



2023 Legislative Victories for Veterans

First Session of the 118th Congress

Claims Development

- ▶ **H.R. 1226, the Wounded Warrior Access Act**, requires the VA to establish and maintain a secure online tool or website to enable a claimant or their representative to make records requests related to VA claims and benefits. Requests for records must specify in which format the copy is desired. The VA must notify a requester within 10 days that their request has been received and must fulfill the request within 120 days.

The **Wounded Warrior Access Act** also requires the VA to ensure that each time a claimant logs in to a website or online tool of the VA, the website or online tool displays in plain language (1) a warning regarding violations of laws related to agents and attorneys, (2) a link to an online tool to report violations, (3) a link to an online tool to search for a VA-recognized agent or attorney, and (4) a link to a website or online tool providing final decisions on discipline of agents and attorneys for violations.

DAV supported this bill in accordance with DAV Resolution No. 095, to support and provide meaningful claims and appeals reform. To view the bill, [click here](#). This legislation was signed into law by the president on November 11 and became **Public Law 118-21**.

Disability Compensation

- ▶ **S. 777, the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2023**, was passed by the Senate on March 30, 2023 and the House on May 22, 2023. The bill provides an increase for all disability compensation rates and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for survivors of certain disabled veterans effective December 1.

DAV supported this bill in accordance with DAV Resolution No. 102, calling on Congress to provide realistic cost-of-living allowances. To view the bill, [click here](#). The legislation was signed into law by the president on June 14 and became **Public Law 118-6**.

Extending Authorities

- ▶ **S. 2795** extends the eligibility or applicability of various VA programs and benefits. The legislation passed the Senate on September 18 and the House on September 26.

This law extends from three to five years the authority for additional licensed health care professionals (i.e., physician assistants, nurse practitioners, audiologists, and psychologists) to perform medical disability examinations as part of the existing VA pilot program related to the use of contract physicians for disability examinations.

The law also provides protections for veterans using their education benefits. Currently, when an individual transfers fewer than 12 credits from a program of education that is closed or disapproved, the individual is deemed to have not received those credits, and no charge from the individual's



entitlement to education assistance may be made for that period of enrollment. Under the bill, this period of relief for those affected by a closure or disapproval is extended by two years to apply to programs that close or discontinue before September 30, 2025.

Additionally, the law extends through fiscal year (FY) 2028 the authorization for VA emergency preparedness for public health emergencies and extends the applicability of certain loan fee rates under the VA's home loan program through November 15, 2031.

DAV supported this bill in accordance with DAV Resolution No. 095, to support and provide meaningful claims and appeals reform. To view the bill, [click here](#). This legislation was signed into law by the president on October 3 and became **Public Law 118-19**.

Health Care

- ▶ **S. 30, the Fiscal Year 2023 Veterans Affairs Major Medical Facility Authorization Act**, authorizes the VA to carry out specified major medical facility projects during FY 2023. The bill also indicates the maximum funding levels that can be spent on each project.

DAV supported this bill in accordance with DAV Resolution No. 023, to support modernizing VA's health care infrastructure. To view the bill, [click here](#). This legislation was signed into law by the president on July 8 and became **Public Law 118-8**.

The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for fiscal year 2024

The NDAA for fiscal year 2024 was signed into law on December 22 and became **Public Law 118-31**. To view the bill, [click here](#). This comprehensive legislative package contained several impactful veterans' provisions that DAV supported as stand-alone bills and other provisions supported by DAV resolutions. Those provisions are noted below:

- ▶ **Sec. 863. Increase in Governmentwide Goal for Participation in Federal Contracts by Small Business Concerns Owned and Controlled by Service-Disabled Veterans.** This section changes the current government required goal for contracts for Service-Disabled Veteran Small Owned Businesses (SDVSOBs) from 3% to 5%. DAV supported this provision based on DAV Resolution No. 156.
- ▶ **Sec. 102. Expansion of Vet Center workforce.** This section increases Vet Center capacity by mandating the hiring of 50 additional full-time equivalent employees for Vet Centers. It is based on S. 3293, the Post-9/11 Veterans' Mental Health Care Improvement Act, which DAV supported in accordance with 2021–2022 DAV Resolution No. 118.
- ▶ **Sec. 1092. Red Hill Health Impacts.** This section requires the Secretary of Defense to coordinate with federal and state agencies in investigating, studying and reporting on the long-term health impacts of the Red Hill petroleum incident that contaminated water supplies at military installations in Hawaii. DAV supported this measure based on DAV Resolution No. 187.
- ▶ **Sec. 5001. Adjustment of Threshold Amount for Minor Medical Facility Projects of Department of Veterans Affairs.** This section changes the threshold dollar amount from \$20 million to \$30 million for minor construction costs. DAV supported this provision based on DAV Resolution No. 238.



- **Sec. 5003. Improving Processing by Department of Veterans Affairs of Disability Claims for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Through Improved Training.** This section requires the VA to establish a formal process to analyze, on an annual basis, training needs of employees who review claims for disability compensation for post-traumatic stress disorder, based on identified processing error trends as well as conduct studies of the information gleaned from the analysis. DAV supported this as a stand-alone bill, **H.R. 3718, Department of Veterans Affairs Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Processing Claims Improvement Act of 2023** based on DAV Resolution No. 220.