veterans First program with companies that were not legitimate SDVOSBs or VOSBs; and

WHEREAS, VA has implemented a formal verification process that is overly burdensome; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, recommends VA simplify its verification process for SDVOSBs and VOSBs interested in participating in the VA's Veterans First Contracting Program.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 096

OPPOSE USING DISABLED VETERANS OUTREACH PROGRAM SPECIALISTS AND LOCAL VETERANS EMPLOYMENT REPRESENTATIVES TO WORK WITH OR PROCESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS UNRELATED TO VETERANS

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Labor's Veterans Employment and Training Service administers programs to assist veterans with their employment and training needs; and

WHEREAS, Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists (DVOPS) provide intensive services to disabled veterans and veterans with barriers to employment in finding work, and Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) work with nondisabled veterans, informing them of employment opportunities, and outreach to community businesses to locate employment opportunities; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Public Law 112-56, the VOW to Hire Heroes Act, state employment agencies are now directed to utilize DVOPS and LVERs to work on other public assistance-related programs, which diverts DVOPS/LVERs from their prime mission to assist veterans with their employment and training needs; and

WHEREAS, this same law directs the Secretary of Labor to conduct regular audits to ensure compliance with this provision; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, urges Congress to amend Public Law 112–56 and return the duties of DVOPs and LVERs to concentrate their work to aid veterans.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 113

IMPROVE, REFORM AND MONITOR ACTIVITIES OF THE MANDATORY TRANSITION GOALS, PLANS, SUCCESS PROGRAM

WHEREAS, current law authorizes comprehensive transition assistance benefits and services for separating service members and their spouses, and requires that the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) and Disabled Transition Assistance Program (DTAP), now known as the Transition Goals, Plans, Success (GPS) program; and

WHEREAS, the transition from military service to civilian life is very difficult for many veterans who must overcome obstacles to successful employment; and

WHEREAS, the transition program was created to help our separating service members successfully transition to the civilian workforce, start a business or pursue training or higher education and is now mandatory for active-duty personnel, except under certain circumstances as specified in Public Law 112-56, the VOW to Hire Heroes Act; and

WHEREAS, participation by DAV and other veterans service organizations in the Transition GPS program is essential to service members to gain a full understanding of entitlements and free assistance and representation available upon discharge from military service; and

WHEREAS, the Transition GPS program expands the previous TAP and DTAP workshops from five to seven days (or longer in some instances) to strengthen, standardize and expand counseling and guidance for service members as they are separating from military service while transforming the military's approach to education, training and credentialing for service members; and

WHEREAS, the Transition GPS program, and its component TAP and DTAP workshops, are essential to easing some of the problems associated with transition, as is periodic review of training methodology and the collection and analysis of course participant critiques to ensure the program is fulfilling its intended objective, as mandated in Public Law 112-56;

WHEREAS, as the Transition GPS Program was established several years ago, it does not fully contemplate new needs of transitioning service members nor additional programs to improve their transition; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation to create new services and to improve and reform the Transition GPS Program;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV urges Congress to provide comprehensive oversight of the Transition GPS program, its workshops, training methodology and delivery of services, and the collection and analysis of course critiques;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports the inclusion of veterans service organizations in workshops, in order to confirm the program is meeting its objective, and to follow up with participants to determine if they found gainful employment following such training.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 114
PROVIDE ADEQUATE FUNDING AND PERMANENCY FOR VETERANS'
EMPLOYMENT AND/OR TRAINING PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, the extended economic downturn has had a greater impact on veterans generally and service-disabled veterans specifically than many other groups; and

WHEREAS, there are numerous veterans employment and training programs reaching out to provide critical assistance but are in need of adequate staffing and funding; and

WHEREAS, these programs include the Veterans' Employment and Training Service of the Department of Labor, National Veterans Training Institute of the Small Business Administration, Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program, Local Veterans Employment Representative program, homeless assistance programs and others; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, seeks and supports adequate funding and permanency for all veterans' employment and training programs.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 115
SUPPORT EXTENSION OF A PERIOD OF EMPLOYMENT SERVICES
UNDER THE VETERAN READINESS AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

WHEREAS, title 38, United States Code, §3105 states the period of a Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) program for a veteran may not exceed 48 months; and

WHEREAS, title 38, United States Code §3105 allows veterans counseling and placement and post-placement services for an additional period not to exceed eighteen months in any case in which the Secretary determines the provision of such counseling and services to be necessary to accomplish the purposes of a rehabilitation program in the individual case; and

WHEREAS, veterans with service-connected disabilities face employment barriers even after rehabilitation or achievement of vocational goals; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, seeks to ensure that service-connected veterans receive the services necessary to obtain and maintain suitable employment and supports an extension up to 24 months for counseling and placement and post-placement services.

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RESOLUTION NO. 122
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO STRENGTHEN AND PROTECT
SERVICE-DISABLED VETERAN-OWNED SMALL BUSINESSES

WHEREAS, the federal government's support of Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSBs) contributes significantly to restoring veterans' quality of life while aiding in their transitions from active duty; and

WHEREAS, the federal government sets aside over \$105 billion in annual small business spending, which the SDVOSBs compete for; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans First Program was created under Public Law 109-461 for Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (VOSBs) and expanded the Service-Disabled Veteran contracting program for VA procurements in order for veteran business owners and the government to benefit mutually; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans First Program's purpose is to ensure that legitimately owned and controlled VOSBs and Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSBs) are able to compete for VA VOSB and SDVOSB set-asides, and help stimulate the small business community and create growth for the economy; and

WHEREAS, the success of the SDVOSB programs greatly benefits the service-disabled veteran community; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, DAV supports the enactment of legislation that strengthens and protects SDVOSB programs.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 123
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO CREATE, IMPROVE AND REFORM FEDERAL
PROGRAMS FOR SERVICE-DISABLED VETERAN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

WHEREAS, the federal government has established programs to assist Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSBs) and veteran self-employment, many of these programs have not been reformed or updated in multiple years; and

WHEREAS, the VA's program, Veterans Readiness and Employment (VR&E) in 2021, provided education and employment services to over 80,000 eligible disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, VR&E has a self-employment track; however, its eligibility is open to only "veterans with the most severe service-connected disabilities who require homebound training or self-employment," resulting in just 162 veterans participating in the self-employment track in 2021; and

WHEREAS, veterans with service-related injuries deserve the opportunity for self-employment that accommodates their employment barriers and provides them with financial empowerment; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports the enactment of legislation to create federal programs for service-disabled veteran entrepreneurship; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports legislation to improve and reform existing federal service-disabled veteran entrepreneurship programs; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports legislation to expand eligibility for the self-employment training within VA's VR&E program.

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RESOLUTION NO. 154
REMOVE REQUIREMENT THAT DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
COMPENSATION TO SERVICE-CONNECTED VETERANS IS COUNTED AS
INCOME FOR PURPOSES OF FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID DETERMINATIONS

WHEREAS, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) monthly disability compensation is a tax-free benefit awarded to ill and injured veterans and is not considered income under the Internal Revenue Code; and

WHEREAS, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) requires dependents of service-connected disabled veterans in receipt of VA disability compensation to disclose their parents' compensation as income under penalty of perjury; and

WHEREAS, this requirement is contrary to the intent of the VA disability compensation award and contrary to tax law; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation to counter this arbitrary and capricious victimization of ill and injured veterans and their dependents, which can render the dependent child of a service-disabled veteran ineligible for federal student aid; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this requirement is unjust to service-disabled veterans and their dependents.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 155
SUPPORT PROMPT PAYMENT OF CONTRACTS TO
SERVICE-DISABLED VETERAN-OWNED BUSINESSES

WHEREAS, the program of contracts for Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSB) on a preferential basis should be of a great assistance to SDVOSBs that hire disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, we are aware of problems involving the nonpayment of contracts; and

WHEREAS, when these SDVOSBs complain about reduced payments, they face the threat of rejection from future contracts and/or the threat of being put out of business; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, seeks and strongly supports the immediate payment of all completed SDVOSB contracts that are unpaid for more than one year, the expeditious payment of all unpaid completed SDVOSB contracts and an investigation of the inappropriate tactics used against our comrades by an independent prosecutor.

RESOLUTION NO. 156
SUPPORT LEGISLATION ENHANCING GOVERNMENT-WIDE
SUPPORTS FOR PARTICIPATION BY SMALL BUSINESSES OWNED
AND CONTROLLED BY SERVICE-DISABLED VETERANS

WHEREAS, section 502, Public Law 106-50, the Veterans Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development Act of 1999, codified “the Government-wide goal for participation by small business concerns owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans shall be established at not less than 3 percent of the total value of all prime contract and subcontract awards for each fiscal year;” and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization has the Center for Veterans Enterprise, which maintains VA’s database of Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (VOSB) and Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSB), as well as serving as an advocate for VOSBs, SDVOSBs, historically underutilized business (HUB) zone businesses and women-owned small businesses; and

WHEREAS, the database va.gov/osdbu vendor information pages (VIP) lists businesses that are 51% or more owned by veterans and is the only one within the federal government; and

WHEREAS, the VIP was originally established to act as a single-source database of certified VOSBs and SDVOSBs to supply all federal agencies and prime contractors information to assist the federal government with achieving the not less than 3% goal of set-aside contracts for SDVOSBs and/or contracts being awarded to SDVOSB or VOSB concerns, as mandated in Public Law 106-50; and

WHEREAS, while section 8127 (f)(4), Public Law 109-461, requires verification of veterans’ ownership of listed SDVOSBs and VOSBs, as well as verification of the service-disabled status of SDVOSBs, the federal agencies tasked with ensuring set-asides and timely, comprehensive verification have failed to do so; and

WHEREAS, according to the VA Office of Inspector General report, “Audit of Veteran-Owned and Service Disabled-Owned Small Business Programs,” Report Number 10-02436-234, dated July 25, 2011, 32 of 42 statistically selected businesses that were reviewed—76%—were either ineligible to participate in the programs or were ineligible for the awarded contracts; and

WHEREAS, few government agencies have met, much less exceeded, the set-aside program goal for disabled veteran-owned businesses; and

WHEREAS, women-owned small businesses have a required federal contract set-aside goal of 5%, which is greater than the set-aside for VOSB or SDVOSB; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation and efforts to increase the federal set-asides for VOSB and SDVOSB to 5% of all governments agencies to provide parity to those goals for women-owned businesses; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV calls on all government agencies to meet the set-aside goal of all prime and subcontract awards to businesses controlled by service-disabled veterans each fiscal year; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Congress should enact legislation requiring the federal government make set-asides mandatory rather than be goals, and should require underperforming federal agencies to make up shortfalls in achieving these goals in the subsequent fiscal year; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Congress should revise the enforcement penalties for misrepresentation of a business concern as a VOSB or SDVOSB from a reasonable period of time as determined by the Secretary to a period of not less than five years; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Congress must ensure adequate resources are available to the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization to expedite verification of VIP business listing eligibility and all federal agencies to effectively monitor and hold accountable those agencies that are not meeting the set-aside goals and require all federal agencies to list in their annual reports their prior fiscal year’s actual percentage of meeting this goal, the results of which would serve as an annual report card of which agencies need the most assistance in the development and implementation of stronger contracting compliance.

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RESOLUTION NO. 157

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO IMPROVE AND PROTECT EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS FOR DISABLED VETERANS AND THEIR SURVIVORS

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA's) Veterans Readiness and Employment (VR&E) and Survivors and Dependents' Educational Assistance (Chapter 35) have been integral to improving the economic outlook for both service-disabled veterans and their survivors; and

WHEREAS, despite improvements in the overall veteran unemployment rate, service-disabled veterans still have a higher rate of unemployment than their civilian counterparts; and

WHEREAS, programs, such as the VetSuccess on Campus, that could be used to reach more rural locations, could be expanded and strengthened; and

WHEREAS, both Chapter 35 and VA's VR&E benefits should be strengthened and protected from budget cuts and fraud, waste, and abuse; and

WHEREAS, survivors and dependents of severely disabled veterans should see their benefits under Chapter 35 strengthened and increased so as not to cause a financial burden if they choose to attend school; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation that would improve and protect VA's education and employment benefits for service-disabled veterans and their survivors.

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RESOLUTION NO. 158

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO REIMBURSE, REPLACE AND EXTEND EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL BENEFITS FOR DISABLED VETERANS AND THEIR SURVIVORS FOR EDUCATION/TRAINING IMPACTED BY ANY NATIONAL EMERGENCY

WHEREAS, all educational and vocational programs administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) have an established number of months of potential eligibility; and

WHEREAS, the underlying premise for the educational and vocational programs is to enable the veteran and/or their dependents to obtain college/university/trade school-based education; and

WHEREAS, during the certain situations, all schools/colleges/universities may experience impacts to the ability to serve the student population, to include both class and counseling; and

WHEREAS, this disruption impacted the quality of education obtained during that period and the schools/students continue to face difficulties in adjusting to changes imposed by lockdowns and the ongoing pandemic; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, proposes, seeks and strongly supports Congress directing the VA to not count the semesters/quarters of school that were interrupted, beginning in March 2020 due to any national emergency restrictions, against the overall number of months of eligibility for any veteran/dependent who was in receipt of benefits from any VA education or vocational program at the time, and continuing until such a time as Congress determines that stability to the educational process has returned; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports legislation to ensure that any delimiting date, whether through time frame of eligibility or, in the case of dependent children, the attainment of age, be extended for one full semester/quarter for each semester/quarter impacted by national emergency disruptions to fully mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 closures that began in March 2020.

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RESOLUTION NO. 192

ENCOURAGE THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO INSTITUTE AN OUTREACH PROGRAM TO BUSINESSES THAT HIRE VETERANS AND WANT TO MAINTAIN THEIR VETERAN WORKFORCE

WHEREAS, the VA has many programs designed to help Veterans obtain training and gain employment; and

WHEREAS, there is no VA program designed to help businesses retain Veterans who are employed; and

WHEREAS, veterans that are employed suffer from many disabilities, both physical and mentally; and

WHEREAS, employers are often left to deal when a Veteran is triggered and shuts down, or becomes severely depressed, or even suicidal. Leaving many businesses to release the Veteran from their employment.

WHEREAS, arming businesses with the VA resources to help their Veteran employees will help businesses become successful and helps the Veteran maintain employment; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports efforts by VA to institute an outreach program to businesses that hire Veterans and want to maintain their Veteran workforce.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 297 CREATE AN ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ADMINISTRATION WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

WHEREAS, veterans programs have become more complex over the years, the fragmented nature of these programs has resulted in a decreased ability of senior management to monitor the delivery of each veteran's employment, education, and training program; and

WHEREAS, when the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) was created, the initial reason for doing so was to avoid duplication, fragmentation or delay in the various services provided to veterans; and

WHEREAS, anticipating veterans' long-term needs, not only for health care and disability compensation but also for education and employment, requires a new approach; and

WHEREAS, establishing a fourth administration within VA dedicated to creating economic opportunities for veterans would increase the visibility and accountability of all veterans education and employment-related programs; and

WHEREAS, despite a steadily increasing workload due to more veterans becoming eligible as the compensation backlog is reduced, programs such as Veteran Readiness and Employment have seen a stagnation of budget requests and even reductions; and

WHEREAS, this new centralized veterans economic opportunity administration should be administered through a new position of Under Secretary for said organization; and

WHEREAS, such a move would allow the Under Secretary for Benefits to focus specifically on the delivery of disability compensation and pension benefits to disabled veterans, their dependents and survivors; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, recommends that Congress separate from the Veterans Benefits Administration all programs related to economic opportunity and create a new administration and that it should be appropriately funded and administered by an Under Secretary for Economic Opportunity.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 327 PROTECT VETERANS FROM EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION WHEN RECEIVING HEALTH CARE FOR SERVICE-CONNECTED CONDITIONS

WHEREAS, the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) requires certain employers to allow employees to take reasonable unpaid leave for qualified medical and family reasons; and

WHEREAS, the National Defense Authorization Acts for fiscal years 2008 and 2010 amended the FMLA to include "qualifying exigency leave" and "military caregiver leave" to better balance the unique needs of employees with family members in the military and family members ill and injured while serving in the military; and

WHEREAS, the FMLA delays service-connected disabled veterans' eligibility to job-protected medical leave; and

WHEREAS, many service-disabled veterans with the ability to work need ongoing care to maintain their health status and retain their employability; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, urges Congress to extend protection under the FMLA to encompass the medical care needs of veterans with service-connected disabilities.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 434
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO STRENGTHEN THE VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT
EMPHASIS UNDER FEDERAL CONTRACTS STATUTE

WHEREAS, section 4212, title 38, United States Code, requires federal contractors to give preference in hiring to disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, veterans themselves are required to enforce the law, presuming those that are covered by the law are aware of it and are able to detect violations; and

WHEREAS, the requirement does not take effect unless a legally mandated provision is included in federal contracts; and

WHEREAS, federal agencies regularly omit the mandatory provision from applicable contracts; and

WHEREAS, millions of veterans entitled to valuable employment assistance are being denied it without recourse; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation that will amend 38 USC §4212 to clearly require automatic, active recruiting and hiring of veterans by federal contractors.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 437
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO REMOVE THE RESTRICTION AGAINST THE
TRANSFERRING OF EDUCATION BENEFITS OF THE POST 9/11 GI BILL
DIRECTLY TO ANY DEPENDENT OF THE VETERAN AT ANY TIME

WHEREAS, current law provides restrictive rules and regulations limiting the transfer of education benefits to a dependent of the veteran; and

WHEREAS, veterans with entitlement to Post 9/11 GI Bill who did not transfer entitlement to dependents through registering in the DEERS system once separated from service can no longer transfer entitlement to new dependent; and

WHEREAS, therefore these veteran who wish to transfer entitlement to a new spouse, adopted child, or any dependent not listed cannot do so; and

WHEREAS, this restriction of utilizing the earned education benefit to the veterans wished purpose for the veteran's family is restricted;

WHEREAS, allowing the veteran to transfer entitlement of Post 9/11 education benefits to any dependent of the veteran at any time would be of the veteran's wishes and good purpose of the veteran's earned entitlement; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation to repeal the restrictions of entitlement to transfer Post 9/11 education benefits to any dependent of the veteran at any time.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 539
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO EXTEND, EXPAND AND REFORM
WORK OPPORTUNITY TAX CREDITS AND OTHER EMPLOYER
INCENTIVES TO HIRE AND RETAIN VETERAN EMPLOYEES

WHEREAS, the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC), is a Federal tax credit available to employers for hiring and employing individuals from certain targeted groups, including disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, in general, the WOTC is equal to 40% of up to \$6,000 of wages paid to, or incurred on behalf of, an individual who, is in their first year of employment; is certified as being a member of a targeted group; and performs at least 400 hours of services for that employer; and

WHEREAS, the WOTC is only applicable for hiring a certified veteran prior to December 31, 2025, and does not apply beyond that first year; and

WHEREAS, the WOTC was extended in September 2021 and will expire December 31, 2025; and

WHEREAS, a RAND Corporation study on qualified veterans, found that the WOTC increased their employment rates by 2% and increased their wage income by nearly 40%; and

WHEREAS, another study, "The Effects of an Employer Subsidy on Employment Outcomes: A Study of the Work Opportunity and Welfare-to-Work Tax Credits," found no evidence for the WOTC having a positive impact on either employment rates or wages in the long term; and

WHEREAS, veterans with service-related injuries deserve the opportunity for long-term employment and retention in a variety of career fields; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports the enactment of legislation to extend the WOTC beyond December 31, 2025; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports legislation to expand and reform the WOTC tax credits for employers who employ certified veterans beyond the first year; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports legislation to enact other tax credit incentive programs for employers to hire and retain disabled veterans in a variety of locations.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 540

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO CREATE A WORK PROJECTS PROGRAM THAT GUARANTEES FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT TO SERVICE-DISABLED VETERANS

WHEREAS, the federal government set a precedent with the creation of the Works Progress Administration (WPA), later renamed the Work Projects Administration (WPA) to complete major public works projects before World War II; and

WHEREAS, the WPA was highly successful in completing major public works projects, and

WHEREAS, general government infrastructure nationwide lacks sufficient funding to maintain the adequate safety of public roads, bridges, water supplies, and the like; and

WHEREAS, the nation's veterans have proved themselves as dedicated, highly trained, and capable workers, that bring leadership and maturity to the workforce; and

WHEREAS, such a program has the potential to significantly reduce veteran homelessness caused by high unemployment rates and demonstrate the gratitude of the people served by our veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, strongly supports legislation to require the United States Congress to create and fund, without reduction to VA or DOD funding, a jobs program similar to the WPA, which guarantees federal employment to service-disabled veterans being discharged from military service under other than dishonorable conditions.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 541

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO EXTEND THE DURATION OF VETERAN READINESS AND EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS BEYOND 48 MONTHS

WHEREAS, veterans that have a disability rating with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and are considered to have an employment handicap are eligible for Veteran Readiness & Employment (VR&E) services through the VA; and

WHEREAS, disabled veterans are eligible for VR&E for a duration not to exceed 48 months (or its equivalent when pursued on a part-time basis); and

WHEREAS, many veterans do not have any college prior to entering the VR&E program and require basic entry level courses to start college; and

WHEREAS, VR&E released its Longitudinal Study Annual Report for fiscal year 2016, in which it states that the average college degree takes up to five years to complete; and

WHEREAS, it would be more equitable if the laws and regulations were changed so that veterans were eligible for VR&E benefits beyond 48 months, extending them to a minimum of 60 months, to ensure that they can complete their program without additional financial burden; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation that would allow VR&E benefits to be extended, to a minimum of 60 months, for eligible veterans, to ensure that they can complete their program without additional financial burden.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 542

Support the Adoption of Programs and Legislation to Reduce Barriers to Employment, Education and Full Use and Access to Other Benefits Earned through Service in the United States Military

WHEREAS, the DAV is dedicated to empowering veterans to lead high quality lives with respect and dignity; and

WHEREAS, a primary focus for the DAV is to provide free, professional assistance to service-disabled veterans and their families in obtaining benefits and services earned through military service; and

WHEREAS, furthering their education and seeking gainful employment to support themselves and their families becomes a veteran's immediate and continued focus upon leaving service; and

WHEREAS, upon separation from service, veterans do not always fully understand the scope and breadth of their earned benefits, how to access those benefits, and often do not understand or realize the barriers that impede or infringe on those benefits; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports the adoption of programs and legislation to identify, reduce and remove barriers to a service-disabled veteran's employment, continued education and full access and use of other benefits earned as a result of their service-connected disability.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 543
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE A REASONABLE TRANSITION
PERIOD FOR SERVICE-DISABLED VETERAN-OWNED SMALL
BUSINESSES TO RETAIN FEDERAL PROTECTED STATUS FOLLOWING
THE DEATH OF THE DISABLED VETERAN OWNER

WHEREAS, section 308, Public Law 108-183, the Veterans Benefits Act of 2003, established a procurement program for Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB); and

WHEREAS, Executive Order 13360, Contracting with Service-Disabled Veterans' Businesses, directs all federal agencies to provide opportunities for SDVOSBs to increase their federal contracting and subcontracting opportunities; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 109-461, the Veterans Benefits, Health Care, and Information Technology Act of 2006, established a Veterans First Contracting Program specifically for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to increase business opportunities with the VA for SDVOSBs; and

WHEREAS, SDVOSBs and other small businesses are the focus of Public Law 111-240, the Small Business Jobs Act of 2010, which provides enhanced opportunities for SDVOSBs to compete for federal projects and subcontracting opportunities; and

WHEREAS, the SDVOSB category has encouraged many service-disabled veterans to take the personal risk of establishing small businesses with the support of their families, their own personal financial resources, the VA and, in some cases, commercial institutions; and

WHEREAS, these SDVOSBs have created new job opportunities for American citizens and, in many cases, have hired other service-disabled veterans and veterans during very challenging economic times; and

WHEREAS, in enacting Public Law 111-240, the federal government acknowledges that it is essential to create and grow small businesses in order to create new jobs and help the country recover from a most severe recession and provide for future job growth; and

WHEREAS, the SDVOSB category requires the service-disabled veteran to own at least 51% of the stock in the business and remain active in the day-to-day operations of the business in order for the business to maintain its SDVOSB status; and

WHEREAS, the enabling legislation for the SDVOSB program does not currently include a provision dealing with the treatment of the business after the death of the veteran owner; and

WHEREAS, since loss of the company's SDVOSB status would put the service-disabled veteran's investment, family heirs and employees at severe risk due to either downsizing or closing the business due to loss of federal procurement opportunities; and

WHEREAS, section 8127 (h)(2)(C), Public Law 109-461, (applicable only to VA) allows for a 10-year transition period to the surviving spouse of a 100% service-disabled veteran owner of a SDVOSB or a veteran owner who dies as a result of a service-connected disability; and

WHEREAS, allowing the surviving spouses or heirs of service-disabled veterans to gain a reasonable transition period for the SDVOSB program would help to maintain the jobs created by the SDVOSB for service-disabled veterans, veterans and other employees, and will not put these individuals at increased financial risk and hardship due to likely job loss or downsizing of the business; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports the enactment of legislation to provide a reasonable transition period for all SDVOSBs, not covered by Public Law 109-461, to retain their SDVOSB

status with the federal government following the death of the service-disabled veteran owner via a surviving spouse, children or heirs, and thus allowing the business to restructure over time without necessarily downsizing, laying off workers or closing.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 544

SUPPORT FRAUD PREVENTION CONTROLS OVER SERVICE-DISABLED VETERAN-OWNED SMALL BUSINESS PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB) Program, designed to steer \$4 billion in government contracts to businesses owned by service-disabled veterans, has allowed over \$90 million to be fraudulently awarded to ineligible companies; and

WHEREAS, the Small Business Administration failed to properly check applicants before awarding contracts and failed to take action on service-disabled veterans' complaints of abuse; and

WHEREAS, testimony presented by the United States Government Accountability Office identified millions of dollars of SDVOSB contracts awarded to ineligible firms; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, seeks and strongly supports creating effective resources to investigate, prevent and monitor the SDVOSB program and to ensure that fraud is aggressively prosecuted or companies having committed fraud are suspended, debarred or otherwise held accountable.

* * *

(Whereupon, the Employment Committee chair withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Thank you, Joe. You have heard the motion. May I have a second? Don't all rush at once. (Laughter)

MR. ALBERT LABELLE: Mic 2.

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Mic 2.

MR. LABELLE: Al Labelle, Chapter 47, Wisconsin, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Thank you, Al. We have had a first and a second to accept the committee's report. All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered.

(Whereupon, the Employment Committee chair withdrew from the stage.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: I would like to call upon Chairman Trent Dilks for the report of the Committee on Legislation and Veterans Rights.

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and the Committee on Legislation and Veterans Rights chair advanced to the podium.)

LEGISLATION AND VETERANS RIGHTS CHAIRPERSON TRENT DILKS: You good?

COMMANDER PARSETICH: There we go. Give me a second, Joe. Have my seat. Go ahead and sit down there. (Laughter)

(Whereupon, the commander returned to the podium and the chairman sat in the commander's seat.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Okay, we're going to back up for a second following the Committee on Employment.

In accordance with Rule 9 now is the time for any rejected resolutions to be read. Are there any resolutions that you wish read? All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered. Thank you. All right, Joe. You've got the floor.

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and the chairman advanced to the podium.)

LEGISLATION AND VETERANS RIGHTS COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON DILKS: Thanks, Commander. It's a nice chair you got there, commander. (Laughter) You can see this beautiful audience. It's wonderful.

Comrade Commander and delegates, the National Convention Committee on Legislation and Veterans Rights was called to order on August 6th, 2023, by the Committee advisors Joy Ilem and Shane Liermann.

The first order of business was the election of a Convention Committee chairman and secretary. Trent Dilks was elected as chairman. And Pedro Quinones was elected as secretary.

The Committee then proceeded to review the resolutions submitted. And I will now report to you the resolutions recommended for adoption by this national convention. For the purpose of time I will read only the number and the purpose of the resolutions.

Resolution 1, resolution 1, increase the grant and specially adaptive reimbursement rates for automobiles and other conveyances to certain disabled veterans and authorize reimbursement for new adaptive equipment technologies;

002, support legislation to improve the VA fiduciary program;

003, support legislation providing that special separation benefits payments not be withheld from VA disability compensation payments;

004, support legislation to allow a veteran permanently and totally disabled due to service-connected conditions to continue to receive dependents' compensation for their adult child attending school while that child is in receipt of dependents' educational assistance under Chapter 35;

005, require VA to request private medical records prior to future examinations;

024, support compensable evaluations for certain disabilities currently at zero percent;

025, oppose any recommendation by any commission or other source to reduce or eliminate benefits for disabled veterans;

026, oppose reduction, taxation, or elimination of veterans' benefits;

039, support legislation to reduce the 10-year rule for dependency indemnity compensation;

040, support legislation to remove prohibition against concurrent receipt of longevity retired pay and veterans' disability compensation for all longevity retired veterans;

041, support interest payments for Department of Veterans' Affairs retroactive awards of one year or more;

042, support legislation to provide for presumptive service connection for tinnitus and hearing loss;

043, expand presumptions for service-connection for former POWs;

044, support legislation to provide a temporary total disability compensation rating for an amputee veteran while a new prosthetic device is developed and delivered;

045, support legislation to establish presumptive service connection for diseases and illnesses related to toxic exposure at Grand Forks Air Force Base and Minot Air Force Base in North Dakota;

051, provide for a compensable rating for hearing-impaired veterans required to use a hearing aid;

060, support legislation to provide studies, health care and benefits resulting from toxic exposures at Bosnia and Kosovo;

061, support legislation that would exempt the benefits paid to war-time service-connected disabled veterans from the Pay-go/Cut-go provision of the budget enforcement act;

066, support legislation for a scientific evaluation to include conditions of the thyroid as a presumptive Gulf War Disorder;

067, support legislation to reform fugitive felon status within the Department of Veterans Affairs;

068, support legislation authorizing the presumption of service connection for all radiogenic diseases and eliminate dose exposure estimate requirements;

069, support legislation to award special monthly compensation at R1 to veterans with anatomical loss or loss of use of three extremities;

077, support legislation to increase maximum evaluation for service-connected headaches;

078, amend provision regarding eligibility for automobile adaptive equipment to include any veteran whose service-connected disability inhibits his/her ability to safely operate a motor vehicle;

079, support a change in regulatory requirements for temporary total disability ratings;

080, establish immediate authorization of grants by the Board of Veterans Appeals on all cases advanced on the docket;

081, support legislation to establish presumptive service connection for diseases and illnesses related to toxic exposure at Malmstrom Air Force Base, Montana;

086, support elimination of the link between chronicity and continuity with chronic diseases listed in 38 C.F.R., Section 3.309;

087, support legislation to grant Aid and Attendance to a veteran's seriously disabled child;

088, extend veterans benefits to survivors following the death of a veteran;

097, support legislative reforms related to recovery of debts by the VA;

098, extend eligibility for mortgage protection life insurance for 100 percent service-connected veterans;

099, support legislation to cap attorneys' fees for benefits' counseling and claims services before the VA;

108, support an increase in the Department of Veterans' Affairs Burial Allowance for service-connected veterans and provide automatic annual adjustments;

109, support legislation to provide a realistic increase in VA compensation rates to address loss of quality of life;

116, support legislation to require VA to implement an optional path for visual impaired veterans;

117, remove requirement of manifestation of chloracne and porphyria cutanea tarda and acute/subacute peripheral neuropathy within one year of exposure to Agent Orange; phew (Laughter)

125, support legislation for studies in presumptive disease related to P-FAS exposure;

126, support legislation to provide studies related to health care and benefits resulting from toxic exposures at K-2.

127, oppose subjecting disability compensation and DIC to means testing;

129, support legislation to expand VA mental health transition services to all service members upon discharge;

131, support legislation to direct the Secretary of VA to coordinate within VA and with the DoD to verify dependency status;

135, support legislation to oppose the payment of attorneys' fees based on periods when the attorney was not involved in the claim;

138, support legislation to expand the recognized wartime service periods to include those veterans who served in combat environments from hostile military or terrorist activity from November 4, 1979, through August 1, 1990;

139, support legislation to clarify and expand entitlement to Dependent's Educational Assistance under Chapter 35 for children of a two-veteran household;

142, support legislation to ensure entitlements to spina bifida and birth defects related to Agent Orange in new locations of the PACT Act;

143, support legislation requiring any appeal withdrawal to be in writing;

144, support legislation to include service near the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station as a radiation risk activity;

145, support legislation to include Myrtle Station Antarctica as a radiation risk activity;

164, support legislation to remove the veteran's personal identification information from his/her claim identification;

196, provide medical benefits and compensation for Persian Gulf War veterans negatively impacted by Sarin Nerve Gas;

197, support a change in regulatory requirements rating under Section 4.30 under Title 38, C.F.R. to provide for temporary total rating for incapacitation of more than 21 days;

199, support legislation to allow for the use of an "intent to file" in cases where an initial or supplemental claim of the same or similar benefit on the same or similar basis was previously denied;

201, support outdated forms to be considered as "intent to files";

211, oppose long-term rounding down of COLAs and veterans' benefits;

213, amend the law to provide ten-year protection for service-connected disability ratings;

214, support legislation to provide for service connection for disabling conditions resulting from toxic and environmental exposures;

215, oppose any proposal that would reduce payments of Department of Veterans' Affairs Disability Compensation by payments of Social Security Disability Insurance or any other federal benefit paid to a veteran;

216, consider treatment for presumptive service-connected condition as a claim for VA compensation;

220, support meaningful claims and appeals reform;

222, support legislation for the VA to provide childcare services assistance to veterans attending VA programs;

223, support legislation to increase disability compensation;

224, support legislation to allow all veterans to recover amounts withheld as tax on disability severance pay;

225, support legislation that requires VA to consider private medical evidence provided by licensed private health care providers;

226, support legislation to provide for realistic cost-of-living allowances;

227, support legislation to exclude veterans' disability compensation from countable income for purposes for eligibility for benefits and services from other government programs;

228, support oversight of VA's practices in evaluating disability claims for residuals of military sexual trauma;

230, support a more liberal view of "Other than Honorable" discharge for the purpose of eligibility for VA benefits and health care services;

231, oppose lump-sum payments for service-connected disabilities;

232, oppose the imposition of time limits for filing disability compensation claims;

233, oppose any change that would redefine service-connected disability or restrict the conditions or circumstances under which it may be established;

234, oppose change of definition of herbicide agent for the purposes of establishing service connection for disabilities related to herbicide exposures;

235, support legislation to establish a presumptive service connection for diseases and illnesses related to contaminants at Fort McClellan, Alabama;

236, amend the VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities for mental disorders;

237, compensate Persian Gulf War veterans suffering from illnesses circumstantially linked to their service in the Persian Gulf War;

238, support sufficient, timely and predictable funding for all VA programs, benefits and services;

239, support legislation to include children in legal custody as VA dependents;

241, support legislation to improve and reform DIC benefits;

283, support legislation recognizing racial trauma as a stressor for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder;

292, support legislation to establish a supplementary specially adapted housing grant;

306, support legislation to investigate cancer linked to intercontinental ballistic bases;

318, support legislation to increase the number of presumptive diseases related to contaminated water at Camp Lejeune; phew (Laughter)

320, increase benefit rate for the Home Improvement and Structural Alterations Grant;

328, increase grant funding for local cemeteries;

330, protect claimants from those charging fees for VA claims' preparation, presentation, or prosecution;

389, streamline and improve Specially Adapted Housing and Special Housing Adaptation grants;

390, support legislation to remove the prohibition against DAV members who are federal employees from communication on behalf of DAV with federal agencies;

412, support legislation to allow expanded entitlement to dependent educational assistance under Chapter 35 for children of a two-veteran household where both parents are shown with a permanent and total status;

445, support Congressional action to ensure that total disability based on individual unemployability remains available for all veterans, regardless of age or receipt of any other earned federal benefit;

452, investigate the effects on military veterans stationed at Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Arizona;

453, investigate the effects on military veterans stationed at Tindale Air Force Base, Florida;

454, investigate the effects on military veterans stationed at NAS Whidbey Island, Washington;

455, investigate the effects on military veterans stationed at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii;

473, remove the delimiting date for Persian Gulf War Illness;

482, oppose regional dispersion of the Board of Veterans Appeals.

We're getting there; (Laughter) I didn't realize it was 100 degree up here. (Laughter) I don't know how you do it.

483, support legislation to require the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims to decide each of the Appellant's Assignments of Errors;

527, support the elimination of the 30-day requirement for diseases associated with exposure to contaminants in the water supply at Camp Lejeune;

528, support using the proposed reduction due process to all disability evaluation reductions;

529, oppose all attempts to change the basis of the Department of Veterans Affairs Rating Schedule from the Average Impairments of Earning Capacity Standard;

530, reform and improve service-connected disabled veterans' life insurance;

531, support VA modernization of information technology and improvements to include digital sharing, adequate funding, and improved access for disabled veterans;

532, support reauthorization of the Persian Gulf War Veterans Act;

533, support reauthorization of the Agent Orange Act;

534, support resources and oversight of the appeals process.

Comrade Commander, this completes the report of the Committee on Legislation and Veterans Rights. (Applause) Thank you. On behalf of the Committee I move for the adoption of these resolutions and that the Committee be discharged with the thanks of the national convention.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 001
INCREASE THE GRANT AND SPECIALLY ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT
REIMBURSEMENT RATES FOR AUTOMOBILES AND OTHER CONVEYANCES
TO CERTAIN DISABLED VETERANS, AND AUTHORIZE REIMBURSEMENT FOR
NEW ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT TECHNOLOGIES

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides grants to assist eligible disabled veterans and military service members in purchasing specially equipped automobiles or other conveyances; and

WHEREAS, when originally established, the grant was set at an amount sufficient to cover the average retail cost of automobiles; and

WHEREAS, later adjustments elevated grants to amounts representing 80% of the average cost of automobiles; and

WHEREAS, the amount of the automobile allowance has not been further adjusted concurrent with increases in costs of automobiles, resulting in substantial erosion of the value of the benefit due to inflation; and

WHEREAS, the current grant level constitutes about 66% of the total average retail price of automobiles; and

WHEREAS, the VA also provides reimbursement for special adaptive equipment, but the rates of reimbursement have not kept pace with present-day costs to repair or replace such equipment; and

WHEREAS, advances in new automobile technologies, such as collision warning systems, electronic stability control, backup cameras and GPS, would enable disabled veterans to more safely operate vehicles; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation to increase the automobile grant level to an amount representing 80% of the average cost of new automobiles; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports legislation and policies that would increase the rates of reimbursement for repairs and replacement of specially adaptive equipment for automobiles and other conveyances consistent with present-day costs; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV calls on Congress and the VA to support legislation and policies that would expand the items approved for reimbursement, such as collision warning systems, electronic stability control, backup cameras, GPS and other available safety technologies.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 002
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO IMPROVE THE DEPARTMENT
OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FIDUCIARY PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Fiduciary Program was established to protect veterans and other beneficiaries who, due to injury, disease, or age, are unable to manage their own financial affairs; and

WHEREAS, a VA payee, referred to by the VA as a VA fiduciary, is a paid position held by an individual or organization appointed to manage a veteran's VA benefit payments when a veteran is deemed to be financially incompetent by a court or by the VA; and

WHEREAS, the VA Fiduciary Program has been rife with fraud stemming from fiduciaries funneling money and assets from vulnerable veterans; and

WHEREAS, the VA Office of Inspector General (OIG) found that the Eastern Area Fiduciary Hub (EAFH), located in Indianapolis, did not properly investigate most complaints against fiduciaries and of the 12 determinations that were made by EAFH almost \$1 million had been stolen from veterans, which means that the total dollar amount of misuse and potential fraud was likely well over \$1 million had the VA properly investigated the matter—other OIG investigations have uncovered millions more missing from veteran accounts in other hubs; and

WHEREAS, part of the problem is a lack of oversight, some of the VA-appointed fiduciaries have criminal records, but were still approved; and

WHEREAS, OIG investigations also found that the required audits of the fiduciaries were not being done by the VA, and this allowed the thefts to continue for years; and

WHEREAS, in some cases the VA doesn't tell the veteran that they appointed a fiduciary and emptied the bank accounts of the veteran; and

WHEREAS, in some cases, VA employees (unlawfully) gave VA fiduciaries permission to sell the veteran's home and unlawfully took the Social Security payments of the veteran's wife and gave those to the VA fiduciary; and

WHEREAS, in some cases the veteran called the VA to report the financial abuse but was denied help by VA employees, because the vulnerable veteran could not provide "proof" of the abuse; and

WHEREAS, formal complaints filed with VA OIG about VA Fiduciary Program employees (i.e., field examiners and designated fraud investigators), are being denied because VA OIG no longer investigates complaints filed against the VA Fiduciary Program, rather veterans are being redirected to the applicable fiduciary hub suspected of malfeasance so the VA Fiduciary Program at that fiduciary hub can investigate itself for malfeasance; and

WHEREAS, vulnerable veterans are being wronged by both malfeasance of the VA Fiduciary and the institutional incompetence of the VA Fiduciary Program; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation and changes to applicable regulations that require the VA to improve the VA Fiduciary Program by creating a better monitoring system, a timely dispute resolution system when beneficiaries make complaints, initiate investigations based on suspected reports of fiduciary fraud rather than putting the burden of proof on the vulnerable veteran, and make an outside agency, such as VA OIG, responsible for investigating complaints of VA employees who work in the VA Fiduciary Program and Fiduciary Hubs.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 003
SUPPORT LEGISLATION PROVIDING THAT SPECIAL SEPARATION BENEFIT
PAYMENTS NOT BE WITHHELD FROM DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS
AFFAIRS DISABILITY COMPENSATION PAYMENTS

WHEREAS, as a result of the downsizing of our military forces, many career military personnel have left service prior to becoming eligible for longevity retirement pay; and

WHEREAS, these individuals are entitled to separation pay; and

WHEREAS, many of these individuals also become eligible for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability compensation; and

WHEREAS, a VA General Counsel opinion held that any funds received as a result of the Special Separation Benefit (SSB) must be recouped from any VA disability compensation payment; and

WHEREAS, SSB payments are in no way related to a disability; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation to clarify that SSB payments are not disability payments and therefore should not be recouped from VA disability compensation payments.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 004
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO ALLOW A VETERAN PERMANENTLY AND
TOTALLY DISABLED DUE TO SERVICE-CONNECTED CONDITIONS TO
CONTINUE TO RECEIVE DEPENDENTS COMPENSATION FOR THEIR
ADULT CHILD ATTENDING SCHOOL WHILE THAT CHILD IS IN RECEIPT OF
DEPENDENTS EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE UNDER CHAPTER 35

WHEREAS, veterans are able to claim their adult child attending school as a dependent while that child continues to attend school; and

WHEREAS, current law and regulations mandate that once a child establishes entitlement to Dependents Educational Assistance (DEA) benefits the parent veteran is forbidden to also claim that child as a dependent on their compensation claim; and

WHEREAS, the parent veteran is not directly involved in the child's claim other than having established permanent and total (P&T) status where the child, usually with the assistance of a veteran counselor at the school files their own claim; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) does not share the claim information of the adult child attending school with the parent veteran because an individual over the age of 18 is considered to be capable of handling their own matters and it would be a privacy violation to inform the parent veteran of the child's claim status; and

WHEREAS, the parent veteran is frequently charged with overpayment for having received the dependency compensation with the child is also receiving DEA; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation to allow for a P&T veteran to continue to claim their adult child attending school as a dependent while that child is separately in receipt of DEA under chapter 35.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 005

REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO REQUEST MEDICAL RECORDS PRIOR TO ROUTINE FUTURE EXAMINATIONS

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is required to reexamine disabilities that have not become stabilized and are likely to improve; and

WHEREAS, VA regulations require a reduction in rating based on reexaminations disclosing improvement, physical or mental health conditions; and

WHEREAS, VA is not required to request any additional private or government medical records from the veteran prior to a future examination; and

WHEREAS, without any additional medical records prior to the examination, the VA rating specialist will not have sufficient evidence to determine whether the evidence makes it reasonably certain that any improvement will be maintained under the ordinary conditions of life and work; and

WHEREAS, reductions or proposed reductions based solely on VA examinations and not the entire medical evidence available, will not reflect the veteran's true disability picture and functional impairment; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, vigorously supports regulatory and statutory requirements to require VA be mandated to request any private or government medical records prior to scheduling any future examination.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 024

SUPPORT COMPENSABLE EVALUATIONS FOR CERTAIN DISABILITIES CURRENTLY AT ZERO PERCENT

WHEREAS, the VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities assigns a noncompensable rating for asymptomatic disabilities; and

WHEREAS, a noncompensable rating does not contemplate required medications, prosthetic appliances, or employment interference; and

WHEREAS, the VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities provides a compensable rating of 10% for other disabilities that require medication only, such as chronic fatigue disorder, coronary artery disease, and hypothyroidism; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports the assignment of a compensable evaluation of 10% for noncompensable disabilities that require medication, prosthetic appliances, or show employment interference.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 025

OPPOSE ANY RECOMMENDATION BY ANY COMMISSION OR OTHER SOURCE TO REDUCE OR ELIMINATE BENEFITS FOR DISABLED VETERANS

WHEREAS, American citizens owe their freedoms and way of life to disabled veterans who made extraordinary personal sacrifices and who suffer lifelong disabilities as a consequence; and

WHEREAS, those who serve in our armed forces stand ready to endure any hardships and to be exposed to any hazards on behalf of their country and our citizens; and

WHEREAS, our government did not hesitate in asking them to give life or limb if necessary; and

WHEREAS, our elected officials surely should not renege on our reciprocal obligation when our disabled veterans ask for so comparatively little in return; and

WHEREAS, we, as a nation, owe no more important indebtedness nor greater moral obligation than the indebtedness and obligation we have to disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, some elected officials nonetheless prefer to minimize or ignore the suffering of disabled veterans, despite this debt and this national responsibility; and

WHEREAS, any effort on the part of legislators to find ways to avoid compensating disabled veterans, especially in time of war, is unconscionable; and

WHEREAS, honorable and great nations of conscience do not abandon their wounded, injured or ill wartime veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, reminds our elected officials of our undebatable responsibility to fairly and fully compensate veterans for all the effects of disabilities incurred or aggravated in the line of duty as provided for in the equitable standards of current law and regulations; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV vigorously opposes any recommendations made for the purpose of reducing, adding limitations on or eliminating benefits for service-connected disabled veterans and their families.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 026

OPPOSE REDUCTION, TAXATION OR ELIMINATION OF VETERANS BENEFITS

WHEREAS, veterans benefits are earned benefits paid to veterans and their families for their service to the nation; and

WHEREAS, veterans benefits are part of a covenant between our nation and its defenders; and

WHEREAS, certain government leaders have continued to attack veterans benefits in an attempt to tax those benefits, reduce them or eliminate them completely; and

WHEREAS, these attacks recur with regularity and serious intent; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, vigorously opposes reduction, taxation or elimination of veterans benefits.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 039

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO REDUCE THE 10-YEAR RULE FOR DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION

WHEREAS, section 1318 (b)(1), title 38, United States Code, provides Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) benefits for survivors of deceased veterans who were rated totally disabled for 10 or more years; and

WHEREAS, the financial status of the surviving spouse is compromised due to the care required by the totally disabled veteran and provided by the caregiver spouse; and

WHEREAS, the veteran's spouse, acting as a caregiver, must in many cases limit, give up or put careers and other activities on hold; and

WHEREAS, it is inherently unfair that the spouse should carry this additional burden for 10 years or more before qualifying for DIC; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation to reduce the 10-year rule for DIC qualification to a more reasonable period of time.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 040

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO REMOVE THE PROHIBITION AGAINST CONCURRENT RECEIPT OF MILITARY RETIRED PAY AND VETERANS DISABILITY COMPENSATION FOR ALL LONGEVITY RETIRED VETERANS

WHEREAS, current law provides that service-connected veterans rated less than 50% disabled who retire from the armed forces based on length of service do not receive disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in addition to full military retired pay; and

WHEREAS, proposed changes to military retirement plans and changes to the definition of longevity retired veterans by the Department of Defense could affect the veterans with service-connected disabilities; and

WHEREAS, these disabled veterans must therefore surrender retired pay in an amount equal to the disability compensation they receive; and

WHEREAS, this offset is unfair to veterans who have served faithfully in military careers inasmuch as these veterans have earned their retired pay by virtue of their long service to the nation and wholly apart from disabilities due to military service; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation to repeal the offset between military longevity retired pay and VA disability compensation.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 041
SUPPORT INTEREST PAYMENTS FOR DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS
AFFAIRS RETROACTIVE AWARDS OF ONE YEAR OR MORE

WHEREAS, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) claimants are often denied timely receipt of their rightfully earned benefits due to prolonged bureaucratic delay in the VA adjudication process and/or through clear and unmistakable error on the part of VA rating board authorities; and

WHEREAS, under current law and regulation, VA claimants who incur indebtedness to the United States government, in addition to the principal amount of such indebtedness, are assessed and must pay interest charges; and

WHEREAS, in 1982, Congress enacted the Prompt Payment Act, Public Law 97–177, to require federal agencies to pay their bills to outside vendors on a timely basis or pay interest penalties to the outside vendors when payments are made late; and

WHEREAS, VA claimants who are denied timely receipt of their rightfully earned benefits do not receive interest payments from the government and therefore incur a loss of income, which could have been avoided had they received their earned benefits in a timely fashion; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, seeks the enactment of legislation that would require the VA to pay interest on all retroactive benefit awards in excess of one year after these claims are filed.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 042
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE FOR PRESUMPTIVE SERVICE
CONNECTION FOR TINNITUS AND HEARING LOSS

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

WHEREAS, many pre-service and discharge examinations, particularly for World War II and Korean conflict veterans, were usually accomplished with the highly inaccurate “whispered voice” test; and

WHEREAS, veterans, in those cases, were not afforded a comprehensive audiological examination upon entrance and discharge from military service; and

WHEREAS, in recent years, the second leading disability granted service connection by the Department of Veterans Affairs was for hearing loss or tinnitus, which recognizes the high incidence of acoustic trauma by veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports entitlement to service connection on a presumptive basis for any veteran suffering from hearing loss or tinnitus, which manifests itself to any degree and the evidence shows the veteran participated in combat or worked in a position or military occupational specialty likely to cause acoustic trauma.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 043
EXPAND PRESUMPTIONS FOR SERVICE CONNECTION
FOR FORMER PRISONERS OF WAR

WHEREAS, former prisoners of war (POWs) suffered cruel and inhumane treatment, together with nutritional deprivation at the hands of their captors, which resulted in long-term adverse health effects; and

WHEREAS, POWs were subjected to numerous and varying forms of abuse dependent upon the place, time and circumstance of their captivity by the enemy; and

WHEREAS, for this reason, former POWs suffer from a wide range of physical and psychological maladies; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation which would add those medical conditions that are characteristically associated with or can be reasonably attributed to the POW experience as presumptive disorders for former POWs.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 044
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE A TEMPORARY TOTAL DISABILITY
COMPENSATION RATING FOR AN AMPUTEE VETERAN WHILE A NEW
PROSTHETIC DEVICE IS DEVELOPED AND DELIVERED

WHEREAS, four to six weeks are required to manufacture a prosthetic device; and

WHEREAS, the veteran amputee without an artificial limb can be incapacitated and unable to obtain or retain gainful employment; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Schedule for Rating Disabilities (VASRD) does not contain any provision for temporary total disability rating for a service-disabled veteran amputee during the period of waiting for delivery of a new prosthetic limb; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation to amend the VASRD to provide a temporary total rating for a service-connected veteran amputee during the period required to replace a prosthetic device.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 045
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO ESTABLISH PRESUMPTIVE SERVICE
CONNECTION FOR DISEASES AND ILLNESSES RELATED TO
TOXIC EXPOSURE AT GRAND FORKS AIR FORCE BASE AND
MINOT AIR FORCE BASE IN NORTH DAKOTA

WHEREAS, the Grand Forks Air Force Base was established December 1, 1955; and the Minot Air Force Base was established January 10, 1957 in North Dakota; and

WHEREAS, several air and bombardment groups have trained at these bases, some starting during the Vietnam War to present day conflicts; and

WHEREAS, following these past and current conflicts, these sites have become a hub for supply transportation to the northern Pacific, Central United States, Alaska, Europe, and the Middle East, including modern day drone and unmanned flight squadron training and wartime operations; and

WHEREAS, the state of North Dakota's Grand Forks Air Force Base and Minot

Air Force Base oversaw the command, control, and housing of over 1,000 Minuteman Missile sites during their initial 1960 emplacement to the current 150 plus Minuteman Missiles stationed around the Minot Air Force Base currently operating today; and

WHEREAS, Missileers perform/performed their duties underground in small bunkers, encased in a thick walls of concrete and steel; and

WHEREAS, they would remain there sometimes for days, and at that time were ready to turn the launch keys if ordered to by the President of the United States; and

WHEREAS, due to the isolation and security of the locations of these missile sites, Missileers were often exposed to toxins/chemicals to depose of classified documents/waste by unconventional means; and

WHEREAS, there was also the risk of radiation and contaminants exposure from the missiles themselves, and

WHEREAS, Missileers were exposed to a variety of chemicals and toxins ranging from paint in small spaces to fumes from burning classified documents to aerial asbestos and radon exposure; and

WHEREAS, spills or leaks of propellant occurred frequently, contaminating silos for up to six weeks -- a period in which the missiles were manned 24 hours a day, seven days a week; and

WHEREAS, the Grand Forks Air Force Base and Minot Air Force Base have a history of toxic contamination, particularly with perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances; and

WHEREAS, these dangerous chemicals are usually dubbed PFAS or "forever chemicals," encompassing over 9,000 different substances; and

WHEREAS, the Department of the Air Force is aware that there are indications of a possible association between cancer and missile combat crew service at the Grand Forks Air Force Base and the Minot Air Force Base; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, calls upon Congress to immediately introduce legislation to authorize scientific studies of the environmental and toxic exposures at Grand Forks Air Force Base and Minot Air Force Base in North Dakota; AND

BE IT FUTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports legislation to establish a concession of exposure to toxins and legislation to establish presumptive service connection for the veterans who were exposed at Grand Forks Air Force Base and Minot Air Force Base in North Dakota.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 051 PROVIDE FOR A COMPENSABLE RATING FOR HEARING-IMPAIRED VETERANS REQUIRED TO USE HEARING AIDS

WHEREAS, veterans can be rated at 0% based on their audiometric results and still be required to use hearing aids due to their specific type of hearing loss; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Schedule for Rating Disabilities (VASRD) is predicated on the industrial impairment that each disability provides to the disabled veteran; and

WHEREAS, hearing loss can impact a veteran's ability to communicate and negatively affect relationships, school/work performance, safety and emotional well-being; and

WHEREAS, section 4.10, title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, notes that "the basis of disability evaluations is the ability of the body as a whole, or of the psyche, or of a system or organ of the body to function under the ordinary conditions of daily life including employment"; and

WHEREAS, a National Institutes of Health study, "The Socioeconomic Impact of Hearing Loss in U.S. Adults," published in March 2015, noted, "even after controlling for education and important demographic factors, hearing loss is independently associated with economic hardship, including both low income and unemployment/underemployment. The societal impact of hearing loss is profound"; and

WHEREAS, the VASRD does account for required prostheses or required medication for control, as it provides a 10% evaluation for over 15 different disabilities that require daily medication for control of said disability; and

WHEREAS, it is a general principle of the VASRD that ratings are not offset by the function artificially restored by a prosthetic device; and

WHEREAS, assigning a compensable rating for medically required hearing aids would be consistent with minimum ratings otherwise provided throughout the rating schedule; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports the VA granting veterans with high-frequency hearing loss a compensable rating (10%) when it has been medically determined that the veteran requires and has been issued a hearing amplification device.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 060 SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE STUDIES, HEALTH CARE AND BENEFITS RESULTING FROM TOXIC EXPOSURES AT BOSNIA AND KOSOVO.

WHEREAS, beginning in December 1995, US and allied nations deployed peacekeeping forces to Bosnia/Kosovo in support of Operation Joint Endeavor as part of the United Nations Mission; and

WHEREAS, the UN Mission completed its mandate on December 31, 2002; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense (DOD) acknowledged that burn pits were used at U.S. bases in Bosnia and Kosovo; and

WHEREAS, during Operation Joint Endeavor in Bosnia in 1995–1996, military preventive-medicine personnel recognized that open burning of waste might be an operational necessity during combat operations, but they emphasized that burning should be used to the minimum extent feasible and that burn pits should be located as far as possible downwind of personnel; and

WHEREAS, researchers from VA's Epidemiology Program, Post Deployment Health Services, studied the cause-specific mortality risks among veterans who deployed to Bosnia/Kosovo between 1996-2002; and

WHEREAS, this study focused on mortality due to leukemia, respiratory disease, respiratory cancer, and heart disease; and

WHEREAS, media reports of leukemia and other cancers among European United Nations (UN) peacekeepers who served in the Balkans, and a scientific finding of excess Hodgkin lymphoma among Italian UN peacekeepers who served in Bosnia, suggested a link between cancer incidence and depleted uranium (DU) exposure; and

WHEREAS, veterans may not know for years or decades about the toxic or environmental conditions they were exposed to during military service; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) does not recognize or acknowledge burn pit exposure for those who served in Bosnia or Kosovo; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports the recognition of the existence of toxic substances and environmental hazards at in Bosnia and Kosovo, and concession of exposure by all U.S. service members who served there between 1995 and 2002;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports legislation to grant Bosnia and Kosovo veterans eligibility to VA health care, to include hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care by expanding the definition of toxic exposures in title 38, United States Code, section 1710; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports studies to identify illnesses and diseases that have a positive association, including a sufficient, limited, or suggestive association, with exposure to any toxic substances or high levels of particulate matter and dust resulting from open burn pits in Bosnia and Kosovo.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 061

SUPPORT LEGISLATION THAT WOULD EXEMPT THE BENEFITS PAID TO WARTIME SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABLED VETERANS FROM THE “PAY-GO/ CUT-GO” PROVISIONS OF THE BUDGET ENFORCEMENT ACT

WHEREAS, wartime disabled veterans have earned the benefits and services they, their dependents and survivors receive from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) as a result of the injuries sustained during wartime service; and

WHEREAS, the benefits and services received by wartime disabled veterans as a result of their service-connected disabilities is an extension of the costs of war; and

WHEREAS, this country has a moral obligation to continue to care for these citizen-soldiers who have risen in defense and support of the ideals of this great nation and who have returned to civilian life with service-connected disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the benefits and services provided to America's veterans, dependents and survivors have not caused this nation's deficit problems; and

WHEREAS, the so-called “PAYGO/CUTGO” provisions of the Budget Enforcement Act require any new benefits or services to be paid out of existing benefits or programs, in effect, requiring one group of disabled veterans to give up a benefit or service so that another worthy group of wartime disabled veterans can receive benefits or services to which they are entitled; and

WHEREAS, the adoption of budget caps and sequestration have often limited the ability of congressional appropriations committees to fully fund all veterans programs, services and benefits; and

WHEREAS, veterans suffering from ailments associated with their service in the military are compensated from funds generated by cutting the benefits of other service-connected veterans and their survivors; and

WHEREAS, the benefits and services provided to wartime disabled veterans are unique and not a gratuitous benefit; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation to exempt VA benefits and services provided to service-connected disabled veterans, their dependents and survivors from the PAYGO/CUTGO provisions of the Budget Enforcement Act as well as from any budget caps or sequestration legislation.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 066
SUPPORT LEGISLATION FOR SCIENTIFIC EVALUATION TO INCLUDE
CONDITIONS OF THE THYROID AS A PRESUMPTIVE GULF WAR DISORDER

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has an established list of disabilities that are presumptively associated with service in Southwest Asia (SWA); and

WHEREAS, SWA refers to Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the neutral zone between Iraq and Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, the Gulf of Aden, the Gulf of Oman, the Persian Gulf, the Arabian Sea, the Red Sea, and the airspace above these locations for certain veterans (38 CFR §3.317(e)(2)); and

WHEREAS, VA recognizes signs or symptoms of undiagnosed illness and medically unexplained chronic multi-symptom illnesses associated with SWA service to include (1) fatigue, (2) signs or symptoms involving skin, (3) headache, (4) muscle pain, (5) joint pain, (6) neurological signs or symptoms, (7) neuropsychological signs or symptoms, (8) signs or symptoms involving the respiratory system (upper or lower), (9) sleep disturbances, (10) gastrointestinal signs or symptoms, (11) cardiovascular signs or symptoms, (12) abnormal weight loss, and (13) menstrual disorders; and

WHEREAS, 10 of the common symptoms of a thyroid disorder include fatigue; weight changes (gain too much weight with hypothyroid and too little weight with hyperthyroid); muscle and joint pain; neck swelling (goiter); hair and skin changes; bowel changes; menstrual abnormalities; depression; carpal tunnel (weakness or tingling in the arms, wrists, hands, and legs); and finally, family history; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, proposes that the VA immediately establish studies to determine whether thyroid disorder(s) are more common in veterans with SWA service than the general population given that many of the common symptoms of a thyroid disorder are also the currently recognized signs or symptoms of undiagnosed illness and medically unexplained chronic multi-symptom illnesses associated with SWA service.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 067
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO REFORM FUGITIVE FELON STATUS
WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

WHEREAS, at present, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has a recognized policy denying compensation, pension or dependent benefits to an individual listed as a fugitive felon; and

WHEREAS, at present, the VA accepts indications of fugitive status from local authorities; but the VA does not require information from the originating agency that any attempt has ever been made to locate the alleged fugitive, and the VA does not seek clarification on whether or not the claimant was actually fleeing or otherwise avoiding prosecution, custody or confinement, the criteria for establishing fugitive status; and

WHEREAS, the presumption by the VA against the claimant results in loss of VA benefits and significant hardships by the erroneously identified claimant in attempting to reinstate their benefits; and

WHEREAS, the individual often has years of government bureaucracy to overcome despite the fact that they have lived in the same location for years without anyone actually attempting to contact them prior to the VA's declaration of fugitive status; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports the enactment of legislation that requires the VA to verify that the originating agency has actually attempted to locate the claimant, and that the claimant has fled justice or was otherwise avoiding prosecution, custody or confinement, before the VA can seize their current benefits and establish overpayment for prior benefits dispensed.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 068
SUPPORT LEGISLATION AUTHORIZING THE PRESUMPTION
OF SERVICE CONNECTION FOR ALL RADIOGENIC DISEASES
AND ELIMINATE DOSE ESTIMATE REQUIREMENTS

WHEREAS, members of the United States armed forces participated in test detonations of nuclear devices, served in Hiroshima or Nagasaki, Japan, following the detonation of nuclear

weapons, including “cleanup” operations at test sites and have conducted other activities exposing them to ionizing radiation; and

WHEREAS, the United States government knew or should have known the potential harm to the health and well-being of these service members, but did not consistently keep adequate records on radiation exposure; and

WHEREAS, those described as “atomic veterans” served our nation with honor, courage and devotion to duty; and

WHEREAS, remedial legislation passed by Congress in 1984 has not been effective in ensuring that all atomic veterans are compensated for their radiogenic diseases; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has indicated only about 50 claimants have been awarded disability compensation and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation pursuant to Public Law 98–542, the Veterans’ Dioxin and Radiation Exposure Compensation Standards Act; and

WHEREAS, title 38, Code of Federal Regulations §3.311, requires dose estimate exposure levels for claims based on radiation, and is a higher standard than for other disabilities associated with exposure such as claims based on herbicide exposure during the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, the government has spent tens of millions of dollars to provide dose reconstruction estimates that do not accurately reflect actual radiation dose exposure of these veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, calls on Congress to enact legislation to provide presumptive service connection to atomic veterans for all recognized radiogenic diseases; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that any veteran involved in cleanup operations following a detonation of a nuclear device hereinafter be considered an atomic veteran for purposes of eligibility for benefits and services provided by VA; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV calls on Congress to support the elimination of dose exposure estimates required for diseases presumptive to ionizing radiation exposure and presume exposure to ionizing radiation for any radiation-exposed veteran with proof of radiation risk activities to include atmospheric and underwater detonations.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 069

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO AWARD SPECIAL MONTHLY COMPENSATION AT R(1) TO VETERANS WITH ANATOMICAL LOSS OR LOSS OF USE OF THREE EXTREMITIES

WHEREAS, veterans with anatomical loss or loss of use, or a combination of anatomical loss and loss of use, of three extremities are significantly impaired in their ability to conduct activities of daily living; and

WHEREAS, veterans with loss or loss of use of three extremities require the assistance of others for the ability to dress and undress themselves, or to keep themselves clean and presentable, or to perform frequent adjustment of special prosthetic or orthopedic appliances, or to attend to bowel and bladder self-care, or to protect themselves from hazards or dangers incident to their daily environment; and

WHEREAS, these factors are considered basic criteria for determining the need for regular aid and attendance by the Department of Veterans Affairs; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation to award special monthly compensation under the provisions of section 1114(r)(1), title 38, United States Code, to veterans with anatomical loss or loss of use of three extremities.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 077

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO INCREASE MAXIMUM EVALUATION FOR SERVICE-CONNECTED HEADACHES

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) rating schedule notes that the minimum schedular rating for consideration of Individual Unemployability is 60% for a single condition, or a combination of 70% with one of them being at least 40%); and

WHEREAS, at present, a veteran with the highest schedular rating for headaches, 50%, must be shown to have a very frequent completely prostrating and prolonged attack productive of

severe economic inadaptability as stated at title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, section 4.124a, diagnostic code 8100; and

WHEREAS, a veteran currently in receipt of the maximum 50% rating for headaches due to very frequent completely prostrating and prolonged attacks productive of severe economic inadaptability would not also qualify for consideration of a claim for Individual Unemployability based on that single disability; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, proposes that the VA amend its regulations to increase the maximum evaluation for an individual with migraine headaches from the current 50% evaluation to a 60% rating to more appropriately address the industrial impairment attributable to that level of disability.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 078

AMEND PROVISIONS REGARDING ELIGIBILITY FOR AUTOMOBILE ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT TO INCLUDE ANY VETERAN WHOSE SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY INHIBITS THE ABILITY TO SAFELY OPERATE A MOTOR VEHICLE

WHEREAS, section 3902, title 38, United States Code (USC), and section 17.119(a), title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, restrict the eligibility for adaptive automobile equipment to those veterans who qualify for the automobile grant as specified in section 3901, title 38, USC; and

WHEREAS, not all veterans whose service-connected disabilities prohibit the safe operation of a motor vehicle meet the requirements of section 3901, title 38, USC; and

WHEREAS, these service-connected disabled veterans should be provided the adaptive equipment necessary to safely operate a motor vehicle; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports the enactment of legislation that would authorize the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide or assist in providing the adaptive equipment deemed necessary to any veteran whose service-connected disability interferes with the safe operation of a motor vehicle.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 079

SUPPORT A CHANGE IN REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS FOR TEMPORARY TOTAL DISABILITY RATINGS

WHEREAS, with advances in modern medicine and increasing emphasis on more efficient use of health care resources, health care providers are being encouraged to utilize suitable alternatives to inpatient care; and

WHEREAS, as a consequence, veterans are often treated through home health services or convalesce at home rather than in hospital; and

WHEREAS, convalescent ratings are currently only authorized where inpatient or outpatient treatment resulted in surgery or immobilization of a major joint by cast; and

WHEREAS, instances occur in which a veteran's treatment does not involve surgery or casting of a major joint, but the veteran undergoes healing, convalescence or a therapeutic course in the home, with a duration of one month or more; and

WHEREAS, exacerbation of a service-connected disability sometimes contraindicates work or other activities for periods of one month or more; and

WHEREAS, in such instances, a therapeutic course, convalescence or restriction from work for one month or more would occur in the home in lieu of hospitalization; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports a change in section 4.30, title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, to provide a temporary total rating of a veteran if treatment or exacerbation of a service-connected disability results in a condition of temporary total incapacity for employment or temporary unavailability for employment by reason of home health care or ambulatory care, bed rest or confinement to the home, or contraindication of work activities for one month or more.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 080
ESTABLISH IMMEDIATE AUTHORIZATION OF GRANTS BY THE BOARD OF
VETERANS' APPEALS ON ALL CASES ADVANCED ON THE DOCKET

WHEREAS, in a case before the Board of Veterans' Appeals (Board), an appellant can request the case advanced on the docket, due to financial hardship, homelessness, and/or a serious illness; and

WHEREAS, once the Board grants an appeal that is advanced on the docket, it is then sent to either the agency of original jurisdiction (AOJ) or the Appeals Resource Center (ARC) for the decision to be granted, authorized and promulgated prior to payment of benefits to an appellant; and

WHEREAS, the average processing time of these cases by the AOJ or the ARC can be more than 90 days; and

WHEREAS, many appellants with serious illness die prior to the grant and authorization; and

WHEREAS, this delay defeats the purpose of the Board granting a case to be advanced on the docket; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports the allocation of VA Resources either to the Board of Veterans' Appeals or via the National Work Queue, to grant, authorize, and promulgate all cases advanced on the docket and granted by the Board of Veterans' Appeals within 30 days of the decision.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 081
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO ESTABLISH PRESUMPTIVE SERVICE
CONNECTION FOR DISEASES AND ILLNESSES RELATED TO TOXIC
EXPOSURE AT MALMSTROM AIR FORCE BASE, MONTANA

WHEREAS, Malmstrom Air Force Base was constructed in 1942 as Great Falls Army Air Force Base; and

WHEREAS, several air and bombardment groups trained at the base starting in World War II; and

WHEREAS, following the war, this site became a hub for supply transportation to the northern Pacific and Alaska; and

WHEREAS, Malmstrom AFB is home to a vast field of 150 Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile silos; and

WHEREAS, Missileers, to include missile alert facility managers, ride caged elevators deep underground into a small operation bunker encased in a thick wall of concrete and steel; and

WHEREAS, they remain there sometimes for days, ready to turn the launch keys if ordered to by the President; and

WHEREAS, Missileers, to include missile alert facility managers, are exposed to a variety of chemicals and toxins ranging from paint in small spaces to fumes from burning classified documents to aerial asbestos and radon exposure; and

WHEREAS, spills or leaks of propellant occurred frequently, contaminating silos for up to six weeks -- a period in which the missiles were manned 24 hours a day, seven days a week; and

WHEREAS, Malmstrom AFB has a grim legacy of toxic contamination, particularly with perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances; and

WHEREAS, these dangerous chemicals are usually dubbed PFAS or "forever chemicals," encompassing over 9,000 different substances; and

WHEREAS, the Department of the Air Force is aware that there are indications of a possible association between cancer and missile combat crew service at Malmstrom AFB; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation to authorize scientific studies of the environmental and toxic exposures at Malmstrom Air Force Base, Montana.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 086
SUPPORT ELIMINATION OF THE LINK BETWEEN CHRONICITY
AND CONTINUITY WITH THE CHRONIC DISEASES AS
LISTED IN FEDERAL REGULATIONS

WHEREAS, service connection may be granted for a disability resulting from disease or injury incurred in or aggravated by service; and

WHEREAS, to prevail on the issue of service connection there must be competent evidence of a current disability, medical or lay evidence of in-service occurrence or aggravation of a disease or injury, and medical or lay evidence of a nexus between the present disability and the in-service occurrence or aggravation; and

WHEREAS, a veteran may establish service connection by “chronicity” if the evidence demonstrates the existence of a chronic disease in service and later manifestations of the same disease; and

WHEREAS, prior to the precedent decision of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit in *Walker v. Shinseki*, 708F.3d 1331 (Fed. Cir. 2013), veterans could establish a nexus between a present disability and an in-service occurrence or aggravation by “chronicity” when evidence demonstrates the existence of a disease in service and present manifestations of the same disease; and

WHEREAS, prior to the precedent decision, the veteran may alternatively establish service connection by “continuity of symptomatology” if the evidence demonstrates a condition was “noted” during service, there is post-service evidence of the same symptomatology, and there is medical or lay evidence of a nexus between the current disability and the post-service symptomatology, and

WHEREAS, the precedent decision limited establishing service connection by chronicity only for the specific chronic diseases listed in title 38, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), section 3.309(a); and

WHEREAS, the precedent decision additionally abrogated previous decisions by the court extending the use of “continuity of symptomatology” to establish service connection for chronic diseases not specifically listed in the regulation, thereby overruling an entire body of case law, and

WHEREAS, the precedent decision removes veterans’ ability to argue “chronicity and continuity of symptomatology” in all claims for service connection and places a higher standard than intended or required by the plain language of the statute, thereby hindering the non-adversarial nature of the VA claims system; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports the enactment of legislation to establish service connection for a disease not specifically listed in 38 CFR, section 3.309(a), using chronicity or continuity of symptomatology.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 087

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO GRANT ENTITLEMENT TO AID AND ATTENDANCE TO A VETERAN’S SERIOUSLY DISABLED CHILD

WHEREAS, part 3, section 356, title 38, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), provides additional compensation for a veteran whose child is shown to be permanently incapable of self-support by reason of mental or physical defect at the date of attaining the age of 18 years; and

WHEREAS, a veteran’s seriously disabled and or handicapped child is significantly impaired in their ability to conduct activities of daily living; and

WHEREAS, section 1114, title 38, United States Code, provides aid and attendance benefits for veterans, their spouse and dependent parents who have significant disabilities as to be in need of regular aid and attendance; and

WHEREAS, 38 CFR §3.352 states entitlement is held to exist when the veteran requires the assistance of others for the ability to dress and undress themselves, or to keep themselves clean and presentable, or to perform frequent adjustment of special prosthetic or orthopedic appliances, or to attend to bowel and bladder self-care, or to protect themselves from hazards or dangerous incidents to their daily environment; and

WHEREAS, the veteran’s seriously disabled child, in many cases, requires the aid and attendance of another individual to perform functions of daily living; and

WHEREAS, the seriously disabled child is already deemed to be handicapped by the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

WHEREAS, it is inherently unfair that the veteran and the seriously disabled child carry this additional burden without additional compensation despite being an immediate family member of the veteran; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation to allow the seriously disabled child of a veteran who meets the aforementioned criteria be granted the ability to seek additional compensation by way of aid and attendance.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 088
EXTEND VETERANS' BENEFITS TO SURVIVORS FOLLOWING
THE DEATH OF THE VETERAN

WHEREAS, when a service-connected veteran dies, the compensation only continues to the veteran's surviving spouse or family for the month of the veteran's death; and

WHEREAS, a claim for Dependents Indemnity Compensation (DIC) by the surviving spouse can take over four months to be adjudicated by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); and

WHEREAS, the surviving spouse and family are still responsible for the regular monthly household expenses, such as mortgage/rent, utilities, and car payments; and

WHEREAS, in many cases, the surviving spouse has become the veteran's caregiver, given up a career and has no other source of income; and

WHEREAS, not only are these families dealing with the loss of the veteran, but many are put in a financial hardship due to the loss of the veteran's compensation and waiting potentially more than four months for DIC benefits; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation to extend a deceased veteran's VA compensation benefits to the surviving spouse and family for a certain period of time to assist during the transition of the veteran's death.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 097
SUPPORT REFORMS RELATING TO RECOVERY OF DEBTS
BY THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

WHEREAS, it is a reasonable expectation that recipients of overpayments are required to repay the debt; and

WHEREAS, the current overpayment and debt system allows the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to collect debts regardless of when the debt was created; and

WHEREAS, debt collections by the VA include complete recoupment of the veteran's monthly benefit payments, and in many cases, put the veteran at risk of financial hardships; and

WHEREAS, additional amounts of debt created by VA's lack of timely action are often added to the debt, thus creating an inequity on the veteran; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation to reform the VA overpayment and debt collection systems; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports legislation to limit the amount of monies recouped from the veteran's monthly payment to not greater than 25% of the payment amount; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports legislation preventing the VA from collecting debts incurred more than five years prior; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports legislation that requires the VA to waive any additional amounts of debt created by their own lack of timely action on evidence and information received regarding but not limited to dependency changes, income changes, drill status, education changes, or incarceration adjustments.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 098
EXTEND ELIGIBILITY FOR VETERANS' MORTGAGE PROTECTION
LIFE INSURANCE TO SERVICE-CONNECTED VETERANS
RATED PERMANENTLY AND TOTALLY DISABLED

WHEREAS, Veterans' Mortgage Life Insurance (VMLI) is presently available to veterans entitled to the specially adapted housing award under section 2101(a), title 38, United States Code; and

WHEREAS, service-connected veterans rated as permanently and totally disabled cannot obtain mortgage life insurance through commercial insurance companies; and

WHEREAS, their survivors and dependents must bear an undue hardship upon the death of such veterans; and

WHEREAS, the VMLI program provides mortgage life insurance to severely disabled veterans and service members who have also received a specially adapted housing grant from the Department of Veterans Affairs; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, seeks the enactment of legislation which would extend VMLI to service-connected veterans who are rated as permanently and totally disabled.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 099
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO CAP ATTORNEYS' FEES FOR
BENEFITS COUNSELING AND CLAIMS SERVICES BEFORE
THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

WHEREAS, our nation established veterans programs to repay or reward veterans for their extraordinary service and sacrifices on behalf of their fellow citizens; and

WHEREAS, in the spirit in which special benefits are provided to especially deserving beneficiaries, our citizens intended these benefits to be dispensed through an open, helpful and informal system in which the government is duty bound to receive every claimant as entitled and provide every reasonable assistance in developing and shepherding the claim through the entire administrative process while affording consideration of all legal avenues toward granting every benefit that can be supported in law; and

WHEREAS, the programs are also designed in a manner that ensures veterans and their families will receive the full measure of aid from disability compensation and other payments without taxation and with protections that ensure they are not diverted to others who have no entitlement to them; and

WHEREAS, Congress has set the rates of these modest benefits to be minimally adequate for their intended purposes, such as assisting disabled veterans and their families in purchasing the necessities of life or obtaining services necessary to ameliorate the effects of disability, and the amounts provided do not contemplate or allow for any reduction or diminishment in buying power such as will occur when a portion is diverted to attorneys; and

WHEREAS, acquiescence in any general situation in which obtaining veterans' benefits required hiring an attorney and surrendering a portion of disability compensation or other benefits obtained to the attorney fundamentally contradicts and undermines the spirit of the benefit programs created solely to aid and meet the special needs of disabled veterans and their dependents and survivors; and

WHEREAS, it is inappropriate for Congress to disavow the government's obligation to ensure veterans receive the benefits due them by passing them off to the legal profession where their plight might well depend on or be determined by their potential for producing attorney fees; and

WHEREAS, in 2006, Congress passed legislation, Public Law 109–461, the Veterans Benefits, Health Care and Information Technology Act of 2006, which allows attorneys to charge a veteran a fee for counseling and claims service following the filing of a Notice of Disagreement; and

WHEREAS, in 2019, the Appeals Modernization Act (AMA) established three ways for a claimant to take action on a decision, a Supplemental Claims, a Higher Level Review or a Notice of Disagreement and thus allowing attorneys or agents to charge a fee for counseling and representation following any of the three noted; and

WHEREAS, the initial intent of veterans' benefits recognized that no disabled veteran should have to pay an attorney significant fees to obtain the benefits that a grateful nation provides and the veteran is rightfully due; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, seeks legislation to provide for a reasonable cap on the amount of fees an attorney can charge veterans for benefits counseling and claims services before the Department of Veterans Affairs.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 108
SUPPORT AN INCREASE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
BURIAL ALLOWANCE FOR SERVICE-CONNECTED VETERANS
AND PROVIDE AUTOMATIC ANNUAL ADJUSTMENTS

WHEREAS, the National Cemetery Administration burial allowance provides partial reimbursement for eligible funeral and burial costs, with a maximum payment of \$2,000 for service-

connected burial allowance, \$300 for non-service-connected burial allowance and \$749 for non-service-connected plot allowance; and

WHEREAS, passage of Public Law 111–275, the Veterans’ Benefits Act of 2010, resulted in an increase in both plot allowance and burial allowance from \$300 to \$749 for non-service-connected deaths in Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facilities, effective October 1, 2011; and

WHEREAS, this law did not increase the \$2,000 for burial and funeral expenses for service-connected deaths outside of VA facilities, nor is it indexed to the Consumer Price Index for annual adjustments; and

WHEREAS, the plot allowance introduced in 1973 was an attempt to provide a plot benefit for veterans who did not have reasonable access to a national cemetery, but neither the plot allowance nor the burial allowance was intended to cover the full cost of a civilian burial in a private cemetery; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation to increase the burial allowance payable in the case of death due to service-connected disability regardless of whether the death occurs in a VA facility and provide for automatic annual adjustments indexed to the rise in the cost of living.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 109

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE A REALISTIC INCREASE IN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS COMPENSATION RATES TO ADDRESS LOSS OF QUALITY OF LIFE

WHEREAS, the Veterans’ Disability Benefits Commission (the Commission) was established by Public Law 108–136, the National Defense Authorization Act of 2004, to address several measures, one of which was loss of quality of life; and

WHEREAS, current law requires that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) rating schedule compensate service-disabled veterans for average impairment of earning capacity; and

WHEREAS, the Commission concluded early in its deliberations that VA disability compensation should recompense veterans not only for average impairments of earning capacity, but also for their inability to participate in usual life activities and for the impact of their disabilities on quality of life; and

WHEREAS, the Institute of Medicine (now the National Academy of Medicine) reached the same conclusion; moreover, it made extensive recommendations on steps to develop and implement a methodology to evaluate the impact of disabilities on veterans’ quality of life and to provide appropriate compensation; and

WHEREAS, the Commission concluded that the VA rating schedule should be revised to include compensation for the impact of service-connected disabilities on quality of life; and

WHEREAS, for some veterans, quality of life is addressed in a limited fashion by special monthly compensation for loss of limbs or loss of use of limbs; and

WHEREAS, the Commission urged Congress to consider increases in some special monthly compensation awards to address the profound impact of certain disabilities on quality of life and to assess whether other ancillary benefits might be appropriate; and

WHEREAS, while a recommended systematic methodology is being developed for evaluating and compensating for the impact of disability on quality of life, the Commission recommended that an immediate interim increase of up to 25% of compensation rates be enacted; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports the enactment of legislation to provide a realistic increase in VA compensation rates to address loss of quality of life.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 116

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO IMPLEMENT AN OPTIONAL PATH FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED VETERANS

WHEREAS, section 12102, title 42, United States Code, establishes persons’ disabilities and major life activities to be covered; and

WHEREAS, in enacting the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, Congress intended that the Act “provide a clear and comprehensive national mandate for the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities” and provide broad coverage; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is required as a public entity to follow the precepts of the ADA; and

WHEREAS, it is also VHA policy that contacting the hospital via a telephonic device requires the veteran to engage the automated system through a series of keypad tones; and

WHEREAS, these actions are prohibitive where numeric depressions on a keypad such as a land line or mobile device are difficult if not overwhelming for a visually impaired veteran; and

WHEREAS, a second person is often required to assist the veteran in initiating first contact counter to the precepts of the ADA; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, urges the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to develop and implement a consistent policy requiring VA health care facilities and Veterans Benefits Administration offices and call centers with optional paths for telephonic initial contact.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 117

REMOVE REQUIREMENT OF MANIFESTATION OF CHLORACNE AND PORPHYRIA CUTANEA TARDA AND ACUTE AND SUBACUTE PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY WITHIN ONE YEAR OF EXPOSURE TO AGENT ORANGE

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) currently recognizes a total of 14 diseases as presumptive to Agent Orange exposure; and

WHEREAS, section 1116, title 38, United States Code, establishes presumptive service connection for diseases based on exposure to Agent Orange which requires that chloracne and porphyria cutanea tarda become manifest to a degree of 10% or more within one year after service in the Republic of Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, section 3.307(a)(6)(ii), title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, requires the presumptive disease, acute and subacute peripheral neuropathy, to become manifest to a degree of 10% or more within one year of exposure to herbicides; and

WHEREAS, the limitations placed on the three above noted diseases create unreasonable requirements on veterans to provide evidence of manifestations of symptoms from 50 years ago and create an inequity; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation to remove the requirement of manifestation of symptoms to a compensable degree within one year of exposure for Chloracne and porphyria cutanea tarda and acute and subacute peripheral neuropathy.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 125

SUPPORT LEGISLATION FOR STUDIES AND PRESUMPTIVE DISEASES RELATED TO PFAS EXPOSURE

WHEREAS, the acronym “PFAS” relates to perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances that are man-made chemicals with at least one fully fluorinated carbon atom, are present in fire-fighting foams and do not break down in the environment; and

WHEREAS, in the 1970s, the Department of Defense (DOD) began using aqueous film forming foam (AFFF) to fight fuel fires and emergency response is a major source of PFAS contamination of ground water on military bases; and

WHEREAS, in 2018, the DOD examined 524 installations for two of the most prevalent PFAS chemicals in AFFF, perfluorooctane sulfonate, or PFOS, and perfluorooctanoic acid, or PFOA, and found 401 locations with some level of contamination; and

WHEREAS, in March 2020, DOD released new data showing that more than 600 military sites have been contaminated with PFAS, far more than previously disclosed; and

WHEREAS, according to the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ASTOR), some studies in humans suggest that certain PFAS may be associated with: fertility issues and pregnancy-induced hypertension/preeclampsia, increased cholesterol, changes in the immune system, increased risk of certain cancers (e.g., testicular and kidney cancer), changes in fetal and child development, liver damage, increased risk of thyroid disease, and increased risk of asthma; and

WHEREAS, some studies have reported these possible health outcomes, the overall scientific and medical evidence is currently inconclusive; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation to establish and maintain a registry for eligible individuals who may have been exposed to PFAS to ascertain and monitor the health effects of the exposure of members of the Armed Forces; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports legislation requiring DOD or VA to contract with the National Academies of Science, Medicine and Engineering to provide a study on the long-term health effects of PFAS exposure; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports the establishment of presumption of service connection or a concession of exposure for PFAS and establish presumptive diseases related thereto.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 126

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE STUDIES AND HEALTH CARE AND BENEFITS RESULTING FROM TOXIC EXPOSURES AT KARSHI-KHANABAD AIR BASE, UZBEKISTAN

WHEREAS, over 15,000 U.S. service members were deployed to the Karshi-Khanabad Air Base (K2) in Uzbekistan from 2001 to 2005; and

WHEREAS, while it was a Soviet air base, K2 had contained chemical weapons, enriched uranium and soil saturated with fuels and other solvents; and

WHEREAS, recently declassified Department of Defense documents reveal that U.S. service members were exposed to multiple toxic hazards while stationed at K2, including jet fuel, kerosene, dangerous levels of particulate matter in the air, as well as possible exposure to depleted uranium; and

WHEREAS, other health assessment tests found the base had elevated levels of volatile organic compounds, and total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH) were detected at numerous locations throughout K2; and

WHEREAS, air samples at the base found elevated levels of tetrachloroethylene, as well as the residuals of chemical weapons including cyanide in the showers; and

WHEREAS, a 2015 U.S. Army study found that veterans exposed at K2 have a 500% increased likelihood of developing cancer, to include malignant melanoma and neoplasms of the lymphatic and hematopoietic tissues; and

WHEREAS, veterans may not know for years or decades about the toxic or environmental conditions they were exposed to during military service; and

WHEREAS, returning from war, veterans may suffer from disabling conditions that are not immediately identified as a result of such exposures; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) does not recognize or acknowledge service at K2 with high probability of exposure to any toxic exposures; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports the recognition of the existence of toxic substances and environmental hazards at K2, and concession of exposure by all U.S. service members who served at K2 between January 1, 2001 and December 31, 2005; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports legislation to grant K2 veterans eligibility to VA health care, to include hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care by expanding the definition of toxic exposures in title 38, United States Code, section 1710; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports studies to identify illnesses and diseases that have a positive association, including a sufficient, limited, or suggestive association, with exposure to any toxic substances or high levels of particulate matter and dust resulting from open burn pits that may have been at K2.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 127

OPPOSE SUBJECTING DISABILITY COMPENSATION AND DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION TO MEANS TESTING

WHEREAS, the citizens of our nation heretofore have honorably recognized their indebtedness to those who sacrificed in military service by providing disability compensation as restitution for injuries, illnesses or diseases suffered in such service; and

WHEREAS, a disabled veteran is rightfully entitled to compensation for the effects of service-connected disability, without regard to any good fortune or income of the veteran or spouse from sources independent of the government's obligations to the veteran; and

WHEREAS, it is unfair for the government to seek to disclaim its obligation to disabled veterans or their survivors merely because of the receipt of other, unrelated income; and

WHEREAS, notwithstanding the special status of disability compensation and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, efforts have been made to deploy a means test to reduce or eliminate them in cases in which the veteran, spouse or survivor has obtained other income; and

WHEREAS, degrading compensation by providing it to the extent of the veteran's or survivor's economic needs rather than as a measure of restitution for personal injury or illness, thereby disassociates compensation from that which merits it and associates it with factors that govern purely gratuitous benefits; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, opposes any proposal to means test disability compensation and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 129
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO EXPAND DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS
AFFAIRS MENTAL HEALTH TRANSITION SERVICES TO ALL
SERVICE MEMBERS UPON DISCHARGE

WHEREAS, at present, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides limited mental health transition services to individuals who have incurred a traumatic physical injury; and

WHEREAS, individual service members being discharged with severe mental health issues due to traumatic experiences incurred on active duty are not being identified for enrollment in mental health transition services; and

WHEREAS, the VA has committed to expanding its suicide prevention programs; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports enacting legislation that would expand the provision of mental health transition services to individuals who have, or are reasonably suspected to have been, exposed to traumatic events including, but not limited to, military sexual trauma, combat or other exposure to a hostile military or terrorist activity, natural or man-made disaster, or an individual disaster that would reasonably be believed by the layperson to have caused significant emotional distress.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 131
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO DIRECT THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS
AFFAIRS TO VERIFY DEPENDENCY STATUS WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF
DEFENSE AND WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

WHEREAS, current law and regulations allow for additional compensation for veterans who have a service-connected disability rating of 30% or more for the dependents; and

WHEREAS, it is the veteran's responsibility to inform the Veterans Benefits

Administration (VBA) of changes in dependency; and

WHEREAS, veterans are often confused by the different sections of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and report changes to the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and/or through the Department of Defense's Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS); and

WHEREAS, VBA will establish an overpayment due to dependency changes that were not directly reported to VBA regardless of whether VHA and/or DEERS reflected the changes; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation to formally direct the VA Secretary to accept any reports of dependency changes made to the VHA and/or documented in DEERS to mitigate any alleged overpayment due to changes in dependency status; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports legislation to formally direct the VA Secretary to establish a method to accept and incorporate DEERS changes automatically into the VBA process, and to allow VHA changes to dependency to be reported to VBA.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 135
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO OPPOSE THE PAYMENT OF ATTORNEY
FEES BASED ON PERIODS WHEN THE ATTORNEY WAS
NOT INVOLVED IN THE CLAIM

WHEREAS, revisions in the law and regulations governing the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) have allowed for private agents and attorneys to charge for their representation of claimants before the VA; and

WHEREAS, those regulations, 38 CFR § 14.636(e), contain some indications that there may be provision for limitation of the final payment awarded to the private agents and attorneys based on reasonable limitations, as noted in the written description of Fees Permitted:

Fees permitted for services of an agent or attorney admitted to practice before VA must be reasonable. They may be based on a fixed fee, hourly rate, a percentage of benefits recovered, or a combination of such bases. Factors considered in determining whether fees are reasonable include:

1. The extent and type of services the representative performed;
2. The complexity of the case;
3. The level of skill and competence required of the representative in giving the services;
4. The amount of time the representative spent on the case;
5. The results the representative achieved, including the amount of any benefits recovered;
6. The level of review to which the claim was taken and the level of the review at which the representative was retained;
7. Rates charged by other representatives for similar services; and
8. Whether, and to what extent, the payment of fees is contingent upon the results achieved; and

WHEREAS, VA rarely, if ever, restricts the amount of fee paid to the private agents and attorneys beyond restricting the amount to 20% of any retroactive amount payable; and

WHEREAS, many private agents and attorneys act in the role of representative in a particular case for only a matter of months, providing limited interaction on behalf of the claimant, and not demonstrating any particular knowledge of the case; and

WHEREAS, regardless of whether the private agent and/or attorney did any actual work that resulted in the eventual grant of benefits the claimant is required to pay the 20% fee; and

WHEREAS, this frequently results in a windfall payment to the private agent and/or attorney at the immediate and direct expense of the claimant; and

WHEREAS, some private agents and/or attorneys, once they have engaged the signature of the client on the representation agreement have prematurely disengaged as the representative without waiving their right of recovery for any future award; and

WHEREAS, that future award is often years later resulting in an ever-expanding amount of retroactive pay; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports the enactment of legislation to restrict the amount of payment to a private agent and/or attorney to a reasonable analysis of the actual work put into the case, and in no case should the payment extend beyond the date when either the claimant or the private agent and/or attorney ends the representation, and withdrawal by the private agent and/or attorney should result in a loss of all rights to recovery where they, for whatever reason, have opted to break the client/representative relationship.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 138
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO EXPAND THE RECOGNIZED WARTIME SERVICE
PERIODS TO INCLUDE THOSE VETERANS WHO SERVED IN COMBAT
ENVIRONMENTS FROM HOSTILE MILITARY OR TERRORIST ACTIVITY FROM
NOVEMBER 4, 1979 THROUGH AUGUST 1, 1990

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recognizes specific periods of time as being war time periods; and

WHEREAS, the Vietnam era ended on May 7, 1975 and the Persian Gulf War era began on August 2, 1990 (38 CFR §3.2(f) and (i)); and

WHEREAS, hundreds of thousands of United States service members were subjected to combat environments from hostile military or terrorist activity beginning on:

- November 4, 1979 with the seizure of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran and the subsequent ill-fated rescue mission, Operation Eagle Claw;
- May 1981 terrorist threats from and resulting combat action with Libya; the April 18, 1983 bombing of the US Embassy in Beirut;
- the October 23, 1983 bombing of the Marine Barracks in Beirut; the October 25, 1983 invasion of Grenada;
- the December 12, 1983 bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait;
- the September 20, 1984 bombing of the U.S. Embassy annex northeast of Beirut;
- the April 5, 1986 bombing of La Belle, a discotheque in West Berlin known to be popular with off-duty U.S. service members;
- the resulting Operation El Dorado Canyon on April 15, 1986, that involved 200 U.S. aircraft bombing Libya;
- the 1989 buildup of U.S. troops in Panama with increasing tensions and hostilities leading to the December 20, 1989 invasion of Panama by U.S. troops in Operation Just Cause;
- the unknown number of anti-terrorist activities that remain classified to this day; and

WHEREAS, any of the military participants of any of these combat environments from hostile military or terrorist activity who were wounded, physically or mentally, are entitled to service-connected compensation from the VA, they are otherwise not entitled to pension; and NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports a new war time period covering the time frame of November 4, 1979 until August 1, 1990, plausibly identified as Middle East and South America Hostile enemy and terrorist activity.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 139 SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO CLARIFY AND EXPAND ENTITLEMENT TO DEPENDENTS EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE UNDER CHAPTER 35 FOR CHILDREN OF A TWO-VETERAN HOUSEHOLD

WHEREAS, current law and regulations allow for the child of a veteran permanently and totally (P&T) disabled due to service-connected conditions to receive Dependents Educational Assistance (DEA) under chapter 35; and

WHEREAS, upon establishing DEA benefits, the veteran is no longer allowed to claim that adult child attending school as a dependent on their compensation claim; and

WHEREAS, this limitation is carried forward to both veteran parents despite the child received chapter 35 benefits only under the P&T parent's entitlement; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation to clarify and expand the law and regulations to allow for continued dependency claim for the veteran parent who is not the P&T party upon which DEA benefits are being claimed.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 142 SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO ENSURE ENTITLEMENTS TO SPINA BIFIDA AND BIRTH DEFECTS RELATED TO AGENT ORANGE IN NEW LOCATIONS OF THE PACT ACT

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) regulations currently recognize and compensate birth defects in children of certain herbicide-exposed veterans as shown at 38 CFR §§ 3.814 (spina bifida) and 3.815 (birth defects); and

WHEREAS, these regulations are limited to veterans who served in Vietnam and certain parts of Korea; and

WHEREAS, on August 10, 2022, the President signed into law the PACT Act extensively expanding the areas conceded to have resulted in herbicide exposure; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports expanding the provisions of 38 CFR §§ 3.814 and 3.815 to include all herbicide exposure areas and times now conceded in the PACT Act.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 143

SUPPORT LEGISLATION REQUIRING ANY APPEAL WITHDRAWAL TO BE IN WRITING

WHEREAS, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) regulations previously allowed for a withdrawal of an appeal if certain criteria were met, and such withdrawal was in writing; and

WHEREAS, changes to the regulations when the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act (AMA) were set in place dropped the requirement for the withdrawal to be in writing; and

WHEREAS, often when a client is communicating with a VA employee via telephone to express a desire to withdraw a request for a hearing the documentation of the call is left ambiguous as to whether it was just the hearing, or the entire appeal being withdrawn; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports the requirement that any appeal withdrawal be made in writing by the appellant or their authorized representative.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 144

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO INCLUDE SERVICE NEAR THE FUKUSHIMA DAIICHI NUCLEAR POWER STATION, AS A RADIATION RISK ACTIVITY

WHEREAS, due to a major earthquake in Japan, a 15-meter tsunami disabled the power supply and cooling of three Fukushima nuclear reactors, causing a nuclear accident on March 11, 2011, which caused severe damage to the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station, which resulted in the release of radiation into the environment; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense (DOD) estimates that nearly 75,000 DOD-affiliated individuals were on or near the mainland of Japan during the period of March 12, to May 11, 2011; and

WHEREAS, subsequent to the nuclear accident, DOD established the Operation Tomodachi Registry to monitor the health impacts of those service members exposed to radiation; and

WHEREAS, the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation's (UNSCEAR's) May 2013 Report to the General Assembly concluded, "the doses to the general public, both those incurred during the first year and estimated for their lifetimes, are generally low or very low;" and

WHEREAS, in 2018 UNSCEAR decided to update the report to reflect the latest findings, publishing their report in March 2021, which broadly confirms the major findings and conclusions of the 2013 report; and

WHEREAS, despite the conclusions of reports from UNSCEAR, the Japanese government in 2018 acknowledged a connection between the death of a former plant worker and radiation exposure; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) currently does not recognize those veterans who served near Fukushima were exposed to radiation levels that warrant inclusion as a radiation risk activity; and

WHEREAS, veterans who served at Fukushima have a difficult time establishing direct service connection for cancers related to the radiation exposure; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, calls on Congress to enact legislation to expand radiation risk activities and presume exposure for those service members who served in the identified locations during the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant accident of March 11, 2011.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 145

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO INCLUDE MCMURDO STATION, ANTARCTICA, AS A RADIATION RISK ACTIVITY

WHEREAS, Operation Deep Freeze was a U.S. Navy operated small nuclear power plant (NPP) at the McMurdo Station, Antarctica, from 1962 to 1979; and

WHEREAS, the reactor was shut down in 1972 when a leak was discovered and the reactor was decommissioned from 1974 to 1979; and

WHEREAS, per the Defense Threat Reduction Agency report of June 2013, all support personnel stationed at McMurdo Station were potentially exposed to external gamma and neutron radiation, and internal radiation from the intake of radioactive materials by inhalation or ingestion; and

WHEREAS, seven potential sources of external exposure were identified to include the reactor, radioactive waste, radioactive effluent, radioactive materials in passing plumes, and contaminated soil deposited on the ground, while six potential sources of internal exposure were identified to include radioactive materials deposited in the tissues and organs after breathing air and ingesting water and soil and dust that contained radioactive material; and

WHEREAS, the report concluded that calculated doses are low and the associated probability that disease could have arisen from these doses is also low; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) currently does not recognize those veterans who served at McMurdo Station were exposed to radiation levels that warrant inclusion in the definition of radiation risk activities; and

WHEREAS, veterans who served at McMurdo Station have a difficult time establishing direct service connection for cancers related to the radiation exposure; and

WHEREAS, the presumption of service connection for radiation exposure applies to radiation risk activity participants, which does not include those who served at McMurdo Station; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, calls on Congress to enact legislation to expand radiation risk activities and presume exposure to those service members who served at McMurdo Station.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 164

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO REMOVE PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION INFORMATION FROM VETERAN'S CLAIM FILE

WHEREAS, an individual's Social Security number is now assigned at birth, and is directly linked to bank accounts, income taxes and all personal credit references; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) promised many years ago to discontinue using veterans Social Security numbers as the veterans claim number; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, that the VA discontinue using Social Security numbers and promptly assign a unique "C" or Claim Number to all veterans who have or will file a disability claim with the VA.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 196

PROVIDE MEDICAL BENEFITS AND COMPENSATION FOR PERSIAN GULF WAR VETERANS NEGATIVELY IMPACTED BY SARIN NERVE GAS

WHEREAS, the United States had a buildup of almost 700,000 U.S. troops deployed to the Persian Gulf region during the height of the buildup and the war; and

WHEREAS, since returning, many of these veterans have experienced medical issues unique to their service in the Southwest Asia theater of operations; and

WHEREAS, while the exact cause of these symptoms were unknown, the Department of Defense (DOD) has stated that a variety of potentially hazardous symptoms, such as pesticides, some from oil well fires, and depleted uranium could be linked; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides disability compensation benefits to veterans who served in Southwest Asia for illnesses that fall into the following three categories: (1) Undiagnosed illnesses (established in 1994); (2) Medically unexplained chronic multisymptom illnesses (established in 2001); (3) Nine specific infectious diseases (established in 2010); and

WHEREAS, according to VA more than 1.1 million veterans served in the Southwest theater of operations and estimates that 44% of veterans who served have medical issues commonly referred to as Gulf War Illness; and

WHEREAS, in the Government Accountability Office (GAO) 2017 report states Gulf War Illness claims were denied at a higher rate than all other claimed disabilities; and

WHEREAS, unclassified records confirm that rockets filled with sarin and cyclosarin were found at a munitions storage depot in Iraq and were destroyed by U.S. troops in 1991 and an undetermined amount of the gas was released into the atmosphere; and

WHEREAS, it is estimated that over 250,000 Servicemembers were exposed to these nerve agents; and

WHEREAS, in the May 2022 issue of "Environmental Health Perspectives Journal", Dr. Robert Haley, stated that his findings provide strong evidence for an etiologic role of the nerve agent in Gulf War Illness; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation to concede sarin gas exposure for all veterans who served in the Southwest Asia area of operations; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports scientific studies and reports to determine the potential long-term negative health impacts of sarin and cyclosarin; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports establishing benefits and presumptives diseases related specifically to the two nerve agents.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 197
SUPPORT A CHANGE IN REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS RATING
UNDER SECTION 4.30 OF TITLE 38, CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS
TO PROVIDE FOR A TEMPORARY TOTAL RATING FOR
INCAPACITATION OF MORE THAN 21 DAYS

WHEREAS, with advances in modern medicine and increasing emphasis on more efficient use of health care resources, health care providers are being encouraged to utilize suitable alternatives to inpatient care; and

WHEREAS, as a consequence, veterans are often treated through home health services or convalesce at home rather than in the hospital; and

WHEREAS, convalescent ratings are currently only authorized where inpatient or outpatient treatment resulted in surgery or immobilization of a major joint by cast; and

WHEREAS, there are instances where the veteran's treatment did not involve surgery or casting of a major joint, but the veteran has undergone healing, convalescence, or a therapeutic course in the home, with a duration of more than 21 days; and

WHEREAS, exacerbation of a service-connected disability sometimes makes work activities contraindicated for periods of more than 21 days; and

WHEREAS, in such instances, the therapeutic course, convalescence, or restriction from work would occur in the home in lieu of hospitalization for more than 21 days; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports a change in section 4.30 of title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, to provide for a temporary total rating if treatment or exacerbation of a service-connected disability results in a condition of temporary total incapacity for employment or temporary unavailability for employment by reason of home health care or ambulatory care, bed rest or confinement to the home, or contraindication of work activities for more than 21 days.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 199
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO ALLOW FOR THE USE OF AN INTENT TO FILE IN
CASES WHERE AN INITIAL OR SUPPLEMENTAL CLAIM FOR THE SAME OR
SIMILAR BENEFIT ON THE SAME OR SIMILAR BASIS WAS PREVIOUSLY DECIDED

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) published regulations allowing for the use of an intent to file (ITF) that would make it easier for veterans to file fully developed claims that would allow for quicker decisions easing the backlog of cases with the VA; and

WHEREAS, with the enactment of the Appeals Modernization Act on February 19, 2019, VA regulations specifically restricted the use of the ITF with a supplemental claim, defined by VA as any complete claim for a VA benefit on an application form prescribed by the Secretary where an initial or supplemental claim for the same or similar benefit on the same or similar basis was previously decided; and

WHEREAS, the typical veteran does not maintain the legal sophistication to clearly understand when the claim they are presently seeking to file is a claim for the same or similar benefit on the same or similar basis was previously decided; and

WHEREAS, VA relies on its partnership with veterans service organizations (VSO) to assist with many claim related activities; and

WHEREAS, VSOs in turn rely on the development and submission of claims from a wide range of volunteer assistants; and

WHEREAS, the VSO volunteers have no reasonable way to understand when the veteran they are assisting is presenting a claim where the same or similar benefit on the same or similar basis was previously decided; and

WHEREAS, by accepting the use of the ITF in Supplemental Claims, VA would have the opportunity to notify the veteran of the fact that the claim filed was considered to be the same or similar benefit on the same or similar basis that was previously decided; and

WHEREAS, that would allow the veteran, with VSO volunteer and professional staff assistance, to prepare a better claim; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports the enactment of legislation to allow for the use of an ITF for any claim, to specifically include Supplemental Claims.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 201

SUPPORT OUTDATED FORMS TO BE CONSIDERED INTENTS-TO-FILE

WHEREAS, when the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) updates any standardized form that a period of one year will be authorized for the claimant to submit an updated form rather than the current 60 days; and

WHEREAS, if the veteran submits an outdated form, then the outdated form would be considered an intent to file for one year from the date of receipt of the outdated form; and

WHEREAS, if the veteran returns an updated form addressing the same contentions on the outdated form, the VA will apply the regulations of the intent to file and honor the effective date of claim as the date of receipt of the outdated form, NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports any outdated form received by the VA be considered an intent to file and the veteran be warranted one year to file the current dated form, in which the VA honors the date of receipt of the outdated form as the earliest effective date as related to 38 C.F.R. § 3.155(c).

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 211

OPPOSE LONG-TERM ROUNDING DOWN OF COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENTS IN VETERANS' BENEFITS

WHEREAS, to maintain the worth of veterans benefits, they must be adjusted to keep pace with the rise in the cost of living; and

WHEREAS, long-term rounding down of adjusted rates to the next lower dollar amount erodes the value of these benefits over time and thus does not keep pace with the rise in the cost of living; and

WHEREAS, the rounding down of veterans' cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) unfairly targets disabled veterans, their dependents and survivors for cost savings to the government; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, opposes long-term rounding down COLAs for veterans disability compensation, and compensation to their dependents and survivors.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 213

AMEND THE LAW TO PROVIDE A 10-YEAR PROTECTION PERIOD FOR SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY RATINGS

WHEREAS, section 110, title 38, United States Code, now provides for the protection of all disability compensation ratings that have been continuously in effect for 20 or more years; and

WHEREAS, permanency should be conceded for disability compensation ratings that have been in effect for 10 years without change in evaluation with no further examination scheduled; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports amendment of section 110, title 38, United States Code, to provide that disability ratings in effect be permanently protected after a period of 10 continuous years.

RESOLUTION NO. 214

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE FOR SERVICE CONNECTION FOR DISABLING CONDITIONS RESULTING FROM TOXIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL EXPOSURES

WHEREAS, veterans of all military conflicts from the World Wars to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have been exposed to toxic and environmental exposures such as mustard gas, herbicides, cold weather, chemicals, biological agents, harmful levels of radiation and other combat operation exposures; and

WHEREAS, veterans may not know for years or decades about the toxic or environmental conditions they were exposed to during military service; and

WHEREAS, returning from war, veterans subsequently suffer from disabling conditions that are not immediately identified as a result of such exposures; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense (DOD) has not always been willing to publicly share information regarding exposures during military service with other government departments or agencies or with the individuals involved; and

WHEREAS, research conducted by the National Institutes of Health, DOD and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and other federal agencies has focused on relationships between toxic and environmental exposures and health outcomes of veterans and pending claims; and

WHEREAS, such research is necessary to ensure veterans receive high-quality health services and benefits to which they are entitled due to diseases or injuries resulting from deployment exposures; and

WHEREAS, in studies mandated by Congress, the National Academy of Sciences continues to review and evaluate scientific literature including specific research studies to determine whether a link exists between exposure and certain physical disorders; and

WHEREAS, VA and DOD must collaborate and share necessary deployment, health and exposure data to better address the health conditions experienced by disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, these studies to establish and recognize relationships between exposures and diseases, take several years to accomplish, requiring veterans to establish claims on a direct basis without conceded exposure to such toxins; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation to establish a concession of individual exposures while awaiting conclusions of studies for presumptive diseases and conditions associated with all veterans' related exposures to toxic and environmental hazards; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV vigorously supports the VA's expeditious handling of veterans' claims and the payment of fair and just compensation for conditions associated with all veterans' service and related exposures to toxic and environmental hazards.

RESOLUTION NO. 215

OPPOSE ANY PROPOSAL THAT WOULD REDUCE PAYMENTS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS DISABILITY COMPENSATION BY PAYMENTS OF SOCIAL SECURITY INSURANCE, SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY INSURANCE OR ANY OTHER FEDERAL BENEFIT PAID TO A VETERAN

WHEREAS, consideration has been given to offsetting Social Security Insurance (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits from any other federal benefit; and

WHEREAS, the adoption of such a measure would reduce the overall income provided to veterans who have a compensable service-connected disability; and

WHEREAS, such an offset creates undue hardship on totally disabled service-connected veterans and their families by drastically reducing their total income; and

WHEREAS, benefits received from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) or under military retirement pay and other federal programs have differing eligibility criteria compared to eligibility for SSI or SSDI benefits; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, opposes any measure that proposes to offset the payment of any other federal benefit or earned benefit entitlement from VA compensation payments made to service-connected disabled veterans.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 216
CONSIDER TREATMENT FOR A PRESUMPTIVE SERVICE-CONNECTED
CONDITION AS A CLAIM FOR DEPARTMENT OF
VETERANS AFFAIRS COMPENSATION

WHEREAS, many service members have suffered from diseases that are recognized to be presumptive; and

WHEREAS, veterans suffering from diseases that include many types of cancer, as well as diabetes and other chronic diseases may not be aware that they may be eligible for service connection, even if they are being treated in a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facility; and

WHEREAS, many VA medical facilities are not currently staffed or equipped to provide appropriate counseling to veterans or their families on how to file a claim for service-connected benefits; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, urges Congress to enact legislation requiring that treatment by the VA for a condition or disease recognized as presumptively service-connected will be considered to be an Intent to File for service connection for compensation purposes.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 220
SUPPORT MEANINGFUL CLAIMS AND APPEALS REFORM

WHEREAS, Congress has created a system for the administration of veterans benefits and services, the Veterans Benefits administration (VBA) is responsible for processing veterans claims and appeals for a myriad of benefits and services; and

WHEREAS, the number of claims filed and appeals each year is growing, the complexity of claims and appeals filed is increasing, the backlog of non-rating claims and appeals pending is too large, and the accuracy of claims must continue to be approved; and

WHEREAS, VBA's primary emphasis of reducing the disability claims backlog resulted in less attention to other work that led to significant increases in non-rating related claims and a rising backlog of appeals; and

WHEREAS, VBA has reached out to veterans service organizations accredited to represent veterans in the claims process for assistance in reforming its claims processing system, particularly the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) because of our experience and success in representing more than 300,000 veterans each year; and

WHEREAS, VBAS has made measurable progress in reducing the number of disability claims pending in the backlog (defined as those pending more than 125 days), while also improving accuracy; and

WHEREAS, in 2016, DAV joined with VBA, the Board and other stakeholders to develop a new framework to reform and modernize how VA processes appeals that includes several appeal options that claimants could choose, including filing supplemental claims, seeking higher level review of VBA claims decisions, and filing formal appeals directly to the Board; and

WHEREAS, VBA is in the process of modernizing the system for adjudicating veterans' appeals; and

WHEREAS, when VBA reports on the average days pending for claims, VBA does not include non-rating claims, and these claims are just as important and should be accounted for when reporting average days of pending claims; and

WHEREAS, any claims or appeals reform must preserve or enhance veterans' due process rights and ensure that adjudications are fair, accurate, timely, and of acceptable quality; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, calls on Congress and VBA to support significant and meaningful claims and appeals processing reform to address VA's overall claims and appeals workloads; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV calls on Congress and VBA ensure that all proposals to streamline and automate the claims development and rating process fully protect veterans rights and that automated rating processes, such as automated decision letters, provide sufficient and specific information to inform veterans and their advocates about the reasons and bases for rating decisions; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV calls on VA and Congress to ensure that sufficient funding is requested and provided to complete all reform and transformation initiatives; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports legislation and other policies that will strengthen training, testing and quality control, as well as accountability measures to ensure that VBA leaders and employees develop a corporate culture focused on getting each claims decided right the first time; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports legislation to give due deference to private medical evidence that is competent, credible, probative and otherwise adequate for rating purposes, as well as legislation and policies that encourage the use of private medical evidence, including allowing private physicians to gain access to all Disability Benefit Questionnaires.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 222
SUPPORT LEGISLATION FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
(VA) TO PROVIDE CHILD CARE SERVICES/ASSISTANCE TO
VETERANS ATTENDING VA PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) does not provide child care assistance or services for veterans; and

WHEREAS, multiple studies and surveys reveal that a significant barrier for veterans seeking and obtaining VA services is child care; and

WHEREAS, child care services would assist in removing a major obstacle for veterans, while vastly improving their ability to successfully comply with health care treatment and complete training, rehabilitative, and education programs; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports the enactment of legislation for the VA to provide child care services/assistance to veterans attending VA health care, VA benefits programs, VA educational programs, VA employment services, VA homeless programs, and VA rehabilitative programs.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 223
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO INCREASE DISABILITY COMPENSATION

WHEREAS, it is the historical policy of DAV that this nation's first duty to veterans is to provide for the rehabilitation of its wartime disabled; and

WHEREAS, the percentage ratings for service-connected disabilities represent, as far as can be practicably determined, the average impairment in earning capacity resulting from such disabilities in civil occupations; and

WHEREAS, compensation increases should be based primarily on the loss of earning capacity; and

WHEREAS, disabled veterans who are unable to work because of service-connected disabilities should be entitled to compensation payments commensurate with the after-tax earnings of their able-bodied contemporaries; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports the enactment of legislation to provide a realistic increase in Department of Veterans Affairs compensation rates to bring the standard of living of disabled veterans in line with that which they would have enjoyed had they not suffered their service-connected disabilities.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 224
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO ALLOW ALL VETERANS TO
RECOVER TAXES ON DISABILITY SEVERANCE PAY

WHEREAS, certain funds received by military service members determined to be unfit for duty as a result of personal injury or disability are not taxable; and

WHEREAS, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) continues to tax military disability severance pay as regular income; and

WHEREAS, a United States District Court held that such military disability severance pay is nontaxable income; and

WHEREAS, the IRS has subsequently acquiesced to the District Court holding; and

WHEREAS, a three-year statute of limitation prevents individuals who have been discharged for more than three years from recovering the taxed funds taken by the IRS; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, strongly supports legislation that would allow all veterans to recover taxes from their disability severance pay.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 225
SUPPORT LEGISLATION THAT REQUIRES THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS
AFFAIRS TO CONSIDER PRIVATE MEDICAL EVIDENCE SUPPLIED
BY LICENSED PRIVATE HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

WHEREAS, section 5125, title 38, United States Code, Acceptance of Reports of Private Physician Examinations, authorizes the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to accept private reports in the adjudication of claims for veterans disability benefits; and

WHEREAS, Veterans Health Administration personnel, to include nurse practitioners and physician assistants in independent practices, of equal training and background to their private-sector counterparts, are authorized to complete such medical reports for VA adjudication purposes; and

WHEREAS, submission of private medical records by a claimant, if otherwise adequate for rating purposes, provides claimants with an alternate means to procure evidence in support of their claims, rather than being required to attend mandatory compensation and pension examinations; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, seeks the enactment of legislation that would require VA to consider private medical evidence supplied by licensed private health care providers to include, but not be limited to, reports from nurse practitioners and physician assistants in private practices.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 226
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE FOR REALISTIC
COST-OF-LIVING ALLOWANCES

WHEREAS, the Department of Labor provides statistical information and analysis that impacts the annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for disabled veterans, military retirees and Social Security recipients; and

WHEREAS, the calculations regarding COLAs are the domain of the Social Security Administration, using a formula that has been directly linked to the Consumer Price Index since 1975, prescribed by law when calculating any COLA increase; and

WHEREAS, in general, a COLA is equal to the percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) from the third quarter of one year to the third quarter of the next, and if there is no increase, there is no COLA; and

WHEREAS, the formula that derives the level of increase is tied to the United States economy on a very broad basis; stagnant economic activity does not mean disabled veterans' cost of living is flat; in fact, as they age and suffer from associated illnesses of aging, their costs increase; and

WHEREAS, it is unfair that disabled veterans are denied necessary increases in disability payments due to a formula that actually has little to do with the costs they bear; and

WHEREAS, there have been recent attempts to adjust the COLA downward in various methods such as "Chained CPI," and

WHEREAS, disabled veterans disability compensation has not kept pace with the rest of the economy; even in years when there were COLA payments, disability benefits lagged; and

WHEREAS, many disabled veterans and their survivors are on fixed incomes and rely on COLAs to keep pace with their current living expenses; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation to provide a realistic cost-of-living allowance for our nation's disabled veterans, their dependents and survivors.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 227
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO EXCLUDE VETERANS DISABILITY
COMPENSATION FROM COUNTABLE INCOME FOR PURPOSES
OF ELIGIBILITY FOR BENEFITS AND SERVICES FROM OTHER
GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, by virtue of their service and sacrifices, disabled veterans deserve special benefits that are separate and in addition to benefits the government provides to other citizens; and

WHEREAS, compensation for the effects of service-connected disabilities is counted as income in determinations of eligibility for other government benefits and programs, such as low-income housing through the Department of Housing and Urban Development; and

WHEREAS, the value of compensation is negated and its purposes are defeated when a veteran's receipt of compensation is used to reduce or deny entitlement to government benefits or services available to other citizens; and

WHEREAS, when a veteran's compensation is offset against other entitlements, it is in effect deducted from eligibility for services generally available to citizens who did not serve, and thus the veteran receives nothing for his or her disability and is thus not compensated; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, seeks legislation to exclude veterans disability compensation from countable income for purposes of eligibility for benefits or services under other government programs.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 228
SUPPORT OVERSIGHT OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
PRACTICES IN EVALUATING DISABILITY CLAIMS FOR RESIDUALS
OF MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA

WHEREAS, DAV maintains a long-standing resolution from our membership that advocates an open process to govern establishment of service connection for diseases and injuries incurred in or aggravated during military service; and

WHEREAS, establishing a causal relationship between certain injuries and later disability can be daunting due to lack of records or human factors that obscure or prevent documentation or even basic investigation of such incidents after they occur; and

WHEREAS, military sexual trauma is ever more recognized as a hazard of service for 1% of men serving and 20% of women serving in the armed forces and later represents a heavy burden of psychological and mental health care for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); and

WHEREAS, an absence of documentation of military sexual trauma in the personnel or military unit records of injured individuals prevents or obstructs adjudication of claims for disabilities of this deserving group injured during their service, and may interrupt or prevent their care by VA once they become veterans; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense (DOD) has established an office of Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPRO) to establish department-wide policies and procedures for the handling of sexual assault and injury cases for active military service members and members of reserve and Guard units, including documentation, records retention and protection of the privacy of the individuals involved in such cases; and

WHEREAS, both DOD and VA have agreed on some procedures that would govern documentation sufficient to justify service connection of sexual assault and other military sexual trauma; and

WHEREAS, the VA has issued a regulation (section 3.304(f)(5), title 38, Code of Federal Regulations) that provides for a liberalization of requirements for establishment of service connection due to personal assault, including military sexual trauma, even when documentation of an "actual stressor" is not found, but when evidence in other records exists of a "marker" indicating that a stressor may have in fact occurred; and

WHEREAS, VA has trained adjudication personnel, especially its rating staffs in VA regional offices, in better evaluating disability claims for military sexual assaults and has emphasized these particular claims must be made subject to special attention in consonance with the new regulation; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports VA's practices in evaluating disability claims associated

with military sexual trauma, and urges VA to conduct rigorous oversight of adjudication personnel and review of data to ensure the present policy is being faithfully followed and standardized in all VA regional offices.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 230
SUPPORT A MORE LIBERAL REVIEW OF OTHER THAN HONORABLE
DISCHARGES IN CASES OF POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER,
TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY, MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA AND OTHER
TRAUMA FOR THE PURPOSE OF ELIGIBILITY FOR DEPARTMENT OF
VETERANS AFFAIRS BENEFITS AND SERVICES

WHEREAS, former service members who receive a non-punitive administrative discharge characterized as other than honorable ("bad paper") are generally not considered eligible for care and treatment from the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) or other Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits; and

WHEREAS, the current rate of bad paper discharges by Afghanistan and Iraq service members with undiagnosed traumatic brain injury (TBI), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), military sexual trauma (MST) and other trauma are twice that during the Vietnam era and nearly four times the rate of veterans during the World War II era; and

WHEREAS, in 2014, the Secretary of Defense provided policy guidance to the Military Department Boards for Correction of Military/Naval Records (BCM/NR) to give "liberal consideration" in examining requests for discharge upgrades to evidence that PTSD may have contributed to the misconduct leading to less than honorable discharges; and

WHEREAS, former service members who have potentially suffered TBI, PTSD, MST or other trauma and are awarded bad paper discharges are likely to need medical care and benefits related to their military service; and

WHEREAS, without access to VA medical care and benefits, these former service members may be at higher risk of suicide and homelessness, along with involvement in the criminal justice system; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports a more liberal review of other than honorable discharges for purposes of receiving VA benefits and health care services in cases of former service members whose PTSD, TBI and MST or other trauma contributed to their administrative discharges characterized as other than honorable.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 231
OPPOSE LUMP-SUM PAYMENTS FOR SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITIES

WHEREAS, disability compensation is paid monthly to an eligible veteran on account of and at a rate commensurate with diminished earning capacity resulting from the effects of service-connected disease or injury; and

WHEREAS, such compensation, by design, continues to provide relief from the service-connected disability for as long as the veteran continues to suffer its effects at a compensable level; and

WHEREAS, by law, the rate of compensation is determined by the level of disability present, thereby requiring re-evaluation of the disability upon a change in its degree; and

WHEREAS, various entities have suggested lump-sum payments as a way for the government to avoid the administrative costs of re-evaluating service-connected disabilities and as a way to avoid future liabilities to service-connected disabled veterans when their disabilities worsen or cause secondary disabilities; and

WHEREAS, such lump-sum payments would not, on the whole, be in the best interests of disabled veterans but would be more intended for government savings and convenience; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, opposes any change in law to provide for lump-sum payments of Department of Veterans Affairs disability compensation.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 232

OPPOSE THE IMPOSITION OF TIME LIMITS FOR FILING COMPENSATION CLAIMS

WHEREAS, some veterans suffer lifelong impairments from disabilities incurred in connection with military service; and

WHEREAS, disability compensation is a benefit available to veterans at any time they choose to claim it; and

WHEREAS, veterans who, for whatever reason, do not initially desire to claim and receive compensation should not forfeit the right to claim and receive it at some later time; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans' Claims Adjudication Commission, created by Congress to study the Department of Veterans Affairs claims processing system, suggested a time limit for filing compensation claims as a way to reduce VA's workload; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, opposes any change in law to limit the time for filing compensation claims.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 233

OPPOSE ANY CHANGE THAT WOULD REDEFINE SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY OR RESTRICT THE CONDITIONS OR CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH IT MAY BE ESTABLISHED

WHEREAS, current law authorizes service connection for disabilities incurred or aggravated during service in the United States armed forces in the line of duty; and

WHEREAS, various proposals have been made to limit service connection to disabilities caused directly by the performance of duty; and

WHEREAS, disability incurred in the line of duty is sometimes not directly due to a job injury but may be due to less obvious factors attributable to the armed forces environment; and

WHEREAS, proof of a causal relationship may often be difficult or impossible notwithstanding an inability to dissociate the disability from service-related factors; and

WHEREAS, current law equitably alleviates the onerous burden of establishing performance of duty or other causal connection as a prerequisite for service connection; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, opposes changes in current law so as to redefine and restrict the conditions under which service connection may be established.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 234

OPPOSE CHANGE OF DEFINITION OF A HERBICIDE AGENT FOR THE PURPOSES OF ESTABLISHING SERVICE CONNECTION FOR DISABILITIES RELATED TO HERBICIDE EXPOSURE

WHEREAS, section 1116, title 38, United States Code (USC), defines a "herbicide agent" as a chemical in a herbicide used in support of the United States and allied military operations in the Republic of Vietnam during the period beginning on January 9, 1962, and ending on May 7, 1975; and

WHEREAS, 38 USC §1116 states that for the purposes of establishing service connection for a disability or death resulting from exposure to a herbicide agent, including a presumption of service connection, a veteran who, during active military, naval or air service, served in the Republic of Vietnam during the period beginning on January 9, 1962, and ending on May 7, 1975, shall be presumed to have been exposed during such service to a herbicide agent containing dioxin or 2,4-dichlorophenoxyacetic acid, and may be presumed to have been exposed during such service to any other chemical compound in a herbicide; and

WHEREAS, congressional records indicate the Secretary of Defense acknowledged herbicides were used on the Korean demilitarized zone as early as April 1968; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Manual M21-1 acknowledges herbicides were used at eight specific Royal Thai Air Force bases; and

WHEREAS, the Administration's proposed budget for fiscal year 2019 seeks to amend 38 USC §1116 to redefine herbicides as only those containing tetrachlorodibenzo-p-dioxin (TCDD); and

WHEREAS, the Administration's proposal states that herbicides with TCDD were only used in Vietnam and not on any other military base outside of Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, the Administration's proposal is inconsistent with known herbicide use outside of Vietnam and would only serve to limit service connection for herbicide exposure to only veterans with Vietnam service; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, opposes any change of definition of herbicides that would limit service connection only to those veterans physically in Vietnam.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 235
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO ESTABLISH PRESUMPTIVE SERVICE
CONNECTION FOR DISEASES AND ILLNESSES RELATED TO
CONTAMINANTS AT FORT MCCLELLAN, ALABAMA

WHEREAS, after World War II until the based closed in 1999, Fort McClellan, located in Anniston, Alabama, was home of the Chemical Corps and Chemical Weapons school for the United States Army; and

WHEREAS, in 1953, Fort McClellan conducted "Operation Top Hat" which used military personnel to test exposure and decontamination methods that included sulfur mustard and nerve agents; and

WHEREAS, in 1962, Fort McClellan added the Biological Radiological Agency, Aberdeen Proving Grounds; and

WHEREAS, the Monsanto Chemical Plant, located in Anniston, was instrumental in the development and testing of the herbicides used during Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, in 2003, Monsanto Chemical settled a class action law suit with more than 200,000 residents of Anniston for more than \$700 million; and

WHEREAS, the 2005 Institute of Medicine (IOM) Report, Contaminants in the Subsurface: Source Zone Assessment and Remediation, shows that there were 67 different disposal sites on Ft. McClellan containing volatile organic compounds (VOCs) trichloroethylene (TCEs), Polychlorinated biphenyl (PCBs), semi-volatile organic compound (SVOCs), pesticides, explosives, heavy metals (Pb), unexploded ordinance (UXO), radioactive sources, and non-stockpile chemical materials; and

WHEREAS, the 2005 Institute of Medicine (IOM) Report recognizes that both the groundwater and soil were contaminated by those noted above; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans Health Care Administration (VHA) has recognized the potential exposures at Fort McClellan, noting in part:

Some members of the U.S. Army Chemical Corp School, Army Combat Development Command Chemical/Biological/Radiological Agency, Army Military Police School and Women's Army Corps, among others, may have been exposed to one or more of several hazardous materials, likely at low levels, during their service at Fort McClellan. Potential exposures could have included, but are not limited to, the following:

Radioactive compounds (cesium-137 and cobalt-60) used in decontamination training activities in isolated locations on base.

Chemical warfare agents (mustard gas and nerve agents) used in decontamination testing activities in isolated locations on base.

Airborne polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) from the Monsanto plant in the neighboring town; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, calls upon Congress to immediately introduce legislation to authorize scientific studies of the environmental and toxic exposures at Fort McClellan; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports legislation to establish a concession of exposure to toxins and legislation to establish presumptive service connection for the veterans who were exposed on Fort McClellan.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 236
AMEND THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS SCHEDULE
FOR RATING DISABILITIES FOR MENTAL DISORDERS

WHEREAS, under section 4.130, title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, the criteria for evaluating mental disorders is ambiguous; and

WHEREAS, schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders, delirium, dementia, and amnesic and other cognitive disorders, anxiety disorders, dissociative disorders, somatoform disorders, mood

disorders and chronic adjustment disorders are all evaluated using the same general rating formula for mental disorders; and

WHEREAS, the current edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders specifically lists different symptoms for post-traumatic stress disorder, schizophrenia and other psychiatric disorders; and

WHEREAS, one veteran service connected for schizophrenia and another veteran service connected for another psychiatric disorder should not be evaluated using the same general formula; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports amendment of section 4.130, title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, to formulate different criteria to evaluate the various mental disorders under the appropriate standards applicable to each diagnosis.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 237
COMPENSATE PERSIAN GULF WAR VETERANS SUFFERING
FROM ILLNESSES CIRCUMSTANTIALLY LINKED TO THEIR
SERVICE IN THE PERSIAN GULF WAR

WHEREAS, DAV has a significant concern regarding the multitude of ailments reported by a growing number of Persian Gulf War veterans who were exposed to both identified and unknown health hazards; and

WHEREAS, Persian Gulf War veterans were exposed to numerous and various environmental health hazards, including smoke from oil field fires and other petroleum agents, depleted uranium, chemical and biological elements, desert parasites, vaccines, chemoprophylactic agents and vehicle paints; and

WHEREAS, primary investigations and multifarious studies have thus far failed to identify the source or sources of these ailments; and

WHEREAS, the scientific/medical community's inability to identify the source(s) and pathological nature of the disease has caused considerable anxiety for these veterans and their families; and

WHEREAS, there appears to be a commonality of ailments plaguing Persian Gulf War veterans; and

WHEREAS, these ailments have been unofficially labeled "Persian Gulf Syndrome," "Multiple Chemical Sensitivity" and "Chronic Fatigue Syndrome;" and

WHEREAS, based on Government Accounting Office (GAO) Report (GAO 17-511) findings, approval rates for Gulf War Illness claims are about three times lower than for all other claimed disabilities which is due, in large part, to current law requiring veterans to suffer from an "undiagnosed" or "medically unexplained" illness for eligibility to receive disability compensation for medical conditions occurring in Persian Gulf War veterans; and

WHEREAS, based on the available medical evidence medical examiners must rule out all known diseases that could cause the veterans symptoms for it to be determined as an undiagnosed illness or unexplainable illness; and

WHEREAS, clinicians are highly unlikely to provide a diagnosis of an undiagnosed illness or unexplainable illness in most cases creating an unfair standard for Gulf War veterans to be properly service connected for conditions related to their military service; and

WHEREAS, as a result of the requirements in the existing law, these brave veterans suffering from these unknown ailments are often prevented from obtaining service connection and providing for their own basic needs and for the needs of their families; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, vigorously supports the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA's) expeditious handling of Persian Gulf War veterans' claims and the payment of fair and just compensation for those diagnosed and undiagnosed conditions associated with their service in the Persian Gulf theater or related exposures to certain chemical, biological and environmental toxins; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV strongly urges that these Persian Gulf War veterans continue to receive priority medical treatment for those ailments that may be associated with their service in the Persian Gulf; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we vehemently urge VA, the Department of Defense, and the Department of Health and Human Services to continue to cooperate in tests and studies to unlock the mysteries surrounding the ailments suffered by Persian Gulf War veterans, including the possibility of exposure to chemical agents by United States military personnel.

RESOLUTION NO. 238

SUPPORT SUFFICIENT, TIMELY AND PREDICTABLE FUNDING FOR ALL DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PROGRAMS, BENEFITS AND SERVICES

WHEREAS, DAV believes that wounded, injured and ill veterans, through their extraordinary sacrifices and service, earned the right to health care, benefits and services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); and

WHEREAS, this nation's first concern should be to fulfill its obligation to those who served in the military services in defense of this country; and

WHEREAS, DAV worked for more than two decades to reform the budget process in order to assure sufficient, timely and predictable funding for VA health care programs; and

WHEREAS, DAV developed and supported new legislation to assure sufficient, timely and predictable funding for VA health care through the technique of advance appropriations, as well as through new transparency and accountability requirements covering VA health care budget requests; and

WHEREAS, the adoption of budget caps and sequestration have often limited the ability of congressional appropriations committees to fully fund all veterans programs, services and benefits; and

WHEREAS, spurred by DAV, Congress enacted Public Law 111-81, the Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act of 2009, a law that requires advance appropriations for VA's three medical care accounts that fund VA health care programs; and

WHEREAS, Congress enacted Public Law 113-235, the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act of 2015, that requires advance appropriations for three mandatory accounts of the Veterans Benefits Administration, compensation and pensions, readjustment benefits, and veterans insurance and indemnities; and

WHEREAS, VA's leadership, employees and veterans served by VA health care facilities have universally reported that advance appropriations have allowed VA to more efficiently and effectively deliver timely, quality health care to enrolled veterans; and

WHEREAS, VA health care programs and veterans mandatory benefits have largely been protected from the adverse effects of government shutdowns; and

WHEREAS, the remainder of VA's discretionary budget, which includes information technology (IT), medical and prosthetic research, construction and general operating expenses—primarily the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA)—could benefit from the timeliness and predictability offered by advance appropriations, particularly when unrelated budget stalemates, continuing resolutions and sequestration occur; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 111-81 required the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to study and report to Congress and the public on VA's budget submissions in fiscal years 2011, 2012 and 2013, including an evaluation of VA's budget estimates compared to the forecasts made by VA's internal actuarial model; and

WHEREAS, GAO reported significant findings of unjustified, questionable changes VA made during the internal budget development process, limitations of budget justifications and questionable reliability of proposed savings estimates; and

WHEREAS, recent budget requests for advance appropriations by the Administration and advance appropriations amounts provided for by Congress continue to be insufficient to meet the full demand for VA benefits and services; and

WHEREAS, DAV and congressional sponsors of the advance appropriations concept anticipated that full implementation of Public Law 111-81 would require continued oversight from Congress, DAV and others; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation to authorize advance appropriations for all of VA's discretionary and mandatory budget, which would extend advance appropriations to include IT, medical and prosthetic research, major construction, minor construction, State Home construction, state cemetery construction grants, general operating expenses (VBA and general administration), the National Cemetery Administration, the Office of Inspector General, and all other mandatory benefits; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV continues to call on Congress and VA to fully and faithfully implement Public Law 111-81, the Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act of 2009, to assure sufficient, timely and predictable funding for veterans health care; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports legislation to permanently extend the GAO study and reporting requirements included in the Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act of 2009.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 239

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO INCLUDE CHILDREN IN LEGAL CUSTODY AS A DEPENDENT FOR DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PURPOSES

WHEREAS, per Title 10, United States Code, (USC) § 1072(2)(I), military service members and military retirees can claim a dependent child that is an unmarried person who is placed in the legal custody of the member or former member as a result of an order of a court of competent jurisdiction in the United States (or possession of the United States); and

WHEREAS, 38 USC § 101 (4)(A) in part, defines dependent child as a person under the age of eighteen years, or who before attaining the age of eighteen, became permanently incapable of support, or who after attaining the age of eighteen but not after attaining the age of twenty-three, is attending an education or training program; and

WHEREAS, a child is a person who is a legitimate child, or a legally adopted child, or a stepchild who is a member of the veteran's household; and

WHEREAS, when a child is placed in the legal custody or guardianship of a veteran, the child does not meet the above criteria as a dependent for VA purposes; however, the child would be recognized by the Department of Defense, therefore creating an inequity; and

WHEREAS, the veteran and the child are placed at an disadvantage of not being able to utilize VA programs and benefits; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation to amend the definition of a child to include those placed into legal custody or guardianship of the veteran, even if on a temporary basis.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 241

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO IMPROVE AND REFORM DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION BENEFITS

WHEREAS, Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) was created in 1993 and has only been minimally adjusted since then; and

WHEREAS, DIC payments were intended to provide surviving spouses with the means to maintain some semblance of economic stability; and

WHEREAS, survivors who rely solely on the disabled veteran's compensation face significant financial hardships upon the death of the veteran; and

WHEREAS, monthly benefits for survivors of federal civil service retirees are calculated as a percentage of the civil service retiree's Federal Employees Retirement (FERS) or Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) benefits, up to 55%; and

WHEREAS, recent legislation has reduced the survivor's remarriage age from 57 to 55; and WHEREAS, now survivors in receipt of DIC benefits risk losing entitlement if they remarry before the age of 55; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, strongly supports legislation that improves and reforms DIC benefits to include increasing the monthly amount and lowering the remarriage age for survivors of disabled veterans.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 283

SUPPORT LEGISLATION RECOGNIZING RACIAL TRAUMA AS A STRESSOR FOR POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

WHEREAS, current regulations direct that credible supporting evidence that the claimed in-service stressor occurred, 38 CFR §3.304(f); and

WHEREAS, that regulation currently recognizes five situations where the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has specifically set out criteria for special consideration of the stressor: (1) diagnosed during service, (2) combat, (3) fear of hostile military or terrorist activity, (4) prisoner of war, and (5) in-service personal assault; and

WHEREAS, a service member experiencing a racial trauma is exposed to an unexpected scenario in which they are largely helpless and over which they have no control; and

WHEREAS, their response may include feelings of anger, confusion, disbelief, dysphoria, fear, feelings of desocialization or derealization, hopelessness, humiliation, rage, shame and shock; and

WHEREAS, these recognized traumatic reactions may result in the disabled veteran experiencing and manifesting symptom clusters consistent with a diagnosis of PTSD, including:

Re-experiencing through distressing memories, flashbacks, intrusive thoughts, nightmares, physical and emotional distress at reminders, and

Avoidance through agoraphobia, attempting not to think about it, avoidance of people the same or similar race that is responsible for the racial trauma, isolation, substance use/abuse, and

Negative alterations in cognitions manifested by the presence of anger, anxiety, belief that the world is unsafe, depression, guilt, helplessness and/or hopelessness, horror, inability to trust, self-blame, and/or self-doubt, and

Alterations in arousal and reactivity that may include anger/rage with little provocation, concentration and memory problems, diminished interest or participation in prior significant activities, guilt, hypervigilance, fear, increased startle response, irritability, reckless or self-destructive behavior, reduction in positive emotions, sadness, shame, sleep impairment, social withdrawal, verbal and/or physical aggression; and

WHEREAS, the law and regulations currently in effect require the veteran to provide “credible supporting evidence that the claimed in-service stressor occurred;” and

WHEREAS, this limitation on the law limits the disabled veteran’s ability to prove their case where the assailants may have been in their chain of command and therefore would be the ones responsible for ensuring the documentation, or lack thereof, of the incident; and

WHEREAS, even in the presence of a racial trauma perpetuated outside of the chain of command, the disabled veteran may not have been able to ensure formal documentation either through invalidation by those members of their command or due to fear and shame of reprisal or invalidation; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation to specifically include racial trauma as one of the identified categories of stressors in 38 CFR §3.304(f).

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 292

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO ESTABLISH A SUPPLEMENTARY SPECIALLY ADAPTED HOUSING GRANT

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides grants to service members and veterans with certain permanent and total service-connected disabilities to help purchase or construct an adapted home or modify an existing home to accommodate a disability; and

WHEREAS, the Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) grant helps veterans with certain service-connected disabilities live independently in a barrier-free environment; and

WHEREAS, SAH grants can be used to construct a specially adapted home on land to be acquired, build a home on land already owned if it is suitable for specially adapted housing, remodel an existing home if it can be made suitable for specially adapted housing, or apply the grant against the unpaid principal mortgage balance of an adapted home already acquired without the assistance of a VA grant; and

WHEREAS, the fiscal year 2022 maximum SAH grant amount is \$101,754 and must be used for the purpose of constructing or modifying a home to meet adaptive needs; and

WHEREAS, the maximum grant amount adjusts annually, and the grant benefit cannot be used more than three times up to the maximum dollar amount allowable; and

WHEREAS, eligible veterans can use the VA adapted housing grants, not to exceed the maximum amount at the time of the grant, and once the maximum amount is reached, these veterans must bear the full cost of continued accessible living should they move, need to modify a home or suffer an increase in the severity of their service-connected disabilities; and

WHEREAS, these veterans should not have to choose between surrendering their independence by moving into an inaccessible home or staying in a home simply because they are unable to afford the cost of new modifications; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports the enactment of legislation to establish a supplementary

SAH grant for eligible veterans needing to relocate and for veterans experiencing an increase in the severity of their service-connected disabilities; AND

BE IT FUTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports the supplementary grant amounts be at least half of the maximum amount at the time of application for the supplementary grant.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 306

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO INVESTIGATE CANCER LINK TO INTERCONTINENTAL BALLISTIC MISSILE BASES

WHEREAS, Air Force Global Strike Command approved in 2023 a comprehensive study design by the U.S. Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine to conduct a formal assessment that addresses specific cancer concerns raised by missile community members; and

WHEREAS, the Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine will take “a comprehensive look across multiple Air Force Specialty Codes, locations and possible additional cancer” concerns raised by the missileer community at bases in North Dakota, Montana and Wyoming; and

WHEREAS, U.S. Air Force officials are investigating whether service members in a wide assortment of jobs who have served at any of the nation’s intercontinental ballistic missile bases are at risk for Non-Hodgkin lymphoma and other cancers; and

WHEREAS, missileers are exposed to a variety of chemicals and toxins, ranging from paint in small spaces to fumes from burning classified documents to aerial asbestos and radon exposure; and

WHEREAS, missileers are at times in close proximity to nuclear weapons containing enriched uranium, plutonium and tritium gas; and

WHEREAS, missileers are at times inside endosed missile silos containing toxic missile propellants, including ammonium perchlorate composite, monomethyl hydrazine and nitrogen tetroxide; and

WHEREAS, nine military officers who had worked decades ago at a nuclear missile base in Montana have been diagnosed with blood cancer and there are “indications” the disease may be linked to their service; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, will strongly encourage DoD and VA to Investigate and complete an assessment that addresses specific cancer concerns raised by missile community members; and if the assessment proves a positive correlation to cancer; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV will lobby Congress to pass legislation to address this issue, similar to the PACT Act of 2022.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 318

SUPPORT LEGISLATION FOR PRESUMPTIVE SERVICE CONNECTION FOR ADDITIONAL DISEASES RELATED TO CONTAMINATED WATER AT CAMP LEJEUNE

WHEREAS, military personnel and their families were exposed to contaminated water at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, from August 1, 1953 to December 31, 1987; and

WHEREAS, the Honoring America’s Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012 established 15 different conditions where the exposed military personnel and their families were eligible to seek treatment at Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health facilities at no cost; and

WHEREAS, the conditions identified for cost-free health care were esophageal cancer, lung cancer, breast cancer, bladder cancer, kidney cancer, leukemia, multiple myeloma, myelodysplastic syndromes, renal toxicity, hepatic steatosis, female infertility, miscarriage, scleroderma, neurobehavioral effects, and non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma; and

WHEREAS, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs established the presumptive list for service connection for diseases associated with said water supply exposure as of January 2017 and included only eight conditions: adult leukemia, aplastic anemia and other myelodysplastic syndromes, bladder cancer, kidney cancer, liver cancer, multiple myeloma, non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma, and Parkinson’s disease; and

WHEREAS, the Secretary will continue to review relevant information to support the creation of additional presumptive conditions, as it becomes available; and

WHEREAS, an estimated 900,000 service members were potentially exposed to the tainted water; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, urges the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to consider expanding the presumptive list to include all conditions set in the Honoring America’s Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-154) that were not previously included.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 320

INCREASE THE HOME IMPROVEMENT AND STRUCTURAL ALTERATIONS GRANT

WHEREAS, under section 1717, title 38, United States Code, the Home Improvement and Structural Alterations (HISA) program, veterans with service-connected disabilities or veterans with nonservice-connected disabilities may receive assistance for any home improvement necessary for the continuation of treatment or for disability access to the home and essential lavatory and sanitary facilities; and

WHEREAS, a HISA grant is available to veterans who have received a medical determination indicating that improvements and structural alterations are necessary or appropriate for the effective and economical treatment of the veteran; and

WHEREAS, a veteran may receive both a HISA grant and either a Special Home Adaptation grant or a Specially Adapted Housing grant; and

WHEREAS, the HISA improvement benefit provides up to \$6,800 to service-connected veterans, and up to \$2,000 to nonservice-connected veterans as a result of the Caregiver and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, calls for a reasonable increase in HISA benefits for veterans.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 328

INCREASE GRANT FUNDING FOR LOCAL VETERANS CEMETERIES

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Veterans Cemetery Grants Program was established in 1978 to complement the VA’s National Cemetery Administration; and

WHEREAS, the program was established to assist states, territories and federally recognized tribal governments in providing gravesites for veterans in those areas where the VA’s national cemeteries cannot fully satisfy their burial needs; and

WHEREAS, the funding of the grant may be used only for the purpose of establishing, expanding or improving veterans cemeteries that are owned and operated by a state, federally recognized tribal government or U.S. territory and can only be provided to these entities; and

WHEREAS, the current budget for this grant program is \$5 million per year while the total application requests for this funding far exceed the allocated budget; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, requests an increase in the VA’s Veterans Cemetery Grant Program budget to \$10 million per year to cover the establishment, improvement, operations and maintenance for these cemeteries.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 330

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO PROTECT CLAIMANTS FROM THOSE CHARGING FEES FOR DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS CLAIMS PREPARATION, PRESENTATION, OR PROSECUTION

WHEREAS, claims agents and attorneys recognized by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), can assist a claimant in the preparation, presentation, or prosecution of a claim; and

WHEREAS, fees may not be charged, allowed, or paid for services of agents or attorneys with respect to services provided before the date on which a notice of disagreement is filed with respect to the case; and

WHEREAS, veterans service organizations (VSOs) and the VA provide free assistance in the claims process; and

WHEREAS, many reports, past and present, have identified that certain entities charge claimants fees for the preparation, presentation, or prosecution of a claim; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation to prohibit and penalize those who knowingly solicit or contract for charges or receive any fee or compensation for providing advice on how to

file a VA claim, the preparation, presentation, or prosecution of such a claim, or unlawfully withhold from any claimant any part of a benefit or claim, all prior to the date on which a higher level review, supplemental claim or a notice of disagreement has been filed.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 389
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO STREAMLINE AND IMPROVE THE
REQUIREMENTS AND PROCESSING OF SPECIALLY ADAPTED HOUSING
GRANTS AND THE SPECIAL HOUSING ADAPTATION GRANTS

WHEREAS, the Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) grant and the Special Housing Adaptation (SHA) grant have eligibility requirements, benefits and limitations that are very specific and distinct from each other, which can cause confusion among veterans and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) adjudicators; and

WHEREAS, once eligibility has been established by the VA, the remaining grant processes have numerous requirements, which can be cumbersome and lengthy, that include feasibility studies, minimum property requirements, and the veteran finding three separate contractors to solicit bids and then approval by the VA, all of this even before construction begins; and

WHEREAS, while the required SAH modifications must be compliant with both local municipalities' building codes and VA's own code, there must be a balanced focus on the immediate needs of the veteran; and

WHEREAS, contractors often decline to participate in these projects as the VA has not completely digitized its payment processes, thus contractors may wait months before payment, all while increasing the processing time; and

WHEREAS, these often lengthy processes become of great concern for veterans with severely restricting disabilities or terminal illnesses, as veterans with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) and other terminal illnesses often do not survive long enough to benefit from the improvements that an SAH grant could afford them; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation to streamline the SAH and SHA eligibility requirements, improve the length of processing time, digitize VA payments, and expedite all applicants with ALS and other terminal illnesses.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 390
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO REMOVE THE PROHIBITION AGAINST DAV
MEMBERS WHO ARE FEDERAL EMPLOYEES FROM COMMUNICATING ON
BEHALF OF DAV WITH FEDERAL AGENCIES

WHEREAS, in order to support DAV's mission to provide assistance to service-connected disabled veterans, it often requires DAV members to communicate on behalf of DAV with federal agencies, including the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); and

WHEREAS, DAV members who are federal employees are subject to federal ethics representational and communication prohibitions, including section 205 of title 10, United States Code. Section 205 provides representational and communication prohibitions that any federal employee is barred from acting as agent of any organization other than the federal government when communicating with federal agencies; and

WHEREAS, the Office of Government Ethics (OGE) is responsible for ethics policy in the federal government; and

WHEREAS, OGE has recognized that section 205 bars many reasonable communications by federal employees acting in their personal capacity with federal agencies, even when assisting charitable and service organizations; and

WHEREAS, OGE has recommended changes to section 205, but the changes have not been enacted; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports a legislative amendment to section 205 to establish a statutory exception to the representational and communication prohibitions for the benefit of Congressionally chartered veterans service organizations, including DAV.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 412
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO ALLOW EXPANDED ENTITLEMENT
TO DEPENDENTS EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE UNDER CHAPTER 35
FOR CHILDREN OF A TWO-VETERAN HOUSEHOLD WHERE BOTH
PARENTS ARE SHOWN WITH PERMANENTLY AND TOTALLY DISABLED
STATUS DUE TO SERVICE-CONNECTED CONDITIONS

WHEREAS, current law and regulations allow for the child of a permanently and totally (P&T) disabled veteran to receive Dependents Educational Assistance (DEA) under chapter 35; and

WHEREAS, each P&T veteran parent achieved such a rating based on their own personal military service and service incurred disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) does not allow the child to receive chapter 35 benefits based on the separate entitlement of each P&T parent; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation to require VA to afford the child separate chapter 35 benefits under each P&T parent.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 445
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO ENSURE THAT TOTAL DISABILITY
BASED ON INDIVIDUAL UNEMPLOYABILITY REMAINS AVAILABLE
FOR ALL VETERANS REGARDLESS OF AGE OR RECEIPT OF
ANY OTHER EARNED FEDERAL BENEFITS

WHEREAS, when a veteran's disability is rated less than a total 100% evaluation, but he or she is unable to obtain or maintain substantial gainful employment, VA regulations allow the veteran to apply for Total Disability Based on Individual Unemployability (TDIU); and

WHEREAS, TDIU is based on the severity of the individual veteran's unique disability picture and its impact on the veteran's ability to obtain and maintain substantial gainful employment. Generally, the veteran must have a single disability rated at 60% or a combined evaluation of 70% to be eligible for TDIU; and

WHEREAS, reports published by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) in November 2013, August 2014, and December 2016, as well as the Government Accounting Office (GAO) report in June 2015, made recommendations to limit TDIU based on age and entitlement to additional earned federal benefits; and

WHEREAS, the Administration's proposed 2018 budget contained a proposal to terminate IU ratings for veterans at age of 62 and cut off TDIU benefits for any veteran already in receipt of Social Security retirement benefits; and

WHEREAS, the December 2018 CBO report contained a proposal to terminate IU ratings for veterans at age of 65 and cut off TDIU benefits for any veteran already in receipt of Social Security retirement benefits; and

WHEREAS, VA regulation 38 C.F.R. § 4.19, states the VA is precluded from considering the veteran's age in their determination of a TDIU; and

WHEREAS, TDIU is not a retirement or pension program and is neither similar nor related to Social Security retirement benefits; and

WHEREAS, a VA determination of a TDIU is not the same nor is it similar to federal unemployment insurance; it is a disability compensation benefit; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, urges Congress to enact legislation to protect TDIU for it to remain available for all veterans regardless of age or receipt of any other earned federal benefits.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 452
INVESTIGATE THE EFFECTS ON VETERANS STATIONED
AT MARINE CORPS AIR STATION YUMA ARIZONA

WHEREAS, The VA has determined that contamination of water at Camp Pendleton caused various cancers, and other medical problems due to such chemicals as TCS, PCE, DCE, and other Chemicals;

WHEREAS, MCAS Yuma was on EPA's Superfund Cleanup list; and

WHEREAS, MCAS Yuma was found to have Benzene, Mercury, Lead, TCE, DCE, PCE, and asbestos; and

WHEREAS, Asbestos is a known item that can cause Mesothelioma; and,

WHEREAS, Studies have shown that military personnel stations at MCAS Yuma, Arizona, are at a risk for certain diseases/cancers; NOW,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation that the VA conduct a study,

and review similar studies, that entails medical problems to military personnel, and their families, while stationed at MCAS Yuma, Arizona, that the Superfund Cleanup site included

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 453 INVESTIGATE THE EFFECTS ON VETERANS STATIONED AT TYNDALL AIR FORCE BASE, FLORIDA

WHEREAS, The VA has determined that contamination of water at Camp Pendelton caused various cancers, and other medical problems due to such chemicals as TCS, PCE, DCE, and other Chemicals;

WHEREAS, Tyndall AFB was on EPA's Superfund Cleanup List; and

WHEREAS, Tyndall AFB water was contaminated with lead and lead pellets, chlorinated solvents, DDT and breakdown products, and various metals; and

WHEREAS, Studies have shown that military personnel stations at Tyndall AFB, Florida, are at a risk for certain diseases/cancers; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation that the VA conduct a study, and review similar studies, that entails medical problems to military personnel, and their families, while stationed at Tyndall AFB, .Florida, that the Superfund Cleanup site included.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 454 INVESTIGATE THE EFFECTS ON VETERANS STATIONED AT NAVAL AIR STATION WHIDBEY ISLAND, WASHINGTON

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has determined that contamination of water at Camp Pendelton caused various cancers, and other medical problems due to such chemicals as TCS, PCE, DCE, and other Chemicals;

WHEREAS, Naval Air Station (NAS) Whidbey Island, Washington, was on EPA's Superfund Cleanup List; and

WHEREAS, NAS Whidbey Island was contaminated with numerous chemicals, including but not limited to: TCE, TCA, PCBs, pesticides PAHs, dioxins (already covered by VA as herbicide exposure), heavy metals to include lead and arsenic; and

WHEREAS, Studies have shown that military personnel stations at, or TDY to, NAS Whidbey Island, Washington, have a higher chance for certain diseases/cancers; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation that the VA conduct a study, and review similar studies, that entails medical problems to military personnel, and their families, while stationed at NAS Whidbey Island, Washington, that the Superfund Cleanup site included.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 455 INVESTIGATE THE EFFECTS ON VETERANS STATIONED AT SCHOFIELD BARRACKS HAWAII

WHEREAS, The VA has determined that contamination of water at Camp Pendelton caused various cancers, and other medical problems due to such chemicals as TCS, PCE, DCE, and other Chemicals;

WHEREAS, Schofield Barracks, on the island of Oahu, Hawaii, was on EPA's Superfund Cleanup list; and

WHEREAS, Studies have shown that military personnel stations at Schofield Barracks are at risk for Neurological Disorders, Diabetes, Cancer, and Birth Defects in children; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation that the VA conduct a study,

and review similar studies, that entails medical problems to military personnel, and their families, while stationed at Schofield Barracks, or vicinity of Schofield barracks, that the Superfund Cleanup site included.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 473

REMOVE THE DELIMITING DATE FOR PERSIAN GULF VETERANS' ILLNESSES

WHEREAS, thousands of Gulf War veterans still suffer from chronic and unexplained physical symptoms; and

WHEREAS, current law limits filing dates for illnesses and injuries in veterans from certain service during active-duty periods, including the Southwest Asia theater of military operations; and

WHEREAS, title 38, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), § 3.317(i), stipulates that diseases associated with service in the Persian Gulf must "manifest either during active military, naval, or air service in the Southwest Asia theater of operations, or to a degree of 10% or more not later than December 31, 2026;" and

WHEREAS, the numerous symptoms experienced by sick Gulf War veterans are not well understood, and the causes of such symptoms remain elusive and answers could likely remain obscure for some time; and

WHEREAS, little significant research is being conducted on long-term health effects of many of the agents to which veterans were potentially exposed during the Gulf War; and

WHEREAS, additional research into the long-term health effects of exposures is needed, a fact confirmed in the "Gulf War and Health: Volume 10: Update of Health Effects of Serving in the Gulf War, 2016" on the health effects of exposures during the Gulf War; and

WHEREAS, filing periods for injuries and illnesses related to service in any theater of military operations must remain open ended to assure that benefits and services are available when those conditions ultimately manifest; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, urges Congress to support legislation to remove the delimiting date for disabilities as a result of active-duty services in the Southwest Asia theater of operation.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 482

OPPOSE REGIONAL DISPERSION OF THE BOARD OF VETERANS' APPEALS

WHEREAS, veterans and other claimants for veterans benefits may appeal ratings and other decisions of the various and geographically dispersed benefit offices and medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); and

WHEREAS, inaccuracy and lack of uniformity are pervasive among the claims decisions of the many VA field offices; and

WHEREAS, one board, the Board of Veterans' Appeals (Board) in Washington, D.C., hears all appeals; and

WHEREAS, appellants, Board members and taxpayers derive numerous benefits from an appellate board housed in one centralized location, some of the more obvious of which are:

- Availability of the collective expertise of the entire board;
- Professional interaction and association among Board members and staff;
- Shared and uniform training;
- Common and shared goals and responsibilities;
- Economies of scale from pooled resources and the most efficient workload distribution, with the flexibility and capacity to readjust the workload as necessary between members and support staff;
- A positive environment and employee incentives for developing creative solutions and innovations to meet and overcome the challenges inherent in a system of mass adjudication of claims;
- More efficient and effective centralized case management and storage;
- More effective centralized Board administration and hands-on employee oversight; and

WHEREAS, Congress created the Board after repeated failed experiments with various configurations of regional appellate panels that were plagued by persistent inefficiencies and problems and were proven impractical and poorly suited to properly dispose of veterans' appeals; and

WHEREAS, such regional reorganization of the Board would be extremely unwise, wholly unwarranted and not in the best interests of veterans or taxpayers; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, categorically opposes any decentralization of the Board of Veterans' Appeals.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 483
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO REQUIRE THE UNITED STATES
COURT OF APPEALS FOR VETERANS CLAIMS TO DECIDE
EACH OF APPELLANT'S ASSIGNMENTS OF ERROR

WHEREAS, Congress passed the Veterans' Judicial Review Act of 1988 (VJRA) and created the United States Court of Veterans Appeals (currently the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims) (Court); and

WHEREAS, the VJRA granted the Court the authority to decide all relevant questions of law and to hold unlawful and set aside or reverse any finding of material fact adverse to the claimant, which is clearly erroneous; and

WHEREAS, due to long delays in claims processing at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), it can take veterans years to get their appeals before the Court; and

WHEREAS, in many appeals, the Court will ignore the appellants' legal arguments and remand an appeal to the Board of Veterans' Appeals (Board) based on the General Counsel's confession of error that the Board failed to provide adequate reasons or bases for its decision to deny the benefit; and

WHEREAS, a remand due to lack of reasons or bases allows the VA to reopen the evidentiary record and obtain other evidence to support the continuation of the denial; and

WHEREAS, a veteran must appeal to the Court a second time and, in some cases, a third or fourth time to obtain a decision on the merits of his or her appeal; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation that would require the Court to decide each assignment of error and to reverse any such errors found; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Congress should enact legislation providing the Court should have the authority to modify or remand any Board decision found to contain any error or errors, that the authority to modify should include the power to order an award of benefits in appropriate cases, and that an appellant should be expressly permitted to waive confessions of error made by the appellee.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 527
SUPPORT THE ELIMINATION OF THE 30-DAY REQUIREMENT
FOR DISEASES ASSOCIATED WITH EXPOSURE TO CONTAMINANTS
IN THE WATER SUPPLY AT CAMP LEJEUNE

WHEREAS, title 38, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §3.307(a)(7)(i) provides contaminants in the water supply means the volatile organic compounds (VOC) trichloroethylene (TCE), perchloroethylene (PCE), benzene and vinyl chloride, were in the on-base water supply systems located at United States Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune; and

WHEREAS, 38 CFR §3.307(a)(7)(iii) notes that a veteran, or former reservist or member of the National Guard, who had no less than 30 days (consecutive or nonconsecutive) of service at Camp Lejeune during the period beginning on August 1, 1953, and ending on December 31, 1987, shall be presumed to have been exposed during such service to the contaminants in the water supply; and

WHEREAS, the 30-day requirement is not based on the potential systemic, external and internal exposures to the VOCs; and

WHEREAS, review of the National Research Council, Committee on Contaminated Drinking Water at Camp Lejeune study, Contaminated Water Supplies at Camp Lejeune: Assessing Potential Health Effects, notes that the internal doses of TCE from showering provide inhalation and dermal exposure that is equivalent with ingesting two liters of water; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) notice of proposed rulemaking on the above-referenced subject, as published in the Federal Register on September 9, 2016, notes, "VA experts agree that there is no science to support a specific minimum exposure level for any of the conditions;" and

WHEREAS, the VA plainly states, the 30-day requirement is intended to provide consistency with the Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012, Public Law 112-154; and

WHEREAS, the VA notes in multiple instances that the 30-day requirement is to keep consistency with the requirement for health care but does not assert that there is a scientific basis or legal requirement for the 30-day period; and

WHEREAS, the 30-day requirement is not consistent with any other laws or regulations providing presumptive service connection for exposure to toxic substances, such as veterans exposed to herbicide agents during service in Vietnam; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports the elimination of the 30-day requirement for Diseases Associated with Exposure to Contaminants in the Water Supply at Camp Lejeune as it is not: based on the potential systemic, external and internal, exposures to the VOCs; predicated on any science; based on any legal requirements nor consistent with existing laws and regulations concerning presumptive service connection for exposure to toxic substances.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 528 SUPPORT USING THE PROPOSED REDUCTION DUE PROCESS FOR ALL DISABILITY EVALUATION REDUCTIONS

WHEREAS, section 3.105(e), title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, requires that a reduction in a disability evaluation which results in a reduction of compensation payments or the overall combined evaluation, must include a notice of a proposed reduction with all material facts, a 60-day period to present additional evidence and the right to request a predetermination hearing prior to a final reduction decision; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has determined that if a reduction in a disability evaluation does not result in a reduction of compensation payments, overall combined evaluation, a proposed reduction is not warranted; and

WHEREAS, in many instances, the VA will grant increases and new benefits in the same decision as reducing a disability evaluation but not changing the previous combined evaluation, thus leaving the veteran without proposed reduction due process, to include submitting new evidence and requesting a predetermination prior to a final reduction decision; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports the proposed reduction due process be applied to all reductions of a disability evaluation even when it does not change compensation payments or the overall combined evaluation.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 529 OPPOSE ALL ATTEMPTS TO CHANGE THE BASIS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS SCHEDULE FOR RATING DISABILITIES FROM THE “AVERAGE IMPAIRMENTS OF EARNINGS CAPACITY” STANDARD

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Schedule for Rating Disabilities (VASRD) requires that “ratings shall be based, as far as practicable, upon the average impairments of earning capacity,” as stated in section 1155, title 38, United States Code; and

WHEREAS, the standard of “average impairments of earning capacity” was first adopted under the War Risk Insurance Act of 1917, and except for a short-lived alteration between 1924 and 1933 attempting to reflect individual occupational factors, this philosophy has formed the basis for determining levels of veterans disability compensation for over a century; and

WHEREAS, the current VASRD has been updated, revised and modified numerous times to reflect advances in medical knowledge, diagnosis, treatment and technology for injuries, illnesses and disabilities related to military service, but the standard of average impairments of earnings capacity has remained unchanged due to its practicality, equity and fairness to disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, determining rating levels based on the average impairments of earning capacity ensures that veterans who have similar manifestations of the same disabilities are treated equally and fairly without consideration of their age, education, work experience or current work status; and

WHEREAS, by basing the VASRD on the average impairments of earnings capacity, rather than on individual measurements of earnings loss or functionality, disabled veterans are actually encouraged to seek vocational rehabilitation training in order to find jobs and become more productive wage earners without fear of being penalized for doing so; and

WHEREAS, the VA is currently updating the entire VASRD and has committed to update each body of the section of the VASRD every five years, and throughout this process numerous proposals have been made, and will be considered, to alter the VASRD; and

WHEREAS, any attempt to replace average impairment of earnings capacity with a new standard based on individual earnings loss or measurements of functionality would dramatically alter the purpose and effectiveness of the VA disability compensation program, create disincentives for veterans interested in rehabilitation and work, and lead to reductions in compensation for millions of disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, any attempt to eliminate all consideration of impairments and impacts outside of the workplace fails to properly recognize that disability affects a veteran's entire life—including social, marital, familial, emotional and spiritual aspects—all of which have some effect on their earnings capacity; and

WHEREAS, any attempt to model the VA disability compensation program on the Social Security Disability Insurance or workers' compensation programs fails to recognize that those programs have separate purposes based on injuries and illnesses incurred in the civilian workplace that do not compare with the unique challenges faced and sacrifices made by veterans who have served in our armed forces; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, opposes any attempt to change or modify the VASRD, or the statute and regulations underlying it, which would change the long-standing, accepted and successful policy that ratings shall be based, as far as practicable, upon the average impairments of earning capacity.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 530

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO REFORM AND IMPROVE SERVICE-DISABLED VETERANS LIFE INSURANCE

WHEREAS, the Congress of the United States has created a modernized service-disabled veterans life insurance program, which replaced the previously existing Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance (S-DVI) program beginning January 1, 2023; and

WHEREAS, the modernized insurance program will allow veterans to enroll at any time, which is a change from the existing S-DVI, which only allows veterans to apply within two years of a Department of Veterans Affairs decision that establishes a new grant of service connection; and

WHEREAS, veterans enrolled in the modernized insurance program may elect to be insured in the amounts of \$10,000, \$20,000, \$30,000 and \$40,000; and

WHEREAS, inflation has significantly increased, and the value of the maximum amount of S-DVI coverage has significantly decreased since the existing coverage amounts were set in law; and

WHEREAS, the existing S-DVI provides a waiver of premiums on the basic coverage of \$10,000 for eligible totally disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, the modernized insurance program will not provide a waiver of premiums at any amount for totally disabled veterans, effectively eliminating an existing benefit for future eligible veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports strong oversight of the implementation of the modernized service-disabled veterans insurance program by Congress and chartered veterans service organizations; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports a waiver of premiums for totally disabled veterans; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV continues to support an increase in the maximum amount of coverage allowed by the service-disabled veterans insurance.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 531
SUPPORT DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MODERNIZATION
OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND IMPROVEMENTS TO
INCLUDE DIGITAL SHARING, ADEQUATE FUNDING AND
IMPROVED ACCESS FOR DISABLED VETERANS

WHEREAS, updated and modern information technology (IT) with digital sharing of information within the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Defense (DOD) is critical to the delivery of VA health care, VA benefits and VA educational services; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) made a critical decision to transform its paper-based claims system and replaced it with electronic streamlined business processes such as the Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS), National Work Queue (NWQ), Case Flow, eBenefits and the Stakeholder Enterprise Portal (SEP); and

WHEREAS, several VA sites, including VA forms and applications, have been reported as not having ease of access by visually impaired veterans; and

WHEREAS, veterans service organizations (VSOs) providing representation for veterans and their families rely on VA systems, while VBA has determined to no longer fund upgrades or updates to some of the existing programs; and

WHEREAS, lacking appropriate IT funding led to the Veteran Readiness and Employment's (VR&E) \$12 million IT debacle and the Education Service's continuing problems in making accurate payments under the new GI Bill program; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) will be integrating the new VA Electronic Health Records (EHR) Modernization program, a commercial health IT program in collaboration with DOD, over the next 10 years, while its existing Veterans Health Information Systems and Technology Architecture (VistA) program will remain throughout the implementation phase; and

WHEREAS, the cost of full integration of the Oracle Cerner EHR is projected at \$16 billion over the next 10 years, with \$5.8 billion of those funds set aside to manage and support the current VistA infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, VHA and VBA must compete with other offices and agencies within the VA for the limited IT funding available each year, delaying development and deployment of critical IT systems and programming; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports reforming and improving the budgeting and funding of VA IT systems for each individual department within the VA; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports secure and protected digital information sharing between the DOD and VA, as well as sharing within VA agencies; AND

BE IT FUTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports improving IT access for VSO representatives and veterans with disabilities, including those who are visually impaired.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 532
SUPPORT REAUTHORIZATION OF THE PERSIAN GULF WAR VETERANS ACT

WHEREAS, the Persian Gulf War Veterans Act of 1998, codified at section 1118, title 38, United States Code, provides for presumptive service connection for diseases related thereto; and

WHEREAS, subsection (b) provided requirements for the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to follow when prescribing new presumptive diseases, including determinations of positive association of diagnosed or undiagnosed illnesses; reports from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM); and positive significantly statistical association; and

WHEREAS, subsection (c) provided that, not later than 60 days after the date on which the Secretary receives a report from NASEM, the Secretary shall determine whether or not a presumption is warranted for each illness covered by the report; and

WHEREAS, if the Secretary determines that a presumption of service connection is warranted, the Secretary shall, not later than 60 days after making the determination, issue proposed regulations setting forth the Secretary's determination; and

WHEREAS, if the Secretary determines that a presumption of service connection is not warranted, the Secretary shall, not later than 60 days after making the determination, publish in the

Federal Register a notice of the determination, and the notice shall include an explanation of the scientific basis for the determination; and

WHEREAS, if the Secretary determines that a presumption of service connection is warranted, the Secretary shall, not later than 60 days after making the determination, issue proposed regulations setting forth the Secretary's determination; and

WHEREAS, the provisions of the Persian Gulf War Veterans Act of 1998, as noted above in subsection (b) and subsection (c) expired on September 30, 2011; and

WHEREAS, there are no longer any requirements for a positive association or time requirements for the Secretary to act on scientific reports; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation to reauthorize all sections of the Persian Gulf War Veterans Act of 1998 to ensure that the presumptive process for diseases related to toxic exposures, as noted, remain available for veterans exposed.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 533

SUPPORT REAUTHORIZATION OF THE AGENT ORANGE ACT

WHEREAS, the Agent Orange Act of 1991, codified at section 1116, title 38, United States Code, provides for presumptive service connection for diseases related thereto; and

WHEREAS, subsection (b) provided requirements for the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to follow when prescribing new presumptive diseases, including determinations of positive association of diagnosed or undiagnosed illnesses; reports from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM); and positive significantly statistical association; and

WHEREAS, subsection (c) provided that, not later than 60 days after the date on which the Secretary receives a report from NASEM, the Secretary shall determine whether or not a presumption is warranted for each illness covered by the report; and

WHEREAS, if the Secretary determines that a presumption of service connection is warranted, the Secretary shall, not later than 60 days after making the determination, issue proposed regulations setting forth the Secretary's determination; and

WHEREAS, if the Secretary determines that a presumption of service connection is not warranted, the Secretary shall, not later than 60 days after making the determination, publish in the Federal Register a notice of the determination, and the notice shall include an explanation of the scientific basis for the determination; and

WHEREAS, the provisions of the Agent Orange Act of 1991, as noted above in subsection (b) and subsection (c) expired on September 30, 2015; and

WHEREAS, there are no longer any requirements for a positive association or time requirements for the Secretary to act on scientific reports; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation to reauthorize all sections of the Agent Orange Act of 1991 to ensure that the presumptive process for diseases related to toxic exposures, as noted, remain available for veterans exposed.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 534

SUPPORT RESOURCES AND OVERSIGHT OF THE APPEALS PROCESS

WHEREAS, in 2019, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) implemented the Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act (AMA), which impacts decisions at the Veterans Benefits Administration, the existing legacy appeals and AMA appeals at the Board of Veterans' Appeals (Board); and

WHEREAS, in fiscal year (FY) 2022, the Board issued 95,294 decisions and although this is the fourth consecutive year over producing over 95,000 decisions, it is the lowest amount in the last three years; and

WHEREAS, in January 2022, over 200,000 appeals were pending at the Board and over 84,000 of them were awaiting hearings; and

WHEREAS, in FY 2022, the Board scheduled over 56,000 hearings; however, only 30,000 hearings were held; and

WHEREAS, hearing requests vastly increased in FY 2022, and at the beginning of FY 2023, the Board had over 74,000 hearings pending; and

WHEREAS, in 2022, the Board received an additional 20 veterans law judges; and

WHEREAS, at the beginning of FY 2023, over 206,000 appeals were pending with 74,000 awaiting hearings; and

WHEREAS, for FY 2024, DAV and the Independent Budget recommended an additional 20 VLJs and an additional 200 employees in other positions to assist in driving down the backlog of appeals and hearings; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, calls on Congress to provide effective and continued oversight of the legacy and AMA appeals processes to ensure that adequate resources are provided to resolve the backlog of legacy appeals and the backlog of pending hearings at the Board, as well as provide regular oversight to monitor and measure the VA's progress so these reforms achieve their intended purpose.

* * *

(Whereupon, the Committee on General Legislation and Veterans Rights chair withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Thank you, Trent. Thank goodness for Coppertone. (Laughter) You was up here so long you got a suntan. (Laughter) Anyhow, you have heard the motion. May I have a second?

MR. WAYNE WALTERS: Mic 3.

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Mic 3.

MR. WALTERS: Wayne Walters, Chapter 25, Volunteer State of Tennessee, seconds the motion and congratulates on a job well done reading that.

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Thank you. In accordance with Rule 9, now is the time for any rejected resolutions to be read. Are there any rejected resolutions that you wish read?

(Response of "No.")

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Hearing none, all those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Committee on Legislation and Veterans Right chair withdrew from the stage.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: I would like to call upon Chairman Joyce Gaddis for the report of the Committee on Hospital and Voluntary Services.

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and the Committee on Hospital and Voluntary Services chair advanced to the podium.)

HOSPITAL AND VOLUNTARY SERVICES COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN JOYCE GADDIS:

Comrade Commander and delegates, the National Convention Committee on Hospital and Voluntary Services was called to order on August 6th, 2023, by the Committee Advisors John Retzer and John Kleindienst.

The first order of business was the election of a Convention Committee chairman and secretary. Joyce Gaddis was elected as chairwoman and Michael Elmore was elected as secretary.

The Committee then proceeded to review the resolutions submitted. And I will now report the resolutions recommended for adoption by this national convention. For the purpose of saving time I will read only the number and the purpose of the resolutions.

006, support sufficient resolutions for poly-trauma units at VA medical centers;

007, support sufficient funding for VA prosthetic and sensory aids services and a timely delivery of prosthetic items;

008, require assistive technology training for VA staff who work to rehabilitate blind and visually-impaired veterans;

009, urge the VA to provide service-connected veterans meaningful access to personal health information;

010, encourage the Department of Veterans' Affairs to submit candidates for DAV scholarship programs;

011, support a robust, comprehensive, rehabilitative research program for veterans with traumatic brain injury;

013, conduct well-designed studies to determine effectiveness of hyperbaric oxygen therapy treatment for, on treatment-resistant traumatic brain injuries and PTSD;

014, establish program offices and advisory committee for unprecedented sub-populated – unrepresented, wow, subpopulations to ensure representation of subgroups within the VA;

015, establish automatic payments for travel pay for eligible disabled veterans without additional barriers;

027, support enhanced medical services and benefits for women veterans;

028, support legislation to grant the president, the vice-president and members of Congress the privilege to use veterans' health care systems and to receive their care exclusively from the VA; (Applause)

029, provide comprehensive dental care to all service-connected veterans;

030, support sufficient resources for VA to improve health care for veterans living in rural and remote areas;

031, support legislation to authorize scholarships for new mental health practitioners in exchange for agreements to serve veterans in VA facilities;

034, support the expansion of stellate ganglion block, SGB, research and implementation to treat post-traumatic stress disorder;

046, include domiciliary – excuse me – care in the form of mental health and rehabilitative treatment programs in the definition of VA health care treatment;

053, urge the VA to support comprehensive research on health effects of the children of male Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange;

070, strengthen and protect the VA health care system;

071, support mandated VA research on and expand access to investigational drugs for ALS;

072, support effective care for veterans with dementia within the Department of Veterans Affairs;

073, urge VA to provide prompt screening and treatment for veterans exposed to depleted uranium and support additional research into the long-term health effects of such exposure;

083, support sustained and sufficient funding to improve services for homeless veterans;

085, encourage VA to process voluntary applications in a timely manner;

089, ensure equity in the quality and access from VA Veteran's Community Care Program providers;

090, ensure quality and timeliness for the VHA Veterans Community Care Program providers;

091, request change of policy so that retired medical staff can return without financial penalty as necessary to supplement the current staffing at VAMCs;

092, request VA cooperate with Fisher House fundraising;

101, adequately fund and sustain the Successful Readjustment Housing Service of the VA and its highly-effective Vet Center program;

102, oppose means testing service-connected veterans for VA health care;

103, support programs to provide psychological support and mental health counseling services to family members of veterans suffering from post-deployment mental health challenges or other service-connected conditions;

104, support humane, consistent, pain management programs in veterans' health care system;

110, VA should provide low-dose computed tomography scans as part of a veteran's yearly physical to effectively screen and diagnose veterans with lung cancer;

111, improve timely reimbursement by VA for purchased care and protect veterans from debt collection and adverse credit reporting associated with such care;

112, urge VA to apply a consistent coordinated care policy for service-disabled veterans with chronic health conditions who have a home residence in two states;

118, ensure VA facilities and information resources are available to veterans with disabilities;

119, support a consistent benefit for service and guide-dogs prescribed by VA providers and examine the benefits of training service dogs;

166, support top-quality access for service-connected veterans within the VA health care system;

167, support legislation to provide comprehensive support services for care givers of severely-wounded, injured and ill veterans from all eras;

189, ensure VA may not deny a veteran any benefits who participate in state-approved marijuana program;

203, support VA research into the medical efficacy of cannabis for service-connected disabled veterans;

204, support automatic enrollment of medically-retired veterans into VA health care system with an opt-out provision;

205, improve urgent and emergency care benefits for service-connected veterans;

245, enhance CHAMP-VA benefits and services;

246, enhance long-term services and supports for service-connected disabled veterans;

247, support modernizing VA health care infrastructure;

248, ensure a safe, secure and effective electronic health record for veterans that allow the Department of Veterans Affairs to fulfill core missions of patient care, research and training;

249, oppose recovery of third-party payments for service-connected disabilities;

250, support effective recruitment, retention, and development of the VA health care system workforce;

251, support improvements in provider training and beneficiary travel benefits for veterans seeking specialized treatment programs and care for military sexual trauma;

252, support legislation to improve VA programs designed to prevent and treat substance use disorders in veterans;

253, support program improvements and enhanced research for VA mental health programs and suicide prevention;

255, support legislation to extend eligibility of a qualifying veteran's adult child for CHAMP-VA;

262, ensure sufficient resources for VA research to improve care and benefits for veterans exposed to military toxic and environmental hazards;

267, support state veteran home program;

270, require the VA to increase efficiency in the recruitment, hiring and credentialing of certain health care professionals undergoing separation from the armed forces;

285, ensure VA clinical appeals process protects veterans;

286, support the provision of comprehensive VA health care services to enrolled veterans;

287, oppose any restriction on eligibility of military medically-retired veterans to receive care in DoD or VA health care systems;

288, support legislation to change eligibility for community nursing home program;

293, repeal beneficiary travel deductible for service-connected disabled veterans and increase reimbursement rates;

294, address social determinants to promote health equality among veterans – equity among veterans;

322, implement a pilot program to assess the effectiveness of Post-Traumatic Stress growth;

323, provide easy and equitable access to VA transportation benefits and services;

324, increase capacity at VA facilities by operating extended hours and weekends;

353, support legislation to eliminate or reduce VA and DoD health care copayments for service-connected disabled veterans;

354, urge VA medical facilities to provide reasonable access to service dogs and guide dogs, including enclosed animal relief areas;

360, support the rights and benefits earned by service-connected Native American and Alaskan Native veterans;

362, expand eligibility for VA to provide hospital medical services and nursing home care to veterans of World War II and the Korean Conflict;

363, provide beneficiary travel benefits for unscheduled acute and urgent care from VA;

366, urge the VA to improve the nursing home program;

367, urge the VA to make improvements in the beneficiary travel self-service system;

368, create a three digit number to report intimate partner violence;

369, provide peer-to-peer infertility care program coordinator;

370, the need for future research in preventing suicide in LGBTQ+ veterans;

371, to address the need for more research regarding female veteran menopause;

372, to provide oversight by the VA of service dogs permitted in the medical centers and community-based outpatient centers;

417, require a veteran's attending VA physician to provide a medical opinion with regards to a claim for VA disability compensation benefits when requested;

418, support legislation to include 1151 protections under Title 38, United States Code, for veterans using VA community care services;

423, support naming the VA Mare Island Clinic in Vallejo, California, as the Delphine Metcalf-Foster VA Clinic; (Applause)

451, establish studies on the long-term effects of exposure to Bisphenol-A, a substance found in plastic disposable water bottles;

491, improve the care provided to veterans with service-connected disabilities affecting the ability to procreate through assisted reproductive technology;

535, support VA medical and prosthetic research programs;
536, ensure adequate staffing of patient advocates in the veterans' health care system;
537, support equity in access to services and benefits for racial and ethnic minority service-connected veterans;
538, encourage the VA to submit candidates for the Volunteer of the Year program;
545, extend appreciation to the VA Wilmington, Delaware Medical Center for their support of a medical room and the overall success of the DAV National Convention.

Comrade Commander, this completes the report of the Committee on Hospitals and Voluntary Services. On the behalf of the Committee I move the adoption of these resolutions and that the Committee be discharged with the thanks of the national convention. Thank you.

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RESOLUTION NO. 006 **SUPPORT SUFFICIENT RESOURCES FOR POLYTRAUMA UNITS AT** **DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTERS**

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Polytrauma System of Care is the largest integrated system of care dedicated to the medical and rehabilitation needs of veterans and service members with combat- and noncombat-related traumatic brain injuries (TBI) and polytrauma; and

WHEREAS, catastrophically injured veterans are treated at five Polytrauma Rehabilitation Centers (PRC), located in Tampa, Richmond, Minneapolis, San Antonio and Palo Alto, for intensive care and long-term restoration and rehabilitation; and

WHEREAS, Polytrauma Support Clinic Teams or Polytrauma Points of Contact are located in VA medical centers across the country to provide specialized outpatient care in coordination with their Polytrauma Network Site (PNS) and offer continuing medical and rehabilitation care and support closer to the home community for veterans who have experienced a mild to moderate TBI or polytraumatic injury; and

WHEREAS, veterans spend long periods in VA recovering from their injuries and receiving patient-centered care in specialized polytrauma settings; and

WHEREAS, this specialized care is extraordinarily expensive and complex, often addressing complications from multiple amputations, TBI, burns, hearing and visual impairments, multiple shell fragment wounds and other catastrophic injuries; and

WHEREAS, since VA's current nursing home capacity is primarily designed to serve elderly veterans, VA must make every effort to create an age-appropriate environment for younger veterans that recognizes their different psychosocial needs; and

WHEREAS, having the support of their families and friends is an integral part of these veterans' treatment and recovery process; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, calls on the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to continue to request and allocate sufficient resources for polytrauma centers and PNSs to ensure these centers include adequate space and other services for veterans' ongoing rehabilitation, social and recreational needs, and dedicated space, including therapeutic residential facilities, for disabled veterans and family members who must often stay for extended periods to assist in veterans' recovery and rehabilitation; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV calls on the Secretary to support provision of longer-term neurobehavioral and vocational support in age-appropriate settings within or outside of VA for veterans with moderate to severe injuries who require such programming.

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RESOLUTION NO. 007 **SUPPORT SUFFICIENT FUNDING FOR DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS** **AFFAIRS PROSTHETICS AND SENSORY AIDS SERVICE** **AND TIMELY DELIVERY OF PROSTHETIC ITEMS**

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has operated a nationwide prosthetics and sensory aids program, organized as Prosthetics and Sensory Aids Service (PSAS), for more than a half-century; and

WHEREAS, tens of thousands of veterans need VA's life-changing PSAS care and services, and obtain a variety of items including prosthetic limbs, custom wheelchairs, orthotic items, eyeglasses, hearing aids, a variety of implantable surgical devices and supplies—a need that

continues to rise due to the aging of the veteran population and grievous injuries in war veterans, past and present; and

WHEREAS, in FY 2021, VA provided 21 million prosthetic items or devices to 3.3 million veterans; and

WHEREAS, in FY 2021, VA provided artificial limbs to almost 27,000 veterans and wheeled mobility to about 148,000 veterans; and

WHEREAS, in many cases prosthetic items are a truly individualized extension of the body and can impact all aspects of veterans' lives; and

WHEREAS, VA must maintain flexibility in ordering and delivering a variety of state-of-the-art prosthetic aids to meet the unique needs of wounded, ill and injured veterans, including women veterans who require prosthetics that are sized appropriately for their bodies, and allow for the physical changes in their bodies during pregnancy and menses; and

WHEREAS, PSAS is nearing completion of regulations designed to standardize its procurement policies and administrative processes, and to improve its purchasing power and leverage its position in the prosthetic, orthotic and medical device marketplace; and

WHEREAS, changes in procurement practices have in some cases negatively affected the timeliness of delivery and quality of prosthetic, orthotic and other items to many veterans and may limit veterans' access to prosthetics that "promote, preserve or restore" function in accordance with current law; and

WHEREAS, throughout the process, VA should ensure appropriately trained prosthetic representatives and rehabilitation specialists are available to maintain VA's strong connection between veterans and clinical components of prosthetic care and services; and

WHEREAS, VA must rededicate itself to becoming a leader in prosthetic care by providing cutting-edge services and items to help injured, ill and wounded veterans fully regain mobility and achieve maximum independence in their activities of daily living, and in sports activities such as running, cycling, skiing, rock climbing and other physical exercises if they so choose; and

WHEREAS, research and development funding in addition to ongoing training to ensure that prosthetists and procurement officers are up-to-date on all available technologies is integral to VA's ability to provide such leadership to the field; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, urges VA to retain centralized funding for PSAS, which enables the program to deliver high-quality prosthetic items to all enrolled veterans needing such items and to train veterans on appropriate use and care of the device; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV urges VA to retain its goal of maximum recovery and independent living for our highest-priority veterans, to adopt procurement policies and staff training on advances in and other practices that accelerate the timely delivery of, and responsive maintenance and repair of, all prosthetic items, and to take fully and fairly into account the unique needs of severely injured and wounded veterans.

RESOLUTION NO. 008 REQUIRE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY TRAINING FOR DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS STAFF WHO WORK TO REHABILITATE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED VETERANS

WHEREAS, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) has established training and assessment protocols for blind and visually impaired veterans and provides them assistive technology training; and WHEREAS, training on technology-related devices and equipment encompasses a growing proportion of the rehabilitation needs of veterans with blindness or visual impairment; and

WHEREAS, the VHA acknowledges competition for scarce computer assistive technology instructor specialists; and

WHEREAS, staff and supervisors within Blind Rehabilitation Service acknowledges difficulties recruiting and retaining certified computer assistive technology specialists and ensuring staff remain abreast of evolutionary advances in assistive technology for the blind; and

WHEREAS, enhancements of electronic assistive devices are continuously introduced; and

WHEREAS, blind and visually impaired veterans utilize assistive technology to accomplish tasks in manual skills, living skills, orientation mobility, computing and basic quality-of-life needs; and

WHEREAS, any individual within Blind Rehabilitation Service that either provides training or assesses visually impaired veterans must be knowledgeable on the capabilities of such devices; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, urges that the VA Blind Rehabilitation Service ensure that all personnel involved with the assessment and training of blind and visually impaired veterans receive regular training in the form of continuing education credits or achieve independent certification on technological solutions and adaptive aids.

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RESOLUTION NO. 009
URGE THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO PROVIDE
SERVICE-CONNECTED VETERANS MEANINGFUL ACCESS
TO PERSONAL HEALTH INFORMATION

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is engaged in a multi-billion-dollar, decade-long roll-out of an “off-the shelf” electronic health record through Cerner Corporation that is interoperable with military, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) and some private sector health records which will largely replace the Veterans Health Information and Technology Architecture (VISTA) and its current computerized patient record; and

WHEREAS, interoperability with its community care providers, including its academic affiliates and partners in military treatment facilities, has been a long time goal of VA allowing it to become more integrated with its increasingly diverse network of federal and community health care providers by allowing more timely referrals, transfer of medical records, diagnostic and laboratory testing, pharmaceutical data and billing information; and

WHEREAS, another goal of the modernization project is to create a longitudinal patient record for the veterans which incorporates military records including exposures and medical records during service; and

WHEREAS, veterans and their families would benefit from better means to schedule their own appointments and access to real-time information about their health in a timely and secure manner; and

WHEREAS, the VA has experienced significant challenges in the initial phases of the roll out—patients have been endangered because the new records do not accurately capture data about prescribed medication and other key data and the difficulty of implementing the new record is causing staff fatigue and low morale at the pilot site in Spokane; and

WHEREAS, VA researchers have expressed concerns about losing access to the richness of the data captured in VA's computerized medical record which have allowed them to identify and explore unique issues and trends in veterans' health; and

WHEREAS, recent reports indicate VA must improve cybersecurity to ensure veterans' private health and data are protected from illicit use; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, urges caution in ensuring that VA's new information technology architecture allows it to fulfill all of its core missions—maintaining patient safety should be the foremost concern as the system is updated, but adequate staff support and training is also critical at this juncture; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, VA must continue its modernization effort in a manner that ensures personal data is secure but accessible to veterans to allow them to be partners in their health care.

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RESOLUTION NO. 010
ENCOURAGE THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO SUBMIT
CANDIDATES FOR THE DAV SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

WHEREAS, DAV created the DAV Scholarship Program as a means to recruit young volunteers and to recognize the efforts of America's young volunteers who serve disabled veterans in Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities and the local community; and

WHEREAS, the scholarship program will award a total of \$110,000 in 2022 to 10 deserving youth volunteers in the form of a first place \$30,000 scholarship; a second-place \$20,000 scholarship; a \$15,000 third-place scholarship, a \$10,000 fourth-place scholarship, two \$7,500 fifth-place scholarships and four \$5,000 scholarships; and

WHEREAS, at the beginning of each calendar year, DAV solicits every VA Voluntary Service program manager to nominate one deserving youth volunteer from their facility in order to be considered for one of the scholarships, but with little response; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, strongly encourages each Voluntary Service program manager at every VA medical facility to submit the name of a deserving youth volunteer to be considered for one of the scholarships in appreciation of their dedication to serving America's veterans through their voluntary service efforts.

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RESOLUTION NO. 011
SUPPORT A ROBUST COMPREHENSIVE REHABILITATIVE AND RESEARCH
PROGRAM FOR VETERANS WITH TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY

WHEREAS, traumatic brain injury (TBI) has been called the signature wound of veterans serving in Afghanistan and Iraq; and

WHEREAS, since 2000, 380,000 service members have been diagnosed with traumatic or acquired brain injury and brain injuries accounted for 22% of all combat injuries in recent deployments (compared to 12% in Vietnam); and

WHEREAS, veterans struggling with the chronic effects of combat injuries, falls, vehicular accidents and other trauma and illness leading to chronic brain injury that, in the most severe cases, will require a lifetime of services including extensive rehabilitation and lifelong personal and clinical support, including neurological, medical and psychiatric services, and physical, psycho-social, occupational and vocational therapies; and

WHEREAS, blast injuries were responsible for only a small portion of traumatic brain injury among post-9/11 veterans and service members, and despite significant drawdowns in those returning from deployment, workload in the polytrauma rehabilitation systems of care is projected to grow as veterans and service members continue to be exposed to falls, vehicular accidents and other acquired brain injuries that result in lasting brain damage and that the longer term rehabilitative needs of veterans continue; and

WHEREAS, VA has not yet developed the programs to meet the full spectrum of longer term needs to fill programmatic gaps VA acknowledges in neurobehavioral rehabilitation and community reintegration or to provide assisted living or other supported housing arrangements for veterans with moderate to severe traumatic brain injuries; and

WHEREAS, VA must also maintain programs to identify veterans with milder forms of TBI may experience a variety of symptoms, including headaches, irritability, sleep disorders, memory problems and depression; and

WHEREAS, research demonstrates that even mild TBI may have long-term mental health and medical consequences including a higher risk of developing dementia, and that symptoms are often co-morbid with post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and post-traumatic visual syndrome that can further confound diagnosis and treatment; and

WHEREAS, generations of veterans from earlier wars and conflicts may have suffered TBI, but this injury went unrecognized or was treated as mental illness; and

WHEREAS, milder forms of TBI may not be detected immediately, and the Department of Defense (DOD) and VA have recently released a suite of cognitive rehabilitation products for veterans and service members who sustain mild-to-moderate TBI, and have lingering cognitive impairment; and

WHEREAS, VA maintains active research collaborations with the National Institutes of Health, the National Institutes of Disability Rehabilitation Research "model centers" and the Defense Centers of Excellence in Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury and is an acknowledged world leader in research into TBI; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, urges Congress to authorize full payment for VA's Traumatic Brain Injury Residential Rehabilitation program to include payments for room and board that must now be made by veterans and to look for opportunities to ensure greater expansion of the program across the Nation; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV urges Congress to support permanent supported housing arrangements with specialized neurobehavioral rehabilitation for veterans with service-connected moderate to severe traumatic brain injuries; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV calls on VA to expand the universal screening it now provides to post-9/11 veterans to all generations of veterans and maintains resources within its polytrauma system of care to ensure their access to appropriate rehabilitation; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV urges that VA and DOD continue to engage in TBI studies such as LIMBIC (Long-Term Impact of Military Relevant Brain Injury) or research and that such research includes older veterans of past military conflicts who may have suffered similar injuries that went undetected, undiagnosed and untreated.

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RESOLUTION NO. 013
CONDUCT WELL-DESIGNED STUDIES TO DETERMINE EFFECTIVENESS OF
HYPERBARIC OXYGEN THERAPY ON TREATMENT-RESISTANT TRAUMATIC
BRAIN INJURIES AND POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

WHEREAS, thousands of veterans have received treatment from VA for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI) (or both), which are often related to their military service, but have not experienced significant or sustained improvements in health; and

WHEREAS, the FDA has cleared Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (HBOT), as a combination treatment of increased oxygen (hyperoxia) at increased hydrostatic pressure for several types of injury indications such as wound healing, necrotizing infections, burns, radiation injury, and carbon monoxide poisoning, and its use for treating these conditions does not appear to have significant side effects for most populations; and

WHEREAS, in case series of TBI and/or PTSD populations, HBOT, has statistically significantly improved cerebral blood flow and mean scores on post-concussion symptoms (PCS), PTSD, depression, and anxiety symptom checklists, as well as cognitive functioning and quality of life, but these physiological changes have not necessarily been associated with clinically significant improvements; and

WHEREAS, in 2018, VA published its Evidence Brief: Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (HBOT) for Traumatic Brain Injury and/or Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, which reviewed available high-quality studies (Randomized Controlled Trials or RCTs), in response to veterans and other stakeholders anecdotal reports of improvements in functionality and quality of life; and

WHEREAS, VA's analysis found that there were no high quality studies available on the effect of HBOT on post-traumatic stress disorder and those available for TBI showed inconclusive benefits; and

WHEREAS, the inconsistent evidence of effectiveness and lack of significant red flags for adverse health effects have led some to call for further evidence development on the off-label use of HBOT for TBI and/or PTSD for veterans in whom standard treatments have not been successful; and

WHEREAS, there is a significant need for innovative treatments for many veterans with treatment-resistant TBI and PTSD who have also expressed the desire for mental health and symptom relief that does not require the use of controlled substances that can lead to overuse and addiction; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, urges VA to conduct randomized controlled trials to determine the effectiveness of HBOT for veterans with treatment-resistant PTSD, and TBI; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that should VA determine that HBOT is effective, it should determine appropriate means of making this therapy accessible to appropriate veterans.

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RESOLUTION NO. 014
ENSURE ADEQUATE REPRESENTATION FOR ALL SUBGROUPS OF
VETERANS THAT INCLUDE SERVICE-CONNECTED VETERANS

WHEREAS, adequate representation is an important social determinant of health ensuring the special needs and preferences of a subgroup are voiced, understood and addressed; and

WHEREAS, many veterans with service-connected disabilities using the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) belong to subpopulations including racial or ethnic minorities; LGBTQ+ groups; women or from geographically remote areas (rural, underserved or outlying areas); and

WHEREAS, these subgroups are gradually making up greater portions of the veterans population; and

WHEREAS, racial or ethnic minorities now comprise 28% of the veterans' population, but, by 2045, they will make up 40% of all veterans; and

WHEREAS, women veterans today make up about 10% of the veterans population, but this will increase to almost 18% by 2040, and 43% of the women who use VA services in FY20 belonged to a racial or ethnic minority group; and

WHEREAS, over 1 million veterans identify as LGBTQ+ veterans and are also likely to increase from an estimated 5-6% in the population today due to liberalized policies allowing them to serve openly in the military; and

WHEREAS, VA will also begin to collect data systematically on sexual and gender identity; and

WHEREAS, VA researchers have found that many veterans in subgroups do not feel safe or welcome in its facilities; for example, a quarter of women veterans claimed to be sexually harassed by other patients causing many to delay or forego care; and

WHEREAS, Black veterans also indicated that they believed VA providers often exhibited biases against them; and

WHEREAS, VA has a number of campaigns, including its White Ribbon Campaign, which aim to ensure that all veterans feel safe and welcome in VA facilities; and

WHEREAS, VA has also found disparities in health outcomes and perceptions of access for many veterans including women, racial and ethnic minorities and LGBTQ+ veterans; and

WHEREAS, veterans living in rural or remote areas comprise about 40% of VA's patient population but VA's rural facilities receive only about 32% of VA expenditures and access often compromises their ability to receive high quality and timely care; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, urges VA to establish program offices and advisory committees for unrepresented subpopulations to ensure representation of subgroups within VA and promote understanding of unique needs and preferences among these groups in VA; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that VA must take steps to identify and resolve issues identified by representatives that lead to health disparities and develop programs to address them.

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RESOLUTION NO. 015 ESTABLISH AUTOMATIC PAYMENT OF TRAVEL PAY FOR ELIGIBLE DISABLED VETERANS WITHOUT ADDITIONAL BARRIERS

WHEREAS, certain disabled veterans are eligible for beneficiary travel pay to assist in covering the cost of travel associated with their care at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) or through Community Care programs; and

WHEREAS, the VA has mandated the veteran make a request for payment of this benefit for each instance of care in which they are eligible; and

WHEREAS, over the past several years, the VA has increased barriers for veterans to be able to claim this benefit for which they are eligible; and

WHEREAS, the process moving online in its entirety to apply for travel pay has created significant barriers for veterans with limited access to technology, visually impaired veterans, those with cognitive issues including traumatic brain injury, and many other service-connected disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, the requirement for application for each instance of care itself creates an unnecessary barrier itself for service-connected disabled veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports implementation of a system that would initiate travel pay payment at the point of check-in for any appointment at, or facilitated through, the VA without any further barriers placed between eligible veterans and this benefit.

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RESOLUTION NO. 027 SUPPORT ENHANCED MEDICAL SERVICES AND BENEFITS FOR WOMEN VETERANS

WHEREAS, the number of women serving in our military and veterans population continue to grow with women now comprising 10% of all veterans and 17% of our active duty service members; and

WHEREAS, women are now included in virtually all military occupations, including combat roles that expose them to the same injuries as their male peers; and

WHEREAS, the number of women veterans using Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care has doubled in the last decade, and women of recent service eras are younger, more likely to have service-connected conditions and are more reliant upon VA health care; and

WHEREAS, 40% of women veteran users of VA care are under the age of 45 and therefore within their child-bearing years, and their gender-specific needs often represent challenges to the current model and delivery of VA health care, which has traditionally focused on men; and

WHEREAS, significant numbers of women veterans, including those returning from current military deployments, are the primary or sole providers of dependent children, which can limit their ability to access services in inpatient, intensive outpatient or residential settings that have traditionally been available to address post-deployment mental health readjustment needs; and

WHEREAS, a significant number of women report military sexual trauma and domestic violence and need specialized mental health services from VA; and

WHEREAS, VA has too few proficient, knowledgeable health care providers with expertise in women's health; and many facilities fail to adequately address environment of care standards that assure the safety, privacy and dignity of women patients; and

WHEREAS, many non-VA health providers in VA's community care network, who fill gaps in critical gender-specific services for women veterans, including mammography, maternity care, and gynecology lack the training requirements to assure they are meeting VA quality and care standards and waiting times; and

WHEREAS, VA must improve outreach and services to meet the unique needs of women veterans who were catastrophically wounded, suffering amputations, blindness, spinal cord injury, post-traumatic stress, traumatic brain injury, or who were sexually assaulted; and

WHEREAS, DAV's 2014 report, Women Veterans, The Long Journey Home found that despite a generous array of benefits to assist veterans with transition and readjustment following military service, serious gaps are evident for women in every aspect of existing federal programs; and

WHEREAS, DAV's 2018 report, Women Veterans: The Journey Ahead found that the VA system still struggles to provide equitable access to women veterans which requires adapting existing programs and facilities to meet their distinct needs in a culture that honors women's service and sacrifices, and assures that they feel safe and welcome; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5-8, 2023, seeks to ensure the provision of health care services and specialized programs, inclusive of gender-specific services, by VA to eligible women veterans are provided to the same degree and extent that services are provided to eligible male veterans, inclusive of counseling and/or psychological services incident to combat exposure or sexual trauma; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we urge VA to strictly adhere to stated policies regarding privacy and safety issues relating to the treatment of women veterans and to proactively conduct research and health studies as appropriate; periodically review, adjust and improve its women's health programs; and seek innovative methods to address barriers to care, thereby better ensuring women veterans receive the quality treatment and specialized services they so rightly deserve.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 028

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO GRANT THE PRESIDENT, VICE PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS OF CONGRESS THE PRIVILEGE TO USE THE VETERANS HEALTH CARE SYSTEM AND TO RECEIVE THEIR CARE EXCLUSIVELY FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

WHEREAS, even though veterans' health care is funded through an advance appropriation, it is still at the discretion of Congress to provide the level of funding necessary for the veterans' health care system to meet the medical care needs of ill and injured veterans; and

WHEREAS, despite the increases in funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care system over the past decade, veterans often have difficulty accessing the care they need in a timely manner; and

WHEREAS, VA is recognized as the best health care system in the United States, and for providing high-quality health care services; and

WHEREAS, by using the VA health care system, the President, Vice President and members of Congress would be in a better position to judge the resource needs of VA to enable it to provide timely, high-quality health care to our nation's veterans; and

WHEREAS, similar to the members of the military, the President, Vice President and most members of Congress are required to spend a significant amount of time away from their homes, families and friends while Congress is in session; and

WHEREAS, because of the patriotism, devotion and sacrifices of our President, Vice President and members of Congress, ours is the most free nation on earth, where our citizens enjoy unequalled rights, privileges and prosperity; and

WHEREAS, the President, Vice President and members of Congress should therefore be granted the privilege of using the VA health care system for their health care needs; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation to grant the President, Vice President and members of Congress the privilege to use the veterans' health care system and to receive their care exclusively from the VA.

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RESOLUTION NO. 029
PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE DENTAL CARE TO ALL SERVICE-CONNECTED
DISABLED VETERANS WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF
VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

WHEREAS, DAV recognizes that oral health is integral to the general health and well-being of a patient and is part of comprehensive health care; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care system is mandated under section 1712, title 38, United States Code, to provide outpatient dental services to veterans rated 100% service connected, to veterans who were held prisoner-of-war or to those who have sustained dental trauma in performance of military service; and

WHEREAS, irrespective of service-connected disability, section 1701(9), title 38, United States Code, defines "preventive health services" as a broad collection of VA health services that improve, protect and sustain the general health and well-being of veterans enrolled in VA health care, to include "such other health care services as the Secretary may determine to be necessary to provide effective and economical preventive health care;" and

WHEREAS, according to the 2000 report by the Surgeon General of the United States, Oral Health in America, individuals who are medically compromised or who have disabilities are at greater risk for oral diseases, and, in turn, oral diseases further jeopardize their health, and that oral diseases are progressive, cumulative and become more complex over time, and can affect economic productivity and compromise the ability to work, and often significantly diminish the quality of life; and

WHEREAS, VA maintains oral and dental programs within its health care system; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide outpatient dental care to all enrolled service-connected disabled veterans.

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RESOLUTION NO. 030
ENSURE SUFFICIENT ACCESS TO CARE TO MEET THE HEALTH NEEDS
OF VETERANS RESIDING IN RURAL OR REMOTE AREAS

WHEREAS, 44% of active-duty service members identify rural or highly rural areas as their home of record and 33% of all veterans enrolled in the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) live in rural areas; and

WHEREAS, many rural areas are designated by the Health Resource Services Administration as Health Professional Shortage Areas for primary care, mental health and dental care or for any combination of these practice areas therein; and

WHEREAS, 56% of all rural veterans are enrolled in VHA, and rural veterans are older (57% of all enrolled rural veterans are elderly), poorer (52% are low income), sicker and less likely to have internet access (36% have no internet); and

WHEREAS, about half of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) community-based outpatient clinics are sited in rural areas, VA rural health and enterprise-wide initiatives have impacted close to a million veterans, VHA telehealth initiatives have served 84,500 enrolled veterans, the VA's Office of Rural Health has funded 450 projects in rural areas, including broadband and transportation programs, and trained 1,400 medical students in rural health; and

WHEREAS, VA's Office of Rural Health has identified strategies for improving health care for rural veterans including identifying more opportunities to collaborate with government agencies such as the Health Services Research Administration and the Indian Health Service; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 115-182, the VA MISSION Act of 2018, includes access standards that will enable many rural veterans to use care from community partners which may not have the veteran-specific expertise to which VHA patients are accustomed; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, fully supports the right of rural veterans to be served by VA to the maximum extent practicable, but urges VA to develop training materials and conduct training and outreach to its community and federal partners in rural areas to ensure that these providers have understanding of veteran-specific exposures, risks, and evidence-based practices to best address their needs; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that VA continue to overcome barriers to care for rural veterans by continuing to improve access to telehealth initiatives and assisting veterans with transportation and travel.

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RESOLUTION NO. 031

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO AUTHORIZE SCHOLARSHIPS FOR NEW MENTAL HEALTH PRACTITIONERS IN EXCHANGE FOR COMMITMENTS TO SERVE VETERANS IN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FACILITIES

WHEREAS, the nation faces a looming shortage of practitioners in mental health, including physicians, nurse practitioners, psychologists, social workers, mental health therapists and other counselors; and

WHEREAS, the needs of the newest generation of war veterans suffering the effects of post-traumatic stress disorder and other mental health challenges, combined with the continuing mental health needs of older generations of veterans, may overwhelm the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA's) capacity to properly treat them with qualified providers so that they can recover from these illnesses; and

WHEREAS, after serving our nation, veterans should not see their health care needs neglected by the VA because VA lacks the capacity to serve them; and

WHEREAS, recent public laws have authorized VA to expand the types and numbers of mental health and other services VA must make available to veterans, their caregivers, dependents and survivors; and

WHEREAS, an existing scholarship program under chapter 76, title 38, United States Code, targeted to physicians, nurses and a variety of other health professions has been highly successful in recruiting new practitioners to VA careers and has expanded and improved care to wounded, injured and ill veterans; and

WHEREAS, hundreds of VA community-based outpatient clinics and Readjustment Counseling Service Vet Centers do not directly participate in the existing scholarship program as an aid to their local recruitment and employment efforts; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation or administrative policy changes in the existing scholarship program to make its benefits available more broadly within both the community-based outpatient clinics and Readjustment Counseling Service Vet Centers of the Department so that these facilities will be able to adequately meet the needs of veterans of all generations who need mental health services and psychological counseling to aid in their recoveries.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 034

SUPPORT THE EXPANSION OF STELLATE GANGLION BLOCK RESEARCH AND IMPLEMENTATION TO TREAT POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

WHEREAS, every June is designated as "National Post-Traumatic Stress Awareness Month" to help raise public awareness, reduce the associated stigma, and help ensure that those individuals suffering from the invisible wounds of war promptly receive proper treatment; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) reports that approximately 20%, 12% and 30% of service members and veterans that served in Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom, the Persian Gulf War and the Vietnam War respectively, have had post-traumatic stress (PTS) in a given year; and

WHEREAS, both government and non-governmental organizations have made significant advances in the identification, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of PTS; and

WHEREAS, one of the most promising PTS treatment is Stellate Ganglion Block (SGB) and the VA Long Beach Healthcare System in California and the VA Center for Compassionate Care Innovation (CCI) are leading an effort to offer SGB to a subset of veterans who have not experienced relief from traditional PTS treatments; and

WHEREAS, there is growing evidence that SGB may alleviate certain PTS symptoms such as hyperarousal, exaggerated startle responses and anxiety, and it appears to calm an exaggerated “fight or flight” survival reflex in people living with PTS, which can become triggered by various events that do not warrant it, and veterans who received SGB for other health conditions like nerve pain report positive effects for their PTSD symptoms, including reduced anxiety and hypervigilance; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, urges the entire federal government to accelerate SGB research and that VA advertise SGB in all VA facilities, and that the VA expand the CCI-led clinical demonstration nationwide.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 046
INCLUDE DOMICILIARY CARE IN THE FORM OF MENTAL HEALTH
AND REHABILITATIVE TREATMENT PROGRAM IN THE DEFINITION OF
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE TREATMENT

WHEREAS, millions of veterans suffer from chronic mental health disabilities incurred during or as a result of military service; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) offers inpatient domiciliary care in the form of the Mental Health Residential and Rehabilitation Treatment Program (MH RRTP) for said disabilities; and

WHEREAS, VA compensation for total disability (100% rate) is paid to veterans in cases of hospitalization for more than 21 days under the provisions of 38 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), section 4.29; and

WHEREAS, veterans receiving treatment in MH RRTP are unable to pursue their occupations and lose income during their period of inpatient care, creating reluctance to seek needed mental health treatment; and

WHEREAS, prior to October 2018, the VA paid compensation for total disability during the period of MH RRTP treatment to qualifying veterans; and

WHEREAS, the United States has made a commitment to caring for veterans who incur injuries and other chronic medical conditions in the defense of this great nation; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports amending 38 CFR § 4.29 to include MH RRTP in the definition of VA health care treatment that establishes eligibility for payment of compensation for total disability.

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RESOLUTION NO. 053
URGE THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO SUPPORT
COMPREHENSIVE RESEARCH ON HEALTH EFFECTS OF CHILDREN
OF MALE VIETNAM VETERANS EXPOSED TO AGENT ORANGE

WHEREAS, research studies reviewed by the National Academy of Medicine (NAM) have not shown that there are increased rates of birth defects among children of male Vietnam veterans, except for spina bifida, where it found a “limited/suggested” association between paternal exposure to the herbicides used in Vietnam, or to dioxin, and a higher risk of spina bifida among their children; and

WHEREAS, there is a growing body of evidence that exposure to herbicide and its contaminants can induce epigenetic changes that pass from parent to offspring in animal models; and

WHEREAS, NAM has found that the available epidemiologic studies are of insufficient quality, consistency or statistical power to permit a conclusion regarding the presence or absence of an association with birth defects (other than spina bifida) as well as childhood cancer (including acute myeloid leukemia) in offspring of exposed people; and

WHEREAS, to resolve questions regarding paternally transmitted effects to their offspring, the NAM continues to recommend that laboratory research be conducted to characterize herbicides and their contaminants' potential for inducing epigenetic modifications, study paternal exposure in

the absence of maternal exposure, review systematically defined clinical health conditions that are manifested later in the lives of offspring; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, urges the Department of Veterans Affairs to conduct comprehensive research, including those recommended by the NAM, to determine the level of association between herbicide exposure and birth defects and other conditions of children of male Vietnam veterans.

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RESOLUTION NO. 070

STRENGTHEN AND PROTECT THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

WHEREAS, this nation's highest obligation is to the men and women who were put in harm's way in its defense, and became wounded, injured and ill as a consequence of that service; and

WHEREAS, America's veterans have earned and deserve high-quality, comprehensive and veteran-focused health care designed to meet their unique circumstances and needs; and

WHEREAS, there are over 9 million veterans who have enrolled in the VA health care system, of whom over 7 million receive some medical services from VA each year; and millions of service-connected disabled veterans who rely on VA for all or most of their medical care; and

WHEREAS, the increasing demand for VA health care reflects changes in the veteran patient population such as the advanced aging of many World War II, Korea, and Vietnam veterans in greater need of health care; high veteran satisfaction with the VA's comprehensive and coordinated delivery of health care; and changes in health care practice such as the increasing use of pharmaceuticals, advances in technology and increasing provision of community care; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care system's primary mission is to provide service-connected veterans timely, high-quality health care that offers a full continuum of services, including, but not limited to foundational services such as primary care, mental health care, and specialized care for prosthetics, spinal cord injury and disease, blindness, amputees, polytrauma, toxic and environmental exposures, as well as pharmacy, and long-term services and supports in both institutional and non-institutional settings; and

WHEREAS, while funding for VA to furnish medical care has increased year after year, it has not kept pace with demand from the rising number of veterans using the VA, the growing volume and intensity of health services being used and the increasing reliance on using the VA health care system; and

WHEREAS, VA and Congress must work together to provide additional resources to maintain sufficient staffing levels; eliminate disparities in treatment; and improve information technology necessary for the care and treatment of injured and ill veterans; and

WHEREAS, the VA must maintain a "critical mass" of capital, human and technical resources to promote effective, high-quality care for veterans, especially those with sophisticated health problems, such as blindness, amputations, spinal cord injury or chronic mental health problems; and

WHEREAS, it is well documented that VA provides health care that is as good or better than private sector health care, and does so at a lower cost compared to other national health care systems; and

WHEREAS, veterans who use the VA health care system have repeatedly indicated their preference for and satisfaction with the care they receive directly from VA, notwithstanding existing problems that VA must overcome, including the lack of timely and convenient access in some locations; and

WHEREAS, independent assessments of the VA health care system have found that the principal cause of access problems was insufficient funding provided to VA to meet the growing demand for care by veterans; and

WHEREAS, VA must develop and implement a long-term strategy to rebuild, modernize, maintain and expand medical facilities, and Congress must provide adequate and timely funding to fulfill VA's health care infrastructure plans; and

WHEREAS, VA must continue to fully and faithfully implement the VA MISSION Act (Public Law 115–182) to ensure that VA remains the primary provider and coordinator of care for veterans, while optimizing the use of new community care networks to fill in gaps when and where VA is unable to deliver timely, convenient care; and

WHEREAS, VA must realign and expand availability of health care services to meet the diverse needs of future veterans, including women and minority veterans, and those who reside in rural and remote regions far from VA facilities; and

WHEREAS, VA must reform its management by increasing efficiency, transparency and accountability to become more veteran-centric and responsive as an organization; and

WHEREAS, in addition to its first mission of providing care to ill and injured veterans, VA is also expected to fulfill three other critical health care missions: educating and training health care professionals; conducting medical and prosthetic research; and serving the nation in times of national emergency; and

WHEREAS, VA facilities are affiliated with 168 medical schools for physician education and 40 other health professions represented through affiliations agreements with more than 1,800 colleges and universities, and annually train over 69,000 medical students and residents—about 70% of all physicians in the United States—nearly 29,000 nurses and more than 30,000 other health professionals; and

WHEREAS, VA's biomedical research and development programs have established new treatments and models of care tailored to the needs of disabled veterans, including a vast array of prosthetic, orthotic and other assistive devices, and elevated the standard of medical care for all Americans; and

WHEREAS, VA has a federal emergency preparedness responsibility to assist the Departments of Homeland Security and Health and Human Services with natural disasters and national emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, and VA also serves as a backup for the Department of Defense in times of war; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, believes the nation must continue to honor the service and sacrifices of our nation's ill and injured veterans by strengthening and protecting a modern, high-quality, accessible and accountable VA health care system; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that to provide timely and convenient access to enrolled veterans, the VA health care system remain the primary provider and the coordinator of care, while continuing to optimize the use of community care networks to fill in gaps, particularly in rural and remote areas; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV calls on Congress and the Administration to provide timely and sufficient funding to the VA health care system to meet the continuing demand for care by ill and injured veterans in order to fulfill our promises to the men and women who served; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV will oppose any recommendation or proposal that could lead to weakening, diminishing or dismantling of the VA health care system that millions of veterans have chosen and rely upon, or that would weaken VA research or medical education programs.

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RESOLUTION NO. 071 SUPPORT RESEARCH ON, AND EXPAND ACCESS TO, INVESTIGATIONAL DRUGS FOR AMYOTROPHIC LATERAL SCLEROSIS

WHEREAS, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) is a terminal neurodegenerative disease that leads to loss of muscle strength and coordination causing people affected to lose their ability to perform routine tasks of daily living and eventually lose control of motor functions such as swallowing and breathing; and

WHEREAS, for reasons not clearly understood, and unrelated to specific duties, eras, or locations of service, military service itself is a risk factor for future diagnosis of ALS; and

WHEREAS, a veteran who served between 1910 and 1982 is about 1.5 times more likely to be diagnosed with ALS compared with someone who never served in the military; and

WHEREAS, current law and regulations direct the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to provide presumptive service-connected compensation for ALS (38 CFR §3.318); and

WHEREAS, the average age of patients with ALS is 55 years old and ALS has a poor prognosis with life expectancy after diagnosis, ranging from three to five years for most individuals; and

WHEREAS, there is currently no “cure” for ALS, but some treatments can slow progression or ease symptoms that lead to improved quality of life; and

WHEREAS, some promising investigational drugs and therapies, including stem cell therapy, have demonstrated increased survival and function for people diagnosed with ALS, but veterans have not had optimal access to these breakthrough therapies through the VA; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, encourages VA to seek out collaborative partnerships to allow veterans to participate in multi-site clinical drug and treatment trials that will expand access to breakthrough treatment for interventions intended to prevent, diagnose, mitigate, treat, or cure ALS; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that VA should prioritize research into the causes and effective treatment of ALS as a service-connected condition disproportionately affecting veterans.

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RESOLUTION NO. 072 **SUPPORT EFFECTIVE CARE FOR VETERANS WITH DEMENTIA** **WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) faces a large and growing number of veterans with dementia, including Alzheimer's disease and other organic diseases of the brain, it is prevalent in more than 774,000 veterans, including over 400,000 veterans enrolled in VA health care; and

WHEREAS, the risk of Alzheimer's disease and dementia is higher for populations in VA that are already at risk for certain adverse health outcomes including women (2.5 times higher risk than men) and higher for African Americans (2 times) and those of Hispanic ethnicity (1.5 times) than white individual populations; and

WHEREAS, research shows that military-related exposures such as traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder, as well as depression, are linked to an increased risk of Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia and VA estimates that as many as a quarter of new cases of dementia may be associated with these military exposures; and

WHEREAS, advanced age also disproportionately affects veterans risk for developing dementia (46% of veterans are more than 65 years old compared to the 16.5% in the general population of the United States); and

WHEREAS, dementia is a chronic and incurable condition, costing VA three times more than the average patient; and

WHEREAS, dementia impairs key executive functions, such as memory and cognition, including language, insight, judgment, ability to plan; diminishes the ability for self-care; triggers behavioral and psychological problems; and creates a heavy burden on caregivers; and

WHEREAS, dementia is difficult to diagnose and is often missed by clinicians, and there are high levels of off-label use of antipsychotic medications, particularly in institutional settings, that may be inappropriate or even harmful for patients with dementia; and

WHEREAS, a team approach to supporting family caregivers of dementia patients by assisting them with navigating VA's complex array of health care and financial benefits, coaching them on effective approaches to managing challenging behaviors, diversional activities and non-verbal communication has proven more effective than off-label use of antipsychotic medication; and

WHEREAS, lifestyle changes that have been proven to delay or prevent disease for as many as a quarter of veterans with cognitive impairment; and

WHEREAS, VA's Geriatric Evaluation and Management (GEM) teams which include a memory care coordinator may assist family caregivers with education about VA services, patient health and wellness, patient safety, and making legal and care plans for the future; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, urges VA to increase support and resources for improved dementia care and programming, including GEMs with a dedicated memory care coordinator at each VA medical center.

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RESOLUTION NO. 073 **URGE THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO PROVIDE PROMPT** **SCREENING AND TREATMENT FOR VETERANS EXPOSED TO DEPLETED** **URANIUM AND SUPPORT ADDITIONAL RESEARCH INTO THE** **LONG-TERM HEALTH EFFECTS OF SUCH EXPOSURE**

WHEREAS, the military utilized the extreme density of depleted uranium in projectiles and tank armor during the Persian Gulf War, Bosnia, and in Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF); and

WHEREAS, exposure to the heavy metal depleted uranium as a result of friendly-fire incidents, cleanup and salvage operations, and proximity to burning tanks and ammunition containing depleted uranium, poses hazards, including chemical toxicity to humans when internalized through ingestion inhalation, shrapnel and contaminated wounds; and

WHEREAS, over 1.1 million service members have deployed to the Southwest Asia theater of operations, and over 2 million OIF/OEF service members have deployed, and the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA's) Depleted Uranium Program, established in 1993, has assessed over 3,000 veterans exposed to depleted uranium; and

WHEREAS, during the Gulf War, an estimated 134 to 164 people experience "level 1" exposure (the highest of three exposure categories as classified by the Department of Defense(DOD)) through wounds caused by depleted uranium fragments, inhalation of airborne depleted uranium, particles, ingestion of depleted uranium residues, or wound contamination by depleted uranium residues; and

WHEREAS, hundreds or thousands more may have been exposed to lower exposure through inhalation of dust containing depleted uranium particles and residue or ingestion from hand-to-mouth contact or contamination of clothing; and

WHEREAS, questions remain regarding testing process used by the DOD and VA, 10 veterans who served in OIF had confirmed depleted uranium detected in their urine, and all had depleted uranium embedded fragments or fragment injuries; and

WHEREAS, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) Committee, mandated by Congress to examine scientific and medical literature on the potential health effects of chemical, biological, and radiological agents, could not determine the likelihood of increased risk of adverse health outcomes among Gulf War veterans due to exposure to the agents examined in its 2000 report, due to the lack of exposure data; and

WHEREAS, the IOM Committee in its 2008 updated scientific and medical literature review regarding exposure to depleted uranium and long-term human health outcomes assigned a high priority to continue monitoring a possible association between exposure and several diseases and conditions; and

WHEREAS, the VA Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses recognized the limited number of research projects to examine the impact of the total exposures and experience of deployment and war on veterans' health; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, urges VA to provide prompt medical screening and treatment to any veteran that may have been exposed to depleted uranium; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the DAV supports additional research to examine the health effects of exposure to depleted uranium.

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RESOLUTION NO. 083

SUPPORT SUSTAINED AND SUFFICIENT FUNDING TO IMPROVE SERVICES FOR HOMELESS VETERANS

WHEREAS, compared to nonveterans, veterans are at higher risk of homelessness, and women veterans, especially face unique challenges that increase their risk of homelessness; and

WHEREAS, many veterans experience post-deployment readjustment conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder, substance-use disorders acquired during or worsened by their military service, or traumatic brain injuries that may make their participation in the workforce difficult or impossible, making them more prone to homelessness; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA's) specialized homelessness programs each year provide health care to almost 150,000 homeless veterans and other services to more than 112,000 veterans; and

WHEREAS, with greater numbers of women serving in military deployments and the greater likelihood of women veterans being single parents, new and more comprehensive housing and child care services are needed; and

WHEREAS, a wide variety of public and private programs are in place to assist veterans in preventing or overcoming chronic homelessness, but these programs are often underfunded; and

WHEREAS, the VA initiatives to end homelessness among veterans through enhanced collaboration with other federal, state, faith-based, veterans service organization and community partners have made significant inroads in decreasing homelessness among veterans; and

WHEREAS, annual point-in-time counts, a “snapshot” of homelessness on a given night in America, have demonstrated downward or stable trends in homelessness since 2009, but have not yet registered the economic or psychosocial impact of quarantine and lockdowns related to the COVID-19 pandemic; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, urges Congress to sustain sufficient funding to continue to support VA’s initiative to eliminate homelessness among veterans and strengthen the capacity of the VA Homeless Veterans program to include: increasing its mental health and substance-use disorder programs’ capacity, providing vision and dental care services to homeless veterans as required by law, incorporating child care and legal aid for veterans in homeless programs where possible, and improving its outreach efforts to help ensure homeless veterans gain access to VA’s specialized health and benefits programs; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we urge Congress to continue to authorize and appropriate funds for competitive grants for transitional housing to community-based organizations; that it fund the Supportive Services for Veterans Families program to ensure prevention of homelessness among veterans and their families; that it authorize vouchers through Department of Housing and Urban Development and require VA to provide to effective case management and health and supportive services to necessary for them to stay housed; and that it fund the Department of Labor’s Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program to reengage veterans in employment or other productive activity.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 085 ENCOURAGE THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO PROCESS VOLUNTEER APPLICATIONS IN A TIMELY MANNER

WHEREAS, many DAV members want to join the ranks of volunteers who serve disabled veterans in Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities and in local communities associated with the VA; and

WHEREAS, there is great variability in both the process and timeliness of providing prospective volunteers all the required screenings, interviews, orientations, and training prescribed by the VA facility; and

WHEREAS, these volunteers must undergo an arduous clearance process and background check that can require months of delay, as well as complete a lengthy application to volunteer and thus lose their services and the opportunity for voluntary activities to aid veterans; and

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of the VA Voluntary Service program manager to ensure that volunteer applications are processed in an expeditious manner, because volunteers perform a valuable service to veterans in facilities and save taxpayers millions of dollars; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 116-315, the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020, passed in January 2021; and

WHEREAS, section 7001 of that law required the Department establish a national policy regarding the medical exams required to certify volunteer drivers for the VTN no later than 90 days following its passage; and

WHEREAS, despite briefings alluding to VA’s work responding to this requirement and multiple requests for updates, Congress is not aware of any such policy more than a year after that deadline passed; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, are calling on VA to quickly develop and disseminate a straightforward, standardized and timely process for certifying volunteer drivers. Once this process is finalized, VA should undergo a concerted effort to not only disseminate the updated guidance, but also seek out and recruit volunteers, especially those who began the certification process but discontinued it after facing too much bureaucracy to continue.

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RESOLUTION NO. 089
ENSURE EQUITY IN QUALITY AND ACCESS FROM DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS
AFFAIRS AND VETERANS' COMMUNITY CARE PROGRAM PROVIDERS

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) use of community care is rapidly increasing in terms of the portion of the budget it expends on such care and as a share of all care provided to enrolled veterans; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 115-182, the VA MISSION Act of 2018, requires VA to assess the availability of appointments in the Veterans Community Care Program provider network that meet a veteran's particular needs prior to scheduling that appointment in the community, but VA has not had data to make such determinations; and

WHEREAS, much of the information Congress intended VA to use in electing use of community providers under Public Law 115-182, including assessing comparable quality and timeliness for certain service lines, is not systematically collected by these providers; and

WHEREAS, VA providers have access to special training and clinical practice guidelines for certain types of issues veterans experience or are significantly more at risk of experiencing due to military service, including post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, blast injuries, the aftereffects of military sexual trauma, certain toxic exposures, and suicidal ideation; and

WHEREAS, a recent RAND report found that many community providers express concerns about being adequately prepared to address some of the issues veterans experience as a result of military service; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports a requirement that VA contracts with care intermediaries such as TRIWEST, Optum and Humana require their network providers to collect information comparable to standardized outpatient data that VA collects including process, outcome and access data; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that providers be required to receive VA training in basic VA benefits and services and in best practices managing common veterans' conditions including suicidal ideation, post-traumatic stress disorder, military sexual trauma, traumatic brain injuries, and toxic exposures.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 090
ENSURE QUALITY AND TIMELINESS FOR THE VETERANS HEALTH
ADMINISTRATION AND VETERANS COMMUNITY CARE PROGRAM PROVIDERS

WHEREAS, Congress established the Veterans Community Care Program under Public Law 115-182, the VA MISSION Act of 2018 to ensure that veterans have timely access to quality care when they are unable to receive care in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); and

WHEREAS, the Veterans Community Care Program providers are deemed to be part of the VA integrated high-performing networks; and

WHEREAS, VA establishes many goals for its performance and measures outcomes using standardized metrics for the health care industry including Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS), Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) and other appropriate measures; and

WHEREAS, all VA facilities have participated in the Joint Commission for the past 35 years, and relevant facilities participate in the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities, Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCACPS) (patient surveys) and other programs establishing standards for the health care industry; and

WHEREAS, VA and the Department of Defense routinely develop and revise clinical practice guidelines for best practices for treatment of many conditions for which veterans and service members are at risk, including suicidal ideation and behavior, post-traumatic stress disorder (including for military sexual trauma), substance use disorders, traumatic brain injury, depression, diabetes mellitus and hypertension; and

WHEREAS, VA routinely collects information on wait times for each of its points of access to the health care system for primary, mental health and specialty care including for both new and established patients; and

WHEREAS, many private sector health care providers do not participate in programs that support quality or collect and publish data on quality or timeliness; and

WHEREAS, comparison data used by VA is based on regional data collected by CMS; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, urges VA to improve real time access to quality and timeliness measures to ensure continued improvement in these measures; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Congress must require VA to include key measures of quality and access in its contracts for intermediaries administering the Veterans Community Care Program to allow true comparisons between VA and its network of providers and to ensure that all VCCP providers are in good standing in the states in which they practice by accessing data from national resources and state licensure boards; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that veterans community care providers be required to participate in annual training on VA resources available to veterans, and its clinical practice guidelines for conditions associated with military service.

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RESOLUTION NO. 091

REQUEST CHANGE OF POLICY SO THAT RETIRED MEDICAL STAFF CAN RETURN WITHOUT FINANCIAL PENALTY AS NECESSARY TO SUPPLEMENT CURRENT STAFFING AT DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTERS

WHEREAS, every Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical center (VAMC) is demonstrating a profound shortage of skilled and licensed as well as trained nursing and medical staff; and

WHEREAS, a large number of highly skilled staff are now retiring; and

WHEREAS, a significant number would be willing to return on a part-time basis; and

WHEREAS, if they do, all compensation is directly deducted from their retirement; and

WHEREAS, if the person works in a state where income tax is incurred, it would result in a net loss of income for trained staff; and

WHEREAS, there would be no benefit to the trained staff to return, as they would not receive enhanced benefits to their retirement unless they worked for a full year; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, recommends that this policy be changed to allow trained medical staff to avoid suffering the penalty from their retirement when they return to the VA to provide their highly skilled staff necessary to supplement current staffing; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we ask for this policy to be rescinded because we are losing highly skilled staff to the community.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 092

REQUEST THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS COOPERATE WITH FISHER HOUSE FUNDRAISING

WHEREAS, Fisher House provides and important service for the family members of veterans; and

WHEREAS, family support is essential for essential for healing; and

WHEREAS, community hotels are both expensive and may be a safety risk; and

WHEREAS, the Fisher House requires no out-of-pocket expense to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) nor the veteran's family members; and

WHEREAS, the Fisher House provides a place for family members to have proper nutrition and rest; and

WHEREAS, DAV feels that providing the best care for our veterans involves their family members' support and education; and

WHEREAS, DAV is fully in support of the Fisher House as an essential tool of care for the veteran; and

WHEREAS, not all VA hospitals are allowing a Fisher House; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, requests all VA Medical Centers to fully cooperate with constituents to permit the building and fundraising for the Fisher House at every VA that has a greater than 50-mile driving distance to any VA medical center in their state and to cooperate and support the building of such a facility and to fully support local constituents in all efforts to raise the associated costs.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 101
ADEQUATELY FUND AND SUSTAIN THE READJUSTMENT
COUNSELING SERVICE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS
AFFAIRS AND ITS VET CENTER PROGRAM

WHEREAS, in 1979, Congress authorized the establishment of the Readjustment Counseling Service, an independent counseling activity within the then-Veterans Administration's Department of Medicine and Surgery; and

WHEREAS, in 1980, the Veterans Administration opened the first "Vet Center" to provide readjustment services and psychological counseling to Vietnam combat veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and other conditions related to combat exposure and their experiences in Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, the Vet Centers, now numbering 300 locations, 83 mobile vet centers and 19 vet center outstations nationwide, have proven to be a most useful and effective tool to assist veterans of all eras who seek care for issues associated with exposure to traumatic combat situations, challenges with reintegrating into families and communities and military sexual trauma, in addition to other problems and to certain family members; and

WHEREAS, Vet Centers provide cost-effective and highly beneficial services, including counseling for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other readjustment challenges, suicide prevention and crisis intervention, marriage and family counseling, and family bereavement counseling beneficial to recovery; and

WHEREAS, the Vet Center program has been successful counseling veterans from all prior conflicts needing such readjustment services, including World War II, the Korean War, the war in Vietnam, the Persian Gulf War, and veterans of combat service in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq; and

WHEREAS, Vet Centers lead all Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) mental health programs in conducting veteran-to-veteran peer counseling services, wherein veterans who have themselves experienced post-deployment mental health issues related to their military experience are trained to provide counseling to those still suffering ill effects; and

WHEREAS, Vet Centers are now charged with selecting and administering the peer retreats in both gender-exclusive and mixed gender groups of veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, commends the work of the Readjustment Counseling Service and of its Vet Centers of the VA, and encourages the Vet Centers to maintain funding levels commensurate with the growth in veterans' demand for services and to accommodate outreach to meet unmet needs of additional veterans within the Vet Center catchment areas.

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RESOLUTION NO. 102
OPPOSE MEANS TESTING SERVICE-CONNECTED VETERANS FOR
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE

WHEREAS, Public Law 104-262 requires 0% service-connected disabled veterans to be means tested in order to receive treatment in a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facility; and

WHEREAS, countless thousands of veterans have relied on care from VA medical facilities for decades and now face the possibility of losing access to VA medical care because of income levels, consequently causing them undue financial hardship, pain and suffering; and

WHEREAS, these 0% service-connected disabled veterans have been relegated to the lowest eligibility categories for care and, in some cases, below nonservice-connected veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports the exclusion of service-connected disabled veterans from the requirements of means testing for treatment or service received at VA medical facilities and the inclusion of 0% service-connected disabled veterans in Priority Group 3.

RESOLUTION NO. 103
SUPPORT PROGRAMS TO PROVIDE PSYCHOLOGICAL AND MENTAL
HEALTH COUNSELING SERVICES TO FAMILY MEMBERS OF VETERANS
SUFFERING FROM POST-DEPLOYMENT MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES
OR OTHER SERVICE-CONNECTED CONDITIONS

WHEREAS, veterans exposed to combat and other hardship deployments are known to be at risk for development of post-deployment mental health conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression and other serious mental health challenges; and

WHEREAS, left untreated or inadequately treated, a veteran suffering the chronic effects of PTSD, depression or other mental illnesses may suffer marriage and relationship breakdown, underemployment or loss of employment, financial hardship, social alienation and even homelessness, or involvement with the justice system; and

WHEREAS, a combat-exposed veteran who is not appropriately counseled for the psychological effects of PTSD or depression stands at greater risk of emotional and mental decompensation, whose consequences often fall directly on family members and dependents of such veterans; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) embraces recovery from mental illness as its guiding principle in all VA mental health programs, and involvement of family members and dependents is often vital to a veteran's eventual recovery from mental illness; and

WHEREAS, subsection 1712A(b)2, title 38, United States Code, authorizes the VA Readjustment Counseling Service, through its Vet Center program, to provide psychological counseling and other necessary mental health services to family members of war veterans under care in such Vet Centers, irrespective of service-connected disability status; and

WHEREAS, Congress enacted section 301 of Public Law 110–387 for the express purpose of authorizing marriage and family counseling in VA facilities to address the needs of veterans' families, including spouses and other dependent family members of veterans who are experiencing mental health challenges with attendant marital or family difficulties; and

WHEREAS, Congress enacted sections 101–103 of Public Law 111–163 and sections 161–163 of Public Law 115–182 for the purpose of authorizing a wide array of support, care and counseling services for personal caregivers of severely injured veterans from all eras of military service; and

WHEREAS, Congress has recently established a grant program under section 201 of Public Law 116–171, the Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act of 2019, which would allow grantees to provide a variety of supportive services to at-risk veterans and family members; and

WHEREAS, section 1782, title 38, United States Code, authorizes a program of counseling, training and mental health services, including psychological support, for immediate family members of disabled veterans who need care for service-connected disabilities; who have service-connected disabilities rated at 50% or more disabling; who were discharged or retired from the armed forces for injuries or illnesses incurred in the line of duty; who are World War I or Mexican Border Period veterans; who were awarded the Purple Heart; who are former prisoners of war; who were exposed to radiation or toxic substances; or who are unable to defray the expenses of their care; and

WHEREAS, section 1781, title 38, United States Code, authorizes a program of health care, including certain mental health services, for immediate family members and dependents of a veteran who is totally and permanently disabled from service-connected disabilities or who died from disabilities incurred during military service; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, calls on the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish appropriate and effective programs to ensure that veterans who are enrolled in VA health care receive adequate care for their wounds and illnesses, including mental health-related illnesses, and, when appropriate, family members—whether family caregivers, spouses or other family dependents—receive necessary counseling, including psychological counseling, training and other mental health services authorized by law to aid in the recovery of veterans.

RESOLUTION NO. 104
SUPPORT HUMANE, CONSISTENT PAIN MANAGEMENT
PROGRAMS IN THE VETERANS HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

WHEREAS, pain is one of the most prevalent reasons individuals, including wounded, injured and ill veterans, seek health care; and

WHEREAS, hundreds of thousands of veterans suffer from traumatic amputations and other severe injuries incurred during military service, while others suffer from a host of painful organic diseases and disabling conditions; and

WHEREAS, chronic pain is closely linked with depression and other mental health challenges, including suicidal ideation; and

WHEREAS, the serious adverse side effects of opioids, including physical dependence, overdose and suicide, have made Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and other health care providers reconsider clinical guidance, policy and programming for pain management; and

WHEREAS, because of these adverse side effects, the number of veterans using opioid medications for pain management prescribed by the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), which skyrocketed in the 2000s and peaked in 2012, have plummeted (the veterans to whom it dispensed an opioid fell by 56% and those to whom it co-prescribed opioid/benzodiazepine by 83%) due to VHA's revision its policies and programs for managing opioids; and

WHEREAS, VA has adopted a stepped, interdisciplinary approach to pain management using a patient-centered and holistic approach to delivering health care in order to maintain and improve the health and quality of life of veterans and VA's pain management program has been emulated in other public and private health care settings nationwide; and

WHEREAS, access to opioids has been compromised for many disabled veterans who have used these medications as prescribed for many years to reduce pain and maintain their quality of life and productivity; and

WHEREAS, a growing number of veteran patients with chronic pain who have been prescribed pain medication over long periods have been abruptly denied without the benefit of tapering or counseling or provision of alternate means of pain relief to reduce or eventually discontinue opioid therapy; and

WHEREAS, abrupt denial of opioid medications can lead to devastating health consequences, including compromised health, overdose or suicidal behavior; and

WHEREAS, VA has not made access to substance use disorder treatment or medications for opioid use disorder including first line opioid agonists such as methadone, buprenorphine, or overdose reversal drugs such as naloxone universally available and accessible to veterans (even those at highest risk) across the system; and

WHEREAS, VA recognizes non-pharmacological therapies, including complementary and integrative health therapies such as yoga, massage, acupuncture, and chiropractic, as the best alternative in managing pain, yet VA policy does not require such therapies be available and be offered without locally imposed restrictions; and

WHEREAS, without appropriate psychological counseling and transition to suitable alternatives to controlled substances, including Schedule II controlled medications, veterans can suffer physical and mental anguish needlessly; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, urges VA to redouble its efforts to conduct a uniform national pain management program to ensure that veterans requiring pain management including those who have used prescribed pain medications for long time periods are managed with patient-centered, interdisciplinary and holistic approaches with balanced regard for both patient safety and humane alternatives to the use of controlled substances, and while under VA care receive their prescribed medications in a timely fashion; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV encourages VA to continuously review and update its clinical guidance, policies and programming to ensure compliance with federal law and adherence to best practices in prescribing, dispensing and disposing of controlled substances.

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RESOLUTION NO. 110
DEVELOP CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINES ON PREVENTION, EARLY
DETECTION AND INTERVENTION FOR LUNG CANCER

WHEREAS, lung cancer is the second most common cancer in men and women and the leading cause of death from cancer; and

WHEREAS, veterans are more likely to be exposed to hazardous and potentially carcinogenic agents such as dioxin, burn pits and environmental agents than non-military personnel; and

WHEREAS, individuals may not experience or recognize symptoms of lung cancer until the disease has progressed to an advanced stage; and

WHEREAS, even when lung cancer does cause symptoms, many people may mistake them for acute health conditions such as infections which may delay the diagnosis; and

WHEREAS, based on findings that low-dose cat scans (LDCT) caught more early stage lung cancer than chest x-rays, the American Cancer Society has developed guidance for screening high-risk individuals including use of annual LDCT screening for people at higher risk for developing lung cancer; and

WHEREAS, early detection may significantly increase the likelihood of successful treatment of lung cancer; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports the Department of Veterans Affairs developing and implementing new clinical guidance on the prevention, detection and treatment of lung cancer, including the appropriate use of LDCT scans for early detection of lung cancer in at-risk populations.

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RESOLUTION NO. 111
IMPROVE TIMELY REIMBURSEMENTS BY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS
AFFAIRS FOR PURCHASED CARE, PROTECT VETERANS FROM DEBT
COLLECTION AND ADVERSE CREDIT REPORTING FROM SUCH CARE

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is authorized to provide a full continuum of health care to all service-connected veterans enrolled in the VA health care system, including preventive, primary, acute, specialty and rehabilitative care as well as pharmaceutical, mental health and readjustment counseling services; and

WHEREAS, to ensure veterans are able to receive timely comprehensive care, Congress authorized numerous VA programs since the early 1920s to purchase care for veterans from non-VA community providers; and

WHEREAS, according to the Government Accountability Office, VA's use of purchased care programs has increased 82% since the access to care crisis in 2014; and

WHEREAS, veterans who are treated by non-VA community providers under any of VA's community care programs should not be under any financial obligation to defray the full costs of VA authorized care; and

WHEREAS, the VA MISSION Act (Public Law 115-182) amended most but not all of VA's community care programs and instituted standards for VA to promptly pay for care provided to veterans by community care providers; and

WHEREAS, in innumerable cases, service-connected veterans have been billed directly for care provided by community providers despite VA's obligation to pay in a timely fashion; and

WHEREAS, in some cases, veterans do not receive timely billing or copayment due notification for services rendered through VA or a network community care provider, for more than six months or a year, to include services for emergency care or transportation; and

WHEREAS, should service-connected veterans be without the means to rectify debt assigned by community providers when VA payment is deficient or delinquent, providers are referring such debt to debt collection agencies as well as reporting such debt to credit reporting agencies, adversely affecting these veterans' credit worthiness when in fact no justification supports such collection actions or credit reporting against veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, urges VA to improve its administrative practices to promptly pay non-VA community providers for care under all of VA's purchased care program; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV urges Congress to enact legislation requiring VA to reimburse or require non-VA community providers to forgive any veterans' copayments for community care, including emergency care or transportation, that are billed more than 180 days after services are rendered; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV urges Congress to enact legislation to properly protect veterans' credit ratings and require VA to protect veterans from collections actions against service-disabled veterans because of delinquent or delayed payment to non-VA community providers.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 112
URGE THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO APPLY A
CONSISTENT COORDINATED CARE POLICY FOR ENROLLED
VETERANS WITH A HOME RESIDENCE IN TWO STATES

WHEREAS, many service-connected disabled veterans temporarily split their principal residence between two locations; and

WHEREAS, coordination and continuity of care are core features of high-quality primary care and have been shown to offer significant benefits, including lower rates of hospitalization and lower mortality; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) policy defining how patients are assigned to Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) primary care providers states that, in general, each veteran receiving VA primary care must be assigned a single primary care provider within the VA health care system; and

WHEREAS, under VHA Handbook 1101.11(3), veterans who spend a significant part of the year living between two regions and who have complex health care needs requiring close ongoing care management may have primary care providers assigned at two geographically distant facilities; and

WHEREAS, some service-connected veterans who would otherwise be eligible for a secondary VA primary care provider may be denied this critical service; and

WHEREAS, many service-connected veterans are unaware that their VA provider may assess their need for assignment to another facility to manage complex health needs to better coordinate execution of a personal health care plan between the preferred and alternate VA facilities; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, urges the VA to improve its care coordination policy for enrolled veterans with a home residence in two states, especially service-disabled veterans with complex medical needs, who may require the assignment of two primary care providers.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 118
ENSURE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FACILITIES
AND INFORMATION RESOURCES ARE ACCESSIBLE TO
VETERANS WITH DISABILITIES

WHEREAS, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 serves as the basis for allowing individuals with disabilities to enjoy mainstream access to opportunities for employment, commerce and governmental activities; and

WHEREAS, ADA requires new construction projects to use barrier-free design and older facilities to use modifications to allow access to individuals with disabilities including those using wheelchairs to areas that fulfill the primary function of the business; and

WHEREAS, access to some Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health facilities, services and equipment remains problematic for some disabled veterans using wheelchairs and service dogs; and

WHEREAS, Section 504 of the American Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requires that reasonable accommodations be made to allow people with disabilities to access benefits and services available to individuals without disabilities including for written and electronic materials; and

WHEREAS, recent reports have found only about 8% of VA websites are accessible to those with visual impairments; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, calls on VA to ensure its physical space comports to regulations for barrier-free design and address other environment of care deficiencies that impact patients' safety and comfort, and that it has equipment necessary to address the needs of veterans with disabilities; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that VA should create project milestones and timelines to ensure that all of its primary websites, documents and social media allow veterans with visual impairment to access information within the next five years.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 119
SUPPORT A CONSISTENT BENEFIT FOR SERVICE AND GUIDE
DOGS PRESCRIBED BY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
PROVIDERS AND EXAMINE THE BENEFITS OF TRAINING
SERVICE DOGS FOR DISABLED VETERANS

WHEREAS, trained guide dogs and other trained service dogs can have a significant role in restoring or maintaining functionality and promoting maximal independence of individuals with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, some veterans with disabilities such as blindness, deafness, mental illness, and epilepsy and other seizure disorders are able to better engage in their recovery and live more independently when prescribed service and guide dogs; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) prescribes the use of guide and service dogs to veterans enrolled in VA health care when therapeutically indicated to perform specific tasks to allow veterans to restore or maintain function or maximize independence; and

WHEREAS, VA provides a veterinary benefit for all prescribed service dogs meeting the standards of certain accredited training organizations; and

WHEREAS, VA has recently completed a multi-site, multi-year study of the use of service dogs for veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder compared to those with emotional support dogs which found that veterans paired with service dogs had more significant reductions in the severity of symptomology and suicidal behavior and ideation; and

WHEREAS, VA is experimenting with dog training programs led by veterans for veterans, to determine if the training of service dogs itself is a therapeutic method to reduce symptoms in veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, urges VA to continue research to determine the most efficacious use of service dogs for defined populations, and, in particular, for veterans with mental health conditions, and to broadly publish the results of that research; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that VA determine any additional benefit for veterans with mental health issues involved in training service dogs for themselves or other veterans with disabilities; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that VA ensure that any veteran for whom a service dog is ordered receive the dog at no cost, including reimbursement for any follow-up training deemed appropriate, and a veterinary benefit for the life of that service dog.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 166
SUPPORT TOP PRIORITY ACCESS FOR SERVICE-CONNECTED VETERANS
WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Veterans Health Administration (VHA) has issued national directives and policies to affirm its commitment to providing top-priority access to hospital care and medical services to veterans with service-connected disabilities, regardless of the percentage assigned to the service-connected disability rating, in absence of compelling medical reasons to the contrary; and

WHEREAS, many VA facilities are struggling to fulfill this mandate because of budget pressures, insufficient local resources and demand exceeding capacity because of increasing patient workloads; and

WHEREAS, DAV continues to receive complaints from service-connected veterans who are being denied priority access to VA health care services or report their access to care is being delayed; and

WHEREAS, due to inadequate resources, VHA at times has been forced to establish waiting lists and implement other types of health care rationing, absent compelling medical reasons; and

WHEREAS, VA is poised to realign and expand availability of health care services to meet the diverse needs of future veterans, reform its management by increasing efficiency, transparency and

accountability to become more veteran-centric, and restructure all its community care programs into flexible and responsive integrated networks to deliver high value quality care; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports strict enforcement by the VHA, including VHA network and medical center directors, of governing policies providing service-connected veterans priority access to care, unless compelling medical reasons affecting other veterans prevent such priority from being extended to them.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 167
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO IMPROVE AND PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE
SERVICES FOR CAREGIVERS OF SEVERELY WOUNDED,
INJURED AND ILL VETERANS OF ALL ERAS

WHEREAS, severely disabled veterans present great challenges to the Department of Defense (DOD) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for acute, rehabilitative and long-term care health needs; and

WHEREAS, immediate family members and dependents are involved in the care and rehabilitation of severely injured veterans and are responsible for performing complete clinical care once provided by medical professionals, often with little to no relief while shouldering a great and lifelong burden as home and institutional caregivers and attendants, giving up or severely restricting their employment, future financial security, education and social interactions and suffering severe financial and personal penalties as a consequence in order to care for a severely ill loved one; and

WHEREAS, in the absence of such caregivers, the burden of direct care would fall on DOD and VA facilities or other institutions, at significantly higher financial cost and a reduced quality of life for these veterans; and

WHEREAS, the United States government owes its highest obligation to those who are put in harm's way at the call of the nation and become wounded, injured, and ill as a consequence of that service; and

WHEREAS, in 2011, Public Law 111–163 established VA's family caregiver program, which includes a Program of General Caregiver Support Services (PGCSS) for all caregivers, and a Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) for the most severely disabled veterans, which provides family caregivers with a stipend, health insurance, additional respite care, and case management services; and

WHEREAS, when Public Law 111-163 was enacted, only severely disabled veterans who were injured on or after September 11, 2001 were eligible for the PCAFC, excluding equally deserving disabled veterans and their caregivers from the program; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 115-182, enacted in 2018, extended eligibility for the PCAFC to prior generations of veterans in two phases: first for World War II, Korean War and Vietnam veterans, which took effect on October 1, 2020, and then for veterans injured after the Vietnam war through 9/11, which is scheduled to take effect on October 1, 2022; and

WHEREAS, VA's eligibility criteria for the PCAFC has been the source of significant confusion and difficulty, particularly during the application, approval and reassessment processes, such that in 2017, 2018 and again in 2022, it was found that veterans and their family caregivers were being discharged from the PCAFC at such alarming rates that three different VA Secretaries placed a temporary moratorium on discharges and tier reductions; and

WHEREAS, the Court of Veterans Appeals for Veterans Claims ruled in the Beaudette v. McDonough case that veterans and caregivers who disagreed with a decision about eligibility for PCAFC must be provided full judicial review and due process rights, including the right to appeal unfavorable decisions to the Board of Veterans' Appeals, the right to see all evidence and the right to representation in their claims; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans Health Administration's Caregiver Support Program (CSP) has had great difficulty implementing the Court-ordered appeals rights, which include application of the Appeals Modernization Act's requirements, which include mandatory requirements for decision notification letters; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, calls on the VA to complete the final phase of the caregiver expansion required by Public Law 115–182 so that severely disabled veterans of all eras are equally eligible for the PCAFC; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Congress should conduct aggressive oversight of the PCAFC and ensure the VA receives all the resources needed to timely and equitably expand eligibility, process all applications, and provide adequate supports and services to meet the needs of family caregivers; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that VA must expeditiously and fully implement the mandate of the Court's Beaudette decision to ensure that all veterans and family caregivers who make an application to the PCAFC and receive unfavorable decisions, have full judicial review and due process rights, including the right to representation, the right to review all evidence used to make their decisions, and the right to all options included in the Appeals Modernization Act; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Congress should increase funding and enact legislation that would strengthen and expand access to and improve the provision of caregiver support services, including but not limited to fully recognizing family caregivers, adequate financial support, sufficient health and homemaker services, respite, education and training, and other necessary relief, to caregivers of all veterans severely ill and injured due to military service; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Congress and the VA must create and execute a strategic plan for military and veteran caregiver research, including longitudinal surveys and assessments, to evaluate current programs and services and monitor the health and well-being of caregivers to ensure the program's effectiveness and better inform policymakers.

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RESOLUTION NO. 189

ENSURE THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MAY NOT DENY A VETERAN ANY BENEFITS IF THAT VETERAN PARTICIPATES IN STATE-APPROVED MARIJUANA PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, the DAV wholeheartedly supports our military, veterans and their families; and WHEREAS, this legislation prohibits the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) from denying a veteran any VA benefit due to participation in a state-approved marijuana program; and

WHEREAS, for those participating in these approved programs, the VA must ensure its health care providers discuss marijuana use with such veterans and adjust treatment plans accordingly, as well as record such use in the veteran's medical record; and

WHEREAS, under the bill, the VA shall authorize physicians and other VA health care providers to provide recommendations to veterans who are residents of states with approved programs; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports the VA shall authorize physicians and other health care providers to continue to provide comprehensive health care for veterans who are participating in state-approved marijuana programs; NOW

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that VA health care providers discuss marijuana use with veterans and adjust treatment accordingly.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 203

SUPPORT DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS RESEARCH INTO THE MEDICAL EFFICACY OF CANNABIS FOR SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABLED VETERANS

WHEREAS, the Controlled Substances Act of 1970 classifies cannabis as a Schedule I substance, determined to have a high potential for abuse and no accepted medical use, making illegal the possession and use of cannabis even under a medical nature; and

WHEREAS, across 37 states, the District of Columbia, and the territories of Guam and Puerto Rico, state medical marijuana laws vary greatly, but all recognize the therapeutic effect of cannabis and cannabinoids; and

WHEREAS, the growing accessibility of cannabis and acceptance of its use for medical purposes by states set against federal law have raised important issues including public health concerns; and

WHEREAS, the lack of any amalgamated knowledge of cannabis-related health effects has led to uncertainty about what, if any, are the harms or benefits from its use; and

WHEREAS, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine conducted a rigorous review of scientific research published since 1999 about what is known about the health impacts of cannabis and cannabis-derived products—such as marijuana and active chemical compounds known as cannabinoids—ranging from their therapeutic effects to their risks; and

WHEREAS, the study, published on January 12, 2017, considered more than 10,000 scientific abstracts, many of which did not have control study groups, to reach nearly 100 conclusions; and

WHEREAS, the study found evidence to support that patients who were treated with cannabis or cannabinoids were more likely to experience a significant reduction in pain symptoms; oral cannabinoids provided relief for multiple sclerosis-related muscle spasms; and there was conclusive evidence the use of certain oral cannabinoids was beneficial for patients with chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting; and

WHEREAS, the study suggests that cannabis use increases certain risks, including but not limited to, being involved in a motor vehicle accident, developing schizophrenia, other psychoses, and social anxiety disorders, developing cannabis use disorder; and

WHEREAS, this and other studies in their entirety are not conclusive, comprehensive clinical studies of cannabis, cannabis-derived products and their delivery systems are needed to prove medical efficacy for veterans who receive health care as provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports more comprehensive and scientifically rigorous research by the VA into the therapeutic benefits and risks of cannabis, cannabis-derived products as a possible treatment for service-connected disabled veterans.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 204

SUPPORT THE AUTOMATIC ENROLLMENT OF MEDICALLY RETIRED VETERANS INTO THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE SYSTEM WITH AN OPT-OUT PROVISION

WHEREAS, some service members, while on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces, may experience disabilities of varying degrees and these disabilities may impact job performance; and

WHEREAS, in some cases, these service members may be medically retired by physical and/or mental conditions, as determined by the Physical Evaluation Board (PEB), which stand in the way of completing their duties; and

WHEREAS, despite the availability of the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) to help active duty members, who are medically retired understand available benefits, the medical retirement process is often confusing; and

WHEREAS, as part the TAP process, a presentation is made describing the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care System and Benefits; and

WHEREAS, enrollment into the VA health care system is presented as an opt-in option, placing the responsibility of enrollment on the veteran being medically retired and transferring veterans' medical records from the Department of Defense (DOD) to VA, is at times, problematic; and

WHEREAS, making enrollment into the VA health care system automatic during the separation process would relieve veterans being medically retired of responsibilities for enrolling themselves and would make the transfer of medical records from DOD to VA more seamless; and

WHEREAS, some veterans being medically retired may choose not to enroll in VA and an opt-out provision should be included in the automatic enrollment process; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports the automatic enrollment of medically retired veterans into the VA health care system with an opt-out provision.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 205

IMPROVE URGENT AND EMERGENCY CARE BENEFIT FOR SERVICE-CONNECTED VETERANS

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) aims to provide enrolled veterans a uniform benefits package that emphasizes preventive and primary care, and provides a comprehensive health care benefit plan including hospital, outpatient and long-term care; and

WHEREAS, a health care benefits package is incomplete without access to and coverage for urgent and emergent care; and

WHEREAS, the VA MISSION Act (Public Law 115–182) authorizes the VA furnish veterans urgent care, which is typically lower cost than emergency treatment, and with sufficient access can encourage veterans to receive health care in the appropriate setting; and

WHEREAS, the VA's emergency care statutory authorities, regulations, processes, and procedures are complex, inconsistently applied across the Veterans Health Administration and cause significant confusion for VA staff, veterans and community care providers; and

WHEREAS, the August 2019 VA Office of Inspector General report found a significant number of emergency care claims were inappropriately denied and many rejected claims were inappropriately processed, with some leading to wrongful denials and rejection of claims, and potentially placing undue financial risk on thousands of veterans; and

WHEREAS, such denied claims have transferred the liability of billions of dollars from the VA to veterans, resulting in serious financial challenges; and

WHEREAS, fear of incurring enormous financial liability from denied VA payment or reimbursement for emergency care causes many veterans to avoid or otherwise delay seeking or contacting emergency medical services; and

WHEREAS, Congress over the years enacted legislation to address barriers to emergency care and payment or reimbursement for such care for disabled veterans due to the VA's narrow interpretation of the existing authority for emergency care; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation to amend title 38, United States Code, to simplify the eligibility for urgent and emergency care paid for by the VA; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV urges the VA to provide a more liberal and consistent interpretation of the law governing payment for urgent and emergency care and reimbursement to veterans who have received emergency care at non-VA facilities.

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RESOLUTION NO. 245

ENHANCE THE CIVILIAN HEALTH AND MEDICAL PROGRAM OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS BENEFITS AND SERVICES

WHEREAS, the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), known as CHAMPVA, is a health benefits program in which the VA shares the cost of certain health services with eligible beneficiaries; and

WHEREAS, eligible beneficiaries include: the spouse or child of a veteran who VA rated 100% permanently and totally disabled for a service-connected disability; the surviving spouse or child of a veteran who died from a VA-rated service-connected disability, or who, at the time of death, was rated 100% permanently and totally disabled; the surviving spouse or child of a military service member who died on active duty; and the primary caregiver of a veteran seriously injured during military service on or after September 11, 2001; and

WHEREAS, VA medical centers are authorized to provide services to CHAMPVA beneficiaries under the CHAMPVA In House Treatment Initiative (CITI) program at no cost to the beneficiary but are provided at the discretion of the VA medical center director and available only on a space-available basis, after the needs of veterans are met; and

WHEREAS, if the local VA medical facility does not participate in the CITI program, the beneficiary must seek care in the private sector and the CHAMPVA beneficiary is responsible for an annual \$50 deductible for medical services rendered and 25% of reasonable and customary charges for patient care and pharmaceuticals, up to \$3,000 each year; and

WHEREAS, beneficiaries who are chronically ill can incur out-of-pocket medical care costs up to \$3,000 per year and such costs can cause undue financial burden on a severely disabled veteran and family members; and

WHEREAS, numerous health care services such as chiropractic services, routine eye examinations, hearing aids, most dental benefits, and institutional and home-based long-term services and supports are not routinely covered under CHAMPVA; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation to make the CHAMPVA program more comprehensive, including dental and vision care, institutional and home-based long-term care, and eliminate the co-payments beneficiaries are required to pay out of pocket and lower the out-of-pocket costs for beneficiaries who do not live near a VA medical facility that participates in the CITI health care program; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports the CITI program and urges VA medical center directors to make that program available to CHAMPVA beneficiaries when resources are available.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 246
ENHANCE LONG-TERM SERVICES AND SUPPORTS FOR
SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABLED VETERANS

WHEREAS, historically the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) occupied a leadership position in fostering many long-term services and supports (LTSS) programs now routinely available in the private sector, founded the medical specialty of geriatrics in conjunction with affiliated schools of medicine, and led the nation in biomedical research on aging, geropsychiatry and chronic illnesses prevalent in the veteran population; and

WHEREAS, today tens of thousands of service-connected veterans of all ages depend on the VA to meet their health care needs in post-acute and LTSS settings; and

WHEREAS, there is also a subset of service-connected veterans with chronic and terminal illnesses who need LTSS and will need institutional placements; and

WHEREAS, the number of veterans seeking LTSS has increased annually, and VA estimates this trend to continue into the future; and

WHEREAS, as our nation's veteran population ages, VA will face an ever-increasing demand for LTSS of all kinds; and

WHEREAS, in 1999, the Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits Act, Public Law 106–117, significantly enhanced VA's non-institutional LTSS and required such services be provided to any veteran for a service-connected disability and to any veteran who is service connected 50% or greater disabling, yet VA is only required to provide institutional LTSS to any veteran for a service-connected disability and to any veteran who is service connected 70% or greater; and

WHEREAS, lack of centralized planning upon which to base standardized policy leave VA facilities to determine locally their own mix of institutional and non-institutional approaches in providing LTSS, thereby relegating LTSS to a “second tier” of health care service and expectations within the VA system; and

WHEREAS, there is a large and glaring gap in VA's LTSS program with statutory authority prohibiting the Department from paying for veterans to reside in community residential care facilities such as assisted living and family group homes, despite referring thousands of veterans to and inspecting facilities nationwide; and

WHEREAS, the success of noninstitutional and home-based LTSS is critically dependent on the ability of veterans' caregivers, whether they be family or friends, to assist in their care; and

WHEREAS, VA home and community-based programs are not uniformly available in all VA health care facilities resulting in consistent waitlist of veterans in need of such care; and

WHEREAS, VA has not optimized its relationship with State Veterans Homes to ensure veterans in need of institutional and alternative forms of LTSS may avail themselves of state home facilities to consider all options for their provision; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation to improve the VA's program of long-term services and supports for service-connected disabled veterans irrespective of their disability ratings; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV urges VA to ensure each VA medical facility is able to provide service-connected disabled veterans timely access to both institutional and non-institutional long-term services and supports.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 247
SUPPORT MODERNIZING DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS
AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE INFRASTRUCTURE

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) primary mission is to meet the needs of ill, injured and disabled veterans through inpatient hospital care, outpatient primary and specialty care, and long-term care, which is best accomplished through facilities operated by VA for the exclusive benefit of veterans; and

WHEREAS, VA operates the largest integrated health care system in the United States with over nine million enrolled veterans, and annually provides medical care to over seven million veteran users; and

WHEREAS, VA operates over 170 medical centers (VAMCs), almost 1,300 community-based outpatient clinics (CBOCs), over 100 nursing homes known as “community living centers” (CLCs),

over 300 readjustment counseling “Vet Centers,” and other facilities that deliver health care to veterans; and

WHEREAS, the majority of VA's medical centers are over 60 years old and were designed and built under an outmoded model of health care delivery based on centralized hospital inpatient episodes of care; and

WHEREAS, VA must continue modernizing its health care system to meet veterans' current and future health care needs, enhance access to its system of care, and optimize its use of federal resources; and

WHEREAS, VA's Strategic Capital Investment Planning (SCIP) program estimates it could require \$70 billion over the next 10 years to maintain VA's existing health care facilities and expand capacity to meet rising demand for care; and

WHEREAS, there has been a consistent pattern over many years of VA requesting, and Congress appropriating, far less than the level of funding required to maintain VA's health care infrastructure based on SCIP estimates; and

WHEREAS, the current budget and appropriations process is not conducive to fully funding VA's health care infrastructure needs; and

WHEREAS, congressional budget rules have made it difficult to renew or sign new leases for CBOCs, thereby threatening VA's timely delivery of health care; and

WHEREAS, VA needs to assess all its health care facilities and develop a plan to strengthen, expand and realign them to more effectively deliver health care in the future; and

WHEREAS, VA will only be successful if it develops a long term infrastructure plan in consultation and collaboration with veterans service organization (VSO) stakeholders; and

WHEREAS, there is a history of ineffective VA management and congressional oversight of VA health care construction projects that requires fundamental reforms to streamline the approval, management and oversight processes; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports modernization of VA's health care infrastructure and urges VA to request, and Congress to approve, at minimum the level of infrastructure funding VA's SCIP process estimates is required; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Congress should carefully monitor any proposed changes in VA's infrastructure that could jeopardize VA's ability to meet veterans' needs for primary and specialized VA health care and rehabilitative services, or that would threaten VA's medical education, biomedical research or national emergency missions; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that VA must develop a long term infrastructure plan in consultation with VSOs that ensures VA remains the primary provider and the coordinator of care for enrolled veterans; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Congress should examine new models for funding VA infrastructure to guarantee that adequate funding is readily available to maintain existing and build new health care facilities; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that VA and Congress should reform and streamline the approval, management and oversight of construction projects to more quickly deliver health care facilities and more efficiently use appropriated funding.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 248

ENSURE A SAFE, SECURE AND EFFECTIVE ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORD FOR VETERANS THAT ALLOWS THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO FULFILL CORE MISSIONS OF PATIENT CARE, RESEARCH AND TRAINING

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is engaged in a multi-billion-dollar, decade-long roll-out of an “off-the shelf” electronic health record through Cerner Corporation that is interoperable with military, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) and some private sector health records which will largely replace the Veterans Health Information and Technology Architecture (VISTA) and its current computerized patient record; and

WHEREAS, interoperability with its community care providers, including its academic affiliates and partners in military treatment facilities, has been a long time goal of VA allowing it to become more integrated with its increasingly diverse network of federal and community health care providers by allowing more timely referrals, transfer of medical records, diagnostic and laboratory testing, pharmaceutical data and billing information; and

WHEREAS, another goal of the modernization project is to create a longitudinal patient record for the veterans which incorporates military records including exposures and medical records during service; and

WHEREAS, veterans and their families would benefit from better means to schedule their own appointments and access to real-time information about their health in a timely and secure manner; and

WHEREAS, the VA has experienced significant challenges in the initial phases of the roll out—patients have been endangered because the new records do not accurately capture data about prescribed medication and other key data and the difficulty of implementing the new record is causing staff fatigue and low morale at the pilot site in Spokane; and

WHEREAS, VA researchers have expressed concerns about losing access to the richness of the data captured in VA's computerized medical record which have allowed them to identify and explore unique issues and trends in veterans' health; and

WHEREAS, recent reports indicate VA must improve cybersecurity to ensure veterans' private health and data are protected from illicit use; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, urges caution in ensuring that VA's new information technology architecture allows it to fulfill all of its core missions---maintaining patient safety should be the foremost concern as the system is updated, but adequate staff support and training is also critical at this juncture; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, VA must continue its modernization effort in a manner that ensures personal data is secure but accessible to veterans to allow them to be partners in their health care.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 249 OPPOSE RECOVERY OF THIRD-PARTY PAYMENTS FOR SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITIES

WHEREAS, the primary mission of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is to provide high-quality medical care to veterans eligible by reason of their service-connected disabilities; and

WHEREAS, VA is authorized to recover or collect the cost of care from third-party health insurers when insured veterans receive health care from VA for nonservice-connected conditions; and

WHEREAS, the collection of payments from third parties for the treatment of veterans' service-connected disabilities would abrogate VA's and the federal government's responsibility to provide such care and may result in increased premium payments by veterans; and

WHEREAS, to improve its ability to generate revenue on the backs of service-connected disabled veterans, some continue to propose implementing a policy to eliminate the current practice of first applying third-party payments to offset veterans copayment debts; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, opposes any legislation that would require VA to recover third-party payments for the care and treatment of a veteran's service-connected disabilities.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 250 SUPPORT EFFECTIVE RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE SYSTEM WORKFORCE

WHEREAS, staffing shortages and vacancies at every level of the VA health care system and across numerous critical positions impedes service-connected disabled veterans who rely on VA to receive timely, high quality veteran-centric medical care; and

WHEREAS, VA's Office of Inspector General (OIG) annually determines and reports on clinical and nonclinical occupations shortages within the Veterans Health Administration; and

WHEREAS, the VAOIG's report for FY 2022 (IG Report 22-00722-187) indicates that every VA medical center surveyed reported at least one severe staffing shortage; and

WHEREAS, the two most common critical occupation shortages identified for FY 2022 are medical officers (severe shortages at 87% of facilities) and nurses (severe shortages at 91% of facilities); and

WHEREAS, the remaining clinical shortages are practical nurses, psychologists, psychiatry service, medical technologists, and primary care positions; and

WHEREAS, shortages in non-clinical personnel such as custodians, medical support assistants, police officers, food service, and general engineers may also affect operations; and

WHEREAS, health care professionals undergoing separation from the armed services are aware of many of the particular health care challenges of veterans and have worked within a large federal health care system; and

WHEREAS, there is a nationwide shortage of qualified doctors, nurses and specialists particularly in rural areas because VA must compete with other health care providers to recruit and retain the best and brightest clinical staff, and the federal hiring process for clinical staff remains lengthy and convoluted; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports a simple-to-administer alternative VHA personnel system, in law and regulation, which governs all VHA employees, applies best practices from the private sector to human capital management, and supports pay and benefits that are competitive with the private sector; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV urges VA to consider campaigns to target service members in health care and other appropriate occupations separating from the military and develop systems for expedited hiring and credentialing to onboard them.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 251 SUPPORT IMPROVEMENTS IN PROVIDER TRAINING AND BENEFICIARY TRAVEL BENEFITS FOR VETERANS SEEKING SPECIALIZED TREATMENT PROGRAMS AND CARE FOR MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense Office of Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPRO) reported an estimated 35,875 service members experienced sexual assault in fiscal year (FY) 2021 (8.4% in active duty women and 1.5% of active duty men) indicating an increase in reported assaults; and

WHEREAS, the growing prevalence of sexual assault in the military is alarming and often results in lingering physical, emotional or chronic psychological symptoms in assault survivors; and

WHEREAS, 33% of women and 2% of men enrolled in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care system report they had experienced military sexual trauma (MST); and

WHEREAS, each VA medical center has an MST coordinator who can assist veterans in identifying specialized residential and outpatient counseling programs and evidence-based treatments for MST survivors within VA medical centers, clinics and Vet Centers—regional offices also have an MST outreach coordinator to assist survivors with filing claims for conditions related to MST; and

WHEREAS, based on VA clinical determinations, some veterans request or are referred to VA medical facilities other than their local facilities or closest Veterans Integrated Service Network to receive the specialized care they need; and

WHEREAS, VA's current policy in beneficiary travel permits reimbursement to a veteran only from a veteran's home of record to the nearest VA facility by road mileage, whether or not that facility possesses the expertise needed for a particular type of care, including inpatient and residential treatment for MST-related needs; and

WHEREAS, if a VA clinician determines an MST survivor needs specialized care from a VA MST inpatient facility, VA's beneficiary travel policy may serve to obstruct access to that resource or force an MST survivor to self-pay travel costs in order to gain access to these specialized services; and

WHEREAS, evidence-based treatment practices known to successfully treat veterans with MST-related mental health conditions are available but not systemically used by all providers treating these patients; and

WHEREAS, VA offers MST-related training and has produced clinical practice guidelines and formulated evidence-based treatments and states that its mental health providers who treat MST survivors complete specialized training to treat such patients; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, calls on VA to authorize beneficiary travel to distant VA medical centers for veterans seeking specialized MST care; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV calls upon Congress to grant authority for beneficiary travel to Vet Centers for such purposes, to ensure all MST survivors gain access to the specialized treatment programs and services they need to fully recover from sexual trauma that occurred in

military service and are enabled to choose gender exclusive treatment options, including their preferred sex of provider, to the maximum extent possible; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports legislation to require all VA providers offering MST-related treatment, in addition to providers in the Veterans Community Care Program offering such care, to receive specialized training in addressing the needs of individuals who have experienced sexual assault; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV urges VA to continually improve its MST treatment programs and ensure dissemination of MST evidence-based clinical practice guidelines throughout the VA health care system.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 252
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO IMPROVE DEPARTMENT OF
VETERANS AFFAIRS PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO PREVENT AND
TREAT SUBSTANCE-USE DISORDERS IN VETERANS

WHEREAS, the misuse and abuse of alcohol and other addictive substances is a major health problem for many Americans, including veterans; and

WHEREAS, in fiscal year 2021, 540,000 veterans had diagnoses related to substance use or abuse within VA, but less than 30% received specialized care for these diagnoses; and

WHEREAS, trends in opioid abuse had been improving prior to the pandemic, but CDC estimates deaths from overdoses of opioids, especially synthetic non-methadone products such as fentanyl, increased for all Americans by at least 30% over the pandemic; and

WHEREAS, substance-use disorders result in significant health and social deterioration and financial costs to veterans, their families and the nation; and

WHEREAS, data from a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) national study showed that 40% of VA outpatients reported hazardous use of alcohol and 22% reported full alcohol abuse, but only 31% of the respondents reported being counseled about alcohol use and fewer referred to care; and

WHEREAS, substance abuse increases risk for suicidal behavior in veterans, especially in women; and

WHEREAS, substance-use disorders are also associated with family instability, homelessness, decreased worker productivity and declining health status; and

WHEREAS, veterans are at risk for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and a wide array of other medical and psychological conditions, which may be associated with veterans' increased use of substances; and

WHEREAS, VA offers evidence-based treatment for substance use disorders including stepped care and medication assisted withdrawal for opioid abuse, few integrated treatment programs that would work to address both the substance-use disorder and co-occurring PTSD, depression, anxiety, or other medical or mental health conditions which may cause or exacerbate veterans' inappropriate use of substances; and

WHEREAS, in some locations, VA lacks timely access to a continuum of available services that ranges from detoxification to rehabilitation in order to effectively treat substance-use disorders; and

WHEREAS, few locations may offer gender exclusive care options that may be conducive to recovery for veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports program improvement and enhanced resources for VA substance-use disorder programs, including gender-exclusive options for veterans who prefer them, to achieve a full spectrum of evidence-based accessible and available treatment; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this treatment must include identification of effective evidence-based psychotherapeutic programs for veterans with co-morbid mental health and substance-use disorder conditions, regardless of their place of residence.

RESOLUTION NO. 253
SUPPORT PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT AND ENHANCED RESOURCES
FOR DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MENTAL HEALTH
PROGRAMS AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

WHEREAS, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) research indicates that rates of suicide among service members and veterans are significantly higher than for age-adjusted cohorts in the civilian population, with an average of 17.6 veterans a day committing suicide in 2018; and

WHEREAS, veterans are 21% more likely to commit suicide than their civilian counterparts, while the risk for suicide among female veterans was 2.4 times higher compared to civilian adult females; and

WHEREAS, VA has made suicide prevention its top clinical priority and developed a national strategy using a public health model to provide population-based initiatives to veterans who use VA health and those who do not; created a crisis intervention hotline, employing suicide prevention coordinators and developing a clinical algorithm to detect veterans with the most risk factors for suicidal ideation or suicide; and

WHEREAS, addressing the underlying conditions that may increase risk of suicide require a multidisciplinary, comprehensive mental health program that identifies, screens, diagnoses, treats veterans with evidence-based protocols, in a manner that is recovery-oriented, patient-centered, culturally sensitive and strives to tailor care to factors such as ethnic background and gender to ensure treatment engagement; and

WHEREAS, VA frontline staff often lack the skills to effectively manage crises and deescalate situations with veterans with mental health disorders; and

WHEREAS, the most recent eras of veterans have demonstrated high reliance upon VA and higher utilization of mental health and substance use disorder services; and

WHEREAS, the President has recently expanded eligibility to mental health care to all service members within their first year of separation from the military and to emergency mental health care for those veterans who may have discharges characterized as other than honorable; and

WHEREAS, the VA reports that veterans of these recent eras have sought care for a wide range of medical and psychological conditions, including mental health conditions, such as adjustment disorder, anxiety, depression, and PTSD; and

WHEREAS, between FY 2006 and FY 2020, more than 1.72 million veterans received specialized mental health care from the VA, an increase of 85%; and

WHEREAS, VA has improved access to mental health services at its 820 community-based outpatient clinics, but such services still are not readily available at all sites; and

WHEREAS, we remain concerned about the capacity in specialized PTSD programs and the availability of a full continuum of VA substance-use disorder services from inpatient detoxification to long-term residential treatment beds; and

WHEREAS, although additional funding has been dedicated to enhancing and improving capacity in these programs, VA mental health providers continue to express concerns about sustained resources to support, and consequent rationed access to, these specialized services; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense and VA share a unique obligation to meet the health care, including mental health care and rehabilitation needs, of veterans who are suffering from readjustment difficulties as a result of wartime service; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports program improvements, data collection and reporting on suicide rates among service members and veterans; improved outreach through general media for stigma reduction and suicide prevention; sufficient staffing to meet demand for mental health services; and enhanced resources for VA mental health programs, including Vet Centers, to achieve readjustment of new war veterans and continued effective mental health care for all enrolled veterans needing such services.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that VA security officers and other frontline staff receive training in crisis management and de-escalation techniques including safely restraining patients who have mental health crises on campus.

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RESOLUTION NO. 255
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO EXTEND ELIGIBILITY OF A QUALIFYING
VETERAN'S ADULT CHILD FOR THE CIVILIAN HEALTH AND MEDICAL
PROGRAM OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

WHEREAS, dependent children of certain veterans are provided medical care under the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA); and

WHEREAS, a child of a veteran is eligible for CHAMPVA if the veteran is rated permanently and totally disabled due to a service-connected disability, was rated permanently and totally disabled due to a service-connected condition at the time of death, died of a service-connected disability or died on active duty, and the dependent is ineligible for Department of Defense TRICARE benefits, and

WHEREAS, the eligibility of a dependent child for CHAMPVA ends at the age of 18, unless that dependent is enrolled in an accredited school as a full-time student until the age of 23, or marries or is a stepchild who no longer lives in the household of the CHAMPVA sponsor; and

WHEREAS, current law requires private health plans and insurers to offer coverage to adult children of beneficiaries to age 26 regardless of the child's financial dependency, marital status, enrollment in school, residency or other factors; and

WHEREAS, children of severely disabled veterans and survivors of veterans who paid the ultimate sacrifice should not be penalized or denied the same rights and privileges as other citizens of a grateful nation enjoy; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation to extend the eligibility of a qualifying veteran's child for CHAMPVA coverage to age 26 under the same conditions of covered adult children of beneficiaries in private health plans.

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RESOLUTION NO. 262
ENSURE SUFFICIENT RESOURCES FOR DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS
AFFAIRS RESEARCH TO IMPROVE CARE AND BENEFITS FOR VETERANS
EXPOSED TO MILITARY TOXIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

WHEREAS, veterans of all military conflicts from the World Wars to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have been exposed to environmental hazards and man-made toxins, including cold and other adverse weather conditions; mustard gas; herbicides; pesticides; chemical, biological and radiological agents; "burn pits;" and other combat and military occupational exposures; and

WHEREAS, returning from war, some veterans subsequently suffer disabling conditions and symptoms of illnesses that may be difficult to medically diagnose, and not be immediately identified as consequential to such dangerous exposures; and

WHEREAS, research conducted by the National Institutes of Health, the Departments of Defense (DOD) and Veterans Affairs (VA), and other federal departments and agencies has focused on associations linking toxic and environmental exposures with subsequent health status of veterans (and in the case of Vietnam veterans, some of their children); and

WHEREAS, sustained funding for such research is necessary to ensure veterans receive high-quality health care services and adequate compensatory benefits to which they are entitled due to diseases or injuries incurred from hazardous military exposures; and

WHEREAS, in studies mandated by Congress in public law, the National Academy of Sciences continues to review and evaluate scientific literature to determine whether associations exist that connect a variety of military exposures and certain physical disorders within populations of veterans; and

WHEREAS, effective evidence-based medicine to treat individual patients with acute or chronic diseases must rely on scientifically valid biomedical research and peer-reviewed literature; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, urges Congress to actively oversee its established mechanism of delegation to the National Academy of Sciences and the VA to determine validations of, and develop equitable compensation policy for, environmentally exposed veterans; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV urges Congress to provide adequate funding for research to identify all disabling conditions and effective screening and treatment for such

disabilities that may have been caused by exposure to environmental hazards and man-made toxins while individuals served in the armed forces of the United States; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV urges greater collaboration between DOD and the VA to share necessary deployment, health and exposure data from military operations and deployments, in order to timely and adequately address the subsequent health concerns of disabled veterans, whatever the causes of those disabilities; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV intends to closely monitor programs of care within the Veterans Health Administration to ensure veterans disabled by exposure to environmental hazards and man-made toxins receive effective, high-quality health care, and that the biomedical research and development programs of the Department are fully addressing their needs.

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RESOLUTION NO. 267

SUPPORT STATE VETERANS HOME PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the State Veterans Home program is a partnership between the federal government and the states to provide long-term care for aging, ill and disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, there are 158 State Veterans Homes in all 50 states and in Puerto Rico, which provide skilled nursing care, domiciliary care and adult day health care daily to almost 30,000 veterans and their dependents; and

WHEREAS, State Veterans Homes provide more than 50% of VA-supported skilled nursing beds for veterans while receiving only 25% of VA's budget for skilled nursing care; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides a per diem payment that is authorized to cover up to 50% of the cost of care for skilled nursing care provided to veterans with service-connected disabilities rated 60% or lower and pays the full cost of skilled nursing care for veterans with 70% or higher service-connected disabilities or who require nursing home care for service-connected disabilities; and

WHEREAS, VA also provides lower per diem payments for eligible veterans receiving domiciliary care and adult day health care (ADHC) in State Veterans Homes; and

WHEREAS, some State Veterans Homes also provide specialized care for veterans with severe mental health, behavioral and memory issues; and

WHEREAS, under the State Home Construction Grant Program the federal government provides grants to cover up to 65% of the cost to construct, expand, rehabilitate, or repair a State Veterans Home, with states required to match a minimum of 35% of the cost; and

WHEREAS, lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the advantages of modern nursing home designs that provide veterans with single rooms in smaller communal facilities, which can improve safety during health emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as improve their quality of life through greater social interaction; and

WHEREAS, the costs to construct and operate more modern designs of State Veterans Homes are higher than for traditionally designed nursing homes; and

WHEREAS, a fiscal year 2019 regulation (RIN 2900-AO88) changed the rules and requirements for operating domiciliary care and ADHC programs, which increased the cost of these programs without providing commensurate increases from VA per diem support; and

WHEREAS, recognizing the growing number and needs of elderly veterans, including those with mental health, behavioral and memory issues, the State Veterans Home program must continue to be a major partner with the VA in meeting the long-term care needs of aging veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, calls on Congress and VA to provide sufficient funding to support State Veterans Homes, including adequate per diem payments for skilled nursing care, domiciliary care and adult day health care, which properly support different levels of care within each program; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports sufficient funding for the State Home Construction Grant Program, to include adequate funding to support renovations of existing and construction of new State Veterans Homes using more modern designs, AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress and VA should explore additional innovative programs to partner with State Veterans Homes to address the lack of options for aging veterans with severe mental health, behavioral and memory issues.

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RESOLUTION NO. 270
REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO INCREASE
EFFICIENCY IN THE RECRUITMENT, HIRING AND CREDENTIALING OF
CERTAIN HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS UNDERGOING SEPARATION
FROM THE ARMED SERVICES

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has demonstrated difficulty in timely filing vacant health care positions required to meet the needs of service-connected disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, certain active members of the armed forces serve in a health care capacity and are being discharged from the armed forces under honorable conditions and are seeking employment in health care; and

WHEREAS, the VA historically takes an excessive amount of time to recruit, screen and hire new employees, actions that could be expedited by hiring qualified veterans with current training and background checks; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation to require the VA to carry out a program to increase efficiency in the recruitment and hiring by the VA of health care workers that are undergoing separation from the armed forces and to create uniform credentialing standards for certain health care professionals of the VA.

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RESOLUTION NO. 285
ENSURE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS CLINICAL
APPEALS PROCESS PROTECTS VETERANS

WHEREAS, through service to their nation in which they made extraordinary sacrifices and contributions, service-disabled veterans have earned and deserve high quality, comprehensive and veteran-focused health care designed to meet their unique circumstances and needs; and

WHEREAS, all federal providers and most health insurers have processes to ensure that beneficiaries have enforceable protections that allow them to obtain medically necessary care within their health benefits package; and

WHEREAS, these processes for patient grievances and central projections to receive care and services are imperative, particularly for health care systems such as the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA), which use capitated payment models for which there are incentives to conserve resources; and

WHEREAS, the VA MISSION Act (Public Law 115-182) greatly expanded VA's purchased community care program making more than 40% of veterans enrolled in the VA health care system eligible for VA community care; and

WHEREAS, VA's current clinical appeals process is outlined in VHA Directive 1041, Appeal Of Veterans Health Administration Clinical Decisions which outlines procedures for resolving clinical disputes through the Department, but expert or external reviews are performed at the Chief Medical Officer's discretion rather than the veteran's request; and

WHEREAS, continuity of care or services during the clinical appeals process is not guaranteed under the current process; and

WHEREAS, veterans have no right to external, expedited, or independent review, or to timely and fair hearings, including before a multidisciplinary clinical team, an administrative law judge or federal district court in VA's current clinical appeals, making the process less comprehensive and fair than appeals processes private health insurers and other federal payers are required to provide; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, calls on Congress to enact legislation requiring a standardized, fair and impartial process to address veterans clinical disagreements, grievances and disputes to include statutory protections that are at least comparable to those afforded patients under other federal and federally supported programs; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV urges VA to revise the current clinical appeal process, with input from service-connected disabled veterans and other stakeholders, to one that is equitable and transparent, and train appropriate staff to execute the new policy in a standardized manner.

RESOLUTION NO. 286

SUPPORT THE PROVISION OF COMPREHENSIVE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE SERVICES TO ENROLLED VETERANS

WHEREAS, it is the policy of DAV that veterans should be afforded quality and timely health care services by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) because of their honorable service to our nation; and

WHEREAS, care provided to veterans in the community when VA care is inaccessible should be done through responsive integrated networks that deliver high value quality care; and

WHEREAS, it is the conviction of DAV that quality health care for veterans is achieved when health care providers are given the freedom and resources to provide the most effective and evidence-based care available; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans Health Administration plays a critical role in the delivery of health care services to our nation's sick and disabled veterans and is the largest direct federal provider of health care services, the largest clinical training ground for the health professions and a leader in medical research; and

WHEREAS, although the veterans' health care system is provided advance appropriations for medical care, it is still at the discretion of Congress to provide a sufficient level of funding; and

WHEREAS, due to consistently inadequate appropriations levels, VA has been forced at times to restrict, ration and deny access to health care implicitly promised in connection with veterans' military service; and

WHEREAS, the VA health care system must be provided sufficient funding to ensure, at a minimum, the following standards are met:

- Promote and ensure health care quality and value, and protect veterans' safety in the health care system;
- Guarantee access to a full continuum of care, from preventive through hospice services, including complementary and integrative care such as yoga, massage, acupuncture, peer support, chiropractic and other nontraditional therapies;
- Receive adequate funding through appropriations for care of all enrolled veterans;
- Fairly and equitably distribute resources to treat the greatest number of veterans requiring health care;
- Ensure barriers to care for veterans in ethnic, racial and sexual minority groups are addressed, including staff expertise in addressing these groups' needs with sensitivity;
- Furnish quality primary care and gender-specific services necessary to meet the needs of a growing population of women veterans;
- Provide all supplies, prosthetic devices and medications, including over-the-counter medication, necessary for the proper treatment of service-connected disabled veterans;
- Preserve VA's mission and role as a provider of specialized services in areas such as blindness, burns, amputation, traumatic brain injury, spinal cord injury and dysfunction, mental illness and long-term care;
- Maintain the integrity of an independent VA health care delivery system as representing the primary responsible entity for the delivery of health care services to enrolled veterans;
- Modernize its human resources management system to enable VA to compete for, recruit and retain the types and quality of VA employees needed to provide comprehensive health care services to sick and disabled veterans;
- Maintain a strong and veteran-focused research program; and
- Establish and sustain effective tele-health programs as an aid to access to VA health care, particularly for rural and remote populations; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation that embodies the concepts and principles enumerated above and establishes certainty to clearly defined VA health care services for enrolled veterans.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 287
OPPOSE ANY RESTRICTION ON ELIGIBILITY OF MILITARY MEDICALLY
RETIRED VETERANS TO RECEIVE CARE IN DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OR
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE SYSTEMS

WHEREAS, military medically retired veterans were promised and earned lifetime health care through the Department of Defense (DOD) for completion of the required period of military service; and

WHEREAS, as veterans, they are separately entitled to the same health care provided to eligible veterans generally through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); and

WHEREAS, one of the two health care systems may offer advantages that the other does not offer; and

WHEREAS, a veteran's use of this dual entitlement to receive the best services of both systems does not constitute unnecessary duplicate use of health care services or duplication of costs to the government; and

WHEREAS, entitlement to care under one system is not itself justification to end separate entitlement to care through the other system; and

WHEREAS, by virtue of their service and sacrifices, veterans have earned special benefits that are separate and in addition to benefits the government provides to other citizens; and

WHEREAS, enrollment in VA or DOD health care, especially in the case of service-connected disabled veterans, should never become a bar or obstacle to the receipt of benefits from either of these health care systems; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, opposes any action to restrict health care eligibility for military medically retired veterans in either the DOD or the VA health care systems.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 288
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO CHANGE ELIGIBILITY FOR
COMMUNITY NURSING HOME PROGRAM

WHEREAS, Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Notice 2020–32 establishes policy for new community care; and

WHEREAS, eligibility is mandatory for a veteran who has a single or combined service-connected disability rating of 70% or greater, that includes veterans with a single disability rated at 60% and has a total disability rating based on Individual Unemployability; and

WHEREAS, VHA Notice 2020–32 does not consider common etiology in determining the eligibility for community nursing care; and

WHEREAS, the lack of consideration of this factor may prevent veterans from qualifying for community nursing care; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports VHA Notice 2020–32 be amended to make veterans eligible for community nursing care if they have disability evaluations in which common etiology are noted that significantly impair the veterans' ability to perform daily or independent living skills.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 293
REPEAL BENEFICIARY TRAVEL DEDUCTIBLE FOR SERVICE-CONNECTED
DISABLED VETERANS AND INCREASE REIMBURSEMENT RATES

WHEREAS, the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is authorized under section 111 (g)(1), title 38, United States Code, to reimburse transportation expenses for certain service-connected veterans for VA authorized examination, medical treatment or care; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 110–387 required VA to permanently reduce to \$3.00 the applicable deductible, but service-connected disabled veterans are still subject to the deduction from the amount otherwise payable for each one-way trip unless the Secretary determines in an individual case that such deductible would cause severe financial hardship; and

WHEREAS, veterans currently receive a flat rate of 41.5 cents per mile for all transportation effective November 17, 2008; and

WHEREAS, service-connected disabled veterans eligible for beneficiary transportation reimbursements should not be required to help defray the cost of travel, in the form of a deductible, to and from a VA medical facility for medical examination, or health care treatment; and

WHEREAS, it is grossly unfair for the VA Secretary to impose the deductible upon service-connected disabled veterans seeking treatment for service-connected conditions and service-connected veterans rated 30% or more when traveling in connection with any disability; and

WHEREAS, adequate travel expense reimbursement is directly tied to access to care for many veterans and is not a luxury; and

WHEREAS, VA, in consultation with the Administrator of General Services, the Secretary of Transportation, the Comptroller of the United States and representatives of veterans service organizations, is required to conduct periodic investigations on the actual cost of travel incurred by veterans traveling to and from VA facilities for covered purposes; and

WHEREAS, after analyzing and adopting the findings of an Internal Revenue Service (IRS) report on operating costs for a privately owned automobile, the General Services Administration (GSA) determined that the per-mile operating costs for the official use of a privately owned vehicle by a federal employee as of July 1, 2022 is 62.5 cents per mile; and

WHEREAS, VA continues to maintain that increasing veterans' beneficiary travel reimbursement rate to a rate more comparable to the GSA-approved rate would result in a reduction of funds available for direct medical care to our nation's veterans, and service-connected veterans should not shoulder the burden of receiving either medical care or adequate beneficiary travel payments; and

WHEREAS, when rates do not cover the cost of travel, veterans without resources are likely to delay health care access until their needs may become critical, resulting in higher health care costs and poorer health outcomes; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation to repeal the Secretary's authority to impose a deductible for service-connected disabled veterans from the amount payable for beneficiary travel pay for medical examination, treatment or care; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV urges VA to adopt the GSA mileage reimbursement rate to protect against erosion of the value of the benefit due to inflation; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV urges VA to make provision in its budget for the cost of increasing veterans' beneficiary travel reimbursement rates to a more reasonable amount so that it can make the needed adjustment without the reduction in funds for direct medical care to sick and disabled veterans.

RESOLUTION NO. 294

ADDRESS SOCIAL DETERMINANTS TO PROMOTE HEALTH EQUITY AMONG VETERANS

WHEREAS, social determinants including health behaviors (30%), social and economic factors (40%), and physical environment (10%) are understood to affect about 80% of the variance in health outcomes for all people, while clinical care is only responsible for 20%; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of the importance of social determinants in affecting health, starting in fiscal year 2022, the classification for disease codes (ICD-10) will permit social determinants of health to be coded as the primary diagnosis for outpatient visits; and

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization defines social determinants of health as "conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age, and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life. These forces and systems include economic policies and systems, development agendas, social norms, social policies and political systems;" and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has programming, services, and benefits available to address many of the social determinants that affect veterans' health outcomes; and

WHEREAS, such wraparound programs include compensation for the service-connected disabled veterans; housing and safety net programming, including pension, for low income veterans; support for caregivers of certain veterans; education, vocational rehabilitation and job training; health and mental health care services for eligible veterans, including case management or care coordination for certain veterans; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans Health Administration's Office of Health Equity espouses a vision "to champion the advancement of health equity and reduction of health disparities and to ensure appropriate individualized care to each Veteran," and

WHEREAS, VA should strive for equity in all programming to be measured by disaggregating such data by sex, minority, ethnicity and LGBTQ status on applications for, awards for, and utilization of, its programs and services; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, will advocate for holistic programming to address social and economic factors (income, employment, education and family and community support), health behaviors (substance use, sexual behavior, diet and exercise) and physical environment (access to nutritional food, housing and transit) in addition to culturally relevant and personalized clinical care necessary to address health disparities among service-connected veterans.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 322 IMPLEMENT A PILOT PROGRAM TO ASSESS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS GROWTH PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, a significant portion (10-30%) of veterans from all combat eras experience the chronic effects of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD); and

WHEREAS, without effective treatment, PTSD is associated with significant adverse consequences such as substance use disorders, family dissolution, unemployment, homelessness, involvement in the justice system and even suicide; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has developed effective programs for addressing the chronic needs of most veterans struggling with PTSD through trauma exposure-based therapies and pharmaceutical interventions; and

WHEREAS, VA is an acknowledged world-leader in developing effective care for the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder and continues to explore promising interventions; and

WHEREAS, notwithstanding its use of effective VA treatment protocols for PTSD, there are high rates of dropouts in many traumatic exposure therapies and significant numbers of veterans continue to struggle; and

WHEREAS, post-traumatic stress growth emphasizes the development of resiliency by encouraging veterans to adopt different belief systems that may improve their abilities to cope, problem solve and find meaning in their lives after exposure to trauma; and

WHEREAS, certain post-traumatic stress growth programs such as the US Army's Comprehensive Soldier Fitness initiative—Master Resilience Training and the Boulder Crest Warrior programs have been associated with improved psychological health which may be sustained for months after treatment; and

WHEREAS, these programs are often provided by trained peer counselors who may themselves be in recovery from PTSD; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, urges VA to develop a pilot program to assess standardized post-traumatic stress growth programs to ensure effectiveness in achieving long-term health outcomes in meeting the needs of veterans with treatment-resistant, complex PTSD.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 323 PROVIDE EASY AND EQUITABLE ACCESS TO DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TRANSPORTATION BENEFITS AND SERVICES

WHEREAS, because of service-connected disabilities, many disabled veterans face mobility challenges when attempting to access Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care benefits and services; and

WHEREAS, VA is currently authorized to transport any person for any purposes to any location in connection with vocational rehabilitation, counseling and for the purpose of VA examination, treatment or care; however, transportation programs offered through VA do not meet all the transportation needs of service-connected disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, the VA Veteran Transportation Program has three components to accomplish its mission to improve the quality of life for veterans by increasing access to health care through integrated and cost-effective transportation solutions; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans Transportation Service (VTS) is intended to provide veterans with convenient and timely access to transportation services and to overcome barriers to receiving VA

health care and services, and in particular to increase transportation options for veterans who need specialized forms of transportation to VA facilities; and

WHEREAS, wide variations in the eligibility for VTS transportation across the VA health care system is not consistent with overcoming barriers to receiving health care provided or purchased by VA to service-connected veterans; and

WHEREAS, the VA Beneficiary Travel program is not available to all service-connected disabled veterans with mobility challenges, and confusion among local VA facilities due to vague policies for using special-mode transportation, such as a wheelchair van, is reflected in lower-than-expected utilization; and

WHEREAS, the VA Highly Rural Transportation Grant program provides grants to assist only veterans in highly rural areas through innovative transportation services to travel to VA medical centers and to otherwise assist in providing transportation services in connection with the provision of VA medical care to these veterans; and

WHEREAS, VA lacks a consistent and comprehensive transportation policy for all service-connected disabled veterans across all established VA transportation and travel programs, benefits and services; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, urges the VA to operate an effective and efficient transportation program for all service-connected veterans and to simplify access to transportation benefits and services to receive timely and high-quality VA health care, benefits and services.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 324 INCREASE VETERANS' ACCESS AT DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FACILITIES BY EXTENDING COVERAGE ON WEEKDAYS AND WEEKENDS

WHEREAS, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is committed to provide quality care for eligible veterans when they want and need care; and

WHEREAS, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, VHA had made some progress to improve access to health care services as the needs and preferences of the veteran patient population evolved; and

WHEREAS, regular business hours for VHA services are considered to be from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, but offering extended operating hours could ease the burden on service-connected disabled veterans in balancing family, employment, community obligations and other commitments; and

WHEREAS, VHA Directive 2013-001 states Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical centers and Community-Based Outpatient Clinics that treat more than 10,000 unique veterans per year must provide access to a full range of primary care, including Women's Health and Mental Health General Outpatient services at least two hours beyond regular business hours at least once on weekdays and once every weekend; and

WHEREAS, local data including feedback from service-connected veterans and local DAV members should be used to determine which extended hour options would best meet the needs of each facility's enrolled patient population; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, urges VA to, based on local access data and patient feedback, implement extended operating hours at VHA health care facilities for services such as primary, specialty and mental health services.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 353 SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO ELIMINATE OR REDUCE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE HEALTH CARE CO- PAYMENTS FOR SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABLED VETERANS

WHEREAS, through dedicated service and sacrifice to a grateful nation, service-disabled veterans have earned the right to certain benefits; and

WHEREAS, as the beneficiaries of veterans' service and sacrifice, Americans want our government to fully honor our moral obligation to care for veterans and generously provide them benefits and health care entirely without charge; and

WHEREAS, premiums, health care cost sharing and deductibles are a feature of health care systems in which some costs are shared by the insured and the insurer in a contractual relationship; and

WHEREAS, studies have found that cost sharing reduces the use of care and can have detrimental health effects for the sickest and poorest participating patients; and

WHEREAS, subsequent research continues to determine adverse effects of cost sharing on health outcomes particularly for patients with chronic disabilities; and

WHEREAS, asking veterans to pay for part of the benefits a grateful nation provides for them is fundamentally contrary to the spirit and principles underlying the provision of benefits to veterans; and

WHEREAS, co-payments were initially imposed upon veterans using the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care system under urgent circumstances and as a temporary necessity to contribute to reduction of the federal budget deficit; and

WHEREAS, cost sharing is considered as a means of generating revenues to replace Congressionally appropriated funding for the Department of Defense (DOD) and VA health care systems; and

WHEREAS, to improve its ability to generate revenue on the backs of service-connected disabled veterans, some continue to propose policies to eliminate the current practice of first applying third-party payments to offset veterans copayment debts; and

WHEREAS, Congress has forgotten or abandoned the traditional benevolent philosophy of providing free benefits to veterans as repayment for the unusual rigors, including sustaining grave injuries that require a lifetime of care, they underwent for the good of our country; and

WHEREAS, based on practices in the private sector, the Secretaries of Veterans Affairs and Defense, in the recent past, moved to dramatically impose fees and increase premiums and co-payments, as if operating a commercial enterprise; and

WHEREAS, as a continuing cost of national defense and as our nation's foremost moral obligation, benefits for service-connected disabled veterans must remain a first priority of our government; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, calls for legislation to eliminate or reduce VA and DOD health care out-of-pocket costs for service-connected disabled veterans.

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RESOLUTION NO. 354

URGE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL FACILITIES TO PROVIDE REASONABLE ACCESS TO SERVICE DOGS AND GUIDE DOGS INCLUDING ENCLOSED ANIMAL RELIEF AREAS

WHEREAS, many veterans have service-connected conditions including visual, hearing or significant mobility impairments or mental illness for which the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will approve use of a service or guide dog upon completion of approved training protocols; and

WHEREAS, the VA recognizes the benefit of service and guide dogs to veterans when their use can facilitate the rehabilitation goals, increase functionality, enhance independence, and improve the quality of life for certain veterans; and

WHEREAS, Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive 1188(1) states that it is VHA policy to permit service animals to accompany individuals with a disability to all areas of a VHA property on the same terms and conditions, and subject to the same regulations, as generally govern the admission of the public, while maintaining a safe environment for patients, employees, visitors, and the service animal; and

WHEREAS, section 1.218, title 38, Code of Federal Regulations and VHA Directive 1188 states the veteran is responsible for the service dog while on VHA property and such responsibility includes providing water, food, and elimination breaks for the service dog in an outdoor area; and

WHEREAS, veterans with service-connected visual, hearing, significant mobility impairments or mental illness require service and guide dogs to safely navigate VHA property to access needed benefits and services; and

WHEREAS, receiving needed medical benefits and services often requires the veteran and their service animal to remain at the VA medical facility for extended periods; and

WHEREAS, veterans must have reasonable access to safe enclosed areas to meet the required responsibility for care and stewardship of service dogs while on VHA property for extended periods; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, urges that VA carry out its policies to permit reasonable access to VA facilities by service and guide dogs to veterans consistently throughout the system; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Congress should enact legislation setting forth VA standards for admission to VA properties and management of service and guide animals that are equivalent to rules applicable to every other private and public structure in the United States as dictated by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that each VA medical center provide enclosed areas in which a service dog has access to water and a safe area for exercise and elimination.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 360

SUPPORT THE RIGHTS AND BENEFITS EARNED BY SERVICE-CONNECTED NATIVE AMERICAN AND ALASKA NATIVE VETERANS

WHEREAS, a higher percentage of Native Americans have served in the armed forces than any other racial or ethnic group, and many return to their communities in Indian Country upon discharge from the military; and

WHEREAS, the sovereign lands in Indian country are often hundreds of miles from VA facilities, where poverty, lack of transportation and poor roads put great hardships on Native American veterans who need and have earned Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care and other benefits; and

WHEREAS, in evaluating the needs of federally recognized Native American and Alaska Native veterans, especially those living on tribal lands, the VA Office of Tribal Government Relations has reported great travel distances without safe and accessible transportation to VA health care services, affordable and available housing, and a lack of local employment opportunity as pressing needs; and

WHEREAS, many Native American veterans who have completed military deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan and who may be challenged by readjustment and mental health disorders are not afforded responsive medical attention due to insufficient mental health service availability from Indian Health Service or Tribal Health Programs; and

WHEREAS, many VA clinical care providers lack knowledge and understanding of Native American and Alaska Native cultures, including traditional healing and ways of managing illness and disability that are culturally and religiously appropriate, causing additional barriers to care for Native American and Alaska Native veterans; and

WHEREAS, in 2003 and renewed in 2010, VA executed with the Indian Health Service (IHS) of the Department of Health and Human Services, Memoranda of Understanding to coordinate and provide health care services, including mental health services, to Native American and Alaska Native veterans; and

WHEREAS, nearly a decade after its approval in 2010, the VA and IHS have yet to comprehensively implement the Memorandum of Understanding; and

WHEREAS, due to lack of implementation, tribal governments do not have broad knowledge of the existence of, or commitments in, the Memorandum of Understanding, and therefore have not generally disseminated relevant information to Native American and Alaska Native veterans about their VA and IHS rights and benefits under the agreement; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, urges the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and Secretary of Health and Human Services to ensure the Memorandum of Understanding between the VA and the IHS is fully implemented, and that direct providers of services, as well as their leaderships in both agencies, be held accountable to faithfully carry out the agreement so that service-connected Native American and Alaska Native veterans, especially those living on tribal lands, can receive the full benefits and services they have earned and deserve.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 362

EXPAND ELIGIBILITY FOR DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO PROVIDE HOSPITAL CARE, MEDICAL SERVICES AND NURSING HOME CARE TO VETERANS OF WORLD WAR II AND KOREAN CONFLICT

WHEREAS, Congress enacted the Veterans Health Care Eligibility Act of 1996 to exempt veterans from the Mexican border period or World War I from having to meet requirements in order to receive Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical benefits; and

WHEREAS, more than 25% of the living veterans from World War II and the Korean War are not using the medical benefits they have earned because they are not deemed eligible by the VA; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 104-262 requires 0% service-connected disabled veterans to be means (income) tested in order to receive treatment by the VA at their medical facilities; and

WHEREAS, according to statistics proved by the VA, a total of 234 World War II veterans pass away on a daily basis and only 167,284 of these veterans are still alive; and

WHEREAS, the DAV, at its 2018 National Convention, has previously gone on record supporting "the exclusion of service-connected disabled veterans from the requirement of means (income) testing for treatment or service received at VA medical facilities;" NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, urges Congress to amend title 38, United States Code, section 1710(a)(2)(E) by adding the words "or World War II; or Korean Conflict."

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RESOLUTION NO. 363 PROVIDE BENEFICIARY TRAVEL BENEFITS FOR UNSCHEDULED VISITS TO RECEIVE CARE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

WHEREAS, a cornerstone of patient-centered care is having excellent access to appropriate clinical care using appropriate modes of health care delivery at the time patients want and need the care; and

WHEREAS, VA beneficiary travel provides payment of travel expenses within the United States under section 111, title 38, United States Code, to help veterans and other persons obtain care and services from VA; and

WHEREAS, it is VA policy to pay travel expenses only for one-way travel to veterans who receive VA care without a scheduled appointment; and

WHEREAS, the nature of acute medical or psychiatric illness or minor injuries, for which there is a pressing need for treatment to prevent deterioration of the condition or impairing possible recovery, is generally unscheduled and episodic; and

WHEREAS, VA facilities have developed local policy to provide care to veterans on a "drop in" basis rather than through a scheduled appointment and without properly documenting such pre-scheduled encounters thus limiting travel benefits for service-connected veterans; and

WHEREAS, the VA MISSION Act (Public Law 115–182) provides veterans urgent care benefits through contracted community providers but will only pay beneficiary travel on a one-way basis having also defined urgent care as an unscheduled visit; and

WHEREAS, VA policy also subscribes to the principle that access to appropriate primary and urgent care must ensure sufficient capacity to accommodate unscheduled "walk-in" patients; and

WHEREAS, VA beneficiary travel partial reimbursement for unscheduled visits runs counter to the stated purpose of the benefit, which is to "help ensure that beneficiary travel is covered only when necessary for the provision of care or services;" NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, urges Congress and the VA to change current beneficiary travel policy to pay round-trip travel expenses to veterans who receive VA care without a scheduled appointment.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 366 URGE THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO IMPROVE THE NURSING HOME PROGRAM

WHEREAS, like many older Americans, aging veterans may rely on nursing home care to meet their daily needs; and

WHEREAS, over the next two decades, an aging veteran population, including a growing number of service-disabled veterans with specialized care needs, will require long-term care (LTC); and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides or pays for nursing home care in three nursing home settings: VA-owned and -operated community living centers, publicly or privately-owned community nursing homes, and state-owned and -operated state veterans homes; and

WHEREAS, in general, the three settings provide similar nursing home care, in which veterans receive skilled nursing care, recreational activities, and other services; and

WHEREAS, the VA has initiated a rating system for all its 132 VA Nursing Homes; and

WHEREAS, a nursing home's overall star rating is based on Centers for Medicare & Medicaid (CMS) data and has three components: health inspections, staffing, and quality measures; and WHEREAS, according to the VA Nursing Home rating system, one star indicates the lowest possible rating, while five stars indicates the highest possible rating; and

WHEREAS, the CMS and Government Accountability office (GAO) have report quality and oversight needs of VA-owned and -operated community living centers, publicly or privately-owned community nursing homes, and state-owned and -operated state veterans homes; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, urges the VA Nursing Home Program to include VA-owned and -operated community living centers, publicly or privately owned community nursing homes, and state-owned and -operated state veterans homes improve their delivery of high quality care and services that our nations veterans earned and deserve; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VA must recruit and retain only the best health care professionals and support staff and must train and hold all employees accountable for their actions or inactions.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 367

URGE THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO MAKE IMPROVEMENTS IN THE BENEFICIARY TRAVEL SELF-SERVICE SYSTEM FOR VETERANS

WHEREAS, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) implemented the Beneficiary Travel Self-Service System (BTSSS) to provide timely processing and payment of travel reimbursement; and

WHEREAS, the price of gasoline has steadily increased, creating a financial hardship for disabled veterans who must travel great distances for their medical care and treatment; and

WHEREAS, though BTSSS allows the disabled veteran to submit a travel reimbursement claim through any mobile device or computer and receive a payment within five business days, disabled veterans are having issues with the online portal and are unable to receive adequate assistance from VA staff; and

WHEREAS, the BTSSS utilizes Bing Maps, which may not be updated with the disabled veteran's proper address, causing an error with submitting the required form; and

WHEREAS, not all disabled veterans have access to the internet and payments may take months to process disabled; and

WHEREAS, veterans are unable to speak to a VA representative in real time when they receive an error with the system and may become stressed and overwhelmed with the process; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, urges the VA to provide real-time assistance with the current travel claim process, whether that be the BTSSS portal or another system; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the VA provide alternate methods for travel reimbursement that demonstrate inclusivity to all disabled veterans, such as the previously provided Kiosk Check-In System.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 368

CREATE A THREE-DIGIT NUMBER TO REPORT INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

WHEREAS, military experiences, such as deployment, mental health concerns, traumatic brain injury, substance use, and transition to civilian life, can have a significant impact on relationships; and

WHEREAS, the use of aggression in intimate relationships has been found to be more common among veterans who have Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) depression, substance misuse, and traumatic brain injury (TBI) may also be risk factors for using aggression in an intimate relationship; and

WHEREAS, there is a National Domestic Violence Hotline number of 800-799-7233; and

WHEREAS, a collaboration with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) created the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline as an easy-to-remember three-digit number of 988; and

WHEREAS, it is easier to remember and dial three digits rather than ten digits; and

WHEREAS, it has been proven that a shorter time period to get to speak to someone on a helpline saves lives; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, urges HHS and VA to collaborate and create a three-digit number for veterans to report intimate partner violence similar to the creation of 988 for the Suicide Crisis Lifeline.

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RESOLUTION NO. 369

PROVIDE PEER-TO-PEER INFERTILITY CARE PROGRAM COORDINATOR

WHEREAS, the Infertility Care Program is difficult to get through; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 114-223 allows the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) to provide Assisted Reproductive Technology, including In-Vitro Fertilization (IVF), to certain eligible veterans; and
WHEREAS, little is known regarding veterans' experiences accessing IVF through Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Community Care contracts with IVF providers

WHEREAS, there is a study by the Medical Care journal, which found six areas that need improvement. They are:

- the need for improved communication regarding IVF benefits;
- the need for expanded IVF benefits;
- the lack of a comprehensive care coordination program;
- poor access to IVF providers in some areas of the country; special services needed for veterans with spinal cord injuries;
- the IVF policy may be discriminatory to single and LGBTQ veterans; and

WHEREAS, many veterans with service-connected conditions related to reproductive health have taken advantage of the IVF benefit, though limitations on these benefits have prevented other veterans from taking advantage of it; and

WHEREAS, further attention needs to be paid to improving communication and coordination of IVF services with ongoing VA care and ensuring special populations, including those living in rural areas and veterans with spinal cord injuries have access to IVF services as needed; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, encourages the VA to have a navigator work with each veteran or spouse that goes through IVF; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the navigator be someone that has gone through the IVF program.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 370

PROVIDE RESEARCH IN PREVENTING SUICIDE IN LGBTQ+ VETERANS

WHEREAS, the LGBTQ+ veteran is more likely to experience suicidal ideation than their cisgender and heterosexual peers; and

WHEREAS, those who identify as LGBTQ+ face physical and mental health challenges; and

WHEREAS, LGBTQ+ veterans experience higher rates of health conditions related to Military Sexual Trauma, HIV-AIDS, Intimate Partner Violence, substance abuse and tobacco use and experience a higher risk for suicide; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, goes on record asking for support for this resolution from the Department Headquarters to be at the Summer Department Convention.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 371

SUPPORT RESEARCH REGARDING FEMALE VETERAN MENOPAUSE

WHEREAS, the symptoms of menopause can lead to anxiety and/or depression, pain, and anger (which are just a few of the symptoms); and

WHEREAS, these symptoms can be exacerbated for women with a history of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD); and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) currently prescribes hormone therapy in the form of patches and pills to treat female menopause; and

WHEREAS, there is a considerable lack of research in the area of female veteran vs. non-veterans in the scope of PTSD and menopause; and

WHEREAS, the influence of biologic sex on the neurobiology of PTSD could result in better treatment of menopause in female veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, categorically go on record asking for support for this resolution from the Department Headquarters to be at the summer Department Convention.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 372
PROVIDE OVERSIGHT BY THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS
AFFAIRS OF SERVICE DOGS PERMITTED INTO THE MEDICAL
CENTERS AND COMMUNITY-BASED OUTPATIENT CENTERS

WHEREAS, service dogs are an essential part of veterans' lives who suffer from mental or physical disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the veteran and their service dog should have the proper training and meet a specified list of criteria to be considered a service dog team; and

WHEREAS, untrained dogs that are admitted to a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facility present a danger to trained service dog teams and others; and

WHEREAS, oversight of admission of service dog teams to VA facilities should be controlled by a Service Dog Champion Representative of the VA; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports VA creating an office of oversight for the service dog program to ensure the safety of service dogs and their veterans from untrained dogs allowed in to the facility.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 417
REQUIRE A VETERAN'S ATTENDING DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
(VA) PHYSICIAN TO PROVIDE A MEDICAL OPINION WITH REGARD
TO A CLAIM FOR VA DISABILITY COMPENSATION

WHEREAS, section 5103A, title 38, United States Code, requires the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to assist a veteran by providing a medical examination and opinion when necessary to make a decision on a claim for disability benefits; and

WHEREAS, section 3.159, title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, requires Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care providers, under specified circumstances, to provide statements and medical opinions on conditions, employability and degree of disability; and

WHEREAS, Veterans Health Administration (VHA) policy describes Disability Benefit Questionnaires (DBQ) as a documentation tool designed for easy use and provides a format for documenting medical evidence that aids Veterans Benefits Administration rating specialists in making decisions on claims; and

WHEREAS, it is also VHA policy that DBQs are intended for use by VHA primary care and specialty care providers, and VHA clinicians who are not disability examiners may complete DBQs; and

WHEREAS, VA's continued mission is to be a provider of choice for enrolled veterans, and delivering to them a comprehensive medical benefits package; and

WHEREAS, through education, training and experience, VA physicians gain special insight into the veterans' experience and specialized knowledge of the diseases and disabilities common to military service; and

WHEREAS, when VA physicians refuse to provide statements or opinions for veteran patients, those denials are inconsistent with the goal of the VHA to provide comprehensive care and place a serious burden on veterans who may not be able to afford a private medical opinion; and

WHEREAS, providing medical information for disability evaluations or examinations to support adjudication of claims remains inconsistent, because some local VA facilities' practices resist completing DBQs requested by claimants; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, urges VA to develop and implement a consistent policy requiring VA health care practitioners to provide medical statements or opinions when requested by veterans in conjunction with claims for VA benefits.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 418
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO INCLUDE 1151 PROTECTIONS UNDER
TITLE 38, UNITED STATES CODE, FOR VETERANS USING DEPARTMENT
OF VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMUNITY CARE SERVICES

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is the primary care provider for millions of the nation's wartime and disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, veterans, when receiving services at a VA medical facility or from a VA physician, are provided recourse when an additional disability or death is proximately due to or caused by such care is deemed to be negligent or careless; and

WHEREAS, compensation can be awarded if an additional disability or death of a veteran was caused by a VA employee or facility's carelessness or negligence when providing hospital care, medical or surgical treatment, or examination; and

WHEREAS, veterans have increasing options to receive care in their local communities paid for by VA including from providers who participate in the VA's community care network established under Public Law 115-182, the VA MISSION Act of 2018; and

WHEREAS, it is expected that the quality of care provided by the contracted non-VA medical facility or contracted non-VA physician would be as good or better than the care provided by the VA; and

WHEREAS, in the unfortunate circumstance that an additional disability or death occurs due to the carelessness, negligence, lack of proper skill or error of medical judgment of a community care provider's services, paid for by VA, the veteran or his or her family would not have similar recourse as veterans receiving care within the VA under title 38, section 1151 of United States Code; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation that would afford veterans the same protection under title 38 section 1151 of United States Code, if care rendered by a VA community care network provider (paid for by VA), results in an additional disability or death of the veteran due to carelessness, negligence, lack of proper skill or error of medical judgment of said community care provider.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 423
SUPPORT NAMING THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
MARE ISLAND CLINIC IN VALLEJO, CALIFORNIA AS THE
“DELPHINE METCALF-FOSTER VA CLINIC”

WHEREAS, Delphine Metcalf-Foster is a life-long resident of Vallejo, California, a disabled U.S. Army Reserve Veteran of Operation Desert Storm, a Bronze Star Medal recipient, retired as a First Sergeant (E-8) in 1996, and a life-member of The American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and DAV; and

WHEREAS, Delphine Metcalf-Foster was the first African-American woman Commander of the DAV Department of California in 2004-2005 and National Commander in 2017-18; and

WHEREAS, as a past or present member of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Advisory Committee on Women Veterans and the VA Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses, she was very instrumental in the development of more 60 established policies that are currently effective today at Women Veterans Clinics throughout the United States; and

WHEREAS, she has also testified at House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee hearings advocating to improve outreach to and services for women and all veterans; and

WHEREAS, the Department of California Commanders of The American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and DAV have all written letters to US Representatives Mike Thompson and John Garamendi to support this naming effort; and

WHEREAS, the California State Commanders Veterans Council, which is recognized in state law as the collective voice for California's 23 major veterans service organizations also support this effort via <https://www.votervoice.net/iframes/CSCVC/Campaigns/98358/Respond>, NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, urges the Congress to pass the legislation, H.R.251, to name the Veterans Affairs Mare Island Clinic in Vallejo, CA as the “Delphine Metcalf-Foster VA Clinic.”

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 451
ESTABLISH STUDIES ON THE LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF
EXPOSURE TO BISPHENOL A, A SUBSTANCE FOUND
IN PLASTIC DISPOSABLE WATER BOTTLES

WHEREAS, according to studies by the National Institute of Environmental Health, plastic disposable water bottle can leach bisphenol A (BPA) (also known as Phthalates), from the plastic into the drinking water when exposed to extreme or moderate heat over time; and

WHEREAS, according to studies by Johns Hopkins University researcher, Dr. Rolf Halden, chemicals called phthalates are “environmental contaminants that can exhibit hormone-like behavior by acting as endocrine disrupters in human and animals;” and

WHEREAS, studies reveal that heated plastics can increase the leaching of phthalates from containers into food or water and studies further reveal that some of the common effects are cancers; and

WHEREAS, plastic disposable water bottles were used on a massive scale in Iraq, Afghanistan and other extreme temperature locations for active duty personnel; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation to allow for additional research and studies from the National Academy of Science and/or other research facilities to determine the long-term health effects, to include cancers, of exposure to heated plastics and water bottles.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 491
IMPROVE THE CARE PROVIDED TO VETERANS WITH SERVICE-CONNECTED
DISABILITIES AFFECTING THE ABILITY TO PROCREATE
THROUGH ASSISTED REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGY

WHEREAS, during the recent conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, reliance on dismounted patrols and frequent exposure to improvised explosive devices (IED) have significantly increased genitourinary (GU) trauma; and

WHEREAS, an estimated 12% of war injuries involve some kind of genitourinary trauma; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense (DOD) Joint Theater Trauma Registry reports that the highest percentage of trauma admissions were GU injuries (the largest report of GU injuries during any military conflict), and, of those, more than half of those injured were within child-bearing age and were injured due to explosions; and

WHEREAS, sexual functioning can also be impaired by other physical, psychological and social factors that can diminish the quality of life of veterans or service members; and

WHEREAS, the DOD currently offers multiple assisted reproductive technology services for military service personnel who have lost procreative ability due to grave service-related illness or injury, to include those suffering neurological, physiological and/or anatomical loss; and

WHEREAS, emerging evidence suggests mental health conditions related to military service, including post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety and depression, in addition to toxic exposures during military service, may be associated with infertility; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has based its guidance on providing assisted reproductive technology to gravely injured veterans or their legal different-sex spouses on DOD policy which limits options available to many other veterans who have made great sacrifices in the protection of the nation; and

WHEREAS, veterans who, due to their military service, are unable to procreate and require reproductive assistance have already paid a price greater than any monetary assessment and have earned the right to have a family and it is incumbent on the VA to make them whole to every extent possible; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation which would include in the VA's health benefits package the use of assisted reproductive technologies for veterans who have lost the ability to procreate due to service-related injury or illness, including any conditions that may affect fertility that were not present prior to military service and regardless of marital status or the ability to furnish one's own genetic material.

RESOLUTION NO. 535
SUPPORT DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL
AND PROSTHETIC RESEARCH PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, to restore the wounds and injuries, to maintain the health of veterans of prior conflicts, and to develop new treatments for veterans wounded and injured in today's and future conflicts, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical and Prosthetic Research program provides a vital service and investment for veterans; and

WHEREAS, funded VA researchers are studying injuries and illnesses emanating from war, such as traumatic brain injury, burns, paralysis and amputations, and illnesses and diseases that disproportionately appear in the wartime veteran population, such as toxic environmental exposures, numerous organic illnesses, and post-traumatic stress disorder and other associated mental health sequela of war; and

WHEREAS, VA researchers have been recognized by multiple awards of Nobel Prizes, Lasker Awards (the "American Nobel Prize"), and many other public and private emblems of achievement, for elevating the standards of health care not only for wounded and injured veterans but for people all around the world, including publication of tens of thousands of research developments in peer-reviewed medical literature; and

WHEREAS, VA researchers contribute directly to the health of veterans by serving as clinical providers in VA health care facilities, and carry out important faculty and attending duties to sustain VA's affiliations with the nation's schools of health professions, thereby elevating the standards of health care for all; and

WHEREAS, VA research is conducted only after rigorous scientific peer review, supervised by institutional review boards, and only in conformance with the Common Rule and other ethical and humanitarian constraints to ensure informed consent and safety of all research volunteers, and the efficacy of approved research projects; and

WHEREAS, VA's clinician-scientists in VA Rehabilitation Research and Development Service, who constitute the world's foremost scientists working in this field, invent and adapt specialized prosthetic, orthotic and other appliances, supports and treatments, using numerous ground-breaking technologies, to improve the lives of countless numbers of severely disabled veterans, including many members of DAV; and

WHEREAS, the annual VA Medical and Prosthetic Research appropriation constitutes less than 1% of VA's health care budget, but research funding has been subjected to rescissions, does not generally keep pace with research inflation and uncontrollable costs; and

WHEREAS, VA requires significant funding for repairs, restorations and replacements for VA's research laboratories, some of which involve life and safety risks for VA employees and veteran volunteers; and

WHEREAS, significant investment in scientific computing including cloud storage and credits is integral to manipulate large databases to identify genomic patterns and other associations between veterans and health outcomes, including the effectiveness or adverse outcomes of particular treatments for a given population; and

WHEREAS, VA researchers have benefited from the richness of the electronic patient health record developed by VA clinicians for veterans and unique missions they serve and must preserve this unique resource as VA undertakes a major modernization effort; and

WHEREAS, dedicated resources to the development, operations, and maintenance of information technology proportional to the resources provided the VA Medical and Prosthetic Research budget is key to sustaining a robust and vital research program dedicated to the Nation's veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, strongly supports VA's Medical and Prosthetic Research program as a vital investment in the future, affecting wounded, injured and ill veterans, and urges VA and Congress to adequately fund this program by ensuring there is adequate eradication of infrastructure and information technology deficits, so that it may continue its remarkable traditions in helping veterans recover and rehabilitate, to improve the quality of their lives.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 536
ENSURE ADEQUATE STAFFING OF PATIENT ADVOCATES
IN THE VETERANS HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

WHEREAS, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) has designated patient advocates at each VA medical center (VAMC) to receive and document feedback from veterans or their representatives, including requests for information, compliments, complaints and assist with clinical appeals; and

WHEREAS, the VHA provided limited guidance to VAMCs on the governance of patient advocacy programs and its guidance, a program handbook, has been outdated since 2010; and

WHEREAS, VAMCs are still expected to follow the outdated handbook, which does not provide needed details on governance, such as specifying the VAMC department to which patient advocates should report; and

WHEREAS, the Government Accounting Office (GAO Report 18-356) reviewed noted that the department to which patient advocates report can have a direct effect on the ability of staff to resolve veterans' complaints; and

WHEREAS, the lack of updated and complete guidance may impede the patient advocacy program from meeting its expectations, to receive and address complaints from veterans in a convenient and timely manner; and

WHEREAS, the VHA also has provided limited guidance to VAMCs on staffing levels for the patient advocacy program; and

WHEREAS, the VHA's handbook, states that every VAMC should have at least one patient advocate and appropriate support staff; however, it did not provide guidance on how to determine the number and type of staff needed; and

WHEREAS, the GAO's review stated that VHA's patient advocacy program staff had more work to do than they could realistically accomplish; and

WHEREAS, this limited guidance on staffing does not support good practices to ensure there are an appropriate number of patient advocates and support staff to address veterans' complaints in a timely manner; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, that DAV supports that VAMC directors to ensure there is no fewer than one patient advocate for every 13,500 veterans enrolled and or what is adequate and balanced to address all the needs of veterans in the VA Health Care System; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports the need for highly rural veterans to have access to the services of patient advocates assigned to rural community-based outpatient clinics.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 537
SUPPORT EQUITY IN ACCESS TO SERVICES AND BENEFITS FOR RACIAL
AND ETHNIC MINORITY SERVICE-CONNECTED VETERANS

WHEREAS, veterans from minority or ethnic backgrounds are expected to comprise an increasingly large proportion of the veterans population growing from 23.5% in 2014 to 36% by 2043; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) has been unable to provide data to demonstrate equity of access to benefits and services among racial and ethnic veterans and has not implemented repeated recommendations by the Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans to make such data available; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) has identified higher rates of service connection and higher utilization of mental health and substance use disorder services among minority veterans, more research is needed to understand disparate patterns of diagnosed condition rates between whites and minority veterans; and

WHEREAS, the VHA has been successful in reducing disparities in some care outcomes, it finds that disparities that are often the result of social and behavioral determinants of health, including financial and nonfinancial barriers to care, remain and often result in adverse health outcomes; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, urges the VBA to routinely report data on numbers of applications, utilization and completion of programs for veterans by racial and ethnic background and gender; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we urge VA to continue identifying and addressing social and behavioral determinants that may affect health outcomes in addition to barriers to health care for all service-connected veterans by minority and ethnic groups.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 538

ENCOURAGE THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO SUBMIT CANDIDATES FOR THE VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR PROGRAM

WHEREAS, DAV created the Volunteer of the Year award Program as a means to recruit, retain and recognize volunteers who serve disabled veterans in Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities and the local community; and

WHEREAS, the Volunteer of the Year Award annually recognizes the remarkable efforts of an outstanding member of DAV and the Auxiliary who willingly donate their time and energy to disabled veterans in VA Voluntary Service programs; and

WHEREAS, at the beginning of each calendar year, DAV solicits every VA Voluntary Service program manager to nominate one deserving member of DAV and the Auxiliary from their facility in order to be considered for the Volunteer of the Year Award, with little response; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, strongly encourages each Voluntary Service program manager at every VA medical facility to submit the name of a deserving member of DAV and the Auxiliary to be considered for this prestigious award in appreciation of their dedication and service to America's veterans through their voluntary service efforts.

* * *

(Whereupon, the Committee on Hospital and Voluntary Services chair withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Thanks, Joyce. You have heard the motion. May I have a second?

MR. JAMES MILTON BAILEY: Mic 3.

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Mic 3.

MR. BAILEY: From the State of Ohio, the birthplace of the DAV, I, James Milton Bailey, second that. Thank you very much.

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Thank you. In accordance with Rule 9 now is the time for any rejected resolutions you wish read. Are there any rejected resolutions you wish read?

(Response of "No.")

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Hearing none, all those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered.

(Whereupon, the Committee on Hospital and Voluntary Services chair withdrew from the stage.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: I would like to call upon Chairman Matthew Kampainen for the report on the Committee on General Resolutions and Membership.

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and the Committee on General Resolutions and Membership chair advanced to the podium.)

GENERAL RESOLUTIONS AND MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN MATT KAMPAINEN: Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

GENERAL RESOLUTIONS AND MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN KAMPAINEN: Comrade Commander and delegates, the National Convention Committee Chairman on General Resolutions was called to order on August 5th, 2023, by the Committee advisors Marquis Barefield and Scott Hope.

The first order of business was the election of Convention Committee chairman and secretary. Matthew Kampainen was elected as chairman. And Shannon Sander was elected as secretary.

The Committee then proceeded to review the resolutions submitted. And I will now report to you the resolutions recommended for adoption by this national convention. For the purpose of saving time I will read only the number and the purpose of the resolutions.

016, extend military commissary and exchange privilege and space-available air travel to 30 percent or higher service-connected disabled veterans separated from service prior to October 1st, 1949;

017, condemn public desecration of the flag of the United States;

036, encourage all disabled veterans to become registered voters and vote;

037, support the continued growth of veterans' treatment courts for justice-involved veterans;

038, support legislation to require the Secretary of Transportation to annually report the aviation consumer complaints related to passengers with disabilities;

047, seek the immediate release of any Americans who may still be held captive following any war and return and identification of the remains of any Americans who died during these wars;

048, support move to renew Prisoner of War/Missing in Action discussions;

049, support for Defense POW/MIA Accounting Command;

054, support the construction of a courthouse for the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims;

055, oppose any authorization for use of members of the Armed Forces for human experimentation without their knowledge and informed consent; (Applause)

093, extend the travel area that service-connected disabled veterans having a permanent disability rated 100 percent may travel from within CONUS to CONUS and overseas;

094, extend space-available air travel to caregivers of eligible veterans;

120, support legislation to protect honorably discharged wartime non-citizen veterans with service-connected injuries or illnesses from deportation while applying for citizenship;

121, support federal laws, regulations, programs, and policies that enhance and oppose those that diminish DAV's ability to fulfill its mission of assisting service-disabled veterans, their families, and survivors;

273, provide weekend burials at national cemeteries;

295, support legislation to grant U.S. citizenship to honorably-discharged service-disabled veterans at time of discharge;

325, support former POW slave labor claims against Japanese firms;

439, fair air travel for disabled veterans;

512, support meaningful accountability measures, but with due process, for employees of the VA;

546, appreciation to all who were responsible for the success of the 101st National Convention;

547, appreciation to Harrah's Resorts Atlantic City for the success of the national convention;

548, appreciation to retired National Adjutant Marc Burgess;

549, appreciation to National Commander Joseph Parsetich.

Comrade Commander, this completes the report of the Committee on General Resolutions. On behalf of the Committee I move for the adoption of these resolutions and that the Committee be discharged with the thanks of the national convention. (Applause)

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RESOLUTION NO. 016

EXTEND MILITARY COMMISSARY AND EXCHANGE PRIVILEGES AND SPACE-AVAILABLE AIR TRAVEL TO CERTAIN SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABLED VETERANS

WHEREAS, disabled active-duty personnel who were discharged from military service prior to October 1, 1949—the effective date of the Career Compensation Act—are not entitled to disability retirement from the armed forces; and

WHEREAS, many service-connected disabled veterans have been deprived of the various benefits that all other disabled retired military personnel have enjoyed; and

WHEREAS, due to inflation, service-connected disabled veterans receiving Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) compensation as a sole source of income are experiencing difficulties in keeping pace with the increased cost of living; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation that would extend military commissary and exchange privileges, as well as space-available air travel aboard military aircraft, to enlisted personnel who were discharged from active military service prior to October 1, 1949, for a service-incurred injury or disease rated by the VA as 30% or more disabling and who retained at least a 30% evaluation for a period of five years from the date of separation from active duty.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 017

CONDEMN PUBLIC DESECRATION OF THE FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES

WHEREAS, the United States Supreme Court, by a 5–4 decision, ruled that public desecration of the American flag, as a form of free speech and expression, is legal and permissible; and

WHEREAS, the American flag—Old Glory—is our national ensign, the proud and beautiful symbol of our country's precious, free heritage; and

WHEREAS, this symbol, in the form of our irreplaceable Stars and Stripes, has been carried and defended in battle, revered and cherished by citizens, and viewed as a beacon of hope and fulfillment by all the world since it was first unfurled at the birth of our nation; and

WHEREAS, the first amendment to the United States Constitution guarantees freedom of speech, and was not intended by our founding fathers to enable individuals—who enjoy unfettered freedom to express their views, no matter how abhorrent, in both oral and written form—to publicly and contemptuously desecrate our beloved flag; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, condemns any individual or group who at any time publicly and willfully desecrates the flag of the United States.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 036 ENCOURAGE ALL DISABLED VETERANS TO BECOME REGISTERED VOTERS AND VOTE

WHEREAS, members of DAV served their country during time of war in order to preserve the rights and privileges of life in this land of the free; and

WHEREAS, one of the most precious of those rights is the right to vote; and

WHEREAS, the United States Congress and the Administration have failed to fulfill their obligation to our nation's disabled veterans, providing inadequate funding for veterans' benefits and health care; and

WHEREAS, the United States Congress and the Administration have targeted veterans programs for unwarranted spending cuts and reductions under the mistaken and misguided theory that veterans do not base their votes on veterans' issues; and

WHEREAS, the failure of disabled veterans to register and vote will result in the perpetuation of this theory; and

WHEREAS, because of their disabilities, disabled veterans have more difficulty than their nondisabled peers in complying with some of the stricter requirements in voter registration laws; and

WHEREAS, veterans, their families and all Americans concerned about veterans' issues need to make their voices heard by becoming registered voters and exercising their votes in local, state and federal elections; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, encourages all DAV members to register to vote and thereby strengthen our organization's ability to preserve and improve our system of veterans' benefits and services; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all DAV departments and chapters initiate and operate voter registration drives targeted at increasing voter registration among veterans and their families; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all DAV departments, chapters and members are encouraged to ensure that all veterans and their family members are able to access polling places to vote.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 037 SUPPORT THE CONTINUED GROWTH OF VETERANS TREATMENT COURTS FOR JUSTICE-INVOLVED VETERANS

WHEREAS, many military service members and veterans return from today's overseas combat engagements with signature wounds of polytrauma, traumatic brain injury (TBI), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other mental health and repatriation challenges; and, veterans from earlier eras have absorbed their own signature disabilities, including PTSD; and

WHEREAS, some veterans resort to overuse of substances in their attempts to cope with their chronic physical and mental health challenges, other barriers and obstacles, and pain; and

WHEREAS, as a consequence of chronic substance-use disorder or lasting residuals of combat exposure, a minority of veterans display antisocial and even criminal behaviors, and thus become involved with law enforcement and justice systems; and

WHEREAS, veterans treatment courts evolved from a proven national model of diversionary drug courts and mental health courts, to address the specific situations of veterans, and to

maximize efficiency of available resources while making use of the distinct military culture to which veterans are accustomed; and

WHEREAS, in a 2016 report, the Government Accountability Office found large increases in workloads and heard reports from justice-involved veterans indicating that there is a need to add staff and resources to the Veterans Justice Outreach Program, in addition to improving effectiveness by developing and monitoring goals for its coordinators;

WHEREAS, many justice-involved veterans are eligible for the financial benefits, social supports and health care services available through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and through other national, state and local veterans programs; and

WHEREAS, grouping troubled veterans together within specific court dockets expedites access to helpful resources and promotes the camaraderie and mutual support found among veterans; and

WHEREAS, veterans in general deeply value their military experiences and share an inimitable bond with their peers, and the veterans courts build upon this bond by enabling veterans to proceed through the treatment court process with people who are similarly situated, and by pairing together veterans and mentors; and

WHEREAS, years of experience from the veterans treatment courts now in existence nationwide has produced a statistically significant reduction of recidivism rates in veterans compared to persons in other treatment courts and individuals not involved in any sort of alternative or diversionary court; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports the continued growth of the veterans treatment courts throughout our nation and urges adequate support for the increasing resource needs of the VA program in addition to identification of appropriate goals and metrics to determine the programs' effectiveness; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all DAV departments and chapters are encouraged to support additional veterans courts and work with local VA officials and law enforcement to build support for the establishment of these courts; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV calls on departments and chapters to work in support of state legislation where necessary to authorize veterans' courts.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 038
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO REQUIRE THE SECRETARY OF
TRANSPORTATION TO ANNUALLY REPORT ON AVIATION CONSUMER
COMPLAINTS RELATED TO PASSENGERS WITH DISABILITIES.

WHEREAS, each year, over 27 million passengers with disabilities travel by air including many veterans with mobility, cognitive, hearing, vision or other impairments; and

WHEREAS, with an ever-aging population in the United States, including veterans, travelers with disabilities will be a growing customer segment for airlines; and

WHEREAS, without effective accommodations, such as communication of essential flight information, accessible seats and lavatories, appropriate boarding assistance, and careful handling and stowage of wheelchairs and other assistive devices, passengers with disabilities may face challenges when flying on a commercial airline; and

WHEREAS, passengers traveling by air with an authorized service animal have experienced higher than normal issues with boarding, de-boarding and seating; and

WHEREAS, passengers have experienced difficulties in being moved, handled or having their schedules changed without consent; and

WHEREAS, in 2021, the Department of Transportation received 1,394 disability-related complaints, an increase of more than 157% from the total of 541 complaints received in 2020, and up 54% from the 905 disability complaints received in 2019; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation requiring the Secretary of Transportation on Aviation Consumer Complaints to submit an annual report on aviation consumer complaints related to passengers and veterans with a disability filed with the Department of Transportation to the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation of the Senate and the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 047

SEEK THE IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF ANY AMERICANS WHO MAY STILL BE HELD CAPTIVE FOLLOWING ANY WAR AND THE RETURN AND IDENTIFICATION OF THE REMAINS OF ANY AMERICANS WHO DIED DURING THESE WARS

WHEREAS, the members of DAV are deeply concerned for the thousands of American service members still unaccounted for in the aftermath of wars; and

WHEREAS, numerous high-level American delegations, including members of Congress, have visited Southeast Asia in continuing efforts to solve the mystery of the whereabouts and fate of our missing in action (MIA) from the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, the brave families of the missing continue to live in uncertainty and anguish regarding their sons, husbands and other family members; and

WHEREAS, still today more than 73,000 are unaccounted for from World War II, though some 40,000 are deemed unrecoverable, mostly deep sea losses, some 7,500 from the Korean War, over 1,600 still missing in Southeast Asia from the Vietnam War, two from the Persian Gulf War and two from the Afghanistan/Iraq War, who have not been forgotten; and

WHEREAS, DAV was disappointed with the timing of our government's decision to normalize relations with the government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV), prior to having achieved the fullest possible accounting of our prisoners-of-war (POW) and missing in action from Southeast Asia; and

WHEREAS, DAV believes that the SRV can increase its unilateral efforts to account for Americans still missing in action, especially those who were last known alive in captivity or immediate proximity to capture; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, urges the United States government to ensure this issue be considered as one of America's highest priorities by accelerating efforts to obtain the release of any American who may still be held captive and obtain, to the fullest possible extent, an accounting of those still missing and the repatriation of the remains of those who died while serving our nation; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we urge the government of the SRV to increase its unilateral efforts to account for American POW/MIAs, including locating and making available remains of Americans last known alive in captivity that have not previously been returned.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 048

SUPPORT RENEWED PRISONER-OF-WAR/MISSING-IN-ACTION DISCUSSIONS

WHEREAS, DAV has long been and is now deeply committed to accounting as fully as possible for United States personnel previously listed as prisoners, missing and unaccounted for from all of our nation's past wars; and

WHEREAS, DAV recognizes the utility and importance of bilateral discussions, separate from those held on strategic issues, but fully integrated with broader policy and national security priorities in an effort to reach agreement for proceeding on a humanitarian basis with prisoner-of-war/missing-in-action accounting cooperation; and

WHEREAS, DAV also recognizes the lead time required between renewing bilateral discussions to reach humanitarian agreements and restoring and increasing unilateral, bilateral and, as needed, multilateral field recovery operations; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports renewing and expanding direct bilateral humanitarian efforts for the purpose of restoring and improving US agreements and processes with counterpart nations required to account as fully as possible for unreturned American military personnel.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 049

SUPPORT FOR DEFENSE PRISONER-OF-WAR/MISSING-IN-ACTION ACCOUNTING COMMAND

WHEREAS, members of DAV have long been deeply committed to achieving the fullest possible accounting for United States personnel still captive, missing and otherwise unaccounted-for from all of our nation's wars; and

WHEREAS, personnel and funding for the Defense Prisoner of War/Missing in Action (POW/MIA) Accounting Agency (DPAA) have not been increased at a level commensurate with the expanded requirement to obtain answers on Americans unaccounted-for from all of our country's wars and conflicts; and

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of the United States government to account as fully as possible for America's missing veterans, including—if confirmed deceased—the recovery and identification of their remains when possible; and

WHEREAS, DAV deeply appreciates Vietnam's 2009 proposal to expand the pace and scope of POW/MIA accounting cooperation, including use of United States Navy vessels for underwater operations; and

WHEREAS, the DAV recognizes the contributions to successful investigative efforts made by the Defense Intelligence Agency's Stony Beach Team of specialists; and

WHEREAS, this accounting effort should not be considered complete until all reasonable actions have been taken to achieve the fullest possible accounting; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, remains steadfast in its commitment to the goal of achieving the fullest possible accounting for all United States military and designated civilian personnel missing from our nation's wars; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call upon our government to support personnel increases and full funding for the efforts of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory, including specific authorization to augment assigned personnel when additional assets and resources are necessary.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 054 **SUPPORT THE CONSTRUCTION OF A COURTHOUSE FOR THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR VETERANS CLAIMS**

WHEREAS, veterans and other persons claiming benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs have benefited substantially and materially from the jurisprudence of the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (Court); and

WHEREAS, the Court has existed for 34 years; and

WHEREAS, the courtroom, chambers and other space are inadequate to meet the current and future needs of the Court and those it serves; and

WHEREAS, it is in the interest of veterans and their dependents that the Court be accorded the same appurtenances enjoyed by other appellate courts of the United States; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, shall take such actions as may be necessary or advisable in support of legislation to authorize and fund the construction of a suitable and appropriate courthouse for the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 055 **OPPOSE ANY AUTHORIZATION OF USE OF MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES FOR HUMAN EXPERIMENTATION WITHOUT THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMED CONSENT**

WHEREAS, those who serve in our nation's armed forces make personal sacrifices to maintain our national security; and

WHEREAS, members of the armed forces should be accorded respect and the gratitude of the nation; and

WHEREAS, their willingness to sacrifice and relinquish their liberty while serving does not surrender their natural right to determine what shall be done with their own bodies and their right to personal dignity; and

WHEREAS, it is a violation of the ethical principle of the right of self-determination to use service members for human experimentation without their knowledge and informed consent; and

WHEREAS, our government has in the past used military members as "guinea pigs" to test the effects of harmful and injurious substances on the human body; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, opposes any rule or provision that would authorize human experimentation on service members without their knowledge and informed consent.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 093

EXPAND THE TRAVEL AREA THAT SERVICE-CONNECTED VETERANS HAVING A PERMANENT DISABILITY RATED 100% MAY TRAVEL FROM CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES TO CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES AND OVERSEAS

WHEREAS, the 2019 National Defense Authorization Act allows totally disabled service-connected veterans to travel space-available aboard military aircraft; and

WHEREAS, the military has interpreted the language in the act to authorize disabled veterans to travel in the Continental United States (CONUS) or directly between the CONUS and Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, and American Samoa (Guam and American Samoa travelers may transit Hawaii or Alaska), or traveling within Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, or the U.S. Virgin Islands on flights operated by Air Mobility Command; and

WHEREAS, totally disabled service-connected veterans have sacrificed greatly in terms of their impairments and loss of earning capacity; and

WHEREAS, more than any other living group of Americans, such veterans should be eligible for all benefits and privileges that Congress may provide; and

WHEREAS, such totally disabled veterans should be extended the same privileges as other personnel currently authorized to utilize space-available military air travel; and

WHEREAS, the extension of such travel to totally disabled service-connected veterans would not place any additional burden upon the administration of this program; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, seeks the enactment of legislation that would extend the travel area for space-available travel that service-connected veterans having a permanent disability rated 100% to and from CONUS and overseas.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 094

EXTEND SPACE-AVAILABLE AIR TRAVEL TO CAREGIVERS AND DEPENDENTS OF ELIGIBLE VETERANS

WHEREAS, the 2019 National Defense Authorization Act allows totally disabled service-connected veterans to travel space available on military aircraft; and

WHEREAS, this benefit does not include a veteran's caregiver or dependent; and

WHEREAS, active military and retirees are authorized to travel via space-available travel with their dependents; and

WHEREAS, veterans that are eligible are severely disabled and often need the aid or assistance of a caregiver or family member to deal with the rigors of travel; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports legislation to authorize air travel for caregivers or dependents traveling with eligible veterans on a space-available basis in order to provide aid or assistance as well as to provide parity with Department of Defense eligibility for military retirees.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 120

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO PROTECT HONORABLY DISCHARGED NONCITIZEN VETERANS FROM DEPORTATION WHILE APPLYING FOR CITIZENSHIP

WHEREAS, current law allows documented noncitizens the opportunity to serve in the United States military; and

WHEREAS, the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 (INA) allows noncitizen service members to apply for naturalization during peacetime after one year of honorable service and allows noncitizen service members to apply for naturalization during periods of hostility after one day of honorable service; and

WHEREAS, noncitizen recruits often receive incorrect or incomplete information regarding their options to become U.S. citizens through military service and less than half (43.8%) of noncitizen service members naturalize while on active duty; and

WHEREAS, noncitizen veterans arrested for crimes that may be due to underlying and untreated conditions incurred in military service are subject to immediate deportation; and

WHEREAS, current law does not provide any special protection for wartime service-disabled veterans who may become subject to deportation post-service; and

WHEREAS, wartime service-disabled noncitizen veterans who get deported effectively lose access to Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care services and access to VA benefits; and

WHEREAS, Veteran Treatment Courts allow wartime veterans arrested for service-related, nonviolent non-felony crimes to address their service-related mental health or substance abuse issues which may result in removing charges upon successful completion; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports the enactment of legislation to protect honorably discharged wartime noncitizen veterans with service-related disabilities, from deportation without due process and the opportunity to participate in any VA program, including the Veterans Treatment Court; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that DAV supports the enactment of legislation to protect honorably discharged war-time noncitizen veterans with service-related disabilities, from deportation while filing and awaiting a decision on their application for U.S. citizenship.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 121
SUPPORT FEDERAL LAWS, REGULATIONS, PROGRAMS AND POLICIES
THAT ENHANCE, AND OPPOSE THOSE THAT DIMINISH, DAV'S ABILITY
TO FULFILL ITS MISSION OF ASSISTING SERVICE-DISABLED
VETERANS, THEIR FAMILIES AND SURVIVORS

WHEREAS, DAV was founded by Judge Robert Marx and several hundred other fellow veterans on September 25, 1920 in Cincinnati, Ohio in order to rally their collective voice in the halls of Congress and help their fellow disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, DAV was chartered by Congress on June 17, 1932 as a nonprofit war veterans organization to advance the interests, and work for the betterment, of all wounded, injured, and disabled American veterans; and

WHEREAS, DAV is recognized by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) as a congressionally chartered veterans service organization for the purpose of preparation, presentation, and prosecution of claims for VA benefits; and

WHEREAS, DAV is a tax-exempt veterans organization under section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code, and is recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a charitable war veterans organization eligible to receive tax deductible contributions; and

WHEREAS, DAV has a National Headquarters in Kentucky, a National Service and Legislative Headquarters in Washington, D.C. and hundreds of service officers working inside VA offices and on military bases across the country to support veterans and their families seeking benefits and services earned through their service; and

WHEREAS, DAV has 52 departments, over 1,200 chapters and approximately 1 million members who provide their time, talents and resources to help fulfill DAV's mission of empowering veterans to lead high-quality lives with dignity and respect; and

WHEREAS, DAV provides meaningful support free of charge to more than 1 million veterans and family members every year through its service, volunteer, transportation, employment, legislative, communications and charitable programs; and

WHEREAS, changes to federal laws, regulations, programs and policies can enhance or diminish DAV's ability to fulfill its mission as a federally chartered, nonprofit charitable veterans service organization and its members ability to support that mission; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports federal laws, regulations, programs and policies that enhance, and will oppose those that diminish, DAV's ability as a non-profit veterans organization to assist ill and injured veterans, their families and survivors.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 273

PROVIDE WEEKEND BURIALS AT NATIONAL CEMETERIES

WHEREAS, scheduling a weekend burial at a National Cemetery is not current policy; and
WHEREAS, Public Law 114–315 requires the National Cemetery Administration (NCA) to study the feasibility of weekend burials; and

WHEREAS, NCA operates 135 national cemeteries; and

WHEREAS, available cemetery benefits include a gravesite in any national cemetery with available space, opening and closing of the grave, perpetual care, a government headstone or marker, a burial flag, and a Presidential Memorial certificate, at no cost to the family; and

WHEREAS, the NCA works to continuously improve customer satisfaction, meeting the wishes of veterans and their loved ones; and

WHEREAS, providing weekend burial at a National Cemetery eases scheduling and lightens the burden on veterans' survivors, many of whom may need to travel great distances to pay their final respects and honor their loved one as he or she is laid to rest; and

WHEREAS, DAV and other veterans service organizations often provide volunteers who conduct military honors at funeral service burials; and

WHEREAS, weekend burial at National Cemeteries will allow more volunteers an opportunity to participate in military honor guard at funeral services due to scheduling; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, seeks legislation that would authorize weekend burials for service-connected veterans at cemeteries operated by the NCA.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 295

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO GUARANTEE UNITED STATES CITIZENSHIP TO HONORABLY DISCHARGED SERVICE-DISABLED NONCITIZEN VETERANS

WHEREAS, noncitizen service members have played an important role in the United States military since the Revolutionary War and thousands continue to serve honorably today; and

WHEREAS, persons with noncitizen status, who are permanent residents of the United States have permission to work in the United States and those who have obtained a high school diploma and speak English are eligible to enlist in the United States military; and

WHEREAS, current law allows noncitizen veterans to apply for expedited citizenship if they meet age and length of service requirements, and demonstrate English proficiency and knowledge of the history and government of the United States—however, meeting these criteria does not guarantee citizenship will be awarded; and

WHEREAS, honorably discharged veterans with: disabilities due to military service; service-related disabilities pending awards of service connection; or disabilities incurred during or as a result of military service but not awarded service connection should be guaranteed citizenship for their honorable service; and

WHEREAS, these veterans should have the opportunity to live without fear of deportation from the country they fought for; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports the enactment of legislation to provide honorably discharged veterans with disabilities as a result of their military service, regardless if service connection has been established for such conditions, guaranteed citizenship.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 325

SUPPORT FORMER PRISONER-OF-WAR SLAVE LABOR CLAIMS AGAINST JAPANESE FIRMS

WHEREAS, on May 30, 2009, the government of Japan, through then–Ambassador to the United States Ichiro Fujisaki, offered an official apology to American prisoners of war (POWs) for their abuse, misuse, pain and suffering caused by Imperial Japan; and

WHEREAS, in September 2010, the government of Japan reinforced its apology by initiating a visitation program for former POWs to visit Japan, to return to the sites of their imprisonment and to receive the apology directly from senior Japanese government officials; and

WHEREAS, the United States owes much to these soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen, the majority of whom fought in the early heroic battles of World War II in the Philippines, on Wake Island, Guam, Java and in the Sunda Strait; and

WHEREAS, the American POWs of Imperial Japan were forced into slave labor throughout the Japanese Empire in the most unjust, brutal and inhumane conditions; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports and commends the efforts of the American POWs of Japan to reclaim their dignity and attain full justice from the government of Japan and those Japanese private companies that enslaved them; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV insists the government of Japan provide and publicize an official transcript in English and Japanese of the government's 2009 apology to the American POWs; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV insists Congress and the Administration work with all parties involved to ensure the continuation of the POW visitation program to Japan, that it be expanded to include family members and descendants, and funds be provided for a dedicated program of research, documentation, exchange and education; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV will work with all parties involved to persuade the private Japanese companies that benefited from POW slave labor during World War II, especially those companies now doing business in the United States, to follow the Japanese government's lead in acknowledging their use and abuse of American POW labor, and join with the Japanese government to create a fund for remembrance, research, documentation, exchange and education on the POW experience in the Pacific and its lessons for war and peace.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 439

SUPPORT FAIR AIR TRAVEL FOR DISABLED VETERANS

WHEREAS, travel as a disabled veteran can be more expensive; and

WHEREAS, airlines do not have to pay for damage to walkers, wheelchairs, or other assistance aids; and

WHEREAS, there is no way to note without calling the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) call center for each airline to get aid in booking air travel; and

WHEREAS, there is no thought to the need of service dogs and leg space for disabled veterans flying; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, supports an easier way to book travel to show disabled veteran status in need of extra leg room, with no extra charge and reasonable reimbursement of medical equipment or rental cost if damage occurs during transportation; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that legislation be made to assist in ease of travel for disabled veterans with care givers and/or service dogs; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that veterans have the ability to identify themselves online as a disabled veteran with an ADA chatbot as they book online tickets as to not to have to pay a higher cost.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 512

SUPPORT MEANINGFUL ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES, BUT WITH DUE PROCESS, FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

WHEREAS, in order to ensure that veterans receive the benefits and services they have earned, every Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) employee, manager and leader must faithfully fulfill their duties and responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, when VA employees fail veterans due to poor performance or misconduct, these individuals must be held accountable for such failures; and

WHEREAS, accountability constitutes a range of actions, including remedial training; demotion; suspension; and, when justified, termination; and

WHEREAS, the VA's long-term future must foster an environment in which the best and brightest individuals choose VA employment over other federal or private employers; and

WHEREAS, poor performance and misconduct cannot be tolerated, but all VA employees must be confident that fairness and due process govern selection, promotion, demotion, sanction or termination; and

WHEREAS, without such assurances of fairness and due process in the workplace, talented individuals may not entertain working in or remaining at the VA; and

WHEREAS, pending legislative proposals before Congress would heighten accountability; however, any bill enacted by Congress should include standards by which accountability can be measured while ensuring due process and fairness for VA employees subject to such standards; and

WHEREAS, civil service protections enacted decades ago came about as a consequence of cronyism, politicization and ill treatment of civil servants, including terminations for almost any reason or no reason; and

WHEREAS, ensuring that the civil service remains free of political influence is a principle that must be protected to guarantee that VA employees are never appointed, demoted or terminated for political or personal reasons; and

WHEREAS, sanctions against VA employees based on performance must be made only if measurable performance standards have been clearly communicated but still violated; and

WHEREAS, VA managers must be empowered to use existing policies in a timely manner to sanction employees who fail to meet their documented performance standards; and

WHEREAS, applying sanctions exclusively to VA employees in the wake of a scandal is in contravention of civil service rules that regulate the entire federal workforce; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, insists any legislation changing the existing employment protections in the VA must strike a balance between holding civil servants accountable for their performance while maintaining the VA as an employer of choice for the best and brightest.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 546

APPRECIATION TO ALL WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE 101ST NATIONAL CONVENTION

WHEREAS, the success of the 101st DAV National Convention convened in Atlantic City, New Jersey, 5–8, 2023, depends on the total cooperation, collaboration and unselfish devotion of the state, county, and local officials; and

WHEREAS, the success of this National Convention is also attributed to the Department and local Chapters and Units of the DAV and DAVA, particularly to Convention Chairman, Mr. Johnnie Walker; and

WHEREAS, we wish to commend all the news media for their encouragement and assistance at all of our Convention activities; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, expresses its sincere appreciation to all groups and/or agencies whose dedication to our principles has made our Convention a successful one; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we wish to extend to the citizens of Atlantic City, New Jersey, our deepest gratitude for their personal interest in our great organization; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we wish to extend our appreciation to all of the distinguished guests who participated in our convention and support the ideals and principles of our great organization; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we extend our gratitude to Convention Chairman Mr. Johnnie Walker, and his entire Committee for providing personalized assistance to our friends and delegates during our Convention stay.

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RESOLUTION NO. 547

APPRECIATION TO HARRAH'S RESORT ATLANTIC CITY FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE 101ST NATIONAL CONVENTION

WHEREAS, the excellent service and ambience of the Harrah's Resort Atlantic City contributed greatly to the success of the 101st National Convention of the DAV convened in Atlantic City, New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, the courteous team members of the hotel staff ensured the comfort and satisfaction of the DAV officers, delegates and guests; and

WHEREAS, the classic setting, friendly environment, and numerous amenities helped make the 101st National Convention a truly memorable experience; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, expresses its deepest appreciation for the Harrah's Resort Atlantic City and to its entire staff for their friendly, personalized attention, which helped make the 101st National Convention a resounding success.

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RESOLUTION NO. 548
EXPRESSING APPRECIATION TO FORMER NATIONAL
ADJUTANT J. MARC BURGESS

WHEREAS, J. Marc Burgess, a native of Hattiesburg, Mississippi, is a disabled Gulf War veteran; and

WHEREAS, he honorably answered the call to military duty serving in the United States Navy, including duty aboard USS Normandy as a plank owner, from 1987 to 1992 before he was medically discharged; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Burgess joined DAV's professional ranks in 1995 as a national service officer in Baltimore, followed by national service officer assignments in Washington, D.C., and Atlanta; and later served at DAV's Board of Veterans' Appeals Office as a national appeals officer and as appellate counsel before the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims; and

WHEREAS, he served as an associate and assistant national service director at DAV National Service and Legislative Headquarters and as the director of human resources at DAV National Headquarters; and

WHEREAS, in 2010, he was promoted to executive director of DAV National Headquarters; and

WHEREAS, beginning in 2013, Mr. Burgess was appointed and served 10 years as national adjutant and chief executive officer of the more than 1 million-member DAV; and

WHEREAS, he is a life member of Chapter 19 in Cold Spring, Kentucky; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Burgess had a distinguished career as only the seventh veteran to serve as national adjutant in the 103-year history of DAV; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV, assembled at the 2023 DAV and Auxiliary National Convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, expresses its members' heartfelt appreciation and profound gratitude to J. Marc Burgess for his selfless service and dedication to his fellow disabled veterans, their families and DAV; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV also salutes and extends special appreciation to Mr. Burgess' spouse, Amy, and their family for their support and sacrifices during his 10 years as DAV's national adjutant and nearly 28 years of leadership and service on behalf of millions of our nation's ill and injured veterans.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 549
EXPRESSING APPRECIATION TO NATIONAL
COMMANDER JOSEPH PARSETICH

WHEREAS, DAV National Commander Joseph Parsetich, of Great Falls, Montana, served honorably in the United States Air Force, enlisting at the age of 17; and

WHEREAS, his military career included volunteering for assignment to Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, he served with the 377th Security Police Squadron at Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Vietnam, from 1968 to 1969; and

WHEREAS, he quietly carried the memories and burden of surviving that experience for decades; and

WHEREAS, after being diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder in 2009, he prioritized his mental health and began seeking treatment; and

WHEREAS, he has been a strong advocate for his fellow veterans as a department service officer since 2009; and

WHEREAS, he has volunteered his time to help veterans in multiple capacities, including as a DAV Transportation Network driver; and

WHEREAS, he has served on several veteran-focused executive committees, including the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Veterans Rural Health Advisory Committee since 2017; and

WHEREAS, he has held several leadership positions with DAV at the chapter, department and national levels, including adjutant and treasurer for DAV Chapter 2 in Great Falls, Montana;

commander for the DAV Department of Montana; and as the 14th District representative on DAV's National Executive Committee; and

WHEREAS, the membership of DAV unanimously elected him to lead the more than 1 million-member organization as its national commander during the 2022 DAV and Auxiliary National Convention in Orlando, Florida; and

WHEREAS, Commander Parsetich has shown outstanding leadership during his year as national commander, while advancing DAV's mission and promoting DAV's message before Congress, at events and throughout media across the country; and

WHEREAS, Commander Parsetich made it a key priority, working tirelessly throughout his tenure, to ensure veterans have timely access to mental health care, support and services, and improved suicide prevention efforts by the VA; and

WHEREAS, he has advocated on behalf of all veterans to ensure a properly funded VA so veterans receive the health care and benefits that they have earned, as well as the proper recognition of the service and sacrifices made by their family members, caregivers and survivors; and

WHEREAS, Commander Parsetich has shown incredible compassion during his year as national commander by visiting numerous ill and injured veterans at VA medical facilities nationwide and leading DAV at the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic and the National Disabled Veterans Golf Clinic, all while advancing DAV's mission; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV, in its National Convention assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 5–8, 2023, expresses its members' heartfelt appreciation and profound gratitude to Commander Parsetich for his sacrifices, selfless service, professionalism and dedication to his fellow wounded, ill and injured veterans; their families; their survivors; and DAV during his year as DAV national commander; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV also salutes and extends sincere appreciation to Commander Parsetich's wife, Meg, and his family for their steadfast support and sacrifices during his year as DAV national commander.

* * *

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Thank you, Matt.

(Whereupon, the Committee on General Resolutions and Membership chair withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: You have heard the motion. May I have a second?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Mic 3.

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Mic 3.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: District 12, Department Commander of Wisconsin, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Thank you. In accordance with Rule 9, now is the time for any rejected resolutions to be read. Are there any rejected resolutions you wish read? Hearing none, all those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered.

(Whereupon, the Committee on General Resolutions and Membership chair withdrew from the stage.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: It is now my honor and privilege to introduce the president of the DAV Charitable Service Trust, Richard Marbes.

A Green Bay, Wisconsin native, Dick enlisted in the Air Force in 1955 and served as an airborne radio operator. While assigned to medical evacuation and troop carrier squadrons in France and Germany he was medically evacuated back to the United States following a cancer that resulted in the amputation of his leg. He medically retired due to service-connected disability in 1958. Please give a warm welcome to the revered leader, Dick Marbes. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the chairman withdrew from and Chairman Marbes advanced to the podium.)

MR. LEWIS: Past National Commander Dick Marbes served in DAV's highest elected position from 1993 to 1994. In 1978 he was named the Wisconsin Disabled Veteran of the Year.

A life member and service officer for Chapter 3 in Green Bay, he has held numerous elected positions at the chapter, department and national levels.

CHARITABLE SERVICE TRUST PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER RICHARD E. MARBES: Thank you, Commander, for your very kind introduction. And thank you to my fellow veterans for this opportunity to speak with you about our Charitable Service Trust.

As president let me introduce the Trust's governing board. They are Vice-President Barry Jesinoski, Secretary-Treasurer Dennis Nixon, and our Directors: National Commander Joe Parsetich, Marc Burgess, Denice Williams, and Danny Oliver.

I've been giving this annual report at convention since 2000. And let me tell you, it never gets old.

Each year I get to showcase the incredible effects the Trust has on ill and injured veterans through the organizations we support. I get to thank our donors whose continued generosity has allowed us to flourish through turbulent economic times. And I get to recognize the team who administers the trust and helps us maintain our prestigious reputation with donors, organizations, and charity evaluators.

The biggest difference this past year for me, personally, came from one of our grant recipients, Blue Skies for the Good Guys and Gals. Their annual Warrior Weekend to Remember is a life-changing catalyst for emotional healing and building camaraderie among veterans and their families. They invited me to the last one they held to see how the program works. I witnessed the change that occurs in these veterans' lives.

One of the activities they get to do is skydiving. And instead of me talking about it, take a look. (Whereupon, a video of Mr. Marbes skydiving was viewed.)

CHARITABLE SERVICE TRUST PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARBES: I wish you could have been there. As I said in that clip, jumping out of that plane was a dream come true for me. And moments like that are part of the reason why the Trust was established in 1986.

At the time, massive government spending cuts jeopardized veterans and their families getting the care and services they needed. DAV didn't stand idle. We took action, forming a fund that was immune to lawmakers' whims.

With the Charitable Service Trust we could provide reassurance to veterans in need that they would be supported and cared for, no matter what happened on Capitol Hill. And organizations like Blue Skies could offer innovative ways to help veterans.

Yet it seems like the more things change, the more they stay the same. Just a couple of months ago our country faced the very real potential that it would default on its loans, once again putting government funding of some veterans' programs and services at risk.

But the needs of our nation's veterans don't end just because funding doesn't exist. We made a promise to care for them and we intend to keep it. And keep it we have.

During my first annual report 23 years ago I proudly shared that we had provided \$622,000 to various charitable programs in 1999. With that money we helped transport veterans to their VA medical appointments, provided food and shelter to homeless and at-risk veterans, and supported therapeutic initiatives.

We would have been proud to continue giving that amount each year. But the Trust has continued to grow in impressive ways. I'll give you more detail in just a minute, but, incredibly, that \$622,000 represents a little more than 6 percent of what we gave in 2022.

That growth is thanks, in large part, to our donors. Without their gifts we would be unable to do our work of helping renew the lives of veterans and their families.

As we have for the past 36 years, the Trust continues to carefully evaluate those whom we partner with. Our nation's veterans deserve the very best support. And we will continue to provide grants to those organizations that deliver.

We are also committed to sound financial stewardship. More than 95 cents out of every donated dollar directly supports programs that contribute to the victories the Trust makes possible. (Applause) People can confidently give to us and know exactly how we use their money.

The Trust has been awarded a perfect overall score three times from Charity Navigator, the nation's largest independent charity evaluator. (Applause) And we've received their coveted Four-Star Rating more than 15 times since first being evaluated. (Applause)

More recently, we earned the "Accountability and Finance," "Culture and Community" and "Leadership and Adaptability" beacons under their new Encompass Rating System.

The Trust also received Candid's "Platinum Seal of Transparency" for 2022.

These recognitions and the overall success of the program wouldn't be possible without the diligent effort of Bridgette Sorrell and her team that administers the Trust. Thank you all for your hard work. (Applause)

Corporate matching gift programs, bequests and other forms of contributions from corporations, foundations, and individual donors enable the Trust to fulfill its mission.

In 2022 these gifts, along with income derived from investments, totaled nearly \$20 million, allowing the Trust to devote close to \$10 million toward critical health care, education, employment, transition assistance, creative healing, legal services, and therapeutic activities addressing both physical and psychological barriers.

Every organization we support does important work for veterans and their families. They reflect our mission of empowering veterans to lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity. And we are proud to back their initiatives.

One of those organizations is Canines for Service in Wilmington, North Carolina. They train and match service dogs with veterans experiencing mobility limitations, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, or traumatic brain injury. For those of you who have a service dog, you know how life-changing they can be.

Since 2013, funds from the Trust have helped provide trained service dogs to ill and injured veterans. And we are proud of that support.

Now, let's learn a little more about Canines for Service.

(Whereupon, a video about Canines for Service was viewed, followed by a round of applause.)

CHARITABLE SERVICE TRUST PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARBES: What a great mission. And now, to share more about their program and mission, please join me in welcoming the Canines for Service executive director, Bethany Leighton. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Ms. Leighton joined Charitable Service Trust President and Past National Commander Marbes at the podium.)

MS. BETHANY LEIGHTON: Canines for Service is honored to be here today. And we are incredibly grateful to the DAV Charitable Trust and all of you here for the support that you provide to our veterans and service dogs.

What would you say if I told you that each one of you in this room was responsible for saving the life of a veteran? Not only that, but you are responsible for restoring relationships, saving marriages, and ensuring that veterans make it to their children's graduations and weddings?

It might surprise you, but it is true. Because of the DAV Charitable Service Trust Canines for Service is able to provide life-saving service dogs to our veterans at no cost.

Our service dogs in training learn many commands during their years of training. But what is not as obvious is that they give our veterans a tool to mitigate their disability, they allow our veterans to walk out the door with more confidence and dignity, and, quite simply, they give them a reason to live.

When we first meet our veteran clients they are often at some of the lowest points in their life. Many have contemplated or even attempted suicide. Most get a few hours of sleep at night and are on multiple medications and do not leave their house very often and they avoid large crowds.

Some have a huge support network and some have none. Yet all of them want more for themselves, for their families, and ultimately want more out of their life. Canines for Service has a unique opportunity to step in and give them just that.

When Army veteran Tara came to C-F-S, she rarely left her house. She was getting groceries and food delivered in an effort to avoid people and crowds. One of her goals was to be able to go out and eat a meal at a restaurant without getting overwhelmed by the effects of her PTSD.

After just two weeks with her service dog, Leiden, Tara successfully made several trips out in public and enjoyed a meal at Panera Bread. (Applause)

Before receiving service dog, Lanon, Army veteran Michael's family was terrified to leave him alone for fear that he might fall without someone there to help him due to his mobility challenges. He had fallen previously while home alone and was left for several hours before someone could come and assist him.

His family's stress and anxiety were at an all-time high. After receiving his service dog, Lanon, Michael's family is not afraid any more. They know that Michael is not alone and that Lanon will be there when he falls.

Then there is Army veteran Katie whose TBI causes her to have severe migraines, lose feeling in her limbs, and sometimes fall without the ability to stop herself. Now, with service dog, Bowie, when she loses sensation or falls Bowie is trained to support her and help her get back on her feet.

When her alarm goes off to take her medication but she cannot remember where she put her phone due to her TBI, Bowie finds it for her. When she goes out in public in her wheelchair, she does not have to worry about opening doors, Bowie does it for her.

These may seem like trivial things to most people, but they mean everything to the veterans we serve. At Canines for Service we prioritize every service dog's training, their task work and even their size to suit our veterans and meet their needs. We are a passionate and dedicated group of individuals.

I could share many more stories with you all today but what I want to leave you with is that a service dog can save a life. They do each and every day.

Together, we can save many more lives. We are just one Leiden, one Lanon and one Bowie away.

Thank you so much for your support. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Ms. Leighton withdrew from and Charitable Service Trust President and Past National Commander Marbes returned to the podium.)

CHARITABLE SERVICE TRUST PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARBES:

Thank you, Bethany. We are grateful for the work you and your team do to make the lives of veterans better. (Applause)

The needs of every ill and injured veteran differ as they navigate through the highs and lows of life. Recovery, healing and thriving may look different to each of us.

And that is why the Trust exists, to find and partner with the very best organizations in the country that are working toward a common goal of helping veterans and their families.

Organizations like Adaptive Adventures, which provide a variety of adaptive sports and physical fitness activities to veterans, their families, and caregivers.

Or Music Conservatory of Westchester, which has a Healing our Heroes program that provides music therapy services to ill and injured veterans.

And Stack Up's Overwatch Program, which provides suicide and crisis intervention to veterans and active-duty service members during online gaming.

The Trust can make impactful contributions to all these organizations and so many more because of the generosity of loyal supporters, corporations, and foundations. (Applause)

Thank you to every donor. Thank you for your continued support of the Trust and our mission. Your gifts matter. They have restored hope, provided healing and, most importantly, saved lives.

You can learn more about the DAV's Charitable Service Trust and keep up-to-date with our initiatives at CST-dot-DAV-dot-org or by liking us on Facebook.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this presentation. And thank you for allowing me to share some of the incredible work the Trust does.

God bless each and every one of you. And may God continue to bless our U.S. of A.

Commander, this concludes my report. (Applause)

DAV (Disabled American Veterans) Charitable Service Trust

Financial Statements as of and for the
Year Ended December 31, 2022, and
Independent Auditor's Report

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Board of Directors of
Disabled American Veterans Charitable Service Trust:

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of DAV (Disabled American Veterans) Charitable Service Trust (the "Trust"), which comprise the statement of financial position as of December 31, 2022, and the related statements of activities, functional expenses, and cashflows for the year then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements (collectively referred to as the "financial statements").

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Trust as of December 31, 2022, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAS). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are required to be independent of the Trust and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audit. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, and for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is required to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Trust's ability to continue as a going concern for one year after the date that the financial statements are issued.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with GAAS will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery,

intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Misstatements are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

In performing an audit in accordance with GAAS, we:

- Exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Trust's internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements.
- Conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Trust's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings, and certain internal control-related matters that we identified during the audit.

Deloitte + Touche LLP

April 12, 2023

DAV (DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS) CHARITABLE SERVICE TRUST

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2022

ASSETS

CASH	\$ 5,856,468
INTEREST AND DIVIDENDS RECEIVABLE	59,925
ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE	732,669
CAMPAIGNS' PLEDGES RECEIVABLE—Net of allowance for uncollectible pledges of \$181,944	81,260
PREPAID EXPENSES AND OTHER	16,123
INVESTMENTS—Includes charitable gift annuity reserve balance of \$5,896,833	49,945,259
SOFTWARE—Net	<u>28,728</u>
TOTAL	<u>\$ 56,720,432</u>

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS

LIABILITIES:

Accounts payable—Disabled American Veterans	\$ 24,717
Accounts payable—other	76,774
Annuity payment liability	<u>3,597,491</u>

Total liabilities	<u>3,698,982</u>
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NET ASSETS WITH AND WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS

Without donor restrictions	52,938,841
With donor restrictions	<u>82,609</u>

Total net assets	<u>53,021,450</u>
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TOTAL	<u>\$ 56,720,432</u>
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See notes to financial statements.

DAV (DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS) CHARITABLE SERVICE TRUST

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2022

	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
SUPPORT AND REVENUE:			
Contributions—net of assessment fees and provision for uncollectible pledges of \$186,509	\$ 11,671,767	\$ 1,336,372	\$ 13,008,139
Contributions of charitable gift annuities	316,973	-	316,973
Bequests	2,557,998	995,907	3,553,905
Net investment return	(6,286,366)	-	(6,286,366)
Net assets released from restrictions	<u>2,268,670</u>	<u>(2,268,670)</u>	<u>-</u>
Total support and revenue	<u>10,529,042</u>	<u>63,609</u>	<u>10,592,651</u>
EXPENSES:			
Program services	9,950,136	-	9,950,136
Management and general	223,236	-	223,236
Fundraising	<u>93,336</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>93,336</u>
Total expenses	<u>10,266,708</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>10,266,708</u>
CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITY VALUATION ADJUSTMENT	<u>173,812</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>173,812</u>
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	436,146	63,609	499,755
NET ASSETS—Beginning of year	<u>52,502,695</u>	<u>19,000</u>	<u>52,521,695</u>
NET ASSETS—End of year	<u>\$ 52,938,841</u>	<u>\$ 82,609</u>	<u>\$ 53,021,450</u>

See notes to financial statements.

DAV (DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS) CHARITABLE SERVICE TRUST

STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2022

	Program Services	Management and General	Fundraising	Total
EXPENSES:				
Allocations to charitable programs	\$ 9,838,621	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 9,838,621
Administrative charges	-	43,332	72,236	115,568
Professional fees	16,075	99,457	-	115,532
Grant proposal processing	64,997	-	-	64,997
Banking fees	-	40,964	-	40,964
Advertising	11,720	781	3,125	15,626
Maintenance	-	13,734	-	13,734
Printing, postage, and supplies	4,144	8,591	11	12,746
Travel	2,356	10,138	-	12,494
Legal fees	-	-	6,841	6,841
Depreciation	10,179	-	-	10,179
Insurance	2,044	2,044	-	4,088
Other expenses	-	4,195	11,124	15,319
TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>\$ 9,950,136</u>	<u>\$ 223,236</u>	<u>\$ 93,336</u>	<u>\$ 10,266,708</u>

See notes to financial statements.

DAV (DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS) CHARITABLE SERVICE TRUST

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2022

CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:	
Change in net assets	\$ 499,755
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash provided by operating activities:	
Noncash investment contributions	(216,758)
Net change in depreciation of investments	9,371,647
Net gain on sale of investments	(2,054,751)
Depreciation	10,179
Charitable gift annuity valuation adjustment	(173,812)
Changes in operating assets and liabilities:	
Interest and dividends receivable	(22,820)
Accounts receivable	(164,251)
Campaigns' pledges receivable	1,999
Prepaid expenses and other	4,164
Accounts payable—DAV and other	(182,429)
Annuity payment liability	(316,973)
Net cash provided by operating activities	<u>6,755,950</u>
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:	
Purchases of investments	(26,890,048)
Proceeds from the sale of investments	<u>14,107,184</u>
Net cash used in investing activities	<u>(12,782,864)</u>
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES:	
Proceeds from gift annuity agreement contributions	704,590
Payments to annuitants	<u>(504,197)</u>
Net cash provided by financing activities	<u>200,393</u>
NET DECREASE IN CASH	(5,826,521)
CASH—Beginning of year	<u>11,682,989</u>
CASH—End of year	<u>\$ 5,856,468</u>

See notes to financial statements.

DAV (DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS) CHARITABLE SERVICE TRUST

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

AS OF AND FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2022

1. ORGANIZATION

DAV (Disabled American Veterans) Charitable Service Trust (the "Trust") is a not-for-profit service organization formed under the laws of the District of Columbia for the single purpose of empowering veterans to lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity. To carry out this responsibility, the Trust supports physical and psychological rehabilitation programs; enhances research and mobility for veterans with amputations and spinal cord injuries; benefits aging veterans; aids and shelters homeless veterans; and evaluates and addresses the needs of veterans wounded in recent wars and conflicts and their caregivers.

2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Financial Statements—The accompanying financial statements have been prepared on the accrual basis of accounting in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAP).

New Accounting Standards—In February 2016, the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) issued Accounting Standards Update (ASU) No. 2016-02, *Leases (Topic 842)*. This standard amends the existing guidance and requires lessees to recognize on the balance sheet assets and liabilities for the rights and obligations created by those leases with lease terms longer than 12 months. This update is effective for annual financial statements issued for fiscal years beginning after December 15, 2021, and is to be applied using a modified retrospective approach; early adoption is permitted. The adoption of ASU No. 2016-02 did not have a significant impact on the financial statements or the financial statement disclosures.

In September 2020, the FASB issued ASU No. 2020-07, *Not-for-Profit Entities (Topic 958): Presentation and Disclosures by Not-for-Profit Entities for Contributed Nonfinancial Assets*. The amendments require not-for-profit entities to present contributed nonfinancial assets as a separate line item in the statement of activities, apart from contributions of cash and other financial contributions. The standard also requires additional disclosure related to contributed nonfinancial assets. The amendment, which requires retrospective application, is effective for annual periods beginning after June 15, 2021. The adoption of ASU No. 2016-02 did not have a significant impact on the financial statements or the financial statement disclosures.

In June 2016, the FASB issued ASU No. 2016-13, *Financial Instruments—Credit Losses*, which is included in ASC Topic 326, *Measurement of Credit Losses on Financial Instruments*. The new standard requires a financial asset (or group of financial assets) measured at amortized cost basis to be presented at the net amount expected to be collected. The new standard revises the accounting requirements related to the measurement of credit losses and will require organizations to measure all expected credit losses for financial assets based on historical experience, current conditions, and reasonable and supportable forecasts about collectability. Assets must be presented in the financial statements at the net amount expected to be collected. The expected increases or decreases of expected credit losses that have taken

place during the period, is reflected in the statement of activities. Management is in the process of evaluating the impact on the financial statements.

Cash—The Trust considers all highly liquid instruments purchased with a maturity date of three months or less to be cash equivalents and are stated at cost, which approximates fair value. The earnings credit received on the Trust's checking accounts was \$200,509 in 2022. The Trust maintains its cash in bank deposit accounts, which, at times, exceed federally insured limits. The Trust has not experienced any losses in such accounts.

Revenue Recognition—The Trust is a member of Independent Charities of America (ICA) and Military Family & Veterans Service Organizations of America (MFVSOA). ICA and MFVSOA are charitable agency federations, certified by the US Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to participate in the annual combined federal campaigns, as well as state and corporate workplace giving campaigns.

The Trust recognizes contribution revenue as an increase in net assets without donor restrictions when notification of the campaign designations is received and also recognizes an allowance for uncollectible pledges. Pledge receivables that are outstanding for more than one year are written off in their entirety. The Trust also evaluates pledges receivable for any amounts to be specifically reserved. Pledges receivable of \$81,260 are expected to be received in 2023. Amounts received from accounts previously written off are recognized as contribution revenue when received.

As a member of MFVSOA during 2022, the Trust was assessed a portion of MFVSOA's annual operating budget based on the relative amount of total pledges made to the Trust compared with the sum of all member agency pledges. Pledges designated to MFVSOA (versus a member agency) and other revenue, such as interest income, are shared among all member agencies in this same proportion. Therefore, if MFVSOA's revenue exceeds expenses, the member agencies share the excess income. This excess income is distributed in the following year. The Trust recognizes such distribution as an increase in net assets without donor restrictions when received. The Trust received \$18,324 in 2022, included in contributions within the statement of activities, for excess income recognized by MFVSOA in 2021.

Investments—Investments include investment of contributions and charitable gift annuity agreements (see Note 7). Investments are recorded at fair value, and realized and unrealized gains and losses are reflected within the net investment return, in the statement of activities. The fair value of the Trust's investments is determined based on the quoted market prices of the related securities or quoted prices in active markets for instruments that are similar, or model-derived valuations, in which all significant inputs and significant value drivers are observable in active markets. Gains and losses on the sale of investment securities are recognized based upon the specific identification method and are reflected in net investment return. The Trust's policy is to report its cash and cash equivalents, which include money market funds, within its trust accounts as investments.

Contributions and Bequests—The Trust recognizes contributions when cash, securities or other assets; an unconditional promise to give; or a notification of a beneficial interest is received. Conditional promises to give—that is, those with a measurable performance or other barrier and a right of return—are not recognized until the conditions on which they depend have been met.

Contributions and bequests received are recorded as support with and without donor restrictions depending on the existence and nature of any donor restrictions. The Trust received stock contributions at a fair market value of \$216,758, included in contributions within the statement of activities, in 2022.

Contributed Nonfinancial Assets—For the year ended December 31, 2022, no contributed nonfinancial assets were received. Should nonfinancial assets be received, they would be separately recognized within the statement of activities and disclosed within the notes to the financial statements.

Allocation of Expenses—The financial statements report certain categories of expenses that are attributable to one or more program or supporting services of the Trust. Those expenses include grant proposal processing, administrative charges, professional fees, travel, printing, postage and supplies, insurance, advertising and other expenses. All expenses are allocated based on estimates of time and effort toward each program or supporting service. Allocation estimates are reviewed annually based on the specific expense and adjusted accordingly.

Income Taxes—As a not-for-profit service organization, the Trust has received a determination from the Internal Revenue Service that it is exempt from federal income tax as a 501(c) (3) organization. Contributions made to the Trust are tax deductible by the contributor as provided in Section 170 of the Internal Revenue Code.

Use of Estimates—The preparation of the financial statements in accordance with GAAP requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities, disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements, and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the reporting period. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

3. NET ASSETS RELEASED FROM DONOR RESTRICTION

Net assets are released from donor restrictions by incurring expenses satisfying the restricted purposes specified by donors. The net assets released from restrictions in 2022 are as follows:

Purpose restrictions accomplished:	
To Disabled American Veterans	\$ 2,013,976
To DAV Departments and Chapters	15,432
To National Service Foundation	95,527
Program services	<u>143,735</u>
Net assets released from donor restrictions	<u>\$ 2,268,670</u>

4. LIQUIDITY AND AVAILABILITY OF FINANCIAL ASSETS

The Trust’s working capital and cash flows are attributable to the contributions, net of assessment fees and uncollectible pledges, received throughout the year. As of December 31, 2022, the Trust’s financial assets (total assets, less prepaid expenses and software) totaled \$56,675,581. All financial assets with the exception of the Charitable Gift Annuity Reserve investment of \$5,896,833 as of December 31, 2022, are available to fund expenditures within one year following the Statement of Financial Position date.

The Trust has a policy to structure its financial assets to be available as its fundraising costs and general and administrative expenses come due. In addition, the Trust awards grants to board-approved applicants. As part of its liquidity management, the Trust invests cash in excess of daily requirements in various short-term investments. The short-term investments are invested for capital preservation and liquidity for cash flow requirements, such as money market funds, certificates of deposit, and commercial paper.

The Trust's long-term investment portfolio is for the deposit of proceeds and payment of obligations from charitable gift annuities. The portfolio is invested in marketable fixed-income and equity securities, index and actively managed mutual funds, and exchange traded funds. A portion of the balance is invested as required in accordance with governing regulatory agencies to pay the long-term charitable gift annuity beneficiary obligations. See Note 7 for further information. The remaining is invested with the intent of providing capital appreciation and total return to cover future expenditures and grants awarded.

5. FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS

Accounting Standards Codification 820, *Fair Value Measurements and Disclosures*, provides a framework for measuring fair value. This framework provides a fair value hierarchy that prioritizes the inputs to valuation techniques used to measure fair value, as follows: Level 1, which refers to securities valued using unadjusted quoted prices from active markets for identical assets; Level 2, which refers to securities not traded on an active market, but for which observable market inputs are readily available; and Level 3, which refers to securities valued based on significant unobservable inputs. Assets are classified in their entirety based on the lowest level of input that is significant to the fair value measurement.

The Trust did not hold any financial assets requiring the use of inputs that are unobservable and significant to the overall fair value measurement (Level 3) during 2022.

Asset Valuation Techniques—Valuation techniques used maximize the use of observable inputs and minimize the use of unobservable inputs. The following is a description of the valuation methodologies used for assets recorded at fair value. There have been no changes in the methodologies used at December 31, 2022.

Cash equivalents, composed of money market funds, are categorized as Level 1, and are valued at cost, which approximates fair value. The money market funds represent the Trust's shares in a registered investment company's fund.

US government securities (US Treasury notes), common stocks, and exchange-traded funds (ETFs), categorized as Level 1, are valued at the closing price reported in the active market in which the individual security is traded.

Certificates of deposit and commercial paper categorized as Level 2 are valued at fair value, which approximates amortized cost.

US government agency notes and municipal and corporate bonds, categorized as Level 2, are valued using third-party pricing services. These services may use, for example, model-based pricing methods that utilize observable market data as inputs. Broker-dealer bids or quotes of securities with similar characteristics may also be used.

Shares of registered investment companies (mutual funds), categorized as Level 1, are valued at quoted market prices that represent the net asset value of shares held at year-end.

The major categories of the Trust's financial assets measured at fair value on a recurring basis as of December 31, 2022, are as follows:

Asset Category	Quoted Prices in Active Markets for Identical Assets (Level 1)	Significant Observable Inputs (Level 2)	Total
Cash equivalents	\$ 16,491,852	\$ -	\$ 16,491,852
US government securities	1,274,230	-	1,274,230
Common stocks	1,177,202	-	1,177,202
Certificates of deposit	-	593,926	593,926
US government agency notes	-	648,049	648,049
Municipal bonds	-	163,663	163,663
Corporate bonds	-	4,290,126	4,290,126
Mutual funds/ETFs:	-	-	-
Domestic equity funds/ETFs	18,449,708	-	18,449,708
Domestic fixed income funds	171,720	-	171,720
International fixed income funds	936,955	-	936,955
International equity funds	<u>5,747,828</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>5,747,828</u>
Total mutual funds/ETFs	<u>25,306,211</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>25,306,211</u>
Total assets	<u>\$ 44,249,495</u>	<u>\$ 5,695,764</u>	<u>\$ 49,945,259</u>

Fair value of the annuity payment liability of \$3,597,491, classified as Level 2 within the fair value hierarchy, as of December 31, 2022, was calculated as the net present value of expected annuity payments based on the following significant assumptions:

- (1) The discount rate expected to reflect yields available on high-quality investments; and
- (2) The mortality assumption based on expected annuitant longevity.

6. RELATED-PARTY TRANSACTIONS

During 2022, DAV personnel assisted the Trust on a limited basis in administering its business operations, fundraising, and grant programs. For these personnel services, the Trust reimbursed DAV \$180,565 in 2022. As of December 31, 2022, the Trust owed DAV \$24,717. DAV provides the Trust with the use of facilities, equipment, and occasional magazine space at no charge.

In 2022, the Trust distributed the following in support of DAV programs and services:

Assistance to disabled veterans and their families	\$ 1,696,798
DAV Employment Initiative	1,600,000
DAV “Just B Kids” Scholarship	310,000
Transportation Network	200,000
Veterans retreats	150,000
DAV Capital Campaign	83,333
Jesse Brown Youth Scholarship Program	45,000
DAV Disaster Relief	23,500
DAV National Convention	15,000
National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic	7,500
DAV 5K Program	5,000

In performing the duties of their positions, DAV’s National Commander and National Adjutant serve on the Board of Directors of the Trust. In performing the duties of their positions as a Trust Director, some members also serve on the DAV National Service Foundation Board of Directors and the Disabled Veterans’ Life Memorial Foundation’s Board of Directors.

In 2022, the Trust made contributions of \$331,156, to the DAV National Service Foundation’s Columbia Trust for the DAV Transportation Network Van Grant Program. In 2022, the Trust also made contributions of \$95,526 to the DAV National Service Foundation to be used in assisting disabled veterans and their dependents.

7. ANNUITY PAYMENT LIABILITY

The Trust enters into charitable gift annuity agreements with donors. In the statement of activities, contributions of charitable gift annuities of \$316,973 for the year ended December 31, 2022, are the result of the portion of gift annuity contributions that exceed the annuity payment liability estimated at the date of the contribution.

The Trust recognizes an annuity payment liability as the present value of the future cash flows expected to be paid to the donors and their beneficiaries using a discount rate of 5% as of December 31, 2022.

In 2022, the Trust used the mortality table IAR-2012 in determining the liability to reflect the most up-to-date expectations with regard to longevity for individual annuitant lives.

In 2022, the Charitable Gift Annuity Valuation Adjustment of \$173,812 consists of:

- Gain from deceased annuitants of \$445,177, and
- Other actuarial adjustments of \$(271,365), which are primarily related to discounting of the liability during the year ended December 31, 2022.

There are various state statutes and regulations that govern not-for-profit entities that enter into charitable gift annuity agreements with donors. As required by various state statutes and regulations, the Trust segregates the deposit of charitable gift annuity proceeds and reserves a portion for fulfillment of future annuity obligations. The required minimum balance of the reserve account is maintained and invested in accordance with applicable state statutes, the fair market value of which is \$4,907,383 as of December 31, 2022.

In addition to this reserve account, the Trust is required by California statutes to maintain segregated reserves for future obligations to charitable gift annuity donors residing in California. The fair market value for the California reserve account is \$989,450 as of December 31, 2022. The minimum required balance of the segregated accounts for California donors is calculated and invested in accordance with applicable California statutes and regulations.

The Trust also maintains the minimum amount of net assets without donor restrictions as required by any state for the acceptance of charitable gift annuities, which is \$1,000,000. The total net assets without donor restrictions that are subject to state statutes or regulations (calculated as the reserve funds (investments), less the annuity payment liability) amounted to \$2,299,342 as of December 31, 2022.

8. SUBSEQUENT EVENTS

No other events have occurred after December 31, 2022, but before April 12, 2023, the date the financial statements were available to be issued, that require consideration as adjustments to, or disclosures in, the financial statements.

* * * * *

(Whereupon Charitable Service Trust President and Past National Commander Marbes withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Thank you, Dick. May I have a motion to accept that impressive report?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Mic 3.

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Mic 3.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: District 12 commander, Department Commander of Wisconsin, proudly accepts the wonderful Mr. Marbes' report.

COMMANDER PARSETICH: All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered.

(Whereupon Charitable Service Trust President and Past National Commander Marbes withdrew from the stage.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Nearly 10 years ago, a long-overdue memorial paying tribute to the sacrifices of the millions of Americans who have become disabled as a result of their military service was opened in Washington, D.C.

While DAV played a pivotal role in the creation of the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial, which was dedicated on October 5th, 2014, we have continued to serve as stewards of this important monument ever since.

I'm honored to welcome onto the stage a well-known and respected DAV leader who was there in 2014 when the monument was dedicated. He helped lead the charge to establish this memorial and has been a tireless advocate for its use, preservation and promotion ever since.

Ladies and gentlemen, please help me welcome to the stage the Disabled Veterans Life Memorial Foundation President Dennis Joyner. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and DVLMF President and Past National Commander Joyner advanced to the podium.)

MR. LEWIS: DAV Past National Commander Dennis Joyner, was appointed board president for the Disabled Veterans' Life Memorial Foundation in 2015.

While speaking about the importance of the memorial during its dedication ceremony in 2014, Mr. Joyner said:

"Although I've been blessed with many achievements in my life, the achievement I am most proud of is this memorial, a memorial that gives me and the many thousands of other disabled veterans like me a sense of contentment, knowing that what we gave, what our families gave, and what we continue to give will be forever remembered here in our Nation's Capital."

DVLMF PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER DENNIS JOYNER: Thank you, Commander Parsetich, for your kind introduction. Adjutant Jesinoski, national officers, delegates and guests.

Nearly nine years ago on October 5th, 2014, we dedicated a memorial to disabled veterans and the sacrifices that they've made for their country. It was the culmination of a decade-and-a-half of planning and fundraising to bring the vision shared by Lois Pope, Jesse Brown and Art Wilson to fruition.

The results of their efforts and the hard work and determination of DAV and the Auxiliary is a beautiful tribute to those forever changed by service.

The American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial is on a 2.4 acre plot of land within sight of the U.S. Capitol Building. It features a star-shaped fountain with an ever-burning flame at its center. Granite slabs and glass panels all tell the story of veterans forever changed by their visible and invisible wounds of war.

At the dedication ceremony, Art said:

"The experiences etched on these walls remind us that, for those who serve and their families, wars often continue long after the final bullet is fired. The most difficult fight often begins after an injury is sustained."

I encourage each one of you to take the time to see it the next time you're in Washington, D.C. I promise you, it's a moving experience.

DAV was the driving force behind this venture, including hundreds of our chapters and thousands of our members. For those of you here who helped support the memorial with donations at the individual, chapter, or department levels, thank you. And please give yourselves a round of applause. (Applause)

I would like to take a moment and introduce the Disabled Veterans' Life Memorial Foundation Board of Directors: Vice-President Barry Jesinoski; Secretary-Treasurer Gene Murphy; and our Directors: National Commander Joe Parsetich, Dave Riley, Dave Gorman and Don Samuels, and Ex-Officio member Art Wilson.

Maintaining the memorial in the heart of our democracy is no easy task and it would not be possible without the thoughtful consideration of all these disabled and dedicated veterans. Thank all of you so much. (Applause)

Seeing this memorial become a reality after nearly two decades of work and being able to continue to serve on its board is truly an honor of a lifetime for me. Like so many other disabled veterans, there is a deep, personal satisfaction of knowing that what we gave, what our families gave, and what we continue to give will be forever remembered.

That's why our work continues. Completing the memorial was just the beginning.

Since 2014, our foundation has concentrated on getting the word out so current and future generations will come to fully appreciate everything disabled veterans have done for them.

And for those who aren't able to see the memorial in person, we've maintained a virtual experience that conveys its story and message.

Underscoring the deep partnership that exists, DAV continues to promote this online experience through its social media channels. And the memorial's virtual tour includes a "call-to-action" button titled "Veteran Assistance" that takes visits to DAV's veterans' assistance webpage, connecting veterans with contacts and information about DAV offerings and where they can find the nearest national service office.

In 2022, the virtual tour captured the attention of nearly 1,600 unique visitors, bringing the total visitors to roughly 16,500 since the site's launch. Online visitors stem from all over the United States, as well as 26 other countries. (Applause)

It's taken and continues to take the efforts of many generous people and organizations to build and maintain the memorial, ensuring it is pristine and its message is shared with the American people.

It's on all of us to continue the education and outreach mission of the memorial.

Everyone in this room can play a role in promoting the memorial and making the public aware of its existence, its significance, and all that it represents and honors.

To help us spread the word, we've included a brochure about the memorial in your convention bags. It is my sincere hope that you will take just a few seconds out of your day to review the materials and share it with others back home.

We will continue to stand alongside the National Park Service, volunteers, and supporters in improving the site as needed and providing a means for both veterans and their loved ones to access its meaningful message throughout the country.

To take the virtual tour or learn more about the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial, visit A-V-D-L-M-dot-org. You can also follow us on Facebook.

Thank you, Commander. This concludes my report. (Applause)

(Whereupon, DVLMF President and Past National Commander Joyner withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Thank you, Denny. May I have a motion to accept that report?

MR. JAMIL KAHN: Mic 3.

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Mic 3.

MR. KHAN: Jamil Khan, United States Marine, Department of Wisconsin, Chapter 63, with all our humble hearts we second the motion.

COMMANDER PARSETICH: All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered.

(Whereupon, DVLMF President and Past National Commander Joyner withdrew from the stage.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Now, will you please welcome William Robinson, president of the Commanders and Adjutants Association.

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and Mr. Robinson advanced to the podium.)

MR. WILLIAM ROBINSON: National Commander Parsetich, National Adjutant Jesinoski, national officers, delegates and guests, good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

MR. ROBINSON: I am proud to have been elected as president of the State Commanders and Adjutants Association for the year 2023-2024.

We pledge to continue our support for the national organization through our sponsorship for the State Commanders and Adjutants Orientation, the Mid-Winter Conference, and the mid-Winter Sports Clinic. We look forward to another very productive year in the DAV.

I would like to read into record our officers and committees for the coming year: president, William Robinson, South Carolina; vice-president, Kirk Johnson, California.

Executive committees, Pamela Beal, Arkansas; (Inaudible), Alaska; Michael Elmore, Missouri; Lisa Gregory, Virginia; Betty Minus, Maryland; Debra Olsen, Massachusetts; Paul Hermon, Jr., Louisiana. (Applause)

Past president, Burl Jimmerson, Georgia; secretary-treasurer, Rita Alberegg, Virginia; judge advocate, Floyd Watson, Wyoming; chaplain, Juliet Taylor, Connecticut; (sic) Rick Perez, New Hampshire; sergeant-at-arms, Hugo Perez, Alabama; Sadie Hill, Georgia. (Applause)

Audit: Thomas Ayala, Florida; Matt Kampainen, Wisconsin; Donald Peek, Jr., Indiana.

Constitution and Bylaws: J. Hafford Pandose, Oklahoma; Jamie Jakob, New England; Mary Ann Keckler, Florida; Rob Hilliard, Wisconsin.

Resolutions: Tim Alley, New Mexico; (Inaudible) South Carolina; (Applause) Richard Brunelle, Jr., Maine.

Special Projects, Rebecca Johnston, Tennessee; Loretta Taylor, Michigan; and Willard Cunningham, South Carolina. (Applause)

At this time would the National Commander Parsetich and National Adjutant Jesinoski please join me to receive a presentation?

(Whereupon, the commander and adjutant joined Mr. Robinson at the podium.)

MR. ROBINSON: On behalf of the State Commanders and Adjutants Association I would like to present to you these two donations for the National Service Foundation. It is with a great deal of pleasure that we present our donation of \$3,000 (Applause) and an additional check for \$100 in honor of Past President Burl Jimmerson. Thank you all very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Thank you.

ADJUTANT JESINOSKI: Well done.

(Whereupon, the president presented the commander and adjutant with the checks, at which time an official photograph was taken, after which the president withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Thank you so much, President Robinson.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, I would like anyone who wants to support the National Service Foundation but hasn't done so at the booth, to please make your way to form a line at the wall to the seated audience's right. I would like you to do so as quietly as possible. If you have already donated at the booth, please bypass the table in the back and take your place in line.

(Whereupon, members left their seats to prepare to make donations to the National Service Foundation.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Since its incorporation back in 1986, the DAV National Service Foundation has safeguarded and buoyed the long-term financial stability needed to support DAV services at every level. Using resources from the Foundation, DAV is able to continue assisting veterans of today and tomorrow in communities and states nationwide.

Although one of the Foundation's core missions is to support the DAV's daily work to meet the most significant and immediate needs of the veterans, increasing public awareness about the Foundation's mission is an extremely important component of what the Foundation does.

When they are able to open the hearts and minds of the American people, they better understand the needs of ill and injured veterans and their families which, in return, enables all of us to do our part to ensure that the veterans are properly cared for in the long term.

This includes providing free professional assistance with disability claims and benefits; no-cost transportation to and from medical appointments; and other vital services that are imperative to the quality of life of veterans and their families.

With "service before self" in mind, it is only fitting and an honor to introduce the president of the DAV National Service Foundation Andy Marshall. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and National Service Foundation President and Past National Commander Andrew "Andy" Marshall advanced to the podium.)

MR. LEWIS: Combat-disabled Vietnam veteran and past national commander and chairman of the DAV Board of Directors, Andy Marshall served in DAV's highest elected position from 2021 to 2022. Marshall is a life member of Chapter 4 in Tampa, Florida.

He has held numerous elected positions at the chapter, department and national level and currently serves as the adjutant and executive director of the DAV Department of Florida.

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER ANDREW "ANDY" MARSHALL: Commander Parsetich, Adjutant Jesinoski, national officers, and all of our members, friends, and guests.

I want to thank you for your long support of the National Service Foundation. I'd like to begin this morning's report by introducing the DAV National Service Foundation's Board of Directors: Vice-President Barry Jesinoski; Secretary-Treasurer, Past National Commander Joseph Johnston; and our Directors: Director Joe Parsetich, Director Delphine Metcalf-Foster, Director Stephen Whitehead; and Director Mike Elmore.

I'm honored to present this annual convention report to you for my very first time.

The Foundation exists to support the work DAV does on behalf of veterans each and every day. We remain resolute in our commitment to this mission and promise.

In 2022, DAV service officers submitted more than 174,000 claims for over 512,000 specific illness and injuries on behalf of veterans, their families and their survivors. These veterans are on the front lines of DAV and they represent our organization well. Their professionalism and expertise are unmatched. And we're proud to support the work they do.

The Foundation's contributions to the service department helped with the continued expansion of the i-TRAK training program, improved information technology assets, and extended the department's capabilities of service.

Of note, total client contributions to the Foundation, which are a generous expression of appreciation for all of the work our national service officers and transition service officers do, exceeded \$450,000 in 2022. (Applause)

The Foundation's Columbia Trust allows us to distribute resources to DAV's departments and chapters in need across the country.

This restricted fund functions a bit like those "Take a Penny, Leave a Penny" dishes next to cash registers: borrow when you need it; give back when you can.

I highly encourage departments and chapters with excess funds to channel them to the Columbia Trust as they are able. It's a critical resource that helps veterans, but only works if you help sustain it.

Because of your continued generosity, in 2022, the Trust awarded grants totaling \$830,000. (Applause)

These grants helped chapters and departments provide medical transportation, coordinate volunteerism in hospitals, enable department and chapter service programs, and support and assist other initiatives like those that combat veterans' homelessness.

The Trust also helped chapters and departments purchase 49 new vehicles which were donated to the VA as part of the DAV Transportation Network Program. These vehicles contributed to DAV volunteers providing almost 210,000 no-cost rides to veterans through the DAV Transportation Network. Those volunteers logged nearly 556,000 hours and drove over 9.2 million miles. (Applause) That's the equivalent of about 19 trips to the moon and back.

The Transportation Network would not be able to function without the effort of DAV hospital service coordinators. At 243 medical centers around the country, 156 hospital service coordinators match volunteer drivers with transportation requests from veterans as needed.

The Foundation is grateful to also support many of the 191 state-level department service officers and 2,448 chapter service officers who assist with DAV's primary mission of benefits advocacy in their local communities.

These volunteers are often the first interaction veterans and their families have with DAV and they represent the very best of who we are as an organization.

In total, in 2022 we distributed more than \$6.2 million to support DAV's mission. The majority of those funds went to the national service program which delivers no-cost professional services to veterans throughout the nation.

In 2023 we marked 92 years since the Foundation was established. And we remain a steadfast ally of DAV to ensure continued advocacy and service to our country's veterans.

Because of careful management, the Foundation's investments totaled \$152 million and at year-end the total net assets were approximately \$154.6 million. (Applause) This means we'll be able to support the important promise we made to those who've served for many years to come.

We continue to have very special groups and individuals who have been extraordinarily generous in their support of the Foundation. This includes Chapter 2 from Kansas City, Missouri, whose loyalty is reflected through annual contributions since 1979.

In 2019, Chapter 2 earned the first-ever Silver Level Star Award, featuring two stars, representing giving at the \$575,000 and \$650,000 milestones. (Applause) Thank you. In 2022, the chapter earned its third star, giving a lifetime total of more than \$777,000. (Applause)

I'd also like to recognize our largest contributor in the Foundation's history: Finnegan, Henderson, Farabow, Garrett and Dunner. In addition to the thousands of hours of direct legal service to veterans, Finnegan has given more than \$2.8 million over the years. (Applause)

We are very grateful for the firm's unwavering commitment to the mission of the National Service Foundation. Yes. (Applause)

And to all of our supporters of the Foundation, we offer our most sincere appreciation and gratitude. We simply could not accomplish so much without you.

I'd like now to ask National Service Director Jim Marszalek to join me on the stage as we present the Richard J. Cosgriff Pacesetting Performance Awards.

(Whereupon, Mr. Marszalek joined National Service Foundation President and Past National Commander Marshall on the stage.)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: These are given to the national service offices leading their respective division in the largest combined total contributions made in its name during 2022.

The 2022 Richard J. Cosgriff Pacesetting Performance Awards winners are:

Division 1, the National Service Office in Sacramento, California, with a total of \$6,093. And accepting the award on their behalf is NSO Supervisor Dianna Camac. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Division 1 Richard J. Cosgriff Pacesetting Performance Award was presented, at which time an official photograph was taken, after which the NSO withdrew from the stage.)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Division 2, the National Service Office in Manchester, New Hampshire, with a total of \$18,150. Accepting the award on their behalf is National Area Supervisor Mason Sullivan. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Division 2 Richard J. Cosgriff Pacesetting Performance Award was presented, at which time an official photograph was taken, after which the NSO withdrew from the stage.)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Division 3, the National Service Office in Chicago, Illinois, with a total of \$13,289. Accepting the award on their behalf is National Service Officer Supervisor Robert Nobertowize. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Division 3 Richard J. Cosgriff Pacesetting Performance Award was presented, at which time an official photograph was taken, after which the NSO withdrew from the stage.)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Division 4, the National Service Office in Saint Louis, Missouri with a total of \$141,967. Accepting the award on their behalf is National Area Supervisor Andy Edwards. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Division 4 Richard J. Cosgriff Pacesetting Performance Award was presented, at which time an official photograph was taken, after which the NSO withdrew from the stage.)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Division 5, the National Service Office in Seattle, Washington, with a total of \$12,635. Accepting the award on their behalf is National Service Officer Supervisor Ross Walker. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Division 5 Richard J. Cosgriff Pacesetting Performance Award was presented, at which time an official photograph was taken, after which the NSO withdrew from the stage.)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: And Division 6, the National Service Office in Cleveland, Ohio, with a total of \$9,900. Accepting the award on their behalf is National Service Officer Supervisor Jacob Drost. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Division 6 Richard J. Cosgriff Pacesetting Performance Award was presented, at which time an official photograph was taken, after which the NSO withdrew from the stage.)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Please join me again in thanking our incredible national service officers for all they do. (Applause)

As I wrap up my remarks and we get ready to kick off a time of giving, I want to remind you that you can also donate online or by mail at the addresses noted on the screen.

Every cent you donate to the Foundation will not only support the many service initiatives we back, but it will put DAV in an even better position to safeguard our great charity for many years to come.

Whichever method you choose to give, know that it's a way to honor and commemorate our friends, our brothers and sisters and to show our commitment to America's finest.

To start, I'm pleased to acknowledge contributions from the Moral Rearmament League of \$3,000 in the name of David Tannenbaum; (Applause) and from Finnegan, Henderson, Farabow, Garrett and Dunner of \$30,000. (Applause)

So now it's your turn to speak and show the nation what you and your chapter or department are willing to do to support the cause that brought us here today.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Department of Florida. I'm here to present a thousand dollar check on behalf of the Trustees of Chapter 78 in Florida. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Thank you.

MR. DWAYNE RAMEY: On behalf of the great Department of Virginia, I'm Second Junior Vice-Commander Dwayne Ramey, on behalf of the National Service Foundation we donate \$20,000. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Thank you.

MR. RICHARD LEHMANN: On behalf of the Department of Virginia I am First Junior Vice-Commander Rich Lehmann. We are donating \$20,000 to the National Disabled Veterans Golf Clinic. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Thank you.

MR. JAMES SMITH: Good morning. On behalf of the Department of Virginia I am James Smith, senior vice-commander, and we're making a donation of \$40,000 to the Winter Sports Clinic. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Thank you, Virginia.

MR. WILL KING: Good morning. My name is Will King. I'm the commander for the Department of Virginia. On behalf of all my comrades I'm, we are donating \$50,000 to the Disaster Relief Foundation for a grand total of \$130,000 from the great Department of Virginia. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Thank you. Good morning.

MR. THOMAS WALSH: Hi. I'm Thomas Walsh, the commander of the great State of South Carolina. (Applause) We have \$2,000 going to the National Service Foundation, \$2,000 going to the Columbia Trust, \$2,000 going to the Winter Sports, and \$2,000 going to Just B Kids; \$8,000 from the State of South Carolina. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Thank you.

MS. KIMBERLY TATHAM: Kim Tatham from the Show-Me state, a personal donation to the National Service Foundation of \$2,000; \$2,000 to the Charitable Service Trust in honor of our outstanding NSOs in the St. Louis office. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Thank you, Kim.

MR. DOUGLAS VAN GORP: Doug Van Gorp, Chapter 2, Kansas City, Missouri, we have a donation of \$20,000 for the National Service Foundation, \$5,000 for the National Disabled Veterans' Golf Clinic. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Thank you.

MR. VAN GORP: You're welcome.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'd like to make a personal contribution to the National Service Foundation in the amount of \$1,500 in memory of my brother, Elmer, a United States Army Air Force bomber pilot, World War II, who was killed in action on the 21st of January, 1945, and to my wife, Edna, married 62 years, a former Army nurse who passed away on the 9th of January. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Thank you, sir.

MR. JAMES PROCUNIER: Jim Procunier, Oslo County Chapter 16, Department of North Carolina, a personal donation of \$2,000 in memory of my friend, John King. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Thank you.

MR. JOHN RABER: John Raber, Chapter 18, Bradenton, Florida, for our national service officers we're going to donate \$5,000 to the Service Foundation. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Thank you, John.

MR. CHAD RIGGS: Chad Riggs, Chapter 2, Kansas City, Missouri, we've got a donation of \$20,000 to the 2023 Winter Sports Clinic. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Thank you, Chad.

MR. JULIUS MARLEY: Hello. I'm Julius Marley from the State of Missouri. From the National Service Foundation we'd like to donate \$20,000. To the DAV Winter Sports we'd like to donate \$25,000. Thank you. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Thank you.

MR. ELLSWORTH FIELDS: Good morning. I'm Ellsworth Fields, commander, Department of Minnesota. And on behalf of the Department of Minnesota and it's foundation and our 20,000 members: \$40,000 to the Winter Sports Clinic; \$50,000 to the Veterans Golf Clinic; \$10,000 to Columbia Trust; and \$10,000 to the National Service Foundation, for a total of \$110,000. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Thank you, sir.

MR. BOBBY PLUNK: Good morning, Bob Plunk, (Inaudible) the State of Arkansas. We're pledging \$2,500 to the Charitable Trust.

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Thank you. (Applause)

MR. BOB KINSMAN: Good morning. My name is Bob Kinsman, commander of the Department of Massachusetts. And the Department would like to make a donation of \$1,000 to the Charitable Service Foundation and we're honored to also make a thousand dollar donation to the National Service Foundation. Thank you. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Thank you, commander.

MS. CHRISTINE SPEARS: I'm Christine Spears, the Department commander for South Dakota. We'd like to donate \$500 to the National Service Foundation in honor of our NSOs in Sioux Falls. Thank you. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Thank you.

MS. VICKI BROWN: Hi, I'm Vicki Brown, department commander for Oklahoma. We have a thousand dollar check in honor of our NSOs in Muskogee for the National Service Foundation and this is Haylee Hilburn.

MS. HAYLEE HILBURN: From the juniors, from the golf tournament we have \$5,000. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Thank you. Thank you.

MR. LEON BOOKER: Good morning. I'm Leon Booker, commander of William E. Tate Chapter 1 from the great State of Georgia. We would like to make a donation of \$2,000 to the Charitable Service Trust. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Thank you, sir. Appreciate it.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Tom (Inaudible) the adjutant for the Department of New York. I have a check from one of our local chapters here, for Chapter 144, for \$3,000 for Just B Kids. On behalf of the State of New York, the Department of New York, we have a check here for Boot Camp for \$5,000; Just B Kids, \$20,000; and Disaster Relief, \$30,000, for a total of \$58,000.

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Thanks, Tom.

MR. DAVID BERGMANN: Good morning, I'm David Bergmann with the Department of New York, Chapter 15, Rochester, New York. And Chapter 15 is going to donate \$600 to Just B Kids. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Thank you.

MR. JAKE DROST: Good morning. Jake Drost, commander, State of Ohio. On behalf of the Department and all of its chapters we're donating \$10,000 to the DAV Charitable Service Trust and \$50,000 to the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Thank you, Jacob, commander.

MR. LEE GIBBON: Lee Gibbon, Department of Ohio, (Inaudible) Chapter 35. We have three donations, the first one being for \$10,000 to the National Service Foundation in honor of the Cleveland office of the NSOs and past national service officer John Parker who is in poor health, God be with him.

Second, we're giving \$10,000 to the Jesse Brown foundation; third we have \$5,000 to the transportation and our chapter also recently wrote a check for \$20,000 to the Just B Kids program. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Thank you.

MR. MICHAEL STITH: Mike Stith, adjutant, Department of Ohio, a personal contribution of \$1,000 to the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Thank you.

MR. ROLLY LEE: Good morning. On behalf of the Department of Michigan and the membership and also the home of Jim Harbaugh and the Michigan Wolverines, we'd like to donate to the DAV Disaster Relief \$4,000, the DAV Columbia Trust Fund, \$4,000, and the DAV National Service Foundation for \$4,000. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Thank you.

MR. STANLEY KROLL: Good morning. I'm Stanley Kroll with Chapter 16 in Florida. We are donating \$5,000 to the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Thank you, Chapter 16.

MR. KEN (INAUDIBLE): Hi, my name is Ken (Inaudible), state commander for the State of Illinois. I'd like to donate \$10,000 to the Winter Sports Clinic; \$5,000 to the National Disaster Clinic; \$5,000 to the Service Foundation; and \$5,000 for the Golf Clinic. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Thanks, Ken.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Good morning. I'm the commander of Macon County Chapter 17, Illinois. We'd like to donate \$5,000 to Disaster Relief; \$5,000 to the Golf Clinic; \$5,000 to the Winter Sports Clinic; \$10,000 to the National Service Foundation, and all this is in memory of PDC Elmer Yunger. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Good morning. Commander, Chapter 15, the great State of Nevada. On behalf of Chapter 15 we're making a donation of \$100 to the Disaster Relief Fund, \$500 to the National Service Foundation, and a personal donation on behalf of my wife Marilyn and myself to Disaster Relief Fund of \$5,000, bringing our total year-to-date to \$10,000. And, commander, there will be another check later on this year. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Thank you, Bill.

MS. MATTIE WHITFIELD: Good morning. My name is Mattie Whitfield. I'm the department commander for the State of Maryland. And we would like to donate \$3,000 to the Disaster Relief Fund. Thank you very much. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Thank you.

MS. ELIZABETH FONTENOT: I'm Elizabeth Fontenot, Chapter 128, Texas. Mine is a personal donation of \$20 to each of the 11 entities for a total of \$220. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Thank you.

MR. RICK (INAUDIBLE): Good morning, Rick (Inaudible) from the great State of New Hampshire, the "Live Free or Die" state. I present a check to the National Foundation for a thousand dollars and the Columbia Trust for a thousand dollars. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Thank you, sir.

MR. ADAM GREATHOUSE: Good morning, everybody. Adam Greathouse, Chapter 2, Huntington, West Virginia. We want to donate \$1,500 to the National Service officer foundation in honor of Alan Pritchard, (Inaudible) and our NSOs up at the Huntington Regional office. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER
MARSHALL: Thank you.

DR. KAREN KING: Good morning, everyone. My name is Dr. Karen King and I am the department commander of Georgia. And on behalf of the Department of Georgia we are pleased to donate \$1,000 to the Columbia Trust and \$1,000 to the National Service Foundation. Thank you so much. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER
MARSHALL: Thank you, doctor.

MR. KEVIN COOPER: I'm Kevin Cooper. I'm the commander of Arizona. In memory of John Adkins we would like to donate a thousand dollars to the general fund, at the same time we'd like to also donate \$5,000 to the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER
MARSHALL: Thank you.

MR. STEPHEN SANTOS: Hello. My name is Stephen Santos, the commander for the Department of Maine. And we have donated \$750 to the Charitable Trust and \$750 to the National Service Foundation. Also, Chapter 19 in the Department of Maine has pledged the same \$750 to the Charitable Trust and \$750 to the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER
MARSHALL: Thank you.

MR. SANTOS: You're welcome.

COMMANDER HILLIARD: Good morning. Commander Hilliard, Department of Wisconsin. On behalf of the Department of Wisconsin we want to donate \$2,000 to the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER
MARSHALL: Thank you.

MRS. KIM HUBERS: Good morning. Kim Hubers, I am the chapter commander for Sioux Falls, South Dakota, Chapter 1. And we're going to donate \$500 to the National Service Foundation. And I want to say I didn't have to write it on my hand because they gave me a receipt. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER
MARSHALL: Thank you.

MS. REBECCA JOHNSTON: Good morning. My name is Rebecca Johnston, commander of the Department of Tennessee. We're happy to donate a total of \$10,000, \$5,000 of which will go to the Columbia Trust and \$5,000 will go to the Winter Sports Clinic. Go team Tennessee with Captain Brittany Elliot. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER
MARSHALL: Thank you.

MR. JAMES HUNTER: Good morning, comrades. I'm from the great State of North Carolina. I'm the department commander, James Hunter. And on behalf of our department we would like to donate \$2,500 to the National Service Foundation and an additional \$2,500 to the Columbia Trust. Thank you. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER
MARSHALL: Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Good morning, comrades. I'm senior vice from the State of Tennessee. And I want to make a donation for Chapter 70, Chevy County, Memphis, Tennessee, for \$200. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER
MARSHALL: Thank you, sir.

MS. BRENDA REED: Good morning, again. I'm back. Brenda Reed, commander, Department of Florida. The Department of Florida donates \$5,000 to the Charitable Service Trust and \$5,000 to the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER
MARSHALL: Thanks, commander.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Good morning, fellow comrades. I am the commander of Chapter 19 with the Department of Wisconsin. I have a personal donation of \$100 in memory to all of our members that we lost last year. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER
MARSHALL: Thank you.

MS. DENISE FAIRCLOTH WILLIAMS: Good morning. I'm Denise Faircloth Williams, past department commander, Department of Virginia. And on behalf of my family, the Faircloth family, we want to make a personal donation in memory of my dad, Army veteran, World War II, Randolph Faircloth, in the amount of \$300, Charitable Service Trust. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Good morning. From the great State of Alabama, where legends are made, we proudly donate \$5,000 to the Disaster Relief. Thank you. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Thank you, sir.

MR. MICHAEL DUNN: Michael Dunn. On behalf of Team 109 in Titusville, Florida, we donate a thousand dollars to the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Thank you.

MS. SHAWN BREWER: Good morning. I'm Shawn Brewer, Department of Nevada. We donated \$1,000 to the National Service Foundation, \$1,000 to the Charitable Service Trust, \$500 for the Charitable Service Trust earmarked for the homeless veteran program, \$500 for the Disabled Veterans Life Memorial Foundation, \$500 for the Just B Kids Camp Corral, and \$500 for the youth scholarship program. Thank you. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Thank you.

MR. AL LABELLE: Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

MR. LABELLE: I know it's been a long day. Let's try it one more time. Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning, Al.")

MR. LABELLE: All right. My name is Ansel Adams, also known as Al Labelle. I want to make a personal \$500 donation to the Charitable Service Trust in the name of former national adjutant J. Marc Burgess who did what I consider the impossible; he replaced a legend and became one himself. (Applause)

So, finally, as was said earlier in the convention, I will be out in the foyer and anyone is not a member of the Commander's Action Network, I'll be glad to sign you up. (Laughter)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Thanks, Al.

MR. LABELLE: All right, thank you. (Applause)

MS. LORETTA LASSITER-BELTON: Good morning. My name is Loretta Lassiter-Belton. I am the treasurer for Woodrow Wilson Chapter 4 out of Columbia, South Carolina. And we have donated \$300 to Camp Corral, \$300 for Columbia Trust, and \$300 for the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Thank you.

MR. GLYNN PARKER: Good morning. My name is Glynn Parker. I'm from the Department of Maryland and commander of Chapter 4. I'm here this morning to make a personal donation. And I want to make this in the name of two very fine friends and hardworking men. This is in memory of John King and Bob Bent from the Department of Virginia, (Applause) \$5,000. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Thank you, sir.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I have four checks for donation today. The first two are from Chapter 7 in Colorado. The first one is \$2,500 to the Columbia Trust. The next \$2,500 is in recognition of Carmen McGinnis and the great NSOs that we have to the National Service Foundation.

Second of all, as department commander of Colorado I'm proud to present \$100,000 to the National Service Foundation, and an additional \$100,000 to the Columbia Trust. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Thank you, very much. Thank you, sir.

MR. JAMES HUNTER: The first time wasn't enough so I'm back again. My name is James Hunter. I'm from, the department commander for the State of North Carolina. And this one is a personal donation in memory of a good friend of mine, James Bragg.

He was a Korean War, two tours, and a three-tour Vietnam Purple Heart. Him and his wife both passed away. This is in memory of them from me. I'd like to donate \$10,000 to the Disabled Veteran Life Memorial Fund. Thank you. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARSHALL: Thank you. You are all wonderfully generous. Thank you. Your gifts to the DAV National Service Foundation are truly empowering veterans to build successful, fulfilled lives. Your generosity goes a long way in ensuring DAV's critical services and programs. I look forward to another successful year working on behalf of those we serve.

Commander, this concludes my report. But, I want to let everyone here know that this year is a record donations to our programs, all entities, a record of \$1,110,680. (Standing Ovation) Commander that concludes my report.

DAV (Disabled American Veterans) National Service Foundation

Financial Statements as of and for the
Year Ended December 31, 2022, and
Independent Auditor's Report

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Board of Directors of
DAV (Disabled American Veterans) National Service Foundation:

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of DAV (Disabled American Veterans) National Service Foundation (the "Foundation"), which comprise the statement of financial position as of December 31, 2022, and the related statements of activities, functional expenses, and cashflows for the year then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements (collectively referred to as the "financial statements").

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Foundation as of December 31, 2022, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAS). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are required to be independent of the Foundation and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audit. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, and for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is required to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Foundation's ability to continue as a going concern for one year after the date that the financial statements are issued.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with GAAS will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement

resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Misstatements are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

In performing an audit in accordance with GAAS, we:

- Exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Foundation's internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements.
- Conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Foundation's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings, and certain internal control-related matters that we identified during the audit.

Deloitte + Touche LLP

April 12, 2023

DAV (DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS) NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2022

ASSETS

CASH	\$ 2,661,507
INTEREST AND DIVIDENDS RECEIVABLE	26,335
ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE	20,391
INVENTORIES	119
PREPAID EXPENSES	12,615
INVESTMENTS	151,993,435
OTHER ASSETS	<u>7,399</u>
TOTAL	<u>\$ 154,721,801</u>

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

LIABILITIES:	
Due to Disabled American Veterans	\$ 121,613
Other liabilities	<u>27,731</u>
Total liabilities	<u>149,344</u>
NET ASSETS:	
Without donor restrictions:	
Perpetual Rehabilitation Fund	80,097,438
The Columbia Trust	<u>640,894</u>
Total net assets without donor restrictions	<u>80,738,332</u>
With donor restrictions:	
Purpose restricted for mission	73,602,432
Purpose restricted for DAV Legislative Fund	<u>231,693</u>
Total net assets with donor restrictions	<u>73,834,125</u>
Total net assets	<u>154,572,457</u>
TOTAL	<u>\$ 154,721,801</u>

See notes to financial statements.

DAV (DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS) NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2022

		With Donor Restrictions				
	Without Donor Restrictions	Purpose Restricted	Purpose Restricted Columbia Trust	Purpose Restricted DAV Legislative	Total	
SUPPORT AND REVENUES:						
Contributions and bequests	\$ 1,259,609	\$ 2,500	\$ 540,106	\$ -	\$ 1,802,215	
Net investment return	(11,694,457)	(10,879,186)	9,393	-	(22,564,260)	
Net assets released from restrictions	3,161,099	(2,611,600)	(549,499)	-	-	
Total support and revenues	(7,273,759)	(13,488,286)	-	-	(20,762,045)	
EXPENSES:						
Program expenses:						
Grants and expenses in accordance with The Columbia Trust	829,992	-	-	-	829,992	
Appropriations to DAV National Headquarters and other organizations	5,398,261	-	-	-	5,398,261	
Total program expenses	6,228,253	-	-	-	6,228,253	
Management and general expenses	139,845	-	-	-	139,845	
Fundraising expenses	126,379	-	-	-	126,379	
Total expenses	6,494,477	-	-	-	6,494,477	
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	(13,768,236)	(13,488,286)	-	-	(27,256,522)	
NET ASSETS—Beginning of year	94,506,568	87,090,718	-	231,693	181,828,979	
NET ASSETS—End of year	\$ 80,738,332	\$ 73,602,432	\$ -	\$ 231,693	\$ 154,572,457	

See notes to financial statements.

**DAV (DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS)
NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION**

**STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2022**

	Program	Management and General	Fundraising	Total
EXPENSES:				
Allocations to charitable programs	\$6,168,867	\$ -	\$ -	\$6,168,867
Administrative charges	-	56,310	9,947	66,257
Grant proposal processing	56,310	-	-	56,310
Printing, stationery, and supplies	579	3,326	56,473	60,378
Postage and shipping	-	2,392	45,917	48,309
Professional fees	-	26,041	-	26,041
Banking and credit card fees	2,497	14,290	-	16,787
Registration fees	-	3,825	7,202	11,027
Legal fees	-	-	6,840	6,840
Awards	-	12,503	-	12,503
Travel	-	10,702	-	10,702
Insurance	-	4,166	-	4,166
Maintenance	-	3,388	-	3,388
Depreciation	-	2,114	-	2,114
Miscellaneous	-	788	-	788
TOTAL	\$6,228,253	\$139,845	\$126,379	\$6,494,477

See notes to financial statements.

DAV (DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS) NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2022

CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:	
Change in net assets	\$(27,256,522)
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash used in operating activities:	
Net change in (appreciation) depreciation of investments	30,075,572
Net gain on sale of investments	(3,633,684)
Changes in operating assets and liabilities:	
Interest and dividends receivable	(22,580)
Accounts receivable	119,018
Inventories	813
Prepaid expenses	8,896
Due to Disabled American Veterans	(12,296)
Other liabilities	<u>(7,054)</u>
Net cash used in operating activities	<u>(727,838)</u>
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:	
Purchases of investment securities	(20,191,193)
Proceeds from sale of investment securities	21,697,441
Other	<u>2,114</u>
Net cash provided by investing activities	<u>1,508,362</u>
NET INCREASE IN CASH	780,523
CASH—Beginning of year	<u>1,880,984</u>
CASH—End of year	<u>\$ 2,661,507</u>

See notes to financial statements.

DAV (DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS) NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

AS OF AND FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2022

1. ORGANIZATION

DAV (Disabled American Veterans) National Service Foundation (the “Foundation”) is a financial auxiliary of the Disabled American Veterans (DAV). The purpose of the Foundation, as set forth in Article 3 of the Articles of Incorporation, is as follows:

“To receive and maintain a fund or funds of personal or real property, or both; to solicit and obtain contributions from the public; and, subject to the restrictions set forth in the Articles of Incorporation, to use and apply the whole or any part of the income and principal of said fund exclusively for the promotion of social welfare (including incidental nonpartisan legislative activity in furtherance of such purpose) within the meaning of Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, primarily for the assistance, aid, maintenance, care, support, and rehabilitation of disabled veterans and their dependents, either directly or by contributions to the DAV, a Congressionally chartered organization, or any chapter or department thereof.”

2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Financial Statements—The accompanying financial statements have been prepared on the accrual basis of accounting in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAP).

New Accounting Standards—In February 2016, the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) issued Accounting Standards Update (ASU) No. 2016-02, *Leases (Topic 842)*. This standard amends the existing guidance and requires lessees to recognize on the balance sheet assets and liabilities for the rights and obligations created by those leases with lease terms longer than 12 months. This update is effective for annual financial statements issued for fiscal years beginning after December 15, 2021, and is to be applied using a modified retrospective approach; early adoption is permitted. The adoption of ASU No. 2016-02 did not have a significant impact on the financial statements or the financial statement disclosures.

In September 2020, the FASB issued ASU No. 2020-07, *Not-for-Profit Entities (Topic 958): Presentation and Disclosures by Not-for-Profit Entities for Contributed Nonfinancial Assets*. The amendments require not-for-profit entities to present contributed nonfinancial assets as a separate line item in the statement of activities, apart from contributions of cash and other financial contributions. The standard also requires additional disclosure related to contributed nonfinancial assets. The amendment, which requires retrospective application, is effective for annual periods beginning after June 15, 2021. The adoption of ASU No. 2016-02 did not have a significant impact on the financial statements or the financial statement disclosures.

In June 2016, the FASB issued ASU No. 2016-13, *Financial Instruments—Credit Losses*, which is included in ASC Topic 326, *Measurement of Credit Losses on Financial Instruments*. The new standard requires a

financial asset (or group of financial assets) measured at amortized cost basis to be presented at the net amount expected to be collected. The new standard revises the accounting requirements related to the measurement of credit losses and will require organizations to measure all expected credit losses for financial assets based on historical experience, current conditions, and reasonable and supportable forecasts about collectability. Assets must be presented in the financial statements at the net amount expected to be collected. The expected increases or decreases of expected credit losses that have taken place during the period, is reflected in the statement of activities. Management is in the process of evaluating the impact on the financial statements.

Cash—The Foundation considers all liquid instruments purchased with a maturity date of three months or less to be cash equivalents that are stated at cost, which approximates fair value. The earnings credit received on the Foundation's checking accounts were \$30,336 in 2022. The Foundation maintains its cash in bank deposit accounts, which, at times, exceed federally insured limits. The Foundation has not experienced any losses in such accounts.

Inventories—Inventory consists of solicitation materials and other items.

Investments—Investments are recorded at fair value. The fair value of the Foundation's investments is determined based on the quoted market prices of the related securities or quoted prices in active markets for instruments that are similar or model-derived valuations in which all significant inputs and significant value drivers are observable in active markets. Gains and losses on the sale of investment securities are recognized based upon the specific identification method and are reflected as a separate component of revenue for the investments of the Foundation. The Foundation's policy is to report cash and cash equivalents related to investment accounts, which include money market funds, with its trust accounts.

Contributions—The Foundation recognizes contributions when cash, securities or other assets; an unconditional promise to give; or a notification of a beneficial interest is received. Conditional promises to give—that is, those with a measurable performance or other barrier and a right of return—are not recognized until the conditions on which they depend have been met.

Contributions received are recorded as support with or without donor restrictions, depending on the existence and nature of any donor restrictions. Donated assets are recorded at their fair market value at the time of the donation.

Contributed Nonfinancial Assets—For the year ended December 31, 2022, there were no contributed nonfinancial assets received. Should nonfinancial assets be received, they would be separately recognized within the statement of activities and disclosed within the notes to the financial statements.

Net Assets without Donor Restrictions—All contributions and bequests without donor restrictions to the Foundation are designated by the board of directors (the "Board") for investment in a Board-designated endowment fund, known as the Perpetual Rehabilitation Fund, as a reserve for future needs.

Investment income derived from these invested amounts is included in net assets without donor restrictions and used for current operations of the Foundation or appropriated by the Foundation for use by DAV.

Appropriations to the Columbia Trust are excluded from the statement of activities due to the transactions being an internal appropriation. There were no appropriations to the Columbia Trust in 2022.

For 2022, the Board has designated \$640,894 as total unrestricted net assets for The Columbia Trust and are not included in the Board-designated endowment fund. The Columbia Trust recorded a decrease in unrestricted net assets of \$224,183 in 2022. Unrealized appreciation (depreciation) of investments is designated to The Columbia Trust’s net assets from the unrestricted general fund.

Net Assets with Donor Restrictions—Funds considered with donor restriction for mission are restricted by their purpose to being invested prudently and used in fulfilling the Foundation’s mission. As of December 31, 2022, the net assets with donor restrictions of \$73,602,432 are included within the investments balance in the statement of financial position.

Funds contributed to The Columbia Trust are matched 100% by DAV, up to a maximum of \$3,000,000 per year. In 2022, The Columbia Trust received \$104,475 in contributions, which were matched by DAV. In 2022, The Columbia Trust received \$331,156, from the DAV Charitable Service Trust to be used for the DAV Transportation Network Van Grant Program.

Contributions for the DAV Legislative Program are considered contributions with donor restriction. Investment income of \$7,460 in 2022 from the DAV Legislative Fund was transferred to DAV for use by DAV’s Legislative Program. The net assets with donor restrictions of \$231,693 as of December 31, 2022, are included within the investments balance in the statement of financial position.

Allocation of Expenses—The financial statements report certain categories of expenses that are attributable to one or more program or supporting services of the organization. Those expenses include grant proposal processing, administrative charges, postage and shipping, printing, stationery and supplies, legal fees and registration fees. All expenses are allocated based on estimates of time and effort toward each program or supporting service. Allocation estimates are reviewed annually based on the specific expense and adjusted accordingly.

Income Taxes—As a not-for-profit service organization, the Foundation has received a determination from the Internal Revenue Service that it is exempt from federal income taxes as a Section 501(c)(4) organization. Contributions made to the Foundation are tax deductible by the contributor as provided in Section 170 of the Internal Revenue Code.

Use of Estimates—The preparation of the financial statements in accordance with GAAP requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities, disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the reporting period. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

3. ENDOWMENT FUNDS

The following table represents the composition of the Foundation’s endowment net assets by type of fund for the year ended December 31, 2022:

	Without Donor Restrictions
Board designated Perpetual Rehabilitation Fund	<u>\$ 80,097,438</u>

The Foundation's Board-designated endowment fund included in net assets without donor restrictions, also known as the Perpetual Rehabilitation Fund, for the year ended December 31, 2022, had the following activity:

Net assets—beginning of year	<u>\$ 93,641,491</u>
Public support—contributions and bequests	1,259,609
Revenues—net investment return	<u>(11,694,467)</u>
Total public support and revenue	<u>(10,434,859)</u>
Expenses:	
Program:	
Appropriations to DAV National Headquarters and other organizations	2,786,661
Internal appropriation to the Columbia Trust	56,310
Grant proposal processing	<u>56,310</u>
Total program expenses	2,842,971
Management and general	139,845
Fundraising	<u>126,379</u>
Total expenses	<u>3,109,195</u>
Total change in Board-designated endowment fund	<u>(13,544,053)</u>
Net assets—end of year	<u>\$ 80,097,438</u>

4. LIQUIDITY AND AVAILABILITY OF FINANCIAL ASSETS

The Foundation's working capital and cash flows are attributable to the contributions received throughout the year. As of December 31, 2022, the Foundation's financial assets (total assets, less inventory, prepaid expenses and other assets) totaled \$154,701,669. The financial assets, with the exception of the donor-restricted by purpose for DAV Legislative Fund investment of \$231,693 as of December 31, 2022, are available to fund general expenditures within one year following the statement of financial position date. Donor restricted funds of \$73,602,432 for 2022 have been included because they are restricted for programs considered general expenditures by the organization. The Foundation has an investment spending policy that would allow for withdrawals from the long-term investment portfolio, from both general assets without donor restrictions and with donor restriction purpose restricted for its mission.

The Foundation has a policy to structure its financial assets to be available as its program, fundraising, management, and general expenses become due. In addition, as part of its liquidity management, the Foundation invests cash in excess of daily requirements in various short-term and long-term investments. The short-term investments are invested for capital preservation and liquidity for cash flow requirements in money market funds. The Foundation's long-term investments, such as marketable fixed-income and equity securities, index and actively managed mutual funds, and Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs), are invested with the intent of providing a safe return on investments for future use.

5. FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS

ASC Topic 820 provides a framework for measuring fair value. The framework provides a fair value hierarchy that prioritizes the inputs to valuation techniques used to measure fair value as follows: Level 1, which refers to securities valued using unadjusted quoted prices from active markets for identical assets; Level 2, which refers to securities not traded on an active market, but for which observable market inputs are readily available; and Level 3, which refers to securities valued based on significant unobservable inputs. Assets are classified in their entirety based on the lowest level of input that is significant to the fair value measurement.

The Foundation did not hold any financial assets requiring the use of inputs that are unobservable and significant (Level 3) to the overall fair value measurement during 2022.

The Foundation's policy is to recognize transfers between levels at the actual date of the event. There were no transfers during 2022.

Asset Valuation Techniques—Valuation techniques used maximize the use of observable inputs and minimize the use of unobservable inputs. The following is a description of the valuation methodologies used for assets recorded at fair value. There have been no changes in the methodologies used at December 31, 2022.

Cash equivalents, composed of money market funds, are categorized as Level 1, and are valued at cost, which approximates fair value. The money market funds represent the Foundation's shares in a registered investment company's fund.

Common stock securities and ETFs held are categorized as Level 1. They are valued at the closing price reported in the active market in which the individual security is traded.

Corporate bonds are categorized as Level 2, and are valued using third-party pricing services. These services may use, for example, model-based pricing methods that utilize observable market data as inputs. Broker-dealer bids or quotes of securities with similar characteristics may also be used.

Shares of registered investment companies (mutual funds) are categorized as Level 1. They are valued at quoted market prices that represent the net asset value of shares held at year-end.

The major categories of financial assets measured at fair value on a recurring basis as of December 31, 2022, are as follows:

	Markets for Identical Assets (Level 1)	Significant Observable Inputs (Level 2)	Total
Asset category:			
Cash equivalents	<u>\$ 749,061</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 749,061</u>
Common stocks	<u>20,282,934</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>20,282,934</u>
Corporate bonds	<u>-</u>	<u>18,207,376</u>	<u>18,207,376</u>
Mutual funds/ETFs:			
Domestic fixed income funds	32,043,815	-	32,043,815
Domestic equity funds	54,568,447	-	54,568,447
International equity funds	22,606,381	-	22,606,381
Real estate equity funds	<u>3,535,421</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3,535,421</u>
Total mutual funds/ETFs	<u>112,754,064</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>112,754,064</u>
Total assets	<u>\$ 133,786,059</u>	<u>\$ 18,207,376</u>	<u>\$ 151,993,435</u>

The Foundation has adopted an investment policy for the Perpetual Rehabilitation Fund and investments with donor restrictions. The primary goals of the investment portfolio are safeguarding of the assets; maximizing return on the interest, dividends, and appreciation of capital; and avoiding undue interest rate risk in the fixed-income portion of the portfolio. The portfolio performance objective is to exceed a custom benchmark of 60% Russell 3000/40% Barclays Intermediate Government Credit over a five-year period and a full market cycle.

The Foundation relies on a total return strategy in which investment returns are achieved through both capital appreciation and current yield (interest and dividends). The Foundation targets a diversified asset allocation that places a greater emphasis on equity-based investment to achieve its long-term return objective within prudent risk constraints.

6. NET ASSETS RELEASED FROM DONOR RESTRICTIONS

Net assets are released from donor restrictions by incurring expenses satisfying the restricted purposes specified by donors. The net assets released from restrictions are as follows:

Purpose restrictions accomplished:	
Purpose restriction—mission	\$ 2,611,600
The Columbia Trust	<u>549,499</u>
Net assets released from restrictions	<u>\$ 3,161,099</u>

7. RELATED-PARTY TRANSACTIONS

During 2022, DAV personnel assisted the Foundation on a limited basis in administering its business operations and fundraising program. For these services, the Foundation reimbursed DAV \$122,567. At December 31, 2022, the Foundation owed DAV \$121,613. DAV provides the Foundation with the use of facilities, equipment and occasional magazine space at no charge.

As discussed in Note 2, DAV contributed \$104,475 to the Columbia Trust in 2022.

In 2022, the DAV Charitable Service Trust made contributions of \$331,156, to The Columbia Trust for the DAV Transportation Network Van Grant Program. In 2022, The DAV Charitable Service Trust made contributions of \$95,526, to the NSF to be used in assisting disabled veterans and their dependents.

In 2022, the Foundation appropriated \$5,390,800 in support of DAV programs and services.

In performing the duties of their positions, DAV’s National Commander and National Adjutant serve on the Foundation’s Board. In performing the duties of their positions as a Foundation Director, some members also serve on the DAV Charitable Service Trust’s Board and the Disabled Veterans’ Life Memorial Foundation’s Board.

8. GRANTS AND EXPENSES OF THE COLUMBIA TRUST

At December 31, 2022, grants and expenses of the Columbia Trust are as follows:

Grants to DAV chapters and departments in accordance with	
The Columbia Trust:	
Hospital Service Coordinator Program	\$ 337,000
Transportation Network Vehicle Grant Program	331,156
Other grants to service programs	102,450
Grant proposal processing	56,310
Miscellaneous expenses	<u>3,076</u>
Total	<u>\$ 829,992</u>

In 2022, temporarily restricted net assets of \$549,499 and net assets without donor restrictions of \$280,493 were used.

9. SUBSEQUENT EVENTS

No other events have occurred after December 31, 2022, but before April 12, 2023, the date the financial statements were available to be issued, that require consideration as adjustments to, or disclosures in, the financial statements.

* * * * *

(Whereupon, National Service Foundation President and Past National Commander Marshall withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: President Marshall, thank you for that outstanding report. May I have a motion to accept the report for the National Service Foundation?

MR. MIKE MARTIN: Mic 3.

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Mic 3.

MR. MARTIN: Mike Martin, executive director, Department of New York, seconds that report.

COMMANDER PARSETICH: May I have a second.

MS. BRIGITTE MARKER: Mic 1.

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Mic 1.

MS. MARKER: Brigitte Marker from the Department of Oregon seconds.

MR. AYALA: Thomas Ayala, Chapter 1, Florida, seconds.

COMMANDER PARSETICH: All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered.

(Whereupon, National Service Foundation President and Past National Commander Marshall withdrew from the stage.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: I would like to call on Chairman Rob Reynolds for the final report of the Committee on Constitution and Bylaws.

(Whereupon, the Constitution and Bylaws Committee Chair advanced to the podium.)

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL

COMMANDER ROBERT REYNOLDS: Comrade Commander and delegates, I will now proceed with the second reading of the proposed changes to the Constitution and Bylaws which are recommended for adoption. In the interest of time, again, I will read only the number and purpose of the resolution.

Resolution Number 521, amend Article XI, Section 11.9, Paragraph 2 of the Bylaws to increase life membership dues from \$300 to \$325 effective January 1, 2024, in order to maintain the viability of the Life Membership Fund, which provides necessary funding to DAV entities to provide service programs. Free membership will still be offered to those eligible over the age of 80.

Resolution Number 522, amend Article VIII, Section 8.3, Paragraph 3 of the Bylaws to allow for the electronic submission of department officer reports.

Resolution Number 523, amend Article IX, Section 9.2, Paragraph 3 of the Bylaws to allow for the electronic submission of chapter officer reports.

Resolution Number 524, amend Article VIII, Section 8.5, Paragraph 2 of the Bylaws to include the reference to Article VI, Section 6.4, Paragraph 8 in department Bylaws. This is a housekeeping change to facilitate the adoption of Resolution Number 217 during the 2016 national convention.

Resolution Number 525, amend Article IX, Section 9.1, Paragraph 2 of the Bylaws to include the reference to Article VI, Section 6.4, Paragraph 8 in chapter Bylaws. This is a housekeeping change to facilitate the adoption of Resolution Number 217 during the 2016 national convention.

Resolution Number 526, amend Article VI, Section 6.4, Paragraph 1D of the Bylaws to not allow a subordinate DAV entity whose charter was revoked due to their loss of IRS tax exemption the ability to appeal to the national commander's revocation to the National Executive Committee. IRS regulations supersede any decision of the NEC specific to charters of DAV entities and their ability to operate.

Comrade Commander, on behalf of the Committee I move that the Committee recommendations be accepted, that the resolutions be adopted, and that the Committee be discharged with the thanks of the National Convention.

(Whereupon, the Constitution and Bylaws Committee chair withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Thank you, Rob. (Applause) You have heard the motion. May I have a second?

MR. JAMES SHUEY: Mic 1.

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Mic 1.

MR. SHUEY: Jim Shuey, Chapter 49, Department of Nebraska, proudly seconds the report.

COMMANDER PARSETICH: In accordance with Rule 9, now is the time for any rejected resolutions to be read. Are there any rejected resolutions that you wish read?

(Response of "No.")

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Hearing none, all those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So carried. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Constitution and Bylaws chair withdrew from the stage.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Adjutant Jesinoski, do you have any announcements?

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and the adjutant advanced to the podium.)

ADJUTANT JESINOSKI: Immediately following this morning's business session, the final meeting of the Nominating Committee will be held in Avalon 25 and 26.

This afternoon's final business session will promptly begin at 1:30. We will start off with the important business of nominations and election of officers so please be on time and in your seats.

Pick up your Line Officer Dinner tickets between the sessions right outside the exit of this ballroom. This new method is designed to alleviate waiting in line. Tickets will be available until just before doors open at 6:00 p.m.

We are giving away three \$50 gift certificates, once again, that can be redeemed in the DAV store online or right here at convention. You must be present to win and if I call your name and you are in the hall, please see Membership Director Doug Wells up here on stage as soon as we adjourn.

Our lucky this morning: Jesse Mixson, Lillie Montgomery, and Christine Frauendorfer.
(Applause) Congratulations.

One final note, to the greatest extent possible please expedite your departure from the hall following this session. The room will need to be prepared for the final business session this afternoon and we really appreciate if you move out swiftly so we can get that process started. Thank you.

(Whereupon, Adjutant Jesinoski withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Thank you, Barry. Ah. Ah. Ah. Wait a minute. Don't go rushing off. (Laughter) I'll tell you to get out of here in a second but first, thank you, Barry. Chaplain Varner, will you lead us in a closing prayer. Uncover.

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and the chaplain advanced to the podium.)

CHAPLAIN VARNER: Let us pray. Almighty Creator, once again we come to thank you for the gift that inspires us in the spirit of unity to work together. Together, we have complemented and we have strengthened one another's gift.

As a unified body we keep our focus on our mission and that we're able to accomplish and do all things greater and better, which we purpose in our hearts to do. We're so grateful and thank you for the spirit of humility and love that has been expressed among each and every one of us.

This, we give thanks in your name. And the people said Amen.

(Response of "Amen." Whereupon, the chaplain withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: The Convention now stands in recess until 1:30 this afternoon. Now you can (Inaudible) or for you younger veterans, get out of here. (Laughter) Have a good lunch.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed at 10:42 o'clock, a.m. on Tuesday, August 8, 2023.)

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FINAL BUSINESS SESSION

August 8, 2023

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The Final Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans 101st National Convention reconvened in the Wildwood Ballroom 2-7 of the Harrah's Resort Atlantic City, Atlantic City, New Jersey, on Tuesday, August 8, 2023, and was called to order at 1:29 o'clock, p.m., by National Commander Joseph "Joe" Parsetich.

COMMANDER JOSEPH "JOE" PARSETICH: Okay, the Convention will come to order. As a reminder, I would like to ask everyone to please silence your cell phone and portable devices. (Three raps of the gavel)

Please join me, I mean stand up. (Laughter) There you go. Please join me in the Pledge of Allegiance. Hand salute.

(Whereupon, the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Two. We will now be led in prayer by Chaplain Varner.

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and the chaplain advanced to the podium.)

CHAPLAIN DEBRA VARNER: Good afternoon.

(Response of "Good afternoon.")

CHAPLAIN VARNER: Let us pray. Heavenly Creator, we want to thank you once again for bringing us together. We want to thank you as we continue to look forward in attaining our goals and purpose that we are here. We ask that you continue to bless these, your people, as you have allowed us to come together in unity and harmony, keeping our focus on our mission, that we are able to work together and do all things well.

We know ask that your blessings are once again on this session as we continue to look unto you for our strength. These and all things that we ask in your name. And the people said Amen.

(Response of "Amen;" whereupon, the chaplain withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: (One rap of the gavel.) As a reminder, in order for a delegate to be heard at this Convention you must first be recognized by the chair. Only those delegates at a microphone will be recognized. Upon being so recognized, the delegates must state their name, chapter number, and the state which they represent.

I would like to remind everyone that the registration of delegates is now closed. I will call upon Brenda Reed, chairman of the Credentials Committee, for the final report.

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and the Credentials Committee chair advanced to the podium.)

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE CHAIR BRENDA REED: National Commander Parsetich, National Adjutant Jesinoski, delegates, members, and guests.

This is the final report of the Credentials Committee. And it reflects the total registration as of 10:00 a.m. on August 8, 2023.

There are 1,011 delegates and 41 alternates registered, which includes 44 departments and 363 chapters. There are 7 national officers, 12 National Executive Committeemen, and 6 past national commanders currently registered. The vote total is 7,536.

At this time I would like to extend my thanks to the Committee members and the advisors.

Commander, that completes the final report of the Credentials Committee. On behalf of the committee, I move for its adoption.

(Whereupon, the Credentials Committee chair withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Thank you, Brenda. You have heard the motion. May I have a second, please?

MR. WARREN TOBIN: Mic 3.

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Mic 3.

MR. TOBIN: Warren Tobin, Chapter 31, North Dakota, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER PARSETICH: All those in favor signify by aye; opposed. So ordered.

(Whereupon, the Credentials Committee chair withdrew from the stage.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Now I will call on Butch Whitehead, Chairman of the Nominating Committee, for his report. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and the Nominating Committee chair advanced to the podium.)

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEPHEN "BUTCH" WHITEHEAD: Comrade Commander and delegates, the National Convention Committee of Nominations of National Officers was called to order for its first business session on August 5th, 2023, by the Committee advisors Joseph Johnston and Al Church.

The first order of business was the election of a convention committee chairperson and secretary. Stephen Whitehead was elected as chairperson and Joseph Kaufman was elected as secretary.

The Committee of Nominations of National Officers met on Saturday, August 5th at 4:15 p.m. and again Sunday, August 6th, at 1:00 p.m. And the Committee met again today at 11:00 a.m. The Nominating Committee recommends and nominates the following individuals for national office:

For the office of National Commander, Nancy Espinosa, Utah; (Applause) for the office of National Senior Vice-Commander Daniel Contreras from California; (Applause) for the office of National First Junior Vice-Commander, Coleman Nee from Massachusetts; (Applause)

for the office of National Second Junior Vice-Commander, John Donovan from Arkansas; (Applause) for the office of National Third Junior Vice-Commander, Cynthia Madison from Virginia; (Applause) and for the office of National Fourth Junior Vice-Commander, James Procnier, North Carolina; (Applause)

for the office of National Chaplain, Debra Varner, Alabama; (Applause) and, for the office of National Judge Advocate, Michael Dobmeier from North Dakota. (Applause)

Comrade Commander, this completes the report of the Committee of Nominations of National Officers. On behalf of the Committee I move the adoption of this report.

(Whereupon, the Nominating Committee chair withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Thank you, Butch. I will now call for a second for that the report of the Committee on Nominations of National Officers.

MR. PAUL HARMON: Mic 3.

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Mic 3.

MR. HARMON: Paul Harmon, Department of Louisiana, Chapter 50, seconds that motion from the Nominating Committee.

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Okay, you have heard – okay, all those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered. (One rap of the gavel)

(Whereupon, the Nominating Committee chair withdrew from the stage.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: You have heard the report of the Committee on Nominations of National Officers and they have nominated Nancy Espinosa of Utah for National Commander. (Applause) Here to second that nomination is Jerry Estes, past national (sic) commander for the DAV Department of Utah. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and Mr. Estes advanced to the podium.)

MR. JERRY ESTES: Thank you, Commander. It is my privilege the second the nomination of a fellow veteran and a dedicated servant.

Nancy Espinosa lives in Kaysville, Utah, and is a proud member of Chapter 14. She became a DAV member immediately after separating from the military.

In 1975, at the age of 17 years of age, Nancy joined the Army Reserves and went active duty 10 years later. She then transitioned from the New Mexico National Guard until her honorable discharge in 1990.

During her time in uniform, Nancy worked as a personnel records specialist and later as a financial, in finances. She served in Utah, Oregon, Honduras, and New Mexico. Her service was awarded the Army Commendation Medal, along with several other recognitions.

Nancy always knew that she would be a part of DAV. She saw what it did for her family, particularly her uncles Fred and Benny. They were both combat-wounded veterans and model members of Chapter 14.

Later in life, Nancy would learn that her father, a World War II veteran, Joe Espinosa, had also been a DAV member. He died when Nancy was just nine years old and before he could become active in his local chapter. But his legacy of service, no doubt, left an indelible mark.

Nancy's first role in DAV was treasurer of Chapter 14, a position that she inherited from her Uncle Fred and still holds today. She went on to serve as the chapter service officer, the commander of the DAV Department of Utah, and the current department adjutant.

Nancy has also served on the National Executive Committee, the national POW Committee and MIA, and also director of DAV's Charitable Service Trust.

She is a recipient of the Department of Utah's Bonnie Anderson Award for Outstanding Service.

For the past five years Nancy has served on the Utah Legislative Veterans and Military Affairs Commission. As a commissioner she has proposed legislation to improve the lives of veterans and their families, including a measure that made it easier for military spouses to transfer their certifications from previous assignments.

Earlier this year, Nancy retired from a fulfilling, 18-year career with the IRS.

Nancy represents the selflessness and integrity that define our organization. From her military career to the government work to DAV she has been dedicated to being of service.

As a Hispanic woman with a family legacy of military service dating back to the Civil War, Nancy is passionate about helping those who have faced down adversity. Her experience and her leadership will further help DAV's mission to reach all ill and injured veterans and, in turn, make us a stronger, louder, and a more unified voice.

And so, it is with great honor that I nominate Nancy Espinosa for DAV National Commander for the year 2023 and 2024. Thank you. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Mr. Estes withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: The chair will now call for any further nominations for the office of national commander. Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations?

If there are no further nominations, I close the nominations and declare Nancy Espinosa elected as national commander and instruct the national adjutant to cast one unanimous ballot for her election. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and the adjutant advanced to the podium.)

ADJUTANT JESINOSKI: I, Barry Jesinoski, National Adjutant of DAV, hereby cast one unanimous ballot for Nancy G. Espinosa, for the office of National Commander. (Standing Ovation)

(Whereupon, the adjutant withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: The Nominating Committee has nominated Daniel Contreras for the office of national senior vice-commander. Are there further nominations? Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations? If there are no further nominations, I close the nominations and declare Daniel Contreras elected as national senior vice-commander. (Applause)

The Nominating Committee has nominated Coleman Nee for the office of national first junior vice-commander. Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations? If there are no further nominations, I will close the nominations and declare Coleman Nee elected as national first junior vice-commander. (Applause)

The Nominating Committee has nominated John Donovan for the office of national second junior vice-commander. Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations? If there are no further nominations, I will close the nominations and declare John Donovan elected as national second junior vice-commander. (Applause)

The Nominating Committee has nominated Cynthia Madison for the office of national third junior vice-commander. Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations? If there are no further nominations, I will close the nominations and declare Cynthia Madison elected as national third junior vice-commander. (Applause)

The Nominating Committee has nominated James Procnier for the office of national fourth junior vice-commander. Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations? If there are no further nominations I will close the nominations and declare James Procnier elected as national fourth junior vice-commander. (Applause)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: The Nominating Committee has nominated Michael Dobmeier for the office of national judge advocate. Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations? If there are no further nominations, I close the nominations and declare Michael Dobmeier elected as national judge advocate. (Applause)

The Nominating Committee has nominated Debra Varner for the office of national chaplain. Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations? Any further nominations? If there are no further nominations, I close the nominations and declare Debra Varner elected as national chaplain. (Applause)

And I will now instruct the National Adjutant to cast one unanimous ballot for all these offices.

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and the adjutant advanced to the podium.)

ADJUTANT JESINOSKI: I, Barry Jesinoski, National Adjutant of DAV, cast one unanimous ballot for Daniel Contreras for national senior vice-commander; for Coleman Nee for national first junior vice-commander; for John Donovan for national second junior vice-commander;

Cynthia Madison for national third junior vice-commander; and Jim Procutner for national fourth junior vice-commander; Michael Dobmeier for national judge advocate; and Debra Varner for national chaplain. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the adjutant withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: I would like to ask that the newly-elected officers and their spouses be escorted to the stage, please.

(Whereupon, the newly-elected officers and their spouses advanced to the stage to be seated.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: It is my great pleasure to now call on National Commander-elect Espinosa for remarks. (Standing Ovation)

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and the commander-elect advanced to the podium.)

COMMANDER-ELECT NANCY G. ESPINOSA: Thank you, Commander. And thank you all. I am truly honored and humbled, but I would not be the servant or the person I am without the constant support of my family and my fellow veterans.

I'd like to start by thanking my family here today: my sons, Ian, a Navy veteran, and Eric, an Air Force veteran. I am immensely proud to be your mother. There are many reasons why, not the least of which, my five beautiful grandchildren who you've given me and are here with us today: Olivia, Emma, Ryan, Desmond and Echo.

We are all keenly aware of the sacrifices our families make when we decide to wear our nation's uniform. Let's also recognize the sacrifices they continue to make so that we can go on serving long after we take the uniform off. Whether it's a chapter meeting, a volunteer opportunity, or a multi-day national convention thousands of miles from home, they understand that we are called to serve.

I also want to thank the veteran role models in my family for setting an example for me as a young child, beginning with my father, Joe Delfino Espinosa. He enlisted in the Army during World War II and served four tours in Germany over his more than 20-year career.

During his first tour, he served with the Monuments Men and was a guard when they returned Leonardo DaVinci's Woman with an Ermine to Poland. He was a DAV life member but died at 42 before he could become active in his chapter.

My uncle Fred Chavez is the person who introduced my family to the DAV. Fred was a tough Marine. He served during World War II and was shot during the Battle of Saipan in 1944. He became a department commander in Utah and at the time of his death was treasurer for chapter in Davis County. I took over that position when he passed, kick starting my service with DAV.

Then there is my uncle Benny Chavez, a 93-year old Korean War veteran and fellow Chapter 14 member. He volunteered for many years at the local VA hospital and provided military honors for service members until he was over 80 years old. Because of his example, I plan to serve DAV as long as my body will allow.

I also want to thank my mother, Eleanor Chavez. She was a tough lady who got things done in the face of adversity. She became a widow at a young age and had to raise three children on her own. She instilled in us the value of independence and hard work, "Have a car, have a roof, have a job," she'd always say.

When mom told me I needed to get a part-time job to help pay for school clothes, I responded to an ad for a clerk typist – "no experience necessary." The position turned out to be with the United States Army Reserves (Laughter) and launched my 15-year military career. (Applause) Ten years later, I went on active duty and later transitioned to the New Mexico National Guard.

When I separated in 1990, I immediately joined DAV. I had witnessed what this organization did for my family and I knew I'd find the support I needed. What I did not expect was how much our cause would fuel and fulfill my desire to serve others.

I've since had the pleasure of being commander for the Department of Utah, just like Uncle Fred, as well as adjutant. I am also a proud member of Chapter 14 where I continue to serve as treasurer, as well as a chapter service officer. I've also had the honor of serving as director of DAV's Charitable Service Trust and was a member of the POW/MIA Interim Committee.

So many in our DAV family have supported and encouraged me all the way to this podium. I never thought I'd be here. And if it hadn't been for some gentle nudge and kicks in the pants, I wouldn't be.

I want to give a special thank you to the Department of Utah and Chapter 14, where my journey with DAV began. I'm also grateful to have served alongside our amazing team of national line officers and NECs, including the 17th District's Floyd Watson, Jr., who has been one of my biggest cheerleaders.

Lastly, I want to thank the person who inspired me to think bigger and do more than I imagined. I have a feeling she has done that for many of you in this room.

I met Delphine Metcalf-Foster in 2014 during Utah's department convention. We went to lunch and soon realized we had much in common, both coming from families with legacies of military service. She quickly became a treasured mentor and an honored friend.

It was Delphine who ushered me into the national organization and opened the doors to our larger community. A few years later, she showed me what was possible when she became the first woman elected to lead DAV and the first woman to lead any of the top three largest veterans' charities. (Applause)

Delphine, as you've done so many times before, you blazed a trail and left directions for those coming behind you. You have lived in service to your credo, "A child cannot be what a child cannot see." Thank you for showing me the way. Thank you for helping us see who and what we can be.

Being part of DAV is a point of extraordinary pride for me, in large part because of members like Delphine and those who whole-heartedly welcomed and supported her leadership. You did so because of her qualifications and her record of dedicated service.

For many of you, her gender wasn't even a consideration. While you celebrated the historical significance of electing a woman to serve as national commander, it wasn't what motivated your support.

And yet, this organization and its members understand the importance of making sure all of our voices are heard and all of our needs represented. We recognize that for decades too many of those voices were silenced, sometimes intentionally, but often unwittingly.

Whatever the case, DAV and its members have shown that we must and we can do better. While we love the underdogs of the world, we have to remember that those who have been underestimated have often been underserved, under-represented and under-recognized.

Take, for example, late DAV member Kaoru Moto, a second generation Japanese-American, born and raised in Hawaii. When Japanese forces attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7th, 1941, Moto, already in the military, was called to serve his country.

By all accounts, and despite the internment of Japanese-Americans and the hatred spewed toward people who looked like him, Moto served with the utmost integrity and bravery.

On July 7th, 1944, near Castellina, Italy, Moto was a scout, leading his platoon to higher ground. After he spotted a machine gun nest, he captured a German gunner. Taking his prisoner with him, he took cover at a house a few yards away.

After engaging the enemy in fire and forcing most of them to withdraw, a single remaining sniper fired at Moto and struck his left leg, severely wounding him. Injured and bleeding, Moto spotted another enemy gun nest and opened fire, wounding enemy soldiers and forcing them to surrender.

For his actions, Moto was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, Purple Heart, Bronze Star and Italy's War Cross of Military Valor. However, he was denied the recognition many agreed he deserved – the Medal of Honor.

But he wasn't the only one. Moto was part of the 100th Infantry Battalion, a unit composed mostly of second-generation Japanese-Americans or Nisei. The battalion, which later merged with the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, became the most decorated unit of its size and length of service in military history. Its soldiers became synonymous with bravery, yet it was clear that they would not be considered for the nation's highest honor amid a climate of racial prejudice.

Finally, in 2000, after a thorough review, Moto's Distinguished Service Cross, along with those of 20 other Japanese soldiers was posthumously upgraded to the Medal of Honor, correcting the record and more accurately reflecting his contributions. (Applause)

Moto's medal now sits in an exhibit called the "Nisei Soldier Experience" at the National Museum of the United States Army. His story illustrates the struggles so many Japanese-Americans faced at home and abroad, and their courage on the battlefield.

DAV was lucky to call Moto a dedicated life member. His son, Brian, said DAV gave his father community and camaraderie during his post-war years. For the Moto family, DAV was a pillar of support, at one time awarding a scholarship to Brian so he could go to college, fulfilling his father's dream for his son. In 2022, Brian paid it forward when he named DAV as a beneficiary of his estate.

Nobody knew whether the Nisel of the 100th Battalion could make good war fighters or if they would even willingly fight. They were the definition of underdogs. They proved to be, as Brian Moto calls it, "An American story" to which all can aspire.

As a Hispanic woman with a family legacy of military service dating back to the Civil War, I've always had an affinity for those who face down doubt and adversity. Military history is brimming with such stories, and it's easy to see why.

Service appeals to the best in us and the best of us. It calls to our grit and determination. It tests us and pushes us to our limits, not for glory or goods but in service to others. It says to the underdog, "You are meant for something bigger than yourself."

Those in this room have heard that call. At one time or another, whether because of the color of your skin or your gender or the circumstances of your time, many of you have been the underdog. You were met with doubt and prejudice, unfair treatment and towering obstacles. And yet you answered the call to serve.

When your uniform – when your job in uniform was done, you were faced with more hurdles. You had to learn to live with disability. You struggled to readjust to civilian life. You fought against misconceptions.

And yet, once again, you answered the call to serve. This time, the call came from DAV.

Through volunteerism, legislative advocacy, and benefits assistance, you have helped lift your fellow underdogs to new heights. You have proven time and again that we should not be underestimated. You have succeeded in making sure your fellow veterans don't go unserved, unrepresented or unrecognized.

We must continue that work with the grit and determination that inspired our military service. Not because we have something to prove but because it's who we are, the underdogs who refuse to back down.

Thank you for this opportunity. I do not take this responsibility lightly and promise to give you all my best effort in this role. I look forward to channeling the warrior spirit of my ancestors and the force of character that fills this room as we work toward our shared mission of serving veterans and their families.

Thank you. (Standing Ovation)

(Whereupon, the commander-elect returned to her seat and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: I would now like to call on National Senior Vice-Commander-elect Dan Contreras for his remarks. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and the senior vice-commander-elect advanced to the podium.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER-ELECT DANIEL CONTRERAS: My fellow DAV members, I stand before you with a heart full of gratitude and humility. Thank you for your support and your vote of confidence.

My California members, District 16, thank you for the encouragement and support that I receive from you each and every day.

I want to say a special thanks to my wife, Theresa, who could not be here. It's her belief in me that has fueled my determination throughout this journey.

And, of course, my fellow line officers, you inspire me and I know you will continue to work hard to inspire others.

Thank you, again, for this great honor to serve as your national line officer. Thank you. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the senior vice-commander-elect withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: I will now call on National First Junior Vice-Commander-elect Coleman Nee for his remarks. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and the first junior vice-commander-elect advanced to the podium.)

FIRST JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER-ELECT COLEMAN NEE: Thank you. Thank you, comrades, I appreciate your faith and confidence in me to all of you. And I especially want to recognize some of the truest veterans' advocates, professionals, and just most-caring people that I know in the world, my comrades from the Department of Massachusetts. They are absolutely amazing. Thank you so much. (Applause)

We've had a great year but I think the best thing about DAV is that we never rest on our laurels in this line of work. And I know we're going to have an excellent upcoming year, as well. And when we gather next year we'll have not only ourselves to thank but also the many new members that we're going to recruit over the coming year.

So I really appreciate that I just want to say congratulations to all of my fellow line officers, especially to Commander Espinosa. Your quiet but thoughtful and always fierce leadership is what inspires us every day.

I want to thank our outgoing commander. Joe, thank you so much for everything you've done. You and Meg truly are two people who live your values every day. And I really appreciate everything you do.

And especially to my good friend and someone who has meant a lot to me in this organization, Marc Burgess, Marc, I don't see you out there but if you're around, we really appreciate everything you've done and fair winds and following seas. Thank you very much. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the first junior vice-commander-elect withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: I will now call on National Second Junior Vice-Commander-elect John Donovan for his remarks. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and the second junior vice-commander-elect advanced to the podium.)

SECOND JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER-ELECT JOHN DONOVAN: Thank you all for the confidence that you put in me to continue to serve. DAV to me is the one and only veterans' service organization. Without us, our fellow veterans would be nowhere. We get them to where they need to go.

I want to thank District 21, Arkansas, Oklahoma, thank you for your continued support as we go forward.

And I really want to thank my wife. As everyone says, "Behind every man there is a good woman." Mine is at home right now. She couldn't make it this time but you'll get to meet her eventually.

And to the line, I'm humbled to be with these folks here. What I do in comparison to what they've done is nothing short of a miracle. Thank you all for your continued support, as well.

Thank you and I will sit down. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the second junior vice-commander-elect withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: I will now call on National Third Junior Vice-Commander-elect Cynthia Madison for her remarks. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and the third junior vice-commander-elect advanced to the podium.)

THIRD JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER-ELECT CYNTHIA MADISON: Giving honor to God, I am truly humbled to stand before you guys. First of all, I have to thank my chapter, Chapter 27, out of Virginia, and Kimberly Barkley, also Chapter 21 and Marcia Stewart. And I also have to thank Will King and our department, the Department of Virginia.

To the commander, I'm here to support you. To the adjutant, I'm also here to support you in any way possible.

Last year I forgot to thank my daughter. This year I cannot forget to thank my daughter. (Laughter) And the reason why I can't forget to thank her is what is my motto? "Madison, Making a Difference in Serving our Nation's Veterans."

Did you think I came up with that? No. My daughter came up with that. And she told me, "Mom, that's who you are. You make a difference when you serve our veterans." I'm here to tell you it's not about me, it's about you guys. And I'm here to serve you guys. Thank you. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the third junior vice-commander-elect withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: I will now call on National Fourth Junior Vice-Commander-elect James Procunier for his remarks. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and the fourth junior vice-commander-elect advanced to the podium.)

FOURTH JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER-ELECT JAMES PROCUNIER: Whooh, looks different from up here. (Laughter) I'll start off by saying to thank every one of you for what you do every single day of the year for our nation's disabled veterans and their families. Oslo County Chapter 16

and the Department of North Carolina and everybody in District 6, thank you for believing in me and supporting me.

And to my friends from my old department, the Department of Virginia, thank you.

I promise each and every one of you out there that I will serve you with honesty, integrity and do everything I can to further the cause of DAV.

You know, the programs and services that we have right here in DAV are the fruits of the labor of generations of disabled veterans that came before us. We inherited these as a gift. It is our job to receive them, nurture them, honor them, build them better and eventually pass them on to the next generation of disabled veterans.

Before I go I will leave you with something I've said every time I talk to a group: remember the most important veteran you will ever meet is the very next one that walks up and asks you for help.

Thank you. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the fourth junior vice-commander-elect withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: I will now call on National Judge Advocate-elect Michael Dobmeier for his remarks. (Applause) (Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and the judge advocate-elect advanced to the podium.)

JUDGE ADVOCATE-ELECT MICHAEL E. DOBMEIER: Thank you, Commander. First of all, I have to thank my wife, Sandy, because I forgot to once so I got in trouble forever. (Laughter) Thank you to the 14th District, the states of North and South Dakota, Minnesota, and Montana.

Thank you to our professional staff for the wonderful job that you do. You are the people who keep us Number 1 in veterans' service organizations.

And to each and every one of you, thank you for your continued confidence and I will do my best to earn it again. Thank you. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the judge advocate-elect withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: I will now call on National Chaplain-elect Debra Varner for her remarks. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and the chaplain-elect advanced to the podium.)

CHAPLAIN-ELECT DEBRA VARNER: And the people said –

(Response of "Amen.")

CHAPLAIN-ELECT VARNER: All right. I want to give thanks to all of you who have given your support, your encouraging words for me to continue serving you as your national chaplain. I also want to thank my newly-wed husband who is accompanying me here today for his support and his prayers encouraging me that I can do it again.

I want to thank the great MALT, Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana and Tennessee, (Applause) for encouraging me to go ahead and do it again. It is with great honor.

I am also extremely proud. In my resume in applying for this office I boast about having 96 years with my siblings and my two sisters-in-law. My newly-wed husband has also served 20 years, which now takes us to 116 years of serving this great country.

We are thankful. And as for my memorial message, DAV, my personal opinion, is one of the greatest organizations in this United States. And we are determined to keep it moving, forgetting those things that are behind us, reaching back, not leaving anyone behind, pressing toward, and going back and pulling those alongside of us, not only for our comrades but our family, our friends, and even our enemies. We are determined to set the tone, the borders and the boundaries to be the best that we will ever be. Thank you. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the chaplain-elect withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: At this time I will entertain a motion to discharge the Credentials Committee. Do I hear a motion? MR. JAMIL KHAN: Number 3.

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Mic 3.

MR. KHAN: Jamil Khan, Wisconsin Department, Chapter 63, second the motion. (Laughter)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: All right, we have a second, do I hear a first? (Laughter)

MR. KHAN: Makes the motion.

MS. ALICE HAMILTON: Mic 1.

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Mic 1.

MS. HAMILTON: Alice Hamilton, State of Oregon, Chapter 1, I here move that we discharge our nomination committee. (Laughter)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: All right, we have a second and a first. (Laughter) All those in favor signify by saying aye; all opposed. So ordered. (Applause)

National Adjutant Jesinoski, would you please read the list of newly-elected National Executive Committee members?

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and the adjutant advanced to the podium.)

ADJUTANT JESINOSKI: The following members have been elected to the National Executive Committee for the two-year term 2023 to 2025: NEC First District Francis Whitty; (Applause) NEC Third District Joyce Gaddis; (Applause)

NEC Fifth District Leonard Johnson; (Applause) NEC Seventh District Mary Ann Keckler; (Applause) NEC Ninth District Leon Booker; (Applause)

NEC Eleventh District Dennis Hannerman; (Applause) NEC Thirteenth District Eric McGinnis; (Applause) NEC Fifteenth District David Gerke; (Applause) NEC Seventeenth District Jerry Estes; (Applause) NEC Nineteenth District Brigitte Marker; and NEC Twenty-First District Harry Komprood. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the adjutant withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Believe it or not, that concludes today's agenda, Barry. Do you have any other announcements?

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and the adjutant returned to the podium.)

ADJUTANT JESINOSKI: Each session at this national convention has been closed captioned thanks to the generosity of Heroes with Hearing Loss. We are all truly grateful and appreciative of this support. And they've done a fantastic job all week. Give them a hand. (Applause)

As a reminder to all National Executive Committee members, including those newly-elected, the Committee will meet immediately following adjournment of the convention, in just a few minutes, in Avalon 5 through 7. A swearing-in ceremony will be held at that time. NEC alternates should also attend this swearing-in ceremony, please.

The Board of Directors will meet immediately following that NEC meeting.

The presentation of the national officers will begin at 6:30 p.m. this evening, right here in the Wildwood Ballroom, followed by dinner. You cannot enter for dinner without a ticket so please be sure you bring yours with you for dinner.

Come and enjoy an evening filled with ceremony, food, friends, music, and entertainment.

(Whereupon, the adjutant withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Everyone who is able, please rise and uncover. Chaplain Varner, will you lead us in a closing prayer.

(Whereupon, the commander withdrew from and the chaplain advanced to the podium.)

CHAPLAIN VARNER: Let us pray. Our Heavenly and Mighty Creator, once again we ask the blessings upon your people at the close of this meeting. Let us now go forth into the world with great dignity, great peace and dedication, fulfilling our mission and our promise to all of our veterans and their families.

These and all things we ask of you. And we believe it in our hearts and do it in our works that are set before us. And the people said Amen.

(Response of "Amen;" whereupon, the chaplain withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Thank you, Chaplain. Retire the colors.

(Whereupon, the colors were retired by the Department of Massachusetts Honor Guard, followed by a round of applause.)

COMMANDER PARSETICH: Ladies and gentlemen, please join me once more in thanking the Massachusetts Honor Guard. (Applause)

Ladies and gentlemen, the 101st National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans is now adjourned. We will see you next year in Phoenix, Arizona. (Applause)

(Whereupon the meeting adjourned on August 8, 2023, at 2:23 o'clock, p.m.)

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**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY
100TH NATIONAL CONVENTION
ATLANTIC CITY, NEW JERSEY**

August 5, 2023

First Business Session

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The First Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary convened in the Atlantic City Ballroom A-B on the Third Floor of the Coastal Tower of Harrah's Resort Atlantic City, Atlantic City, New Jersey, on Saturday afternoon, August 5, 2023, and was called to order at 2:00 o'clock, p.m., by National Adjutant Bunny Clos.

ADJUTANT BUNNY CLOS: I would like to go ahead and tell everybody to please silence your phones and let's keep the aisles as clear – let me just go with that word – clear.

And another thing, we are live-streaming for all those who are at home who can't be here with us today so let's keep the chatter to a minimum. If you feel that you need to have a discussion, if you don't mind taking it outside, I would appreciate it.

They will let us know and we are monitoring that so that is one thing that we know that we hear a lot is that there is a lot of chatter so let's please keep that to a minimum.

AnnMarie, are you in the room?

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER ANNMARIE HURLEY: Yes.

ADJUTANT CLOS: Okay. Thank you. Ann Wilner, she's in here. She's in the back. Your district signs are up. You don't have to sit where your district sign is, though. They actually weren't going to be put up today but they are. Okay, if we can all find a seat, we're getting started.

Ann Wilner, are we ready?

MS. ANN WILNER: Yes.

ADJUTANT CLOS: National Sergeant-at-Arms please present National Senior Vice-Commander AnnMarie Hurley to the platform. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the senior vice-commander was escorted to the platform.)

ADJUTANT CLOS: National Sergeant-at-Arms, please see that National Chaplain Aura-Lee Nicodemus is escorted to the platform. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the chaplain was escorted to the platform.)

ADJUTANT CLOS: National Sergeant-at-Arms, please see that National Judge Advocate Paula Raymond is escorted to the platform. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the judge advocate was escorted to the platform.)

ADJUTANT CLOS: National Sergeant-at-Arms, please see that National Fourth Junior Vice-Commander Kathleen Wenthe is escorted to the platform. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the fourth junior vice-commander was escorted to the platform.)

ADJUTANT CLOS: National Sergeant-at-Arms, please see that National Third Junior Vice-Commander Terry Grabowski is escorted to the platform. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the third junior vice-commander was escorted to the platform.)

ADJUTANT CLOS: National Sergeant-at-Arms, please see that National Second Junior Vice-Commander Melissa Pierce is escorted to the platform. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the second junior vice-commander was escorted to the platform.)

ADJUTANT CLOS: National Sergeant-at-Arms, please see that National First Junior Vice-Commander Chris Easley is escorted to the platform. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the first junior vice-commander was escorted to the platform.)

ADJUTANT CLOS: National Sergeant-at-Arms, please have Immediate Past National Commander Lynn Helms Prosser escorted to the platform. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the immediate past national commander was escorted forward.)

ADJUTANT CLOS: National Sergeant-at-Arms, have National Convention Chairman Linda Applegate escorted to the platform. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Convention Committee chairman was escorted to the platform.)

ADJUTANT CLOS: National Sergeant-at-Arms, present and post the State Department Colors of New Jersey.

(Whereupon, the Colors for the state were presented and posted.)

ADJUTANT CLOS: National Sergeant-at-Arms, present the National Colors.

(Whereupon, the National Colors were presented.)

ADJUTANT CLOS: National Sergeant-at-Arms, post the National Colors.

(Whereupon, the National Colors were posted.)

ADJUTANT CLOS: National Sergeant-at-Arms, dismiss the Color Bearers.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS ANN WILNER: Color Bearers, you are dismissed.

ADJUTANT CLOS: And we will now have prayer by National Chaplain Aura-Lee Nicodemus.

(Whereupon, the adjutant withdrew from and the chaplain advanced to the podium.)

CHAPLAIN AURA-LEE NICODEMUS: First, I'd like to extend my deepest appreciation to each of you for all the kindness shown to me for this past year but especially after the loss of my husband.

I do appreciate each and every one that called, the cards, all the little thoughtful things from filling my refrigerator with food to every other kindness that was done so thank you each and every one.

We have a lot of people that need our prayers today so it will be a little bit longer than some days.

Dear Heavenly Father, we come before you asking your blessing upon our meeting and upon all of our actions. Help us to be kind to each other and considerate. We ask a special blessing on Linda Jimmerson as her brother is seriously ill. And we ask that you will be with the Jimmersons as she is by his bedside at this time.

We pray for Velma Steinman as she lost her husband this morning. We ask that you will comfort her and be with her. And we give thanks for our Auxiliary members who have stood beside her.

We pray for Darlene Spence and her family. Be with them and comfort them at this difficult time.

We ask that you also will bless the Parker family as they lost his mother this week. And be with them and comfort them, as well as the Skyler family from Buffalo, New York.

We ask a blessing on past state commander from DAV Kentucky, Commander Rick, as his grandmother passed away, and also on Virgil Baker's family as the brother died this week.

We ask a special blessing upon Patti Rapisand and her family as they grieve the loss of a grandchild. We know that this child was very special to their family.

We ask that you be with June Schow as she had a fall this week. And we ask that you will help her to heal from her fall.

We also ask a blessing upon John Parker who suffered a stroke and he is recovering and having a difficult time. And we ask that you will comfort his caregivers who are really struggling.

We also ask a blessing on Mr. Byrd. Be with him and his family as he recovers from heart surgery.

We also ask a blessing on Little Mark and on the past state commander Ed Garritt from Vermont. We ask that you be with each of them.

We also ask a special blessing today on all of those that are recovering from the flooding throughout the country and those affected by the wildfires, as well.

Be with the leaders of the nation. Be with all of us that are leading this organization. Guide all of our travels and our steps. In your name. Amen.

(Response of "Amen," after which the chaplain withdrew from and the adjutant returned to the podium.)

ADJUTANT CLOS: We will now have pledge by Terry Grabowski.

(Whereupon, the adjutant withdrew from and the third junior vice-commander and national Americanism chairman advanced to the podium.)

THIRD JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER AND NATIONAL AMERICANISM CHAIRMAN TERRY GRABOWSKI: Maxine, can you bring the juniors forward?

(Whereupon, the juniors were escorted to the front.)

THIRD JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER AND NATIONAL AMERICANISM CHAIRMAN GRABOWSKI: We're going to do something different this year. We're going to include the juniors in helping me.

Free your hands. Stand at attention. Place your right hand over your heart or render the appropriate salute and join in the pledge.

(Whereupon, the third junior vice-commander and Americanism chairman and juniors led the Pledge of Allegiance.)

THIRD JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER AND NATIONAL AMERICANISM CHAIRMAN GRABOWSKI: Thank you guys.

(Whereupon, the juniors and the third junior vice-chairman and Americanism chairman withdrew and the adjutant returned to the podium.)

ADJUTANT CLOS: Thank you, juniors. Everyone can please be seated.

"The Constitution and Bylaws of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary state that the supreme legislative powers of this organization shall be vested in the Annual National Convention composed of the National Officers and representatives of the state departments and units.

"In accordance with these directives I, Bunny Clos, National Auxiliary Adjutant, declare the 100th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary be convened at Atlantic City, New Jersey.

"Consideration and disposition of business brought before this Convention shall be conducted in accordance with the National Constitution and Bylaws now in force. To all present, take due notice thereof and govern yourselves accordingly."

I do want to read a few remarks that Darlene Spence, national commander, sent to me and asked me to give to you in her absence, which she is sorry she could not be here.

"Greetings to all of the DAVA members and guests. Unfortunately, I am not able to attend this year at National Convention due to the recent passing of my husband of 50 years.

"The loss of my husband, Percy, has had a devastating impact on my life and for the moment being I will be focusing on my own mental health and working out now how I can continue to serve this great organization.

"As your national commander it pains me that I do not feel well enough to be here. I am eternally grateful for the support I have enjoyed over the past few months.

"Thank you for everyone's cards and kind wishes that have come in from all around the country. They have been a wonderful reminder of my husband's impact on both the DAV and on the lives of countless fellow veterans.

"It has been a true honor to serve as your national commander for the 2022-2023 year. Thank you for all of your service to our veterans and their families.

"I wish you all a successful national convention.

"National Commander Darlene Spence."

Now I am excited to introduce national senior vice-commander and the beautiful and sophisticated AnnMarie Hurley. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the adjutant withdrew from and the senior vice-commander advanced to the podium.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER ANNAMARIE HURLEY: Wow, I never heard that before. (Laughter) Thank you. I can't believe I have to bring it down. I'm getting shorter and shorter. (Laughter)

It is my privilege to welcome you to our 100th DAV Auxiliary National Convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey. We hope that you take time during this convention to rekindle old friendships and make new ones.

Your dedication to our organization is top-notch. And because of each of you, we have been able to assist veterans and their families for over 100 years.

Let's work hard this week to complete our business and have a little fun at the same time.

At this time I would like to introduce our 2023 National Convention Chairman Linda Applegate for her official remarks.

(Whereupon, the senior vice-commander withdrew from and the national convention chair advanced to the podium, amid a round of applause.)

MRS. LINDA APPLGATE: Hello.

(Response of "Hello.")

MRS. APPLGATE: Good. Good. National line officers, national adjutant, national assistant adjutant, national judge advocate, national chaplain, National Executive Committee, current and past state commanders and all our Auxiliary members and guests, welcome to the 2023 DAV Convention held in Atlantic City, New Jersey, the Garden State. (Applause)

So here is a question. Why are we called the Garden State? Had you all wondered about that coming to the Convention? Agriculture is New Jersey's third largest industry.

A full 806,000 acres, or 17 percent of the state, still comprises of farmland, a designation that includes nurseries, horse farms, vineyards and orchards and produce and livestock farms.

It's really beautiful when you get back into those areas. And then we have our beaches and boardwalks. If you get tired of lying on the beach, there is more to do on one of our many iconic board walks.

There is rides. There is arcade games. Now when I say "arcade games" I mean like the old carnie games, you know, where you throw the nickel and try to hit the dish and then you walk away with this great big stuffed animal. (Laughter) That's the kind of arcade – they have the other ones, too, but they still have the old carnie games.

And there is soft serve ice cream, lemonade, funnel cakes – oh, my goodness, there is just so much more. You could eat your way all the way down the boardwalk.

We have 18 boardwalks with beautiful views of the ocean. Each boardwalk has its own unique venue. And one of the best is here at Atlantic City so I hope you get an opportunity to go to the boardwalk because it is very beautiful.

We all will have a lot to do here in Atlantic City after our business meetings and visiting all the vendor kiosks. We can visit the Tangers Outlet, The Walk – it's a mall.

And did you know if you show your credentials at the mall you will receive a coupon book with over \$900 in savings at the Tangers Outlet Mall and their restaurants. So you can eat and shop for hours.

It's so good to see all of you from last convention. And it's so nice to see all the new faces that have never been to a convention. So we will have old friends and new friend when we leave here.

Once again, welcome to New Jersey and let's have a great convention. Thank you all for coming. (Applause) What did I forget?

(Whereupon, someone spoke away from a microphone.)

MRS. APPLGATE: That' true. I'm originally from Oregon so this is the last – this is the last state where you can't pump your own gas. (Laughter)

(Whereupon, the national convention chair withdrew from and the senior vice-commander returned to the podium.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Excuse me. Now I'm going to introduce the past national senior vice (sic) commanders. Why don't you rise so that the people in the audience will see you, if you can:

Paula Raymond; Linda Trulio; Judy Steinhouse; Sandy Dobmeier; Patrice Rapisand; Susan Henry; Diane Franz; and Lynn Helms Prosser. (Applause)

(Whereupon, as their names were called each past national commander stood or raised her hand and acknowledged the audience.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Oh. Oh, forgive me. Susan Miller. (Laughter)

I would like now to acknowledge the state delegates. Please stand if you are able and be recognized.

(Whereupon, the state delegates stood and were recognized with a round of applause.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Thank you for traveling here from all over the country.

And now I would like to have Past National Commander Susan Henry bring greetings.

(Whereupon, the senior vice-commander withdrew from and the past national commander advanced to the podium.)

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER SUSAN HENRY: Good afternoon.

(Response of "Good afternoon.")

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER HENRY: It's a pleasure to be here. I'm glad to see so many people here. I am representing the past national commanders and want to welcome you to the convention.

If you have any questions, need help, look us up. We're glad to help. We'll talk to anybody. Right?

Normally I would present a gift to the national commander. It will be delivered to Darlene at her home.

And have a great convention. Thank you. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the past national commander withdrew from and the senior vice-commander returned to the podium.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Now I'd like to recognize first-time attendees, ask them to please remain standing while first-timer ribbons are passed out by the junior members.

(Whereupon, first-time attendees stood and were recognized with a round of applause.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Oh, that's great. Excellent. That is wonderful.

(Whereupon, all first-time attendees were given ribbons, after which they sat down.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Okay. Welcome. We are so – welcome to all of you new guests. It's wonderful to see so many of you. This will help the organization grow and do more good work for our veterans and their families. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. (Applause)

At this time I was going to recognize and congratulate our DAV Auxiliary Outstanding Member of the Year, Delores Roussey, of Florida. (Applause)

Unfortunately – we were going to thank her for all she does for veterans and their families. We are so proud of everything she does. But she's feeling a little ill right now and wasn't able to make it to this meeting.

And this is a good time to remind everyone to submit their Outstanding Member of the Year applications. We had a record number submitted this year and hope to have even more in 2024.

At this time I would like to excuse the Nominating Committee.

(Whereupon, the Nominating Committee withdrew from the ballroom.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Okay. Okay, let's quiet it down a little so we can continue. Anyone making or seconding a motion must go to the microphone and state their name, unit and state department or they may not be recognized since our recorder hears this information through his headphones.

Will the Credentials Chairman Margo Galbreath please come forward to give a preliminary report on the Credentials Committee?

(Whereupon, the Convention Credentials Committee chairman advanced to the podium.)

CONVENTION CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN MARGO GALBREATH: Good afternoon.

(Response of "Good afternoon.")

CONVENTION CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN GALBREATH: It is a good afternoon.

(Response of "It is.")

CONVENTION CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN GALBREATH: So I'll try it again.

Good afternoon.

(Response of "Good afternoon.")

CONVENTION CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN GALBREATH: Good afternoon. I'm standing to read the Credentials report and it goes as follows.

The total units registered is 113. The national departments registered is 36. National officers registered is 5. Past national commanders registered is 9. Total guests registered is 175. Total delegates would be 238. Total alternates would be 21, gives us a total registered as 448. (Applause) Total votes counted was 836. Thank you. (Applause)

I move – Commander, I move that this be accepted, the total number of credentials.

(Whereupon, the convention credentials chairman withdrew from and the senior vice-commander returned to the podium.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Do we have a motion?

MS. KATHY DUNHAM: Kathy Dunham, Texas Unit 22, second.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Thank you. Do we have a motion to accept the preliminary report of the Credentials Committee? Is there any discussion?

Oh, I'm sorry. I'm ahead of myself. Is there any discussion? All those in favor signify by saying aye; all opposed. The motion carried.

(Whereupon, the Convention Credentials Committee chairman withdrew from the stage.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Call for a vote. The national senior vice – that would be me – states that the first order of business is the adoption of the National Convention Rules.

Printed copies of the Convention Rules have been furnished to all registered delegates. The chair will now entertain a motion for adoption of these rules.

MS. ELIZABETH BUTTERS: Elizabeth Butters, Marshfield Memorial 35, Massachusetts, I move that we adopt the convention rules.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Is there any discussion? We need a second. I'm sorry.

MS. CATHY KENNEDY: Cathy Kennedy, Unit 127, Pennsylvania, seconds the motion.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Thank you for bailing me out. (Laughter) Okay. Any discussion? All those in favor; all opposed. The motion carried.

May I have a motion to accept the agenda subject to changes?

MS. SHARON THORNTON: Sharon Thornton, from the great State of Texas, Unit 114.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Is there any discussion? Need a second.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER JUDITH STEINHOUSE: Judy Steinhouse Unit 24, North Dakota, I second the motion.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Thank you. Is there any discussion? All those in favor signify by saying aye; all opposed. The motion carried.

I will now call on the Finance Committee Chairman Linda Applegate for the National Finance Committee report and the budget review.

(Whereupon, the senior vice-commander withdrew from and the Finance Committee chairman advanced to the podium.)

FINANCE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN LINDA APPELEGATE: National commander, Senior Vice-President Annmarie Hurley, national officers, past national commanders, delegates, family and friends, good afternoon.

(Response of "Good afternoon.")

FINANCE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN APPELEGATE: The National Finance Committee meeting was held April 6, 2023, at 9:30 a.m. via GoToMeeting online platform.

The voting members of the Committee present were Darlene Spence, National Commander; Maria Holloway, District Number 7 NEC; Shirley Hill, District Number 9 NEC; Rose Williams, District Number 12 NEC; and myself, Linda Applegate, District 4 NEC.

Those present without a vote were National Senior Vice-Commander AnnMarie Hurley; National Adjutant Bunny Clos; and National Assistant Adjutant Ann Glende.

The purpose of the meeting was to set up and adopt a budget for the 2024 year.

At this time I would like to thank the Committee and the staff for all of their help. The budget was included in your registration packets. And at this time I move for adoption of the budget.

(Whereupon, the finance committee chairman withdrew from and the commander returned to the podium.)

MS. ROSE WILLIAMS: Rose Williams, Unit 30, Wisconsin, I second the motion.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Is there any discussion? All those in favor signify by saying aye; all opposed. The motion carried.

(Whereupon, the Finance Committee chairman withdrew from the stage.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: This is the annual report from Darlene Spence.

"September 29th I started my year with the annual Fall Conference in Lexington, Kentucky. The conference is an amazing resource for members because of the knowledge that is imparted by the speakers for national office. I would like to thank the speakers for doing an amazing job this year.

"October 8th I was invited by the Heart of Texas Unit 3 to the Texas Tater Dinner and Concert. There was an auction to raise money for veterans and an incredible dinner. I enjoyed my company and had a wonderful time.

"October 19th I had a site visit to Audie L. Murphy VA Hospital. I was given a comprehensive tour of the Department relating to mobility vehicles and devices.

"I was impressed by how the directors walked me through the specifics of each department and their importance to veterans.

"On October 28th I visited the VA hospital in Dallas, Texas. I was most impressed by the care afforded to women veterans.

"There I also saw the vehicle adaptive training program, which is an excellent program for veterans looking for the training in how to drive the adapted vehicles.

"November 11th, I spent Veterans Day in Birmingham, Alabama, at their annual parade. I took part in the parade by riding on the back of a cannon atop a float (Laughter) next to Nancy Herrera (sic), the national senior vice-commander for the DAV. It was a marvelous day.

"That night I attended the National Veterans Awards Dinner where certain veterans were honored with service awards.

"January 11th I attended Florida's mid-winter conference. I felt a wonderful sense of comradeship between the DAV and the Auxiliary. I really enjoyed being there with my fellow Auxiliary members.

"April 15th was my testimonial which took place in Downtown San Antonio, right next to the Alamo.

"We enjoyed a little road trip to Fredericksburg, Texas. It's a small Texas town that is notable for both its German heritage and the National Museum of the Pacific War. We had a pleasant day walking around and seeing the town.

"My dinner was held at the Buckhorn Saloon in Downtown San Antonio. I was honestly overwhelmed to see all of my dear friends and family celebrating my achievements for this organization.

"I would like to thank you all, again, for supporting me throughout my journey.

"I would also like to thank the DAVA members for entrusting me with the role of national commander.

"For those who have graciously stepped in to help me in all of the functions, I could no longer attend due to personal issues, I thank you so much for stepping up and showing an awesome example of leadership.

"Respectfully submitted, Darlene Spence, Committed all the Way, National Commander." (Applause)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: There is a motion on the floor by National Finance Chairman Linda Applegate to discuss, to accept the budget. No? Oh, all right, we did that. Did we do that? Okay. All right.

I will now entertain a motion to accept the national commander's report as read.

MR. PETER RAUH: Peter Rauh, Unit 118, New York, motion to accept.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Second.

MS. CAROL PARKER-PARK: Carol Parker-Park, Ohio, District 11, Unit 35, I second the motion.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Thank you. Thank you. Is there any discussion? All those in favor signify by saying aye; all opposed. The motion carried.

Now would the National Adjutant Bunny Clos please make some announcements.

(Whereupon, the senior vice-commander withdrew from and the adjutant advanced to the podium.)
ADJUTANT CLOS: Okay. So the Memorial Service tomorrow night, or, I'm sorry, I'm jumping the gun. I'm going to tonight or tomorrow. (Laughter)

The Memorial Service is at 7:30 a.m. Sunday. Business attire is appropriate. For those involved in the practice remember to check in with me or Ann at 7:00 o'clock, a.m. outside the Wildwood Ballrooms 1 through 7.

I will also have the programs for those who volunteered to hand them out around 6:30-6:40 a.m. and that was, I believe, Barbara Macomb, Linda Applegate and Terry Grabowski, so thank you for volunteering for that.

National chairmen are to pick up their respective committee folders tomorrow morning in the Auxiliary office, Wildwood 14 and 15.

Please help us out and do not forget. Otherwise, we've got to "Follow the Yellow Brick Road" all the way back over here or wherever you are at to give it to you. So don't be late. Get your folders early. We'll be in there at 8:00 o'clock, a.m. Grab your folders.

Convention Committee meetings convene tomorrow morning. If you are serving on a Committee, check the program schedule for the rooms and the times.

There will be no Auxiliary Business Session tomorrow so that you can participate in Convention Committee meetings and take advantage of the opportunity to attend some DAV seminars.

I highly suggest taking advantage of some of these seminars. They're very, very awesome for us. I mean it. I know it might be a DAV seminar but it will pertain to Auxiliary, as well.

Don't forget, if you have not picked up your Forget-Me-Not Luncheon tickets yet please do so no later than Monday morning. If we still have tickets because you haven't picked it up, we don't want that ticket to go unused.

If you don't want the ticket, just let us know. We can resell it. We have about six people that would love to go to that luncheon so if you have not picked up your ticket and you intend on not, just let us know so we can sell it or resell it or you can give it, whatever. We just have more people that would like to come.

Registration badges will be needed to enter the National Commander's Reception, Fun Night, and the Introduction of National Officers and Dinner.

Those without the badge will have to go through a verification process before being admitted. All attendees must be registered in order to attend all events, including junior members.

Once you have registered, please stop by the Wildwood Registration Desk Number 4 for table reservations for the Intro of National Officers and Dinner for Tuesday night. You must be registered before table assignments can be made.

Table assignments will be available for pickup immediately following the final business session on Tuesday, August 8th at the Wildwood Registration Desk 4.

If you do not pre-reserve your seat, you will need to stop at the Seating Desk near the dinner room entrance to obtain your table number before entering the room that night. And, again, this does include junior members.

(Someone on the floor sneezed.)

ADJUTANT CLOS: Bless you. We would like to congratulate the winners of the 2022-2023 Junior Recruitment Incentives sponsored by William A. Smith Jr., Number 22 in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The checks for each of these units are currently in the mail. They went out right before we left to come here.

First place was Brian Morris Number 3, Vermont. And that's \$800. (Applause)

Second place goes to (Inaudible) Garcia Number 29, New Mexico, \$700. (Applause)

Third place, (Inaudible) Junior Number 50 in Virginia, \$600. (Applause)

Fourth place, Wagoner County Number 88, Oklahoma, \$500. (Applause)

Fifth place, Russell Light Number 3, Wisconsin, \$400. (Applause)

So, good job on the junior recruitment. Let's continue to do that for the next year but let's also increase and recruit life members, as well. Junior members are definitely the future.

We need all the junior members we can get. We want to try to get junior members more involved. So if you have things going on in your units or your state departments invite those juniors. Get them there.

Have them, I mean just like us today, it was something small but really it's kind of a large thing. I mean I felt extremely proud to have the juniors up here help recite the pledge.

So, you know, let's just try to get those juniors involved and let's try to recruit more juniors along with life members this next coming year.

All junior members, following adjournment of this meeting, please go to the back of the room where you will see Maxine, our Junior Activities – I'm sorry. Maxine, she'll be waiting for you.

And then Monday and Tuesday you will see the district signs. We will have them up just for caucus purposes. Last year it was a little bit of a mess so we're cleaning that up for you all this year.

And they could be moved Monday so just know where you're sitting right now. That might be different Monday and Tuesday.

Something I want to go over with everybody that, who was listening earlier when they gave the DAV annual review was some of our new programs.

So, for example, our DAVA for Kids Program is our brand-new program, just got created in December. And we have had so far two recipients of that. And we are now in August so we really need to get the information out there.

And that program is to assist a junior who, you know, mom and dad, sometimes it's tough. It's tough right now. And you might only, parents might be going week-to-week, paycheck-to-paycheck. They don't have the extra funds for the kids. So we want to help the kids go to a camp of their choice – basketball, church, band, whatnot.

Say they need something that is maybe not covered by insurance, say they need a medical device of some sort, or maybe it's their 16th birthday, it's a big birthday and you don't have the funds to make it special, so there are some extenuating circumstances that we would love to help out with.

So we have an application online or if you can't find it, let us know. We would be happy to send it to you.

But let's get the word out there about our programs because we do have another one that is our service fund. And that is for a widow or widower of a service-connected veteran.

We have helped three people out with that program since I think 2021. So we really need to get that program out there and let people know we do have that help.

Our education scholarship, as you might have heard this morning, we had I think 40, if I remember right, recipients for the scholarship. So let's continue to make sure that everybody knows about the scholarship program, along with our tuition and reimbursement program.

That is a newer program that was established a year or two ago, as well, that we've literally only given out I think three. So that is, if you're not going to go to an accredited college, but you want to maybe take a computer class, or you want to do something to, for career enhancement, then apply for this. After you get the credit and you pass you can be reimbursed \$500.

And then, of course, as Delores Roussey was our winner this year, we just want to make sure that everybody is passing the word out to put in a nomination for that DAV Auxiliary Outstanding Member of the Year Award.

If you have submitted an application for somebody in the past, do it again. Just because you didn't win does not mean that it's not important because every little thing that you do, big or small, is important. And we need to know about it.

The committee is different every single year. So just because somebody else was chosen this year doesn't mean you won't get chosen next year. We love to hear. We read your applications when they come in and we love seeing what everybody is doing. And everything that you do is phenomenal. So keep it up.

And then, along with that, DAV has the Outstanding Veteran of the Year Award for the Auxiliary for, you know, L-VOP or whatever you are doing on their side.

So they would like to see their applications increased. We've had that conversation a couple of times. And I promised that I would put the word out there for them as well as much as I can. So let's continue to spread the word on all DAV and DAV Auxiliary programs.

And then, of course, the last one I would just like to quickly mention is the DAV Scholarship. As you know, they get about \$110,000 that they put out for scholarships for juniors, which is amazing. So we just need to continue to spread the word on that.

And I think that's it for today. But Monday you will get to hear me probably get to say a lot of this again. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the adjutant withdrew from and the senior vice-commander returned to the podium.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: We will now have our closing prayer by the National Chaplain Aura-Lee Nicodemus.

(Whereupon, the senior vice-commander withdrew from and the chaplain advanced to the podium.)

CHAPLAIN NICODEMUS: Please join me in prayer. Dear Heavenly Father, we give thanks for each and every member who selflessly sacrificed their time and energy to be with us here today.

We ask that you will bless and keep our absent members. Be with each and every one of them. We also pray for our families that we left behind. Care for them and protect them.

We pray for our troops in harm's way. We pray for the leaders of our nation. And we pray for all the leaders of our organization as everyone is doing extra work this week. Guide their paths. Help us to be tolerant of their learning. And help us to be kind to each other.

In your name. Amen.

(Response of "Amen," after which the chaplain withdrew from and the senior vice-commander returned to the podium.)

MS. MARYANN JENSEN: Mary Ann Jensen from the wonderful, scenic state of South Carolina. In the book it says that we have a meeting at 4:00 o'clock today. On the app it's tomorrow. Which is correct?

ADJUTANT CLOS: It's the nominating – so we're done. After this we're done. That going to be the Nominating Committee. You do not have any more.

MS. JENSEN: It's on the app.

ADJUTANT CLOS: So we do not have a 4:00 o'clock meeting today. That's the Nominating Committee.

MS. JENSEN: No, it says it here.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Oh, this is off. Lynn had a problem with that, too.

MS. JENSEN: This said this was the correct, but it's not.

ADJUTANT CLOS: We don't have a meeting at 4:00 o'clock. I promise.

MS. JENSEN: Okay. All right. (Laughter)

ADJUTANT CLOS: If we do, I'm missing it so.

MS. JENSEN: So it's not correct.

ADJUTANT CLOS: What?

MS. JENSEN: The information is wrong.

ADJUTANT CLOS: It's not correct.

MS. JENSEN: Okay.

ADJUTANT CLOS: Yes, we do not have a meeting. We will have a meeting Monday morning at 9:00 o'clock will be our Second Business Session.

MS. JENSEN: Okay, and we don't have any Auxiliary tomorrow.

ADJUTANT CLOS: We do. You will have – if you're on a committee you will have a committee meeting tomorrow.

MS. JENSEN: Committee only.

ADJUTANT CLOS: Committee only, yes.

MS. JENSEN: Thank you.

ADJUTANT CLOS: Yes. And the Memorial Service if you're going to come to the Memorial Service –

MS. JENSEN: At 7:30 a.m.

ADJUTANT CLOS: At 7:30 a.m., yes, ma'am.

MS. JENSEN: Where we were this morning?

ADJUTANT CLOS: Absolutely, 7:30 a.m. over where we had the Joint Opening Session, on the other side of the building.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I got mixed up, that's why we were late today, me and (Inaudible), just saying.

ADJUTANT CLOS: Okay. I'm sorry. We have door prizes after AnnMarie is done.

(Whereupon, the adjutant withdrew from and the senior vice-commander advanced to the podium.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: The Convention stands in recess. And we will reconvene at 9:00 a.m. Monday morning. And now time for the door prizes.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed at 2:55 o'clock, p.m., on Saturday, August 5, 2023.)

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**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY
99TH NATIONAL CONVENTION
HYATT REGENCY ORLANDO HOTEL
ORLANDO, FLORIDA**

August 8, 2022

Second Business Session

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The Second Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary convened in the Atlantic City Ballroom A-B on the Third Floor of the Coastal Tower of Harrah's Resort Atlantic City, Atlantic City, New Jersey, on Monday morning, August 7, 2023, and was called to order at 9:07 o'clock, a.m., by National Senior Vice-Commander Ann Marie Hurley.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER ANNMARIE HURLEY: Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Good morning for those – okay, thank you. Please don't have any side distractions or cell phones ringing and watch your, keep the aisle clear, if you would, possibly.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We can't hear you.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We cannot hear you back here.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Is this better?

(Response of "Yes" and "Thanks.")

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: All right. Let me shift it here. How's that?

(Response of "Better.")

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Then I'm more balanced in the center. Okay, and would Aura-Lee please come for the prayer.

(Whereupon, the senior vice-commander withdrew from and the chaplain advanced to the podium.)

CHAPLAIN NICODEMUS: Please join me in prayer. Dear Heavenly Father, we come before you this morning excited for the chance to spend another day together. We give thanks for the privilege to be here, to be able to talk about what's important in our lives, our disabled veterans and their family.

We ask that you will help us to learn, be open minded and caring for each other. We ask a special blessing on Robert Kominsky and his family on the loss of his grandmother.

We ask a special blessing on the Cordova family as they lost a family member this weekend, as well. We also ask a special blessing upon Burtchell Baker, the past Department of Kentucky commander as his brother died, and along with Linda Jimmerson whose brother also died.

We ask that you will be with each and every one, both here and at home. We ask that you will guide our words, our deeds and our actions and help us to be cooperative with each other and to work together, always keeping the forefront of our mission in our minds.

Bless our troops in harm's way. In your name. Amen.

(Response of "Amen" after which the chaplain withdrew from and the senior vice-commander returned to the podium.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Terry Grabowski will now say the Pledge of Allegiance with us. I should make room for her. (Laughter)

(Whereupon, the senior vice-commander withdrew from and the third junior vice-commander and Americanism chairman advanced to the podium.)

THIRD JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER AND NATIONAL AMERICANISM CHAIRMAN TERRY GRABOWSKI: That's okay. We're all good. Free your hands. Stand at attention. Place your right hand over your heart or render the appropriate salute and join in the Pledge.

(Whereupon, the third junior vice-commander and Americanism chairman led the Pledge of Allegiance.)THIRD JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER GRABOWSKI: Thank you.

(Whereupon, the third junior vice-commander withdrew from and the senior vice-commander returned to the podium.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Will the Credentials chairman please come – please be seated. Will the Credentials chairman please come forward to give an updated report of the Credentials Committee.

(Whereupon, the senior vice-commander withdrew from and the Convention Credentials Committee chairman advanced to the podium.)

CONVENTION CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN MARGO GALBREATH: Good morning.
(Response of "Good morning.")

CONVENTION CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN GALBREATH: I am here to read the Credentials report and it reads as following:

Total units registered is 122. Total departments registered would be 38. National officers registered is 5. Past national commanders registered is 9. Total guests registered is 222. Total delegates, 255. Total alternates is 21. Total registered, 492; total vote count in the amount of 880.

Commander, may I move to accept the Credentials as reported.

There is a correction to the total guests registered. The count is 202 – 202. Thank you.

(Whereupon, the Convention Credentials Committee chairman withdrew from and the senior vice-commander returned to the podium.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: A motion has been made to accept the report. Is there a second?

MS. MARY DONNELLY: I second.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Any discussion?

MS. DONNELLY: I second the motion, Commander Mary – state commander Mary Donnelly. (Whereupon, delegates called out "Can't hear you.")

MS. DONNELLY: Sorry. I second the motion. I'm state commander Mary Donnelly from New Hampshire.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Thank you. Any discussion? All in favor signify – any opposed. The motion carried.

(Whereupon, the Convention Credentials Committee chairman withdrew from the stage.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: The Constitution and Bylaw Committee, the chairman will now come forward. For the purpose of saving time, she will read only the amendment number and the purpose or the rationale for the amendment.

For the second reading she will read the entire proposed amendment. The first reading of the Constitution and Bylaws, Judy Steinhouse.

(Whereupon, the senior vice-commander withdrew from and the constitution and bylaws chairman and past national commander advanced to the podium.)

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER JUDITH STEINHOUSE: Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: Number 1. Amend Article V, National Committees and Chairmen, Section 1, National Executive Committee, fourth paragraph.

Rationale: to provide for district representation in instances where reduced membership and/or waning interest affects the availability of candidates for NEC and/or alternate positions and to aid state departments facing a lack of candidates to fill the state commander position.

Number 2. Amend Article V, National Committees and Chairmen, Section 6, National Interim Constitution and Bylaws Committee, delete first paragraph and replace.

Rationale: to clarify committee member appointments by the national commander and subsequent approval by the National Executive Committee.

Number 3. Amend Article XI, Probation, Suspension and Revocation of Charters, Section 2, Suspend, first paragraph, add second sentence.

Rationale: To set a timeframe to have these matter handled in a timely manner.

Number 4. Article XI, Probation, Suspension and Revocation of Charters, Section 3, Revocation, first paragraph, after the word "be" add "permanently".

Rationale: To clarify that permanent unit or state department charter revocation requires the approval of the DAV Auxiliary Commander and the National Executive Committee and re-chartering would require that all requirement of a newly formed unit or state department charter must be met.

Number 5. Amend Article XI, Probation, Suspension, and Revocation of Charters, Section 3, Revocation. Insert new paragraph after first paragraph.

Rationale: Clarifies the procedural criteria for unit and state department revocations and procedures to reactivate a revoked charter within an 18-month period, at which time any assets held in escrow would be returned.

Number 6. Article III, State Officers, Section 3, Eligibility for State Office, delete the words "for the past twelve (12) months".

Rationale: The current twelve- (12) month restriction hinders state departments in their efforts to fill critical leadership positions. This recommended change will provide stability and progression for those state departments with a smaller active membership base.

Item Number 7. Amend Article XI, Duties of Unit Officers, Section 3, Adjutant, reword Number 8.

Rationale: In addition to the adjutant any elected officer may submit the Annual Election Report, officer report online.

(Whereupon, the constitution and bylaws chairman and past national commander withdrew from and the senior vice-commander returned to the podium.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Excuse me. I now call on Education Program Chairman Lynn Helms-Prosser for a report. For those wishing to make donations for our national programs, they will be accepted upon completion of the Education report.

(Whereupon, the senior vice-commander withdrew from and the education scholarship convention chairman and past national commander advanced to the podium.)

EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP FUND COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER LYNN HELMS-PROSSER: Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP FUND COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER HELMS-PROSSER: I would just like to remind you that all the officers' reports and the committee reports are in your packets so please take time to read those reports because they've got some good information in them.

And my report that I'm fixing to read is also in there for you to be able to go back and refer to the information I'm fixing to give you. Okay? So thank you.

The DAV Auxiliary Educational Program was established to provide education scholarships for students attending an accredited college, university or a vocational school in the United States or territory.

The program is proudly supported by the members, units and state departments of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary.

The 2023 National DAV Auxiliary Education Scholarship Committee was DAVA National Commander Darlene Spence; DAVA Senior Vice-Commander AnnMarie; and myself.

We thank National Adjutant Bunny Clos and National Assistant Adjutant Ann Glende for their excellent guidance and for preparing all the submitted applications to the Committee in a timely manner. Please note that all applicants' personal identifications is redacted to ensure fair and impartial judging.

The Committee received 78 scholarship applications for 2023 and we appreciated the opportunity to read each one; however, judging was quite challenging and exceedingly difficult.

We are proud to announce that we were able to give 29 scholarship awards this year thanks to all your generous donations totaling \$40,000. (Applause) Congratulations to all the recipients this year. (Applause) Thank you.

Just for your information, the scholarship checks are sent directly to the school by the National DAV Auxiliary Headquarters.

The National DAV Auxiliary Committee thanks each student that submitted their applications. Anyone wishing to submit an application for 2023 may contact National Headquarters or go online at www.davauxiliary.org for the requirements and application forms.

Again, we thank all of our members for supporting the DAV Auxiliary Education Program.

DAV Auxiliary is fulfilling their commitment to serving the educational needs of those we serve and is proud to announce an additional program – DAV Auxiliary Vocational Training Assistance Program.

This exciting program provides tuition course reimbursement for ill and injured veterans and their immediate family members seeking education opportunities at educational facilities other than accredited colleges and universities.

Examples include trade schools, career enhancement training, skill improvement, personal development, et cetera. Applicants must be a disabled veteran or the spouse or child.

Please contact DAV Auxiliary National Headquarters for an application, answering any questions and requirements. Application forms are also available online at davaauxiliary.org.

Thank you very much and now if you have any donations you can come forward.

(Whereupon, the education scholarship convention chairman and past national commander withdrew from and the senior vice-commander returned to the podium.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: For those planning to present donations, make sure checks are signed and that the state and unit checks have two signatures.

Form a line in the center. Thank you. And one-by-one you can present your donation.

Announce your name, state, your state and your unit and the donation amount at the microphone. Thank you.

(Whereupon, the senior vice-commander withdrew to the front of the dais and the adjutant returned to the podium.)

ADJUTANT CLOS: Hold on. Oh, okay.

MS. KAREN REDIKER: Okay, Karen Rediker, senior vice from Vermont. We have a \$125 check for the National Education Loan Fund. (Applause)

MS. ASHLEY TEMPS: Good morning. Ashley Temps, District 15, Missouri, senior vice-commander. We have \$300 that we would like to donate to the Education Fund. (Applause)

MS. VICKIE PARTRIDGE: Good morning. Vickie Partridge, state commander for Oregon. We have donations for the Caregiver Program for \$50 and a Winter Sports Clinic for \$100. (Applause)

MS. DIANA POLLOCK: Diana Pollock, Ohio, District 11. And we have a check for \$550 for the Scholarship Fund and \$300 for the Service Support. (Applause)

MS. TERRI CONKLIN: Terri Conklin, State Department of Florida commander. And we have a check for the National Auxiliary Service Program, \$750. (Applause)

MS. KRISTY CHISUM: Kristy Chisum from Oklahoma, commander. We have a check for \$500 for DAVA for Kids. (Applause)

MS. ROSE WILLIAMS: Rose Williams, 12th District NEC. In lieu of gifts to the officers and NECs, Alternate NEC Patty Davis and I have made a personal donation to the DAVA for Kids program. (Applause)

MS. JUNE SCHOW: June Schow, adjutant for Utah, we have a donation for Camp Corral for \$300 and a donation to DAVA for Kids for \$100. (Applause)

MS. DEANNA DUNN: Hello, Deanna Dunn, junior vice, Unit 109, Florida, we have a donation to the Caregivers Initiative for \$1,000 and \$1,000, also, to the National Auxiliary Service Program. (Applause)

MS. KIM STAKE: Kim Stake, Unit 57, Arkansas. We have a \$200 check for the Service Support Fund and a \$100 for Educational Scholarship. (Applause)

MS. JANE CASHER: Jane Casher, Department of Kentucky commander, I have two checks, one for the National Service Program for \$50 and one for the National DAV Education Program, \$50. (Applause)

MS. CATHY KENNEDY: Cathy Kennedy, commander, State of Pennsylvania, we have a check for General Fund, \$50; Winter Sports, \$50; Camp for Kids, \$50, for a total of \$150. (Applause)

MS. BARBARA FISHER: Barbara Fisher from Indiana 23, I have \$20, Service Fund. (Applause)

MS. ELAINE PHILLIPS: Elaine Phillips, State of Texas commander, we have two checks, one for the Caregivers Program, \$750 from the State of Texas; and then we have \$750 for the General Fund. (Applause)

MR. STEPHEN WINKLER: Steve Winkler, State of Maine, commander, we have three checks: one for the DAV Auxiliary National Scholarship Fund for \$200; one for the DAV National DAVA for Kids Program or DAV for Kids Program, \$300; and for the Services Fund in the amount of \$200. (Applause)

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER SUSAN HENRY: Susan Henry, past national commander and past Ed Loan Fund recipient, a personal donation for the Scholarship Fund. (Applause)

MS. AMIE RABER: Amie Raber, Unit 18, Florida, I have a check for \$160 for the Caregivers. (Applause)

ADJUTANT CLOS: I would like to please just ask everybody in the back of the room to kind of keep the chatter to a minimum and if you have to have a conversation, if you don't mind just taking it outside.

I'm getting a few text messages from the back of the room saying that there is a lot of chatter going on so if we could please quit, that would be great. Thank you. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the adjutant withdrew from and the senior vice-commander returned to the podium.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: For those planning – oh, we did that part. I'd like to personally thank you, all of you, for the generous donations to our national programs. Your support is certainly appreciated.

(Whereupon, the senior vice-commander withdrew from and the adjutant advanced to the podium.)

ADJUTANT CLOS: When called upon the convention committee chairman will approach the podium and announce the winners. I ask the committee advisors to step to the awards table to the right of the podium for award presentation and photo ops.

As winners are announced, please step forward to the awards table to receive the awards. If needed, please form a line.

Chairmen will not need to read the committee members, just announce your committee and ask them to stand to be recognized.

And since it's a little bit different what we're going to ask is when you come up to get your award if you could go to the right side, that way if anybody is looking at the closed captioning we're not blocking their view.

And we will start with Americanism, Terry Grabowski. Would the chairman please come up?

(Whereupon, the adjutant withdrew from and the Americanism Convention Committee chairman advanced to the podium.)

AMERICANISM CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN CAROL RUNDELL: Good morning, everyone.

(Response of "Good morning.")

AMERICANISM CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN RUNDELL: National commander, national adjutant, national officers, past national commanders, delegates and guests of the 100th National Auxiliary Convention.

The National Americanism Convention Committee met at 9:00 o'clock on August 6th, 2023. Our advisor was Terry Grabowski. I, Carol Rundell, served as Committee chairman and Danny Pierce was elected/appointed secretary.

The following units were judged for the best in their category for the National Americanism Awards. Group 1, 10 to 50 members, F. McLhinney, Number 15, Maryland. (Applause) Is there anyone here from the chapter or, I'm sorry, the unit or the state to accept the award? Please come forward.

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award, followed by a round of applause.)

AMERICANISM CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN RUNDELL: In Group 2, 51 to 100 members, Northern Hills Number 11, South Dakota. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award, followed by a round of applause.)

AMERICANISM CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN RUNDELL: Group 3, 101 to 200 members, Al Bartraw Junior, Number 50, Virginia. (Applause) If there is a unit or a state person who can come up and accept the award, we'd appreciate it. Please come forward.

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award, followed by a round of applause.)

AMERICANISM CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN RUNDELL: Group Number 4, 201 members or over, Harry L. Axline, Junior, Number 22. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

AMERICANISM CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN RUNDELL: The Special Americanism awards: Group 1 is 10 to 200 members, Ray H. Fuller, Winnebago, Colorado, Number 17. (Applause) I'm sorry. That was County Number 17, Texas. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

AMERICANISM CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN RUNDELL: And Group 2, 201 members or over, Titusville Number 101. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

AMERICANISM CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN RUNDELL: The Committee submitted the following recommendations. Do not write on the report. Read the question entirely. National to provide a sample. Don't leave any blanks. Put zero if you have nothing.

On special Americanism they asked if you could break down, they asked for a breakdown of attendees, members versus non-members.

And the last one was involve schools and committees, not just on holidays.

Will the members who served on this committee please stand, if available and can, to be recognized.

(Whereupon, the committee members stood and were recognized with a round of applause.)

AMERICANISM CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN RUNDELL: I would, again, like to thank you for participating and to thank our advisor who gave us the best information. Congratulations to all the winners. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Americanism Convention Committee chairman withdrew from and the adjutant returned to the podium.)

ADJUTANT CLOS: We will now do Community Service, Kathleen Wenthe. And if the chairman could please come forward for presentation.

(Whereupon, the adjutant withdrew from and the Community Service Convention Committee chairman advanced to the podium.)

COMMUNITY SERVICE CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN ICILDA MARLEY: Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

COMMUNITY SERVICE CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN MARLEY: Okay. National commander, national adjutant, national officers, past national commanders, delegates, and guests of the 100th National Auxiliary Convention.

The National Community Service Convention Committee met in Atlantic City Room C at 9:05 on August 6th, 2023. Our advisor was Kathleen Wenthe. I, Icilda Marley, served as Committee chairman and Tawnya Kingsley was elected and appointed secretary.

The following units were judged to be the best the in their category for the National Community Service awards.

Group 1, of 10 to 50 members, Unit 30, Twin Lakes, Arkansas. (Applause) All right, now. Okay.

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

COMMUNITY SERVICE CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN MARLEY: Group Number 2, 51 to 100 members Unit 46, Dyersburg, Tennessee. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

COMMUNITY SERVICE CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN MARLEY: There we go. Group 3, 101 to 201 members Unit 20, Jack Redell, Louisiana. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

COMMUNITY SERVICE CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN MARLEY: Group 4, 201 members and over, Unit 109, Titusville, Florida. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

COMMUNITY SERVICE CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN MARLEY: The Committee submitted the following recommendations. Our reports should be itemized – that's all reports should be itemized. Just itemize everything.

Remember to limit three pages, front only. We've received three pages front and back. That's six pages. Three pages, one side only, please.

Check all totals and be specific.

Now, will the members who served on this Committee please stand, if able, to be recognized.

(Whereupon, the Committee members stood and were recognized with a round of applause.)

COMMUNITY SERVICE CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN MARLEY: Thank you. Okay. And thank everybody who helped. It was very tedious and Kathleen was wonderful. Thank you. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Community Service Convention Committee chairman withdrew from and the adjutant returned to the podium.)

ADJUTANT CLOS: We will now do Junior Activities, Maxine Nixon. So would the chairman please come forward?

(Whereupon, the adjutant withdrew from and the Junior Activities Convention Committee chairman advanced to the podium.)

JUNIOR ACTIVITIES CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN CAROL PARKER-PARK: All right. National Junior Activities Committee Convention report. National commander, national adjutant, national officers, past national commanders, delegates, and guests of this 100th National Auxiliary Convention.

The National Junior Activities Convention Committee met in the Atlantic City D at 9:00 a.m. on August 6th, 2023. Our advisor was Maxine Nixon. I, Carol Parker-Park, served as Committee chairman and Linda Applegate was elected/appointed secretary.

The following units were judged to be the best in their category for the National Junior Activities Award.

Group 1, Edward G. Galian Memorial Unit 212, Goshen, New York. (Applause) Would a representative of the state please come and accept this award. Okay. She's here.

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

JUNIOR ACTIVITIES CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN PARKER-PARK: Group 2, 26 to 50 members Wagoner County, (Inaudible), Oklahoma, Unit 88. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

JUNIOR ACTIVITIES CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN PARKER-PARK: Group 3, 51 to 100 members, Glendale, Arizona, Unit 20. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

JUNIOR ACTIVITIES CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN PARKER-PARK: We had none for 101 and over so we progressed to the National Junior Awards.

National Junior Award, 7 to 10, Bristyl L. Miller, Heart of Texas, Unit 3. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

JUNIOR ACTIVITIES CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN PARKER-PARK: National Junior Award, 11 to 14 years, Lillian Valila, Worcester 4, Massachusetts.

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

JUNIOR ACTIVITIES CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN PARKER-PARK: National Junior Award, 15 through 17, Jose Reyna-Carbajal, Heart of Texas, Unit 3. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

JUNIOR ACTIVITIES CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN PARKER-PARK: The Committee submitted the following recommendations. Do not use acronyms. Fill out unit name clearly and describe activities. Include only activities associated with veterans.

On junior individual awards we need a clearer way of point system, i.e., state of all seven requirements not met so no points awarded.

And would the members who served on this Committee please stand and be recognized.

(Whereupon, the members of the Committee stood and were recognized with a round of applause.)

JUNIOR ACTIVITIES CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN PARKER-PARK: Thank you.

(Whereupon, the Junior Activities chairman withdrew from and the adjutant returned to the podium.)

ADJUTANT CLOS: Legislative, Melissa Pierce. Would the chairman please come up?

(Whereupon, the adjutant withdrew from and the Legislative Convention Committee chairman advanced to a microphone.)

LEGISLATIVE CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN BRANDON MOTT: Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

LEGISLATIVE CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN MOTT: This is a lot. (Laughter) I have it. This is my first time so – (Applause) yes. And I have to admit, the advice on my Committee was amazing. They've been around a little while. And I've gotten amazing advice.

And I had Legislation. I'm Brandon Mott, Legislative chairman. National commander, national adjutant, national officers, past national commanders, delegates and guests of this 100th National Auxiliary Convention.

The National Legislative Convention Committee met in the Long Port Room at Harrah's at 9:00 a.m. on the 6th of August, 2023. Our advisor was the amazing Melissa Pierce. (Applause)

I, Brandon Mott, served as the Committee chairman. And the awesome Linda Oliver was the elected/appointed secretary. She did a wonderful job. (Applause) Thank you.

The following units were judged to be the best in their category. There was a lot and they were all wonderful. And you need to keep working.

The Group Number 1, from 10 to 50 members, was the Scott Vetterling Unit 33 from Greenville, Massachusetts. They were wonderful.

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

LEGISLATIVE CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN MOTT: Group Number 2, 51 to 100 members, was Lafayette Unit Number 2, Lafayette, Louisiana. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

LEGISLATIVE CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN MOTT: Group Number 3, 101 to 200 members, was Marshfield Memorial Unit 35, Marshfield, Massachusetts. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

LEGISLATIVE CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN MOTT: Group Number 4, 201 members or over, Westcott-Haughton Unit Number 56, North Attleboro, Massachusetts. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

LEGISLATIVE CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN MOTT: The Committee submitted the following recommendations. We need to recognize Massachusetts for winning so many reports. (Laughter)

Please clarify the local context and the follow-up as we noticed only one identity for the local context. Auto-generated messages back. So when you send out from DAV CAN and you get the auto "thank you" back, that does not count as a follow-up. (Laughter)

Will the members who served on this Committee please stand, if able. They were all amazing. Absolutely phenomenal.

(Whereupon, the Committee members stood and were recognized with a round of applause.)

LEGISLATIVE CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN MOTT: Thank you very much for your service.

(Whereupon, the Legislative Convention Committee chairman withdrew from and the adjutant returned to the podium.)

ADJUTANT CLOS: VAVS, Patty Davis. And could the chairman please come up? And good luck following that. (Laughter)

Like I said, I've told him just yesterday his energy and excitement, enthusiasm is phenomenal. That's what we need. We need everybody with his energy and his enthusiasm. (Applause) Thank you, Brandon. And welcome.

(Whereupon, the adjutant withdrew from and the VAVS Convention Committee chairman advanced to the podium.)

VAVS CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN MARYANNA FOSTER: Good morning. It's my first time, too, but I don't think I can upscale that. (Applause)

All right, national commander, national adjutant, national officers, past national commanders, delegates, and guests of this 100th National Auxiliary Convention.

The National VAVS Convention Committee met in the Avalon 1 to 3 on August 6th, 2023, with Patty Davis who was absolutely fantastic. (Applause) And our secretary was Rory Kiven. I don't know if I pronounced that right, Rory.

MR. RORY KIRVEN: Kirven.

VAVS CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN FOSTER: Kirven. Okay. There we go. (Applause) He was wonderful.

The following units were judged to be the best in their categories for the National VAVS.

The first group, 10 to 50, was Craven County Unit 40, Newbern, North Carolina. (Applause) Is there anyone present from North Carolina?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: She's coming.

VAVS CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN FOSTER: Oh, okay.

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

VAVS CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN FOSTER: The second group, Number 2, is from 51 to 100 members, is from the Milwaukee West, West Alice, Milwaukee, Unit 19. (Applause)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

VAVS CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN FOSTER: I think this crowd is getting rowdy. (Laughter) The third group is from 101 member to 200 members, and is from, it is Giovanni – oh, help me with this one – Folcarelli, Providence, Rhode Island Unit 1. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

VAVS CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN FOSTER: That's a Polish person trying to speak Italian. (Laughter) Group 4 is from 201 members and above, from Titusville, Florida, from Viera, Florida, and I don't know the unit – Titusville. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

VAVS CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN FOSTER: The Committee submitted the following recommendations. At the top of the page we'd like to have the word "Year" changed to "Current year hours". Include the instructions and an instruction sheet to identify each category.

Number 1. Define and simplify clarification of senior members, regular as "trained volunteers", i.e., trained from, vetted by the VA, regularly scheduled or the sponsors who are non-DAV members, occasional DAV members, and non-DAV members.

Add a detailed instruction list to define acronyms.

Add a new line, "above information can be obtained from your present representative at your facilities."

Sorry, this is long.

Make sure what you list as VAVS is not community service.

Any projects must exclusively be for VA and not be distributed to another non-profit organization.

To be more specific in details or projects, locations, being specific exactly where it went to, where the facility you donated to is located.

Omit the word "cash." Instead, insert "monetary donations" and omit the word "project" on Number 3.

Insert one monetary donation per line. You may use the back for additional lines or attach another sheet.

DAV transportation or network, that writings projects need to be changed or omitted.

Monetary donations should be exclusively for VA and other non-profits.

All expenditures must be itemized on the back of the report or on the attached list.

Would the members who participated in the VAVS Committee please stand to be recognized.

(Whereupon, the Committee members stood and were recognized with a round of applause.)

VAVS CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN FOSTER: Thank you for your hard work. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the VAVS Convention Committee chairman withdrew from and the adjutant returned to the podium.)

ADJUTANT CLOS: We need to get a book of changes. So she did top Brandon, kind of. (Applause) All right, Mae Holmes, AnnMarie Hurley and would the chairman please come forward.

(Whereupon, the adjutant withdrew from and the Mae Holmes Convention Committee chairman advanced to the podium.)

MAE HOLMES CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN ROSE MCGINNIS: Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

MAE HOLMES CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN MCGINNIS: I, also, am new. (Applause) Isn't it fabulous that so many new people have come to chair and attend or be on the committees? That's fabulous.

National commander, national adjutant, national officers, past national commanders, delegates and guests of this 100th National Auxiliary Convention. The National Mae Holmes Convention Committee met in the Avalon 18 to 20 room at 9:00 a.m. on August 6th, 2023.

Our advisor was AnnMarie Hurley. (Applause) I, Rose McGinnis, served as Committee chair. And Debra Geary was elected/appointed secretary. Thank you. (Applause)

The following units were judged to be the best in their category for National Mae Holmes Award. Group 1, 10 to 50 members, Twin Lakes Unit 30, Arkansas. Congratulations. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

MAE HOLMES CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN MCGINNIS: Group 2, 51 to 100 members, Lafayette, Louisiana Unit 2. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

MAE HOLMES CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN MCGINNIS: Group 3, 101 to 200 members, Michael J. Thomas, Unit 5, North Carolina. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

MAE HOLMES CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN MCGINNIS: And Group 4, 201 members or over, Carroll E. Prosser Unit 30, South Carolina. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

MAE HOLMES CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN MCGINNIS: The Committee submitted the following recommendations. Please fill in all blanks. I think every committee said that.

Be sure to sign your report when you send it in. We had one report omitting a signature. That was really sad to see because you worked very hard.

Use just one font. If you're going to type in with the computer, please use a single font. We had reports that had multiple fonts and copying and pasting. It was really difficult to read when you're looking at the, when you're trying to compare through the Mae Holmes.

And then the Committee requested that if there could be more specific instructions for the Mae Holmes because we have so much to cover. It encompasses everything each unit does, and sometimes it's kind of confusing with the point system so hopefully we can fix that.

But I would like to thank the Committee, if everyone on the Committee for Mae Holmes could please stand.

(Whereupon, the Committee members stood and were recognized with a round of applause.)

MAE HOLMES CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN MCGINNIS: They were amazing, amazing. Thank you. I have to say that they went through everything with a fine-tooth comb. They were just astounding to work with and I, again, want to thank you all. It was a pleasure. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Mae Holmes Convention Committee chairman withdrew from and the adjutant returned to the podium.)

ADJUTANT CLOS: Now we will have Membership, Chris Easley. And, again, you guys, the new people who are taking these chairmen and being on these committees, kudos to you guys. Keep this up.

This is definitely what we need. We need, you know, the older with the younger to intermingle and keep this being a successful committee, organization. So kudos to all of you guys for working together. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the adjutant withdrew from and the first junior vice-commander and National Membership Committee chairman advanced to the podium.)

FIRST JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER AND NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN CHRISTOPHER EASLEY: Howdy.

(Response of "Howdy" and "Good morning.")

FIRST JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER AND NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN
EASLEY: National commander, national adjutant, national officers, past national commanders, line officers, members and guests.

Well, I was your Membership chairman this year. And Patty, when she was Membership chairman had a saying – Patty, are you in the room?

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER PATRICE RAPISAND: Yes.

FIRST JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER AND NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN
EASLEY: What was your saying?

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER RAPISAND: Membership, membership, membership.

FIRST JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER AND NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN
EASLEY: Membership, membership, membership. Well, this year we got a new one: recruit, recruit recruit. (Laughter)

I want to congratulate the national organization because we made quota. (Applause)

Congratulations to all of the states and all of the units that made quota. Without our members, we do not have an organization. We need more members.

The Membership Committee met in an undisclosed bunker. (Laughter) It was comprised of Ann Glende and Bunny Clos and "Big Blue" the membership's machine.

They were provided with tacos, caffeine and four hour, every four hours two bathroom breaks. (Laughter) They beat up the computer and had to replace a printer.

So here are your membership awards.

Group 1, 10 to 50, largest members increase, Wyoming Guthrie Beck, Number 2, with 14. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

FIRST JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER AND NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN
EASLEY: Group 2, 51 to 100, largest member increase, 23, New Mexico, Joe C. Montoya Number 24. (Applause)

If a state representative, if the unit is not here if a state representative can please come up and receive the award.

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

FIRST JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER AND NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN
EASLEY: Group 3, 101 to 200, largest member increase, Alabama Dothan Number 87, 15. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

FIRST JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER AND NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN
EASLEY: Then also there was a tie for 101 to 200, largest increase, 15, for South Carolina, Woodrow Wilson Number 4. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

FIRST JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER AND NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN
EASLEY: Group 4, greater than 200, largest member increase, 115, Florida, Venice Gulf, 101. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

FIRST JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER AND NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN
EASLEY: Group 5, the department with the largest percent increase, 104.06, Louisiana. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

FIRST JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER AND NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN
EASLEY: Group 6, the largest numerical increase over all among all the departments, Florida with 213. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

FIRST JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER AND NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN
EASLEY: And last but not least, the newest unit with the most paid members, 15, R. L. Cochran, Junior, Number 82, Florida. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

FIRST JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER AND NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN
EASLEY: And as they said in the joint opening, we chartered nine new units this year. You know, whoever is the Membership chairman next year, I hope they double that number. (Applause) Thank you very much.

(Whereupon, the first junior vice-commander and National Membership Committee chairman withdrew from the podium and the adjutant advanced to the podium.)

ADJUTANT CLOS: So as we wait for AnnMarie to get finished with her little photo ops over here, if you guys have good recruiting ideas, feel free to share them with us. We can pass them on.

We'll put ideas, as you, if everybody in this room has liked our Facebook page you will see that we try to share as much as we can. If there is an announcement, we'll put it out there. If there is something new, we put it out there.

But we also ask for the units to let us know what they're doing. If it's successful for them, maybe somebody else didn't think of it, so we ask everybody.

So if you have not done so or you did not know we did this, please know that you can send us emails with what little projects you are doing for A, recruiting new members or even what you're just doing for veterans in your area.

We will share that information with others, that way you're giving that idea and suggestion to somebody else. Might be successful for them, as well.

So please always feel free to share that with Ann and myself. You can email that. You can call us. But please email us pictures, if you can. We will be happy to share that.

So that email we like to use is the dava@dav.org. That way if – we both see that email so we make sure it doesn't get missed. So, and then we can talk about that later, as well. (Applauses)

(Whereupon, the adjutant withdrew from and the senior vice-commander returned to the podium.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Thank you. National Senior Vice-Commander states – (Laughter) – that would be me. (Laughter) I have two hats this week. Delegates will now caucus to discuss the proposed bylaw amendments. You will have ten minutes.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed to caucus, at 10:00 o'clock, a.m.; and the meeting reconvened at 10:16 o'clock, a.m. on Monday, August 7, 2023.)

ADJUTANT CLOS: Can we quiet back down. I need to make an announcement. I need to correct something specifically for our transcripts.

I guess they made a mistake with doing the Special Americanism Awards so I just want to reiterate that Group 1, 10 through 200, the winner was Ray H. Fuller, Winnebago City Number 17, Wisconsin. (Applause) Yay.

And then Group 2, 201 and over, was Titusville Number 109, Florida. (Applause) So we just wanted to make sure that that information was updated and corrected. Thank you and congratulations. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the adjutant withdrew from and the senior vice-commander advanced to the podium.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Okay, now, could everyone kind of quiet down so we can get on with the Bylaws. I would like Judy Steinhouse to come up, please.

The Constitution and Bylaws Committee chairman will come forward for the second reading of the proposed Constitution and Bylaw amendments. Second reading of the Constitution and Bylaws, Judy Steinhouse, chairman.

(Whereupon, the senior vice-commander withdrew from and the Constitution and Bylaws chairman and past national commander advanced to the podium.)

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: Still morning, so good morning, again.

(Response of "Good morning.")

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: The National Constitution and Bylaws Committee, national commander, national adjutant, national officers, past national commanders, delegates and guests of this 100th National Auxiliary Convention.

The National Constitution and Bylaws Convention Committee met in the Atlantic City B at 9:00 a.m. on August 6th, 2023. Our advisor was Paula Raymond. Thank you, Paula. I, Judy Steinhouse, served as Committee chairman and Susan Henry was elected and/or appointed our secretary.

I really appreciate everybody who was on this Committee. We will now go into the Constitution and Bylaws – first, everybody who was on the Committee would you please stand and be recognized.

(Whereupon, the members of the Committee stood and were recognized with a round of applause.)

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: Business at hand. Everybody got their Constitution and Bylaw changes ready? Got them.

Number 1. Page N-20, Article V, National Committees and Chairmen, Section 1, National Executive Committee, fourth paragraph, delete "or as State Commander". The paragraph would then read:

"Elected National Executive Committee members or Alternate National Executive Committee members shall not be eligible to serve simultaneously as the Immediate Past National Commander."

Rationale: to provide for district representation in instances where reduced membership and/or waning interest affects the availability of candidates for NEC and/or alternate positions and to aid state departments facing a lack of candidates to fill the state commander position.

Madam Senior Vice, I move for the adoption of this proposed amendment.

(Whereupon, the Constitution and Bylaws Committee chairman and past national commander withdrew from and the senior vice-commander returned to the podium.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: A motion has been made. Is there a second.

MS. ASHLEY TEMPS: Madam Commander, Ashley Temps, District 15, second the motion.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor signify by saying aye; any opposed. The motion carried.

(Whereupon, the senior vice-commander withdrew from and the Constitution and Bylaws Committee chairman and past national commander returned to the podium.)

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: Number 2. Page N-24, Article V, National Committees and Chairmen, Section 6, National Interim Constitution and Bylaws Committee, delete the first paragraph and replace with the following:

"The National Interim Constitution and Bylaws Committee shall be comprised of a chairman and two (2) additional members, all of whom are appointed by the National Commander and approved by the National Executive Committee."

Rationale: to clarify committee member appointments by the national commander and subsequent approval by the National Executive Committee.

Madam National Senior Vice, I move for the adoption of this proposed amendment.

(Whereupon, the Constitution and Bylaws Committee chairman and past national commander withdrew from and the senior vice-commander returned to the podium.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: A motion has been made. Is there a second?

MS. ROSE WILLIAMS: Sorry, Rose Williams, Unit 30, Wisconsin, I second that motion.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Any discussion? All in favor signify by saying aye; any opposed. The motion carried.

(Whereupon, the senior vice-commander withdrew from and the Constitution and Bylaws Committee chairman and past national commander returned to the podium.)

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: Number 3. Page N-41, Article XI, Probation, Suspension, and Revocation of Charters, Section 2, Suspension, first paragraph, add second sentence to read:

"Such suspension may be for a period of thirty days but not more than ninety days."

Rationale: To set a timeframe to have these matter handled in a timely manner.

Madam National Senior Vice, I move for the adoption of this proposed amendment.

(Whereupon, the Constitution and Bylaws Committee chairman and past national commander withdrew from and the senior vice-commander returned to the podium.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: A motion has been made. Is there a second?

MS. SHEILA STEPHENS: Sheila Stephens, State of Louisiana, Delegate, second it.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Any discussion? All in favor signify by saying; any opposed. The motion carried.

(Whereupon, the senior vice-commander withdrew from and the Constitution and Bylaws Committee chairman and past national commander returned to the podium.)

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: Number 4. Page N-42 – excuse me. Page N-42, Article XI, Probation, Suspension, and Revocation of Charters, Section 3, Revocation, first paragraph, after the word "be" add "permanently". The paragraph would then read:

"Unit or state department charters may be permanently revoked by the Auxiliary National Commander with the approval of the DAV Auxiliary National Executive Committee."

Rationale: To clarify that permanent unit or state department charter revocation requires the approval of the DAV Auxiliary Commander and the National Executive Committee and re-chartering would require that all requirements of a newly formed unit or state department charter must be met.

Madam National Senior Vice-Commander, I move for the adoption of this amendment.

(Whereupon, the Constitution and Bylaws Committee chairman and past national commander withdrew from and the senior vice-commander returned to the podium.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: A motion has been made. Is there a second?

MS. AMY BOWSER: Amy Bowser, District 6, Virginia, Unit 48, I second the motion.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Any discussion? All in favor signify by saying aye; any opposed. The motion carried.

(Whereupon, the senior vice-commander withdrew from and the Constitution and Bylaws Committee chairman and past national commander returned to the podium.)

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: Number 5. Page N-42, Article XI, Probation, Suspension, and Revocation of Charters, Section 3, Revocation. Insert new paragraph after the first paragraph, as follows:

"Charters of units or state departments that have failed to file an annual financial report, elect necessary officers, or fulfill other obligations required in these Bylaws shall be revoked and have the opportunity to reorganize under the original charter within a period of eighteen months from date of charter revocation."

Rationale: Clarifies the procedural criteria for unit and state department revocations and procedures to reactivate a revoked charter within an eighteen-month period, at which time any assets held in escrow would be returned.

Madam National Senior Vice-Commander, I move for the adoption of this proposed amendment.

(Whereupon, the Constitution and Bylaws Committee chairman and past national commander withdrew from and the senior vice-commander returned to the podium.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: A motion has been made. Is there a second?

MS. KAREN REDIKER: Karen Rediker, District 3, Vermont, senior vice, I second the motion.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Any discussion? All in favor signify by saying aye; any opposed. The motion carried.

(Whereupon, the senior vice-commander withdrew from and the Constitution and Bylaws Committee chairman and past national commander returned to the podium.)

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: Number 6. Page S-4, Article III, State Officers, Section 3, Eligibility for State Office, delete the words "for the past twelve (12) months". The paragraph would then read:

"Only members in good standing in a chartered unit shall be eligible to serve as an elected or appointed state officer."

Rationale: The current twelve- (12) months restriction hinders state departments in their efforts to fill critical leadership positions. This recommended change will provide stability and progression for those state departments with a smaller active membership base.

Madam National Senior Vice-Commander, I move for the adoption of this proposed amendment.

(Whereupon, the Constitution and Bylaws Committee chairman and past national commander withdrew from and the senior vice-commander returned to the podium.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: A motion has been made. Is there a second?

MS. KAREN WINN: Karen Winn, State of Idaho commander, I second this motion.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Any discussion?

MS. LORETTA NOSKO: Yes. Yes, I need clarification. So you're saying that any member in a unit can become state commander, whether she is new or not, with no experience, correct? Is that the way this is supposed to be read?

We, the way it's read I have a problem with it. Okay? If they could make it where if she either has an experienced senior vice or – oh, excuse me.

Loretta Nosko, Unit 73, Erie, Pennsylvania – so that that state commander would have the backup she needs to help her with everything because everything on a state level is larger than on the unit level, and different.

And if she's not aware of that, or he, there could be an issue. So they need some sort of person of responsibility or a mentor or something that could help them in that position, just the way it's worded, not with the thingy itself.

(Whereupon, there were sidebar conversations to discuss the comments.)

MS. NOSKO: Sorry to cause a problem.

(Whereupon, the senior vice-commander withdrew from and the Constitution and Bylaws Committee chairman and past national commander returned to the podium.)

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: Yes, we're changing the first paragraph. And then that's on Page S-4 of –

MS. NOSKO: Yes.

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: – of your lovely little Constitution and Bylaw, the little blue book. And then on S-5 it says, "In order to be eligible for the office of state commander a member must have served as an elected state officer."

MS. NOSKO: Okay. So you're saying that they would still have to be one position in the line before they could become commander.

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: Yes.

MS. NOSKO: Okay. Thank you.

(Whereupon, the Constitution and Bylaws Committee chairman and past national commander withdrew from and the senior vice-commander returned to the podium.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Okay, all in favor signify by saying aye; any opposed. The motion carried.

(Whereupon, the senior vice-commander withdrew from and the Constitution and Bylaws Committee chairman and past national commander returned to the podium.)

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: Item Number 7. Page U-7, Article XI, Duties of Unit Officers, Section 3, Adjutant, reword Number 8 to read:

"Ensure that the Official Officer Election report (OER) form is properly completed and submitted to state and national headquarters within ten (10) days following the annual installation.

"Any change(s) during the membership year also require submitting a newly completed Officer Election Report (OER) to state and national headquarters.

"Note: Electronic submission of the Officer Election Report (OER) can also be performed by an elected unit officer, if necessary."

Rationale: In addition to the adjutant any elected officer may submit the annual Election Officer Report, officer report online.

Madam National Senior Vice-Commander, I move for the adoption of this proposed amendment.

(Whereupon, the Constitution and Bylaws Committee chairman and past national commander withdrew from and the senior vice-commander returned to the podium.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: A motion has been made. Is there a second?

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER SUSAN HENRY: Susan Henry, Past National Commander, seconds.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Any discussion? All in favor signify by saying aye; any opposed. The motion carried. And thank you all for your work on this. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the senior vice-commander withdrew from and the Constitution and Bylaws Committee chairman and past national commander returned to the podium.)

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: Not going to get rid of me that soon. (Laughter) At the bottom of the back page you will note that this notice that this was accidentally omitted in the 2021 Constitution and Bylaws.

We had lots of changes in 2021 and this one just had been in the book for about eleven years and when they rewrote the book they just kind of forgot to put it in. So it's been approved and accepted way back in 2010 (sic). We just need to stick it back in the book now.

And would you believe it, the Constitution and Bylaws has a recommendation. (Laughter) That's a scary thought, isn't it?

The Committee recommends that the Finance Committee include the criteria and specifications, including requirements for reimbursement, as part of the budget, which is then approved by the Convention body.

Thank you. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Constitution and Bylaws Committee chairman and past national commander withdrew from and the senior vice-commander returned to the podium.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Would – excuse me, National Adjutant Bunny Clos please come to the stand here for the announcements. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the senior vice-commander withdrew from and the adjutant advanced to the podium.)

ADJUTANT CLOS: So, again, I just want to thank everybody on the Committees, again, and the new people that got involved. I am super tickled about this, as you probably can't tell, considering I've now said it two or three times.

So, welcome to all the new attendees and the new members that are getting involved. I can tell you I'm excited. So, the Forget-me-not Luncheon, 12:30 for those of you who have tickets, in Avalon 14 to 17. Be sure to show your ticket at the door.

We still have a couple of people's tickets up here to get. So, I'm going to say it. I'm going to be blunt. If you don't get your tickets now, I'm probably going to get rid of them because we do have about seven or eight people who want tickets.

With that being said, I know Sarah Kashner had one and Nancy Hoey she has got one to get rid of. You are next on the list. So, anybody else, you can check with me.

We are going to stop in the office real quick. If we have any additional, like I said, I have a few. I'll probably call your name out here in a minute. Come get your ticket. If not, we're going to give it away to somebody else.

Districts will caucus immediately following this meeting to discuss the report of the Nominating Committee.

National officers and NECs will not have reserved seating at the Forget-me-not Luncheon and are welcome to sit with their states. PNCs will have a reserved seating table near the front of the room and no one will be escorted in.

Registration badges will be needed to enter Fun Night tonight and the Introduction of National Officers and Dinner tomorrow night. Those without a badge will have to go through a verification process before being admitted. All attendees must be registered in order to attend the events.

If you have not done so already, please stop by the Wildwood Registration Desk Number 4 for table registration – okay, I can't talk – reservations for the Introduction of National Officers and Dinner. You must be registered before table assignments can be made.

Table assignments will be available for pickup immediately following the final business session tomorrow, Tuesday, August 8th, at the Wildwood Registration Desk Number 4.

If you do not pre-reserve your seat, you will need to stop at the seating desk near the dinner room entrance to obtain your table number before entering the room. This will include juniors.

My last thing would be to call Maxine up here so she can pull a winner for juniors.

(Whereupon, the adjutant withdrew from and Maxine Nixon advanced to the podium.)

MRS. D. MAXINE NIXON: Thank you, Bunny. Just so you will know, too, we had some little activity packets for our juniors this year. They're not much but it's some little fun things to do.

And there is a display board over by the water station, table, whatever that is. So if you all would take a look at a few of the little things they do, maybe it will even give you some ideas to take home and get them to do, as well.

When they turn those in we are letting them put in a little ticket for a drawing to celebrate. So I need somebody to draw. How about you? All right.

(Whereupon, a ticket was drawn.)

MRS. NIXON: Okay, first we have Haley Haliburn. (Applause) You want to come up and get it?

(Whereupon, the winner advanced to accept the prize.)

MRS. NIXON: We have one more. (Whereupon, the next ticket was drawn.)

MRS. NIXON: Next we have Flavia Florey. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the winner advanced to accept the prize.)

MRS. NIXON: Okay, thank you. You all keep putting your activities in the box in the office if anybody wants to see them in there. And we will have another drawing after the next meeting. Thank you.

(Applause)

(Whereupon, Mrs. Nixon withdrew from and the adjutant returned to the podium.)

ADJUTANT CLOS: Thank you. So, I have seen our commander and adjutant for DAV walk in so I would just like to say, Joe, you've done a phenomenal job this year. (Applause)

Thank you for always trusting the Auxiliary and for our new National Adjutant of the DAV, Barry Jesinoski. And we look forward to working together within his years to come. (Applause) So if either one of you want to say something, please feel free. I will let you. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the DAV Auxiliary adjutant withdrew from and DAV Commander Joseph Parsetich and DAV National Adjutant Barry Jesinoski advanced to the podium.)

DAV COMMANDER JOSEPH PARSETICH: Thank you. Please. You know, every time I go anywhere I always, people have gotten used to saying, "Where's Joe" when you're looking at the Auxiliary. Not only am I a full paid life proud member of the Auxiliary –

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Here. Here. (Applause)

DAV COMMANDER PARSETICH: But those of you who have been with me at a department convention know how I always make sure that the DAV members also join the Auxiliary because I'm glad that you guys can't join our ranks because they would mean you would have to have a disability, you know, which I wouldn't wish on anybody, more or less, service-connected.

But one of the things I always like to remind you guys of, don't ever look at yourself as some kind of red-headed stepchild. You guys are just as important to the veterans who were in combat situations as their ammunition or their weapon.

And let me clarify that why, because I've been the effects of somebody who wasn't getting any love letters, care packages, or anything else while they were deployed.

Their mental frame of mind was, it makes no difference if I get back or not. You know, what have I got to go back to? And you don't want that kind of attitude next to you if all heck breaks loose.

So the support that you gave your loved ones while they were deployed makes all the difference in the world. And I can't even think about how difficult it must be for those of you who were back here helpless, just all we can do is lift them up in prayer but not knowing what can I do to help protect my loved one.

So, I am so proud to be in your midst. And you guys do a phenomenal job. And if anything, anything that national can do to further support your efforts as far as to strengthen the collaboration between the Auxiliary had DAV, don't you dare hesitate to let us know because we love you and appreciate you. God bless. (Standing Ovation)

DAV ADJUTANT BARRY JESINOSKI: Hey, everybody.

(Response of "Good morning.")

DAV ADJUTANT JESINOSKI: You know what, I am, normally run hot and this room is freezing. (Laughter)

(Response of "Yes.")

DAV ADJUTANT JESINOSKI: I don't say that very often. I'm a guy that likes it, you know, 65-68 degrees. Our NSOs down the hall are burning up. (Laughter)

Also, Terry, thank you for your seat. I said, "No." She said, "Yes." I'm, "Okay, whatever you say, Terry." Thank you.

I'm going to be very brief. I just wanted to tell you a couple of things. First and foremost, I echo and agree with everything that you just heard our commander say.

When it comes to support, there is nobody like those of you in this room. And that means whether it is support of DAV and our initiatives, support of those we serve, support of our legislative efforts, all of that.

Everybody in here knows that a lot of our legislative grassroots success really comes from this room and the people that you, you know, pressure, in a nice way, (Laughter) to do the right thing.

And oftentimes, you, in this room, are applying that pressure, appropriately, whatever way you do it, to the people in the DAV. Right? We all know that. I know that.

I just want to also tell you that – and I thank you for that. And I want to tell you that Bunny and Ann are doing a hell of a job at headquarters. (Applause)

And recently Bunny and I have started having what will be the first couple of many routine meetings that, something new, something that she and I are working out together but (Applause) I want to know what her concerns are. I want to know what her team's concerns are.

I want to know what, you know, I want to have the temperature and the pulse of our Auxiliary. And the best way to do that is to appropriately, you know, work together in a business sense, not just in a friendly banter, right? And so Bunny and I have already established that kind of a rapport where she talks, I listen. (Laughter)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Here. Here. (Applause)

DAV ADJUTANT JESINOSKI: And she affords me the same respect. And so it's mutual, just as our DAV and DAV Auxiliary respect must be mutual. Thank you all. (Standing Ovation)

(Whereupon, the DAV commander and adjutant withdrew from and the DAV Auxiliary senior vice-commander returned to the podium.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: I was just looking at them saying, "They are both terrific." They did a great job. There being no further business, we will now have your closing prayer. Please stand.

(Whereupon, the senior vice-commander withdrew from and the chaplain advanced to the podium.)

CHAPLAIN NICODEMUS: Please join me in prayer. Dear Heavenly Father, we come before you thankful for the energy and the enthusiasm that was shown this morning.

More importantly, we give thanks for the hard work and dedication and commitment of each and every person that made the success in those reports possible.

We ask that you will bless our work and continue to help us to grow. Help us to respect the new energy. Help us to balance those of us who are senior members. And help us to actively listen to our new members so that we can continue to grow and thrive.

Today we give thanks for our Purple Heart recipients on their Purple Heart Day. We give thanks for their dedication and commitment to our nation and the price that each paid.

We pray a special prayer for Amy Bowser and her family as she lost her aunt. Be with them and comfort them. We continue to pray for Darlene Spence and her family and Velma Steinman. Be with them. Guide them and care for them.

We pray for all of our members and families at home. We ask that you will comfort those that need comfort, provide healing to those that need healing and provide support and let us all know that we are there for each other.

Bless our meetings and bless us as we go forward to enjoy the comradeship of a luncheon. In your name. Amen.

(Response of "Amen", after which the chaplain withdrew from and the adjutant returned to the podium.)

ADJUTANT CLOS: If Debra Kendrick, Helen MacShane or Cheryl DiLeo is in the room, please come see me. Please don't leave yet.

(Whereupon, the adjutant withdrew from and the senior vice-commander returned to the podium.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Thank you. The convention stands in recess. Just a moment.

(Whereupon, the senior vice-commander withdrew from and the adjutant returned to the podium.)

ADJUTANT CLOS: Hey, please be seated for just a quick minute.

(Whereupon, the adjutant withdrew from and the the senior vice-commander returned to the podium.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: The convention stands in recess and will reconvene at 9:00 a.m., Tuesday morning. Thank you.

(Response of "Thank you.")

(Whereupon, the meeting was recessed at 10:45 o'clock, a.m., on Monday, August 7, 2023.)

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**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY
99TH NATIONAL CONVENTION
HYATT REGENCY ORLANDO HOTEL
ORLANDO, FLORIDA**

August 9, 2022

Final Business Session

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The Final Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary convened in the Atlantic City Ballroom A-B on the Third Floor of the Coastal Tower of Harrah's Resort Atlantic City, Atlantic City, New Jersey, on Tuesday morning, August 8, 2023, and was called to order at 9:03 o'clock, a.m., by National Senior Vice-Commander AnnMarie Hurley.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER ANNMARIE HURLEY: Okay, good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Everybody be nice and quiet so we can hear the speakers speak. I have hearing aids. I need to be able to hear. I need the prayer please by our chaplain, Aura-Lee Nicodemus.

(Whereupon, the senior vice-commander withdrew from and the chaplain advanced to the podium.)

CHAPLAIN AURA-LEE NICODEMUS: Before we get started, please take a moment and mute your phones or silence them.

Dear Heavenly Father, we come before you after an exciting evening of friendship and camaraderie and the pleasure of listening to great music.

We thank you for blessing us this week. We ask that you will bless this meeting. We ask a special blessing upon Carol Sullivan and also on Jeannette Greeley, the past state commander for Massachusetts' family.

We ask a special blessing this morning on the chaplains throughout our DAV and DAVA. At the chaplain's seminar yesterday they realized that many of them were carrying very heavy burdens.

And we ask that you will bless each of the chaplains and give them peace and comfort. And help them to reach out to each other in that work.

We also ask a special blessing upon Rex Ritchie who will be going to the emergency room following this meeting. We ask that you will bless his eyes and retain his eyesight.

We give thanks for all your blessings throughout this week, all the little kindnesses that we've shown to each other, all the thoughtful and generous times we've spent, and all the great conversations we've shared.

We ask that when we leave this meeting today that we go back to our communities and share what we have learned and help each other to grow and always be kind to each other.

We pray for our troops in harm's way. We pray for the leaders of our nation. And we pray for all of our decisions we make today, that it will lead our organization to the future of great growth and change.

In your name. Amen.

(Response of "Amen," whereupon, the chaplain withdrew from and the senior vice-commander returned to the podium.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Now we will have the Pledge of Allegiance by Terry Grabowski.

(Whereupon, the senior vice-commander withdrew from and the third junior vice-commander and Americanism chairman advanced to the podium.)

THIRD JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER AND AMERICANISM CHAIRMAN TERRY GRABOWSKI: Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

THIRD JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER AND AMERICANISM CHAIRMAN GRABOWSKI: Free your hands. Stand at attention. Place your hand on your heart or render the appropriate salute and join me in the Pledge.

(Whereupon, the third junior vice-commander and Americanism chairman led the pledge of allegiance, after which she withdrew from and the senior vice-commander returned to the podium.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Thank you. We have some donations. Thank you very much for all who donated to the organization's programs. Camp Corral, \$350; the Caregiver Program, \$2,910; DAVA for Kids, \$1,200; the Education Program, \$1,425; the General Fund, \$900; the Service

Program, \$2,045; for a total of \$8,830 was donated by all of you here today from you and your units. (Applause)

Will the Credential chairman, Margo Galbreath, please come forward to give the Credentials report? (Whereupon, the senior vice-commander withdrew from and the Convention Credentials Committee chairman advanced to the podium.)

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN MARGO GALBREATH: Commanders, national officers, delegates and guests. The Credentials report is as following, at the final business meeting. This will be our final reading of credentials report.

Total units registered is 122. Total departments registered is 38. National officers registered, 5; past national commanders registered is 9. Total guests registered, 202; total delegates, 255; total alternates, 21; total registration, 492. Total vote count is 880. Commander, I make a motion to accept the credentials as reported.

(Whereupon, the Convention Credentials chairman withdrew from and the senior vice-commander returned to the podium.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: A motion has been made. Is there a second?

MS. ERIN O'BRIEN: Erin O'Brien, commander, Unit 19, Maine, District 3, I second.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Any discussion? All in favor signify by saying aye; any opposed. The motion carried.

The National Adjutant will now call the roll of the newly-elected National Executive Committee members and alternates. As your name is called please come forward for the purpose of installation.

(Whereupon, the Adjutant advanced to and the senior vice-commander withdrew from the podium. The newly-elected National Executive Committee members and alternates advanced to the front of the room as the national adjutant called their names.)

ADJUTANT CLOS: District 1, Diane Sullivan; Alternate, Nancy Hoey; (Applause) District 3, Erin O'Brien; (Applause) Alternate for District 3, Karen Rediker; (Applause)

District 5, Loretta Nosko; (Applause) Alternate for Number 5, Beverly Spicer; (Applause) I'm sorry. I do need to grab District Number 2's alternate, Nancy Rivera; (Applause) My apologies.

District 7, Amy Raber; (Applause) Alternate, Rose McGinnis; (Applause) NEC for District 9, Ann Wilner; (Applause) Alternate, Yvonne Cunningham; (Applause) District 11, Carol Parker-Park; Alternate, Darlene Hanneman; (Applause)

NEC for District 13, Terri Young; Alternate, Stephanie Proffit; (Applause) NEC District 15, Danny Pierce; (Applause) Alternate, Ashley Temps; (Applause) NEC District 17, June Schow; Alternate, Susan Miller; (Applause)

NEC for District Number 19, Diane Mason; and, unfortunately, we do not have an alternate; (Applause) District 21 NEC Kim Stake; Alternate Vera Hendrickson. (Applause)

Well, sorry, I forgot Kathy Dunham. So these are the alternates who have not been installed yet but should have been previously so I'm sorry. That's why I'm forgetting you. But District 20 Alternate, Kathy Dunham. (Applause) My apologies.

(Whereupon, the adjutant withdrew from and the senior vice-commander returned to the podium.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: You are here for the purpose of installation. You are requested to remain silent during the ceremony of installation. You will take your place to the right of the altar. The adjutant called the roll. The officers' names were called.

So having been selected as an officer of this Auxiliary, do you most solemnly pledge yourself to faithfully and impartially perform in letter and spirit all duties of the office I am about to enter?

(Response of "I do.")

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Do you promise to obey the lawful orders of your superior officers and exact the obedience of others thereto to the best of your ability and means.

(Response of "I do.")

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: When your successor has been duly selected and installed do you promise to surrender properties of the organization in your possession, all of which you now affirm?

(Response of "I do.")

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Members of the Auxiliary, I now present to you the officers of your choice. I trust you will aid them in the performance of their duties. With your help their term of office will be highly successful.

Sergeant-at-arms, you will escort these officers to their respective stations. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the newly-elected officers were escorted to their respective stations.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Will the chairman of the Nominating Committee please come forward to give the Committee report.

(Whereupon, the senior vice-commander withdrew from and the the Nominating Committee chairman advanced to the podium to give the report.)

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER PATRICE RAPISAND: Good morning, everyone.

(Response of "Good morning.")

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER RAPISAND: Hasn't this been a fun convention?

(Response of "Yes.")

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER RAPISAND: It's been pretty good. I've had a good time. Before I give the Nominating Committee report I'd like to thank Bunny and Ann. They have done a terrific job with this convention. (Applause) Give them a big hand. (Applause)

I'd like my, our commander, Darlene Spence, is from Texas. And I know you all know everything going. (Applause) I know you all know everything going on with her but I'd like to thank AnnMarie for doing a wonderful job in her absence. (Applause)

Okay, on to the Nominating Committee. Will the members of each district that served on the Committee please stand and be recognized.

(Whereupon, the Committee members stood and were recognized with a round of applause.)

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER RAPISAND: Thank you. As you know, this is kind of a complicated Committee and we spent a long time talking and interviewing everyone. And we have so many people that are eligible to be officers.

And I hope someday those eligible people, along with the people that came through this year, will try to become an officer at some point. It's really very important for our auxiliary.

And, anyway, we have some – my point is we have some great leaders and all of you could become one. Okay. (Applause) Is that what I'm trying to say?

The Nominating Committee of the Disabled American Veterans (sic) held their first meeting on August 5th, at 2:30 in Ocean City. We are pleased to submit the following slate for your consideration to serve as the 2023-2024 officers:

Commander, AnnMarie Hurley; (Applause) Senior Vice-Commander Chris Easley; (Applause) First Junior Vice Melissa Pierce; (Applause) Second Junior Vice Terry Grabowski; (Applause)

Third Junior Vice Kathleen Wenthe; (Applause) Fourth Junior Vice Carolyn Harris; (Applause) and Judge Advocate, our PNC, Paula Raymond. (Applause)

The secretary who served on the Committee was PNC Linda Trulio. (Applause) And the advisor was, of course, was Lynn Prosser, immediate past national commander. (Applause)

And we had a sergeant-at-arms who was excellent at bringing the candidates in and, anyway, moving us along. She did a great job. Her name is Karen Rediker, Karen. (Applause) And, of course, me. (Applause)

We had a couple of recommendations – oh, I know. We had a couple of recommendations. The first one is we think that the resume that an officer submits for candidacy should have their district number on the resume.

And what was the other one? Could somebody tell me?

(Whereupon, a delegate called out from the floor.)

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER RAPISAND: Karen, where are you? She's back there. Okay, what was the second one? Do you remember?

MS. KAREN REDIKER: I remembered that one. (Laughter)

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER RAPISAND: Yes, ma'am.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I think we put on there I know it was checked that if they want to, will you go for another office and then we had to ask them if they wanted to be on another –

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER RAPISAND: Okay, that was right.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Put it on there, are you willing to choose another, higher position, ask that question.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER RAPISAND: Okay. The second one was we wanted the resume, on the resume you could check which positions you would like to be on.

But we would like them, also, to put on there that, "Would you go for higher office" or, "Would you take another office if it were offered?" Okay? You understand? You all understand?

(Response of "Yes.")

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER RAPISAND: Now, that doesn't mean it's going to happen. That's just a recommendation. But I want to thank everybody on the Committee and I want to thank all of you. You are who makes up our Auxiliary and you do a great job. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Nominating Committee chairman withdrew from and the senior vice-commander returned to the podium.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: I wish to thank the members of the Nominating Committee for their time and efforts. I am now discharging the Nominating Committee and all other convention committees.

I now ask all the officers to please leave the podium and go to your respective districts for the purpose of nomination and election. NECs, please join your Districts, as well.

(Whereupon, the officers and NECs withdrew to their respective districts.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: And there are three tellers for this process: Sandy Dobmeier, Maxine Nixon, and Susan Shifflett.

Will the teller please go to the table on the right? Maxine, would you please come forward, again. Maxine, did you hear me? Would you please come forward again? She's coming. Okay. Thank you.

(Whereupon, the tellers advanced to the table at the side of the room.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: There she is.

(Whereupon, the senior vice-commander withdrew from and the adjutant advanced to the podium.)

ADJUTANT CLOS: Jean Shifflett.

(Whereupon, the adjutant withdrew from and the senior vice-commander returned to the podium.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Hello, again. Okay, again. We're looking for quiet again. Hello. (Three raps of the gavel) I've never done that before. (Four raps of the gavel followed by laughter)

You have heard the report on the committee on nominations. AnnMarie Hurley has been nominated by the Committee for the office of National Commander. We now will have a seconding speech from Jean Shifflett, past state commander of Massachusetts.

MS. JEAN SHIFFLETT: Good morning, everyone. My name is Jean Shifflett. I'm from Boston, Massachusetts.

It is with great pleasure that I stand before you today to second the nomination of AnnMarie Hurley for the high office of national commander. (Applause) Thank you.

Ann and I met over 41 years ago and that was due to us both joining this wonderful organization. Ann, I wish you a great year, a wonderful year, a very productive year. I treasure our friendship and I love you, always. Thank you.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Thank you, Jean. (Applause) Okay, a motion has been made, is there a second? Jeannie just did it.

(Response of "Yes" and laughter.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Any discussion? Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare the nomination closed for the office of national commander. (Applause)

All those in favor of myself (Laughter) for the office of national commander signify by saying aye; those opposed. The ayes have it. AnnMarie Hurley has been elected to the office of national commander. (Standing Ovation) Thank you. Thank you.

Now we will have the nomination for the national senior vice-commander. Christopher Easley has been nominated by the Committee for the office of national senior vice-commander.

Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the national senior vice-commander.

All those in favor of Christopher Easley for the office of national senior vice-commander signify by saying aye; those opposed. The ayes have it. Christopher Easley has been elected to the office of national senior vice-commander. (Applause)

Christopher Easley has been nominated by the Committee for the office of – oh, I'm sorry. First junior is next. (Laughter)

Melissa Pierce has been nominated for the office of national first junior vice-commander. Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the office of national first junior vice-commander.

All those in favor of Melissa Pierce for the office of national first junior vice-commander – hello – signify by saying aye; those opposed. The ayes have it.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Here. Here. (Applause)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Melissa Pierce has been elected to the office of national first junior vice-commander. (Applause)

Terry Grabowski has been nominated for the office of national second junior vice-commander. (Applause) Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the office of national second junior vice-commander.

All those in favor of Terry Grabowski for the office of national second junior vice-commander signify by saying aye; any opposed. The ayes have it. (Applause)

Congratulations, Terry Grabowski. She has been chosen, elected to the office of national second junior vice-commander. (Applause)

Kathleen Wenthe has been nominated for the office of national third junior vice-commander. Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the office of national third junior vice-commander.

All those in favor of Kathleen Wenthe being the third junior vice-commander say aye; any opposed. The ayes have it and Kathleen Wenthe has been elected. (Applause)

Carolyn Harris (Applause) has been nominated for the office of national fourth junior vice-commander. Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the office of national fourth junior vice-commander.

And Carolyn Harris has been elected – signify by saying aye; any opposed. They ayes have it and Carolyn Harris has been elected to the office of national fourth junior vice-commander. (Applause)

And this is a surprise. Paula Raymond has been nominated by the Committee for the office of national judge advocate, again. Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the office of national judge advocate.

All those in favor of Paula Raymond –

(Response of “Aye.”)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: – those opposed. The ayes have it and Paula Raymond has been elected to the office of national judge advocate. (Applause)

I'll just give you the list. National Commander AnnMarie Hurley; Senior Vice-Commander Christopher Easley; First Junior Vice-Commander Melissa Pierce; Second Junior Vice-Commander Terry Grabowski;

Third Junior Vice-Commander Kathleen Wenthe; Fourth Junior Vice-Commander Carolyn Harris; and our Judge Advocate is Paula Raymond. (Applause) The tellers are now dismissed.

(Whereupon, the tellers returned to their seats.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Will the current national officers please return to your seats at the head table.

(Whereupon, the national officers returned to their stations.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: The election having been completed, I ask now for the national sergeant-at-arms to come forward for the purpose of acknowledging those members who have served as convention pages.

At this time I would also like to acknowledge the color bearers and the state color bearers. They did a wonderful job for us. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the the senior vice-commander withdrew from and the national sergeant-at-arms advanced to the podium.)

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS ANN WILNER: National commander, national officers, past national commanders, state officers, members and guests. It has been my pleasure to serve as your sergeant-at-arms for this convention.

I have enjoyed myself. I have learned plenty, which I will use when I come up the next time. But I would also like at this time to thank all the people that helped me.

Would all of the pages, district members that have helped me through this convention please come forward. Come on.

(Whereupon, the pages and members advanced to the front of the room amid a round of applause.)

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS WILNER: Now I would like everybody to take a look at all these people dressed in white. They have been here to serve as your pages and everything during this convention.

If it was not for them we would not have had a great convention. Let's give them a round of applause. (Applause) Thank you all. And have a great rest of your time. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the sergeant-at-arms withdrew from and the the senior vice-commander returned to the podium, and the pages and members returned to their stations.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Now we will take time to thank the national and state color bearers who helped so much in the opening.

National senior vice-commander states – that was me a minute ago – national adjutant, do you have any announcements?

(Whereupon, the the senior vice-commander withdrew from and the adjutant advanced to the podium.)

ADJUTANT CLOS: Good morning, again.

(Response of "Good morning.")

ADJUTANT CLOS: So I want to remind everyone that the external portal is open to all state and unit commander and adjutants. The directions are online. If you have problems finding that please definitely let us know. We will be more than happy to send that to you or direct you on where to go.

With that, we don't have it ready yet. DAV does but we are still making sure that we have everything organized before we let you all do it. But Officer Election Reports, the officer reports, will be able to be done online within the next month or two. So, just to let you all know. (Applause) Yes.

We just want to make sure we're very organized with it before we give it out there to all of you.

We will be revising our Procedure and Program Manual in the near future. Please watch for the future announcements. We're sold out of those and we did not want to reorder until we were able to update the information in there.

And, honestly, we just haven't had a chance to get to that yet. But, it is online so you can view it online. You can print it off. However you want to view it, it is online.

When making donations please remember our new program, DAVA for Kids. So far we have completed two grants to assist children of veterans who wanted to attend summer camps and support these children who depend on our donations.

Also, this is different from the Camp Corral. So I have been questioned a couple of different times. Camp Corral and DAV for Kids is two different grants. We support both.

I would like to acknowledge a few people. Karen Eccles, thank you so much for everything you've done. She's helped us out in the office. She's learned how to use the computer in there for us and just taken the pictures. She's done an amazing job for us and we really appreciate it. You've been a huge help. (Applause)

Chris Easley, he has done our Facebook livestream and closed captioning to assist everyone who could not be here today or if you needed a little help. So he organizes that for us to make sure that all of our members can be involved at national convention. So thank you very much for that. (Applause)

Ann Wilner, thank you so much for being sergeant-at-arms. I know it was thrown at you at the last minute. And you did a marvelous job so thank you very much for everything you've done. You've done a great job. (Applause)

To everyone who helped us in the office, we had several volunteers, you all don't know how much we appreciate you. You all are amazing. Our members are amazing. We thank you all very much. Seriously, we couldn't do it without all of you so thank you. (Applause)

To all the delegates, alternates, members in attendance, members that are not here, and all the guests, thank you for your patience and understanding with us, knowing that we are short-staffed.

We do try to accommodate all of you within 24 hours. So we want to make sure that you all know that and we do appreciate your patience. So we have the best members so thank you. Thank you to all of you. (Applause)

AnnMarie, thank you so much for stepping in and doing a marvelous job. We really appreciate what you've done. Thank you. (Applause)

And I would just like to say to National Commander Darlene Spence, we missed you. You will be in our continued thoughts and prayers. Thank you for all that she's done within this past year. You've been a treasure to work with.

And then, of course, last but not least, Ann. Ann is amazing. I couldn't do everything I do without her. She's my true "right hand." So I really appreciate and love Ann. (Applause)

So some exciting news, Commander's Action Network, does everybody know what the Commander's Action Network is?

(Response of "Yes.")

ADJUTANT CLOS: Perfect. So I just got some interesting information last night and just this year alone, right now, we're in August, 560,000 emails have been sent. That's exciting. So keep up the great work. (Applause)

Last year for the whole year they had 450,000 emails so in the last two years right now we're currently over a million emails – (Applause) Yes – on behalf of veterans and their benefits from all DAV and DAV Auxiliary members. So you truly do make a difference so keep it up.

And when you do get those emails, make sure you're forwarding out to your family and friends so they can go in and vote on that, too, and send that to your legislators.

So if you haven't done so, please sign up for CAN at DAV.quorum.us/home/. I know that's a lot. You can definitely come back and ask Ann or me and we can definitely give you that information. But it's so fast and easy.

You will put your first/last name, your address, your email address. They will send you emails. You literally just go in and click a button and it's that easy.

Two hundred and two guests. We had 202 guests at this convention. We need to encourage those 202 guests to sign up for membership. (Applause) So if those guests are your members, your family, your friends, let's get them signed up.

Just a little note, too, that if you contact our office and you leave a message, we will get back to you. And we do normally try to get back to you before the day is over.

So if we do not, don't think we didn't try. Maybe we tried to call you back. Maybe your voicemail is full. Maybe your voicemail is not set up. Please know that we do try to get back to you within that day.

And if you did not hear back from us that day, contact us the next morning. We're fine with that. But I just want to, again, tell you all that we appreciate your patience.

I had something else but I have to find it. Give me one second.

(Whereupon, Ann Glende gave Bunny the information she needed.

ADJUTANT CLOS: And there is my "right hand man" for me. (Laughter)

I have been asked a couple of different times since I mentioned these the other day so there could be some different people in the audience today so I just kind of want to briefly go over the programs, a few of them, anyway, that we offer, just to make sure that I'm putting it out there so everybody knows what we offer.

So we do have the DAVA for Kids grant program. This program is designed to assist Ages 3 to 17 whose parent/legal guardian is an injured or ill veteran with financial need.

This grant will help a child up to \$500 attend a camp or, say, sports camp, school trip, extenuating circumstance. So if something like this sounds interesting to you to help a child out, let us know and we can direct you on where the application is.

DAV scholarships, be sure if your children or if you know someone who would be eligible for a DAV scholarship, again, they're giving out \$110,000. That's pretty amazing. So we really need to take advantage of what the DAV and the DAV Auxiliary offers.

The DAV and DAV Auxiliary Volunteer of the Year Awards, you know, just make sure you're taking advantage of that, too. If you're sending in on our Member of the Year and you think that it could be valid for the Volunteer of the Year for the DAV, then go ahead and send it to both of us, the DAV and the Auxiliary, because everything that everybody does is truly amazing work and really needs to be recognized.

Our Outstanding Member of the Year, we had 14 applications this year. I believe that was the number. But that's truly amazing. And just because you might not have been selected the winner this year does not mean you won't be selected next year.

Keep doing it. Keep submitting the applications. And don't give up. Don't ever give up. Keep submitting and keep doing everything that you're doing.

The Vocational Training Assistance Program, this is offered to ill and injured veterans and their immediate family members seeking education opportunities in educational facilities other than the accredited colleges.

So if you want to attend a trade school or a career enhancement training, skill improvement or a personal development class, we have this training and assistance program for you.

We've only give out three. So this has been in existence for about three years now. So keep in mind we have this.

And then our Scholarship Program, we have currently up to \$2,500 that a student can get. So just keep in mind that we have this. Take advantage of the programs.

And then, last Service Program, this is a DAV Auxiliary-created program to assist surviving spouses and service-connected disabled veterans in times of dire financial need.

So it's a maximum one-time payment of \$500. It would be paid directly to the company. But it could help with a utility bill or a mortgage or rent payment, a medical bill and et cetera.

So please keep these programs in mind. We want to help you. We're here to help families and their – veterans and their families. So please keep these in mind. And if we can ever answer any questions, feel free to reach out.

Have a great day. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the adjutant withdrew from and the senior vice-commander returned to the podium.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HURLEY: Is there any other further business to come before this Convention? Hearing none, I now declare the 100th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary hereby adjourned.

We will immediately go into the Post-Convention National Executive Committee meeting which I will now call to order.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned at 9:47 o'clock, a.m., on Tuesday, August 8, 2023.)

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Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary National Headquarters

Financial Statements as of and for the
Year Ended December 31, 2022, and
Independent Auditor's Report

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the National Finance Committee of
Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary National Headquarters:

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary National Headquarters (the "Auxiliary"), which comprise the statement of financial position as of December 31, 2022, and the related statements of activities, functional expenses, and cashflows for the year then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements (collectively referred to as the "financial statements").

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Auxiliary as of December 31, 2022, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAS). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are required to be independent of the Auxiliary and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audit. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, and for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is required to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Auxiliary's ability to continue as a going concern for one year after the date that the financial statements are issued.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with GAAS will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement

resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Misstatements are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

In performing an audit in accordance with GAAS, we:

- Exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Auxiliary's internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements.
- Conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Auxiliary's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings, and certain internal control-related matters that we identified during the audit.

Deloitte + Touche LLP

April 12, 2023

**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
AUXILIARY NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS**

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2022**

ASSETS		LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	
CASH	\$ 120,292	LIABILITIES:	\$ 224,451
LOANS RECEIVABLE (less reserve of \$11,672)	5,418	Accounts payable and other liabilities	2,105,454
INVENTORY	1,282	Payable to Life Membership Fund	373,830
INVESTMENTS	10,877,345	Contributions distributable to state departments	
ACCRUED INTEREST RECEIVABLE	14,004	Life Membership-reserve for future distribution of life membership dues	5,892,914
LIFE MEMBERSHIP ASSETS:		Total liabilities	8,596,649
Cash	72,444		
Investments	3,704,526	NET ASSETS:	6,774,790
Accrued interest receivable	10,490	Without donor restrictions	
Receivable from general fund	2,105,454	With donor restrictions:	
		Service program	413,567
		Disaster relief program	100,309
		Education loan/scholarship program	1,025,940
		Total net assets	8,314,606
TOTAL	\$ 16,911,255	TOTAL	\$ 16,911,255

See notes to the financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2022

	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions			Total
		Service Program	Disaster Relief/Other Programs	Education Loan/ Scholarship Program	
SUPPORT AND REVENUE:					
Membership fees and mandates	\$ -	\$ 748	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 748
Life membership distributions	349,213	-	-	-	349,213
Contributions	112,370	2,120	44,740	12,125	171,355
Contributed facilities	20,659	-	-	-	20,659
National convention/conference	68,176	-	-	-	68,176
Net investment return	(2,276,608)	-	-	-	(2,276,608)
Net assets released from restrictions	44,800	-	(5,000)	(39,800)	-
Other	195	-	-	-	195
Total support and revenue	<u>(1,681,196)</u>	<u>2,868</u>	<u>39,740</u>	<u>(27,675)</u>	<u>(1,666,263)</u>
EXPENSES:					
Program services	587,238	-	-	40	587,278
Fundraising costs	38,879	-	-	-	38,879
General and administrative	313,188	-	-	-	313,188
Total expenses	<u>939,305</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>939,345</u>
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	(2,620,501)	2,868	39,740	(27,715)	(2,605,608)
NET ASSETS—Beginning of year	<u>9,395,291</u>	<u>410,699</u>	<u>60,569</u>	<u>1,053,655</u>	<u>10,920,214</u>
NET ASSETS—End of year	<u>\$ 6,774,790</u>	<u>\$ 413,567</u>	<u>\$ 100,309</u>	<u>\$ 1,025,940</u>	<u>\$ 8,314,606</u>

See notes to the financial statements.

**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
AUXILIARY NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS**

**STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2022**

	Program Services	Fund Raising Costs	General and Administrative	Total Expenses
Salaries and wages	\$ 125,615	\$ 17,900	\$ 68,314	\$ 211,829
Employee benefits	50,845	7,245	27,650	85,740
Distributions to state departments	66,580	-	-	66,580
Professional fees	2,649	-	53,507	56,156
Scholarship program benefits	39,800	-	-	39,800
Printing, stationery, and office supplies	6,714	-	17,261	23,974
Conferences and meetings	81,020	-	-	81,020
Fundraising expenses	24,802	9,960	-	34,762
Membership recruitment	-	-	93,413	93,413
Payroll taxes	10,667	1,520	5,800	17,987
Expenses of national convention	95,988	-	-	95,988
Contributed facilities	12,251	1,746	6,662	20,659
Disaster program benefits	6,995	-	-	6,995
Expenses of national commander and officers	45,696	-	-	45,696
Postage	-	-	2,680	2,680
Travel	5,241	-	-	5,241
Other	12,416	508	37,902	50,826
Total	<u>\$ 587,278</u>	<u>\$ 38,879</u>	<u>\$ 313,188</u>	<u>\$ 939,345</u>

See notes to the financial statements.

**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
AUXILIARY NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS**

**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2022**

CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:	
Change in net assets	\$ (2,605,608)
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash used in operating activities:	
Net change in depreciation of investments	3,582,846
Net gain on sale of investments	(143,372)
Changes in assets and liabilities:	
Accrued interest receivable	5,318
Inventory	(568)
Accounts receivable	(331,303)
Prepaid expenses	3,800
Accounts payable and other liabilities	315,281
Contributions distributable to state departments	(5,725)
Reserve for future distribution of life membership dues	(728,665)
Net cash provided by operating activities	<u>92,004</u>
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:	
Purchases of investments	(5,984,367)
Proceeds from sale of investments	5,970,890
Collections from repayment of education loans	<u>1,885</u>
Net cash used in investing activities	<u>(11,592)</u>
NET INCREASE IN CASH	80,412
CASH:	
Beginning of year	<u>112,324</u>
End of year	<u>\$ 192,736</u>

See notes to the financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AS OF AND FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2022

1. ORGANIZATION

Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary National Headquarters (DAVA) is a not-for-profit membership and service organization formed under the provisions of the National Constitution of Disabled American Veterans (DAV). DAVA and its membership are organized for the betterment and improvement of the nation's disabled veterans and their families and for cooperation with all patriotic organizations and public agencies devoted to this purpose through volunteer work at veterans' hospitals, community service, educational assistance, legislative action, and encouraging good citizenship and patriotism.

2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Financial Statements—The accompanying financial statements have been prepared on the accrual basis of accounting in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAP).

New Accounting Standards—In February 2016, the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) issued Accounting Standards Update (ASU) No. 2016-02, *Leases (Topic 842)*. This standard amends the existing guidance and requires lessees to recognize on the balance sheet assets and liabilities for the rights and obligations created by those leases with lease terms longer than 12 months. This update is effective for annual financial statements issued for fiscal years beginning after December 15, 2021, and is to be applied using a modified retrospective approach; early adoption is permitted. The adoption of ASU No. 2016-02 did not have a significant impact on the financial statements or the financial statement disclosures.

In September 2020, the FASB issued ASU No. 2020-07, *Not-for-Profit Entities (Topic 958): Presentation and Disclosures by Not-for-Profit Entities for Contributed Nonfinancial Assets*. The amendments require not-for-profit entities to present contributed nonfinancial assets as a separate line item in the statement of activities, apart from contributions of cash and other financial contributions. The standard also requires additional disclosure related to contributed nonfinancial assets. The amendment, which requires retrospective application, is effective for annual periods beginning after June 15, 2021. The adoption of ASU No. 2016-02 did not have a significant impact on the financial statements or the financial statement disclosures.

In June 2016, the FASB issued ASU No. 2016-13, *Financial Instruments—Credit Losses*, which is included in ASC Topic 326, *Measurement of Credit Losses on Financial Instruments*. The new standard requires a financial asset (or group of financial assets) measured at amortized cost basis to be presented at the net amount expected to be collected. The new standard revises the accounting requirements related to the measurement of credit losses and will require organizations to measure all expected credit losses for financial assets based on historical experience, current conditions, and reasonable and supportable forecasts about collectability. Assets must be presented in the financial statements at the net amount expected to be collected. The expected increases or decreases of expected credit losses that have taken place during the period, is reflected in the statement of activities. Management is in the process of evaluating the impact on the financial statements.

Education Loan Receivable—Students who receive education loans are required to begin repayment six months after completion of their educational programs. DAVA maintains a reserve for uncollectible loans.

Investments—Investments are carried at fair value, and realized and unrealized gains and losses are reflected within net investment return, in the statement of activities. The fair value of DAVA's investments is determined based on the quoted market prices of the related securities or quoted prices in active markets for instruments that are similar, or model-derived valuations in which all significant inputs and significant value drivers are observable in active markets. Gains and losses on the sale of investment securities are recognized based upon the specific identification method and are reflected in net investment return. DAVA's policy is to report cash equivalents, which includes money market funds, within its trust accounts as investments.

Contributions—Contributions received are recorded at their fair value and are classified as without donor restrictions or with donor restrictions for purpose. All contributions are considered without donor restrictions, unless specifically restricted by the donor. Support that is restricted by the donor is reported as an increase in net assets with donor restrictions.

Contributed Nonfinancial Assets—For the year ended December 31, 2022, there were no contributed nonfinancial assets received, beyond the contributed facilities, which are separately presented in the statement of activities as being utilized in the reporting period. The value of these contributed facilities is estimated based on square footage utilized by DAVA and cost of building maintenance per square foot. See Note 8 – Related-Party Transactions for additional details. Based on the nature of these contributions, there is no donor-imposed restriction. Should additional nonfinancial assets be received, they would be separately recognized within the statement of activities and disclosed within the notes to the financial statements.

Accounts Receivable—Amounts recorded as accounts receivable are reduced to their net realizable value, as appropriate.

Allocation of Expenses—The financial statements report certain categories of expenses that are attributable to one or more program or supporting services of the DAVA. Those expenses include salaries and wages, employee benefits, professional fees, printing, stationery, and office supplies, fundraising expenses, payroll taxes, contributed facilities, postage and other. These expenses are allocated between program, fundraising, and administrative based on the percentage of time spent by DAVA staff members on tasks related to each function.

Income Taxes—As a not-for-profit service organization, DAVA has received a determination from the Internal Revenue Service that it is exempt from federal income taxes as a 501(c)(4) organization. Contributions made to DAVA are tax deductible by the contributor as provided in Section 170 of the Internal Revenue Code.

Use of Estimates—The preparation of the financial statements in accordance with GAAP requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosures of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the reporting period. Actual amounts could differ from those estimates.

Risks and Uncertainties—In March 2020, the World Health Organization declared the outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19) a pandemic. As a result, economic uncertainties have arisen which are likely to negatively impact DAVA's financial position, cash flows, or results of operations. Other financial impact could occur though such potential impact is unknown at this time.

3. LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Under the bylaws of DAVA, any eligible person may become a life member. Amounts paid for membership are placed in separate life membership accounts and invested; the only withdrawals permitted from these accounts are amounts required to pay local units, state departments, and National Headquarters (DAVA) per capita dues for services to be provided to the life members. Generally, life membership assets for National Headquarters per capita dues are transferred to the general assets of DAVA at the beginning of the membership year (July 1) and recognized as revenue in the statement of activities. The per capita chapter and department dues are distributed at the beginning of the membership year. The reserve for future distribution of membership dues represents the liability for the future life membership distributions to DAVA, departments, and units to assist with providing member services.

The changes during 2022 in the reserve for future distribution of life membership dues are as follows:

Balance—January 1, 2022	<u>\$ 6,621,579</u>
Additions:	
Membership dues received	<u>359,010</u>
Total additions	<u>359,010</u>
Deductions:	
Dues to National Headquarters	(349,212)
Dues to local units	(55,774)
Dues to state departments	(220)
Other expenses	<u>(57)</u>
Total deductions	<u>(405,263)</u>
Net investment return	<u>(682,412)</u>
Balance—December 31, 2022	<u>\$ 5,892,914</u>

4. FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS

Accounting Standards Codification 820, *Fair Value Measurements and Disclosures*, provides a framework for measuring fair value. That framework provides a fair value hierarchy that prioritizes the inputs to valuation techniques used to measure fair value, as follows: Level 1, which refers to securities valued using unadjusted quoted prices from active markets for identical assets; Level 2, which refers to securities not traded on an active market but for which observable market inputs are readily available; and Level 3, which refers to securities valued based on significant unobservable inputs. Assets are classified in their entirety based on the lowest level of input that is significant to the fair value measurement.

The DAVA did not hold any financial assets requiring the use of inputs that are unobservable and significant to the overall fair value measurement (Level 3) during 2022.

The DAVA’s policy is to recognize transfers between levels at the actual date of the event. There were no transfers between Level 1, Level 2, or Level 3 during 2022.

Asset Valuation Techniques—Valuation techniques used maximize the use of observable inputs and minimize the use of unobservable inputs. The following is a description of the valuation methodologies used for assets recorded at fair value. There has been no change in the methodologies used at December 31, 2022.

Cash equivalents, composed of money market funds, are categorized as Level 1. Such investments are valued at cost, which approximates fair value. The money market fund represents DAVA's shares in a registered investment company's fund.

Common stocks and exchange-traded funds (ETFs), categorized as Level 1, are valued at the closing price reported in the active market in which the individual security is traded.

Shares of registered investment companies (mutual funds) are categorized as Level 1. They are valued at quoted market prices that represent the net asset value of shares held at year-end.

The major categories of financial assets measured at fair value on a recurring basis as of December 31, 2022, are as follows:

Asset Category	Fair Value Measurements Using		
	Quoted Prices in Active Markets for Identical Assets (Level 1)	Significant Observable Inputs (Level 2)	Total
General fund:			
Cash equivalents	\$ 426,264	\$ -	\$ 426,264
Common stocks	1,126,571	-	1,126,571
Mutual funds/ETFs:			
Domestic fixed income funds	3,549,494	-	3,549,494
International fixed income funds	115,133	-	115,133
Domestic equity funds	3,916,106	-	3,916,106
Real estate funds	258,322	-	258,322
International equity funds	1,485,455	-	1,485,455
Total mutual funds/ETFs	9,324,510	-	9,324,510
Total	<u>\$ 10,877,345</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 10,877,345</u>
Life membership:			
Cash equivalents	\$ 315,411	\$ -	\$ 315,411
Mutual funds/ETFs:			
Domestic fixed income funds	2,730,979	-	2,730,979
International fixed-income funds	99,286	-	99,286
Domestic equity funds	460,635	-	460,635
International equity funds	98,215	-	98,215
Total mutual funds/ETFs	3,389,115	-	3,389,115
Total	<u>\$ 3,704,526</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 3,704,526</u>

5. NET ASSETS RELEASED FROM DONOR RESTRICTIONS

Net assets were released from donor restrictions by incurring expenses satisfying the restricted purposes or by occurrence of the passage of time or other events specified by donors. The net assets released from restrictions are as follows:

	2022
Subject to expenditure for specified purpose:	
Disaster relief program	\$ 5,000
Education loan/scholarship program	<u>39,800</u>
	<u>\$ 44,800</u>

Service Program—Donations from individuals and amounts received from each unit as a mandate for the service program are recorded as net assets with donor restrictions, which are used for persons eligible for DAVA who are in need of temporary financial assistance in accordance with the bylaws of DAVA. The total amount of assistance is limited to \$1,000 per individual and in the aggregate is limited to total net assets with purpose restrictions. Benefits are paid directly to the service provider and not to the individual.

Disaster Relief/Other Programs—Donations from units and individuals for disaster relief are recorded as net assets with donor restrictions, which are used for members of DAV and DAVA who are in need of temporary financial assistance due to natural disaster, such as flood or earthquake. Donations from this fund are made to DAV and benefits are paid by DAV directly to the individual. Additionally, included in the net assets with donor restrictions are donations from units and individuals that are to be used for the DAVA Caregiver Initiative, as well as Camp Corral and Winter Sports Clinic.

Education Program—Donations from individuals and amounts received from each unit as a mandate for scholarships are recorded as net assets with donor restrictions from which scholarships are awarded to students in accordance with the bylaws of DAVA. Scholarships are paid directly to the educational institution and not to the student. In 2022, there were 40 scholarships in amounts ranging from \$550 to \$2,500 issued to selected DAVA member applicants for a total of \$39,800. The existing education loans are still required to be repaid in accordance with the terms of the original loan agreements, which includes full repayment within seven years of graduation or withdrawal from school. At December 31, 2022, the total amount of loans outstanding was \$17,091, net of reserve.

6. LIQUIDITY AND AVAILABILITY OF FINANCIAL ASSETS

The DAVA’s working capital and cash flows are attributable to the contributions received from general donations throughout the year.

The following reflects DAVA’s financial assets at December 31, 2022, reduced by the amount not available for general use within one year of the statement of financial position date due to donor restrictions.

Total assets, excluding nonfinancial assets (inventory)	\$ 16,909,973
Subtract: Life Membership Fund	(5,892,914)
Subtract: With donor restrictions for specific purposes	<u>(1,539,816)</u>
Financial assets available to meet cash needs for general expenditures within one year	<u>\$ 9,477,243</u>

The DAVA has a policy to structure its financial assets to be available as its general expenditures, liabilities, and other obligations come due. In addition, as part of its liquidity management, the DAVA invests cash in excess of daily requirements in various long-term investments. The DAVA's long-term investments, such as common stocks, index funds, Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs), and actively managed mutual funds, are invested with the intent on providing a safe return on investments for the general fund use.

7. EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Certain employees of DAVA are covered by the Disabled American Veterans Retirement Plan, a defined benefit pension plan. The benefits are based on years of service and the employee's compensation. Contributions are intended to provide not only for benefits attributed to service to-date, but also for those expected in the future. In 2022, DAV charged DAVA \$85,740 for its share of the retirement plan costs, as well as other benefits for employees, including health and life insurance and contributions to a defined contribution plan.

DAV provides certain health care and life insurance benefits for its retired employees and their spouses. All employees of DAVA may become eligible for these benefits if they reach normal retirement age while working for DAVA. In 2022, DAV did not charge DAVA for these benefits as such amounts are immaterial.

8. RELATED-PARTY TRANSACTIONS

DAV provides services to the DAVA, which puts DAV in the position to influence operating policies of DAVA.

DAVA occupies space in the DAV National Headquarters' building and also uses certain office equipment owned by DAV. No fees are charged for such usage. The value of these contributed facilities is estimated to be \$20,659 in 2022 and is included as revenue and expense in the accompanying statement of activities.

Certain costs are paid by DAV National Headquarters on behalf of DAVA. Such costs are reimbursed by DAVA. As of December 31, 2022, DAVA owed approximately \$58,935 for such costs, the net of such costs less contributions of \$4,214, which is included in accounts payable and other liabilities in the accompanying statement of financial position.

9. SUBSEQUENT EVENTS

No events have occurred after December 31, 2022, but before April 12, 2023, the date the financial statements were available to be issued, that require consideration as adjustments to, or disclosures in, the financial statements.

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