

Legislative Round-Up: 115th Congress, 2nd Session

Public Law 115- 91, National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018

While primarily directed at the Department of Defense, this law contains provisions directing VA to extend the Department's authority to use licensed and duly recognized physicians to perform compensation examinations at any location as long as the examination is within the scope of the authorized duties stipulated under the contract. It is intended to alleviate obstacles in areas where physicians are not licensed within a particular jurisdiction. In addition, the law authorizes counseling for transitioning service members to include a family caregiver and providing information on VA caregiver services and supports including the VA comprehensive caregiver support program.

Resolution No. 009, Support legislation to improve and provide comprehensive services for caregivers of severely wounded, injured and ill veterans from all eras

Resolution No. 212, Support meaningful reform in the Veterans Benefits Administration's disability claims process

Public Law 115- 105, Jobs for Our Heroes Act

This law exempts active-duty members or reservists of the armed forces from certain tests required to obtain a state commercial driver's license if they have qualifying military experience. The bill also expands the types of VA providers, such as physician assistants, chiropractors, and certain nurses, who could qualify to conduct the necessary medical examinations to certify that veterans meet the physical standards required to operate commercial motor vehicles.

Resolution No. 248, Support licensure and certification of active duty service personnel

Public Law 115- 130, Quicker Veterans Benefits Delivery Act

To improve the use of private medical evidence, this law requires VA to submit several reports to Congress regarding the use of private medical evidence in lieu of a VA-provided examination for purposes of establishing eligibility for disability compensation or pension, as well as progress on the Acceptable Clinical Evidence initiative.

Resolution No. 216, Support legislation that requires the Department of Veterans Affairs to consider private medical evidence supplied by licensed private health care providers

Public Law 115-141, Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018

This appropriations act provides funding for: the Veterans Treatment Court program; employment services for homeless veterans; rural care and rural care coordination between VA and rural care entities; annual and advance appropriations for VA, and an assortment of provisions to improve VA health care, benefits, care for women veterans, and veterans' transition and employment services.

Resolution No. 040, Support enhanced medical services and benefits for women veterans (Sec. 236)

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Resolution No. 105, Support establishment of nationwide Veterans Treatment Courts for justice-involved veterans

Resolution No. 124, Support a more liberal view of Other than Honorable Discharge for the purpose of eligibility for Department of Veterans Affairs benefits and health care services (Sec. 258).

Resolution No. 128, Support the provision of comprehensive Department of Veterans Affairs health care services to enrolled veterans (Sections. 245, 252)

Resolution No. 163, Support sufficient, timely and predictable funding for all Department of Veterans Affairs programs, benefits and services (Div. J)

Resolution No. 230, Support sufficient resources for the Department of Veterans Affairs to improve health care services for veterans living in rural or remote areas

Resolution No. 239, Support sustained sufficient funding to improve services for homeless veterans

Resolution No. 248, Support licensure and certification of active duty service personnel (Sec. 246)

Resolution No. 252, Support strengthening the Department of Veterans Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service (Sec. 248)

Public Law 115-159, State Veterans Home Adult Day Health Care Improvement Act of 2017

To provide more access to adult day care, the law directs VA to enter into an agreement or a contract with each State Veterans Home to pay for up to eight hours a day of medically supervised adult day health care for a veteran for whom the home is not receiving VA nursing home care payments. The veteran must have a clinical need for such care either specifically for a service-connected disability, or if the veteran is service-connected 70 percent or higher.

Resolution No. 062, Support State Veteran Home program

Public Law 115-177, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to furnish assistance for adaptations of residences of veterans in rehabilitation programs

The Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) program provides assistance modifying veterans' homes to ensure their safety and achieve the goal of maximum independent living through VR&E's independent living track. This law would authorize VA's Specially Adaptive Housing program to assist in acquiring home adaptation of veterans in the VR&E program.

Resolution No. 252, Support strengthening the Department of Veterans Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service

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Public Law 115-182, the VA MISSION Act of 2018

This law:

- Expands eligibility of VA's comprehensive caregiver support program to severely injured veterans of all eras;
- Establishes a community care program designed to improve access to and coordination of private care for veterans in the VA health care system;
- Authorizes limited walk-in care in the community;
- Improves VA facility service lines and underserved facilities;
- Allows for peer specialists within patient aligned care teams in certain VA facilities;
- Sets standards for opioid prescribing practices by private providers for services paid for by VA;
- Modernizes VA's capital assets and infrastructure;
- Improves the recruitment and retention of VA providers to fill vacancies; and makes other improvements.

Resolution No. 009, Support legislation to improve and provide comprehensive services for caregivers of severely wounded, injured and ill veterans from all eras

Resolution No. 107, Support enhancement of medical services through modernization of the Department of Veterans Affairs health care infrastructure

Resolution No. 128, Support the provision of comprehensive Department of Veterans Affairs health care services to enrolled veterans

Resolution No. 173, Strengthen, reform and sustain the Department of Veterans Affairs health care system

Resolution No. 228, Support effective recruitment, retention and development of the Department of Veterans Affairs health care system workforce

Resolution No. 230, Support sufficient resources for the Department of Veterans Affairs to improve health care services for veterans living in rural or remote areas

Resolution No. 245, Support program improvement and enhanced resources for Department of Veterans Affairs mental health programs