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**TO: Department Commanders and Adjutants
Benefits Protection Team Leaders**

FROM: Joy J. Ilem, National Legislative Director

DATE: September 15, 2022

SUBJ: Benefits Protection Team Welcome Letter

Congratulations on your recent appointment as a department Benefits Protection Team Leader (BPTL). Whether you are new to this position or have been reappointed, DAV appreciates your commitment to taking on the responsibilities of serving in this important position. The legislative team looks forward to working with you this year as we continue the BPTL program's legacy of success.

DAV has fought many battles on behalf of our nation's service-disabled veterans during our more than 100-year history, and these veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors have been well-served by DAV's grassroots advocacy efforts.

Over the past 12 months, key efforts by BPTLs resulted in the passage of the historic Honoring our PACT Act. This new law expands VA health care and benefits for veterans exposed to burn pits and other toxic substances and will provide generations of veterans—and their survivors—with the care and benefits they've earned and deserve. DAV's grassroots advocacy also resulted in the passage of legislation to improve VA mental health services, suicide prevention efforts and programs and services for women veterans.

I know that your leadership and advocacy will help to ensure DAV's legislative priorities remain at the forefront of federal lawmakers' agendas and that you will do your part to ensure that the promises made by our government to the men and women who served are kept.

To help you fulfill the duties of this critical role, we have created a resource page on the [DAV Benefits Protection Team web page](#). This site contains a series of informational webinars that outline the various duties of BPTLs, along with the [Benefits Protection Team Toolkit](#), frequently asked questions, and links to other important resources. Be sure you are signed up for the [DAV Commander's Action Network—DAV](#)

[CAN](#) to receive information on key legislation impacting ill and injured veterans, action alerts, legislative accomplishments and upcoming webinars. While you are strongly encouraged to participate in these live webinar events, which offer opportunities to ask questions, webinars are available by clicking the [Legislative Resources](#) button under the 'Help DAV—Advocate for Legislation' section of DAV's website and can be watched any time.

In recognition of the dedication of our top performing departments and BPTLs, we initiated a recognition program for Outstanding Performance in Advocacy (OPA). The OPA awards are based on the level of department advocacy on DAV's national legislative priorities and duties of the BPTL outlined in the benefits protection team toolkit during the yearlong BPTL appointment period.

To ensure the official BPTL roster is accurate and up-to-date, we ask the department to contact the national membership and legislative departments if there is a change to the BPTL position during the year. If you have a question regarding the BPTL program or the OPA awards, please contact the national legislative department at (202) 554-3501 or legislativepublic@dav.org.

Once again, thank you for your commitment and advocacy work on behalf of our nation's ill and injured veterans, their family and survivors. Fighting for our fellow veterans is a noble cause, and your voice is one of the most important aspects to protecting the benefits they have earned.

The national legislative department looks forward to working with you in supporting DAV's legislative priorities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joy J. Ilem". The signature is stylized and written over the printed name.

National Legislative Director

JJI:jck
c: DAV leadership