



National Convention

Benefits Protection Team Seminar

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National Legislative Director

August 2, 2024



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National Legislative Interim Committee 2023-2024



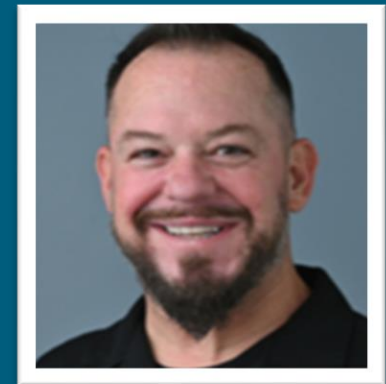
Al Labelle
Department of Wisconsin,
Chairman



W. Lee Gidden
Department of Ohio



Trent Dilks
Department of
Minnesota



J.R. Wilson
Department of California

Outstanding Performance in Advocacy Award Winners

Division I – Department of VA: BPTL **Shamala Capizzi**

Division II – Department of MN: BPTL **Trent Dilks**

Division III – Department of WI: BPTL **Al Labelle**

Division IV – Department of NE: BPTL **Jim Shuey**

Division V – Department of DE: BPTL **Paul Lardizzone**



Thank you!

- In 2024 we received a record **567** resolutions from **36 states**
- Advocacy—DAV CAN Alerts (emails sent to Congress) **412,104**



Critical Policy Goals 118th Congress

- **Correct inequities** and provide parity in compensation benefits for veterans and survivors
- Implement the **PACT Act** and address gaps in toxic exposure benefits
- Ensure **equity in VA care**, services and benefits for **women, LGBTQ+ and minority** veterans
- Provide a full spectrum of **long-term care** options for service-disabled and aging veterans
- Bolster **mental health** resources to ensure continued progress in reducing veteran suicide
- Expand the **VA's capacity** to deliver timely, high quality care to veterans

H.R. 8371, Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Act

Provisions in the omnibus bill include:

- VA long-term care home-health and community-based services
- caregiver services
- dental care
- homeless programs

Omnibus: Veterans Package

- Substance-use disorder services
- Emergency care transportation
- Telehealth
- IT infrastructure/Electronic Health Record
- Educational programs
- DBQ modernization
- Disability examinations
- VA home loans

Vision For Veterans —119th Congress

- Seven bold proposals to strengthen veterans health care and benefits
- Share DAV's "vision" with all federal candidates and officeholders
- Seek written campaign promises of support this year
- Hold winning candidates accountable next year

DAV[®] Dos & Don'ts

FOR MEMBERS DURING ELECTION YEAR CAMPAIGNS

DAV encourages you, as an individual, to register to vote, to vote in elections and to actively support the candidates of your choice. However, as a member of DAV, you have the responsibility to ensure your activities as a private citizen do not give the appearance that DAV supports or opposes any political candidate. To do so would violate our congressional charter, national Constitution and Bylaws and the law and regulations governing DAV's tax exempt status.

Dos and Don'ts

- ☒ **DO** get involved in political campaigns, rallies, forums and town hall meetings, as an individual. It's your right as an American citizen—and a disabled veteran—to support the candidate of your choice.
- ☒ **DON'T** support a candidate, or attend political events in support of a candidate, in the name of DAV, nor should you give the appearance that DAV is supporting a particular candidate. Wearing DAV caps and shirts can give the appearance of support by the organization.
- ☒ **DO** hold open candidate forums or town hall meetings so the candidates can discuss their positions on issues affecting disabled veterans, their families and survivors.
- ☒ **DON'T** forget to invite all candidates to the open forum/town hall meeting and make reasonable attempts to accommodate their schedules. It is not necessary that all candidates accept the invitation or attend for you to hold the event or that the candidates appear on the same day or at the same time.
- ☒ **DO** make candidates aware of the issues facing wounded, injured and ill veterans, their families and survivors, either as an individual or as a member/leader of DAV or its subdivision.
- ☒ **DON'T** forget to review DAV's national resolutions to ensure your position is in line with—and not contrary to or unsupported by—DAV's adopted resolutions when speaking on behalf of the organization.
- ☒ **DON'T** forget that, while DAV provides services to all veterans, our legislative goals focus on the betterment of wartime disabled veterans their families and survivors.

DAV National Policies

- "The corporation [DAV] shall be nonpolitical and nonsectarian, and may not promote the candidacy of an individual seeking public office." Title 36 U.S.C. § 50306.
- DAV National Constitution, Article II - Purpose: "...to advance the interests and work for the betterment of all wounded, gassed, injured and disabled veterans...."
- DAV National Bylaws, Article 2, Section 2.2—Nonpartisanship: "This Organization shall be non-political and non-sectarian and the name of this Organization or name of any subdivision thereof shall not be used in representing the desires or wishes of its membership in any political, sectarian or labor dispute, except as provided hereinafter...the foregoing shall not prevent this Organization or any subdivision thereof from participating in political issues which have a direct bearing upon the welfare of America's disabled veterans."
- DAV National Bylaws, Article 2, Section 2.3, —Legislative Activities, Para. 1: No member shall speak in the name of the DAV taking a position contrary to a standing resolution.
- DAV National Bylaws, Article 2, Section 2.3, Para. 2: Federal legislation cannot be sponsored or endorsed without a resolution.

Check out DAV's Legislative Program and approved resolutions at: dav.org/about-dav/legislation/dav-resolutions



Dos & Don'ts for election season

- DO get involved in forums and town hall meetings
- DO invite candidates to talk about veterans issues
- DO educate candidates on issues impacting ill and injured veterans
- **DON'T** support or oppose a candidate in the name of DAV
- **DON'T** give the appearance of supporting a candidate by wearing DAV branded items
- **DON'T** forget to review DAV's national resolutions

DAV Legislative Resources



[VIEW DAV'S FULL POLICY GOALS FOR 2024](#)

[VIEW DAV'S CONDENSED GOALS FOR 2024](#)

[2023-2024 Legislative Program \(Resolutions\)](#)

DAV's Legislative Program includes all of the legislative resolutions adopted at our most recent national convention, which guide DAV's positions on federal programs, policies and legislation.



[Congressional Testimony](#)

Read official testimonies DAV has delivered to the Senate and House of Representatives, which cover legislation, funding, policies and proposals to strengthen and reform veterans health care services and benefits programs.

[Issue Briefs](#)

Through a series of DAV issue briefs, learn more about the most critical issues challenging veterans today. Topics include veterans health care reform, caregiver support, women veterans, burn pits and survivor benefits.

[Legislative Webinars](#)

Find out how to become more involved and effective as a DAV advocate through our series of webinars about the legislative process, department and national conventions, resolution writing, Benefits Protection Teams and many other topics of interest to our members and supporters.

[Independent Budget](#)

In partnership with Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) and Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), DAV annually produces the *Independent Budget* and policy recommendations for the Department of Veterans Affairs and Congress.

<https://www.dav.org/about-dav/legislation/>



**First time being selected to serve on a
convention committee?**

Please join the National Legislative Department for an overview:

- ✓ Resolution process
- ✓ What to expect
- ✓ Duties and responsibilities
- ✓ How to best prepare to serve as a delegate
on a convention committee

PREPARING TO
SERVE ON A
CONVENTION
RESOLUTION
COMMITTEE

Friday August 2, 2024

3:45 PM - 4:45 PM

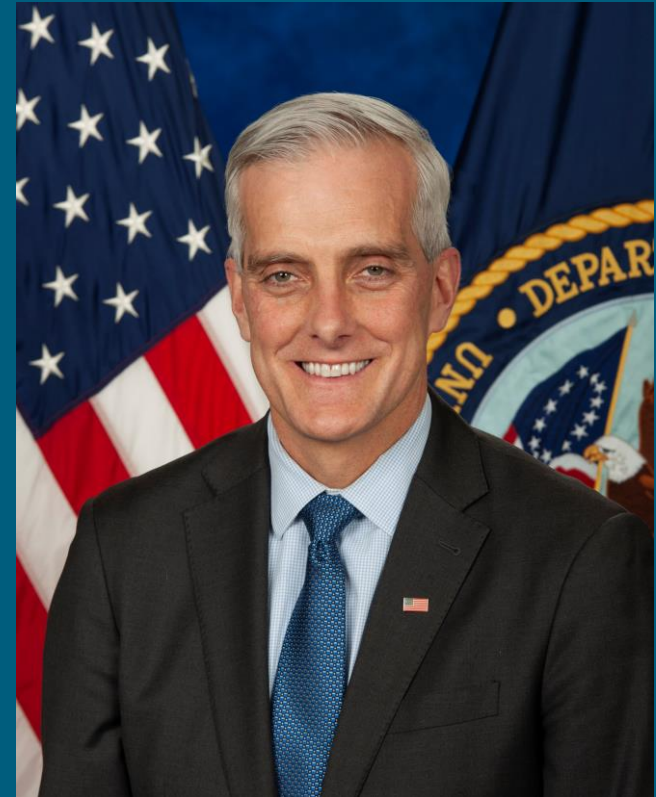
Room: West 104 A-B

WORKSHOP:
Preparing for Convention
“Resolutions” Committee
Friday August 2nd
3:45 pm
Room: West 104 A-B



VA LEADERSHIP

- Key note speaker
- August 3rd Opening Session



VA Secretary Denis
McDonough

DAV Service and Legislative Seminar

Saturday August 3, 2:00 pm



The Honorable Joshua Jacobs
Under Secretary for Benefits
Veterans Benefits Administration



The Honorable Jaime Areizaga-Soto
Chairman of the Board of Veterans' Appeals
Department of Veterans Affairs

DAV Service and Legislative Seminar

Saturday August 3, 2:00 pm



Dr. Sheeref Elnahal
Under Secretary for Health
Veterans Health Administration



Rep. Mark Takano (CA)
Ranking Member
House Veterans' Affairs

Please arrive by 1:45 pm





Thank You!

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Correct Inequities and Provide Parity in Compensation Benefits for Veterans and Survivors

Marquis D. Barefield
Assistant National Legislative Director

August 2, 2024

Critical Policy Goal

DAV urges Congress to:

1. Allow receipt of earned compensation and military payments without offsets.
2. Provide parity for survivors receiving Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC)

Allow Receipt Of Earned Compensation And Military Payments Without Offsets

In 2004, the NDAA authorized Concurrent Retirement and Longevity Retirees rated 50 percent or greater to receive both retired pay and VA Compensation.



Allow Receipt Of Earned Compensation And Military Payments Without Offsets

The 2004 NDAA left out a key group of service members when it was approved...combat injured and those forced to medically retire before reaching 20-years of service due to their combat injuries or illnesses.



Maj. Richard Star Act

S. 344/H.R. 1282, the Major Richard Star Act

This legislation would expand the eligibility for certain military retirees to concurrently receive veterans' disability compensation alongside their earned retired pay. This expansion specifically includes Chapter 61 disability retirees with less than 20 years of service who are eligible for combat-related special compensation.



Maj. Richard Star Act



This legislation was “reported out” of the House Committee on Armed Services with unanimous consent and is supported by more than two-thirds of the 118th Congress.

Maj. Richard Star Act



DAV along with a coalition of other MSOs and VSOs have had several meetings with members of Congress to urge passage of this legislation during this Congress.

Maj. Richard Star Act



On July 10, VSOs and MSOs attended a press event for this bill. Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Jon Tester was a key speaker at the event.

Disabled Veterans Tax Termination Act

H.R. 333, Disabled Veterans Tax Termination Act

Would allow retired members of the Armed Forces who have a service-connected disability rated less than 50 percent to receive concurrent payment of both retired pay and veterans disability compensation, to extend eligibility for concurrent receipt to chapter 61 disability retirees with less than 20 years of service.



Allow Receipt Of Earned Compensation And Military Payments Without Offsets

DAV urges Congress to:

Afford justice for veterans by enacting legislation that allows them to keep military separation payments based on their service, which differs from VA disability compensation.



Restore Veterans' Compensation Act

H.R. 3489, the Restore Veterans' Compensation Act

Would afford justice for ill and injured veterans by eliminating the unfair practice of VA recouping separation payments, which are based on their military service, and differ from VA disability compensation.



Restore Veterans' Compensation Act

- In recent news articles, veterans that have been out of service 10, 15 and as many as 30-years after service have been asked to pay back the federal government for their separation pay.



Provide Parity For Survivors Receiving Dependency And Indemnity Compensation

DAV urges Congress to:

Enact legislation that would index the rate of compensation for DIC payments to 55% of a 100% service-disabled veteran with a spouse to achieve parity with similar compensation federal employees' survivors receive and eliminate the remarriage age.



Caring For Survivors Act

S. 414/H.R. 1083, Caring for Survivors Act of 2023

- Increase the amount of DIC to 55% of the rate of monthly compensation received by a totally disabled veteran.
- Expand eligibility for DIC by replacing the “10-year” rule with a graduated scale of benefits that begins at five years for initial eligibility at 50% and gradually reaches the full benefit at ten years after determination of disability.



Love Lives On Act

H.R. 3651/S. 1266, the Love Live On Act

- Would eliminate the remarriage age for survivors in receipt of Dependency Indemnity Compensation (DIC).
- Removing the remarriage age for surviving spouses has been a long-standing issue for DAV.



Summary

DAV urges Congress to:

1. Allow receipt of earned compensation and military payments without offsets.
2. Provide parity for survivors receiving DIC.



Thank You!

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Ensuring Equitable Benefits and Services for Women, LGBTQ+ and Minority Veterans

Naomi M. Mathis
Assistant National Legislative Director

August 2, 2024

Includes

The VA must:

- Ensure equitable access to health care and services and improve health.
- Improve methodologies for data collection and analysis to identify health trends, access issues, disparity in health outcomes, and differences in patient experience.
- Improve environment of care to ensure all veterans feel safe and welcomed when seeking VA care.



Includes

The VA must:

- Enhance diverse representation and culturally sensitive programming.
- Ensure that all veteran subpopulations have representation on federal advisory committees, in the VA's strategic plans and internal programming.

Women, LGBTQ+, and Minority Veterans Focus In 118th Congress

- Women, LGBTQ+ and minority veterans continue to be a focus of Congress and VA.
- Introduction of legislation to improve services and programs for minority and underserved veteran populations.
- DAV continuing our efforts to ensure women and minority veterans have access to comprehensive, quality care and gender-specific services.



Pending Legislation for Women Veterans

H.R. 8347: Improving Menopause Care for Veterans Act

- Mandates a GAO report on the medical services offered to veterans experiencing the various stages of menopause.
- Improves VA protocols.

Pending Legislation for Women Veterans

H.R. 7596: Servicewomen And Veterans Menopause Research Act

- Evaluate existing menopause research.
- Connection between military service and menopause, the impact of combat roles on menopause-related symptoms.

Pending Legislation for Women Veterans

H.R. 3303: Maternal Health for Veterans Act

- Builds on Protecting Moms Who Served (P.L. 117-69).
- Calls for a report to congress on maternal health outcomes of veterans.
- Authorizes \$15m relating to Maternity Care Coordination through 2028.

Pending Legislation for Women Veterans

S. 2014/H.R. 1753: The “Jax” Act

Ensure that certain members of the Armed Forces who served in female cultural support teams receive proper credit for such service.



Pending Legislation for Underserved Veterans

H.R. 5610/S. 2863: Commission on Equity and Reconciliation in the Uniformed Services Act

- Establish a 15-member commission to investigate and address discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity within the uniformed services.

H.R. 645: Healthy Foundations for Homeless Veterans Act

- Grant VA the authority to use funds to provide homeless veterans and at-risk veterans.
- Allow VA to collaborate with organizations to manage the use of VA land for homeless veterans, specifically for living and sleeping.

Pending Legislation

S. 1028/H.R. 2441 SAVES Act

- Report on military sexual trauma in the digital age.
- Claim may not be denied until notifying the veteran of needed evidence and giving them an opportunity to present or identify it.
- Ensures veteran deals with MST team through BVA.
- Annual review of MST-related claims decisions.

Victory for Veterans

March 2024, VA announced expansion of its IVF Policy:

- **Follows DOD's updated policy**
- **Regardless of Marital Status**
- **Regardless of the veteran's sex**
- **Allows donated eggs, sperm and embryos**





Thank You!

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Long-term Care Options for Service-disabled and Aging Veterans

Jon Retzer

Assistant National Legislative Director

August 2, 2024

Critical Policy Recommendations

DAV urges Congress / VA to:

1. Increase veterans' access to long-term care
2. Modernize and expand VA Community Living Centers and State Veterans Homes
3. Expand home- and community-based care services
4. Improve the program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers

Expanding Veterans' Options For Long Term Care

- 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)
- LTC services and supports will need to double by 2037 just to maintain current services
- Congress must provide VA the resources to significantly expand home- and community-based programs, while also modernizing and expanding facilities that provide institutional care

Expand VA's Program Of Geriatric And Extended Care

- Expand mandatory eligibility for long-term nursing home care to service-connected veterans rated 50% and 60%
- VA must expand veterans' access to noninstitutional programs, when appropriate, to prevent or delay nursing home care and to reduce costs
- VA must increase the workforce shortages by ensuring recruitment is timely and competitive
- VA must geographically align care (particularly for veterans in rural areas)

DAV CAN Campaigns

S. 326, Elizabeth Dole Veterans Programs Improvement Act

This bill has provisions that would have a profound impact on the lives of veterans and their families helping to:

- improve outreach and assistance about veterans' benefits and services;
- expand long-term care options for aging veterans so they can live more independently with respect and dignity;
- create better home loan options for Native American veterans; and
- Over 8,100 actions taken

In The Veterans Package

H.R. 1815 / S. 495, the Expanding Veterans' Options for Long Term Care Act

- Bills would require the VA to report on;
 - the cost of care at each assisted living facility,
 - an analysis of any cost savings when compared to the cost of nursing home care,
 - feedback from participants in the pilot program, and
 - recommendations on whether the pilot program should be continued or adopted throughout the department
- Veterans package, H.R.8371 - Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act
- DAV Supports / Testified both H.R. 1815 / S. 495
- Nearly 28,000 actions taken

In The Veterans Package

H.R. 542 / S. 141 Elizabeth Dole Home Care Act

Bill would expand options for LTC through:

- The Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE);
- Veteran-Directed Care;
- Homemaker and Home Health Aide;
- Home-Based Primary Care; and
- Purchased Skilled Home Care
 - would provide caregiver support services, respite services and annual wellness contact.
- Veterans package, H.R.8371 - Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act
- DAV Supports/Testified H.R. 542

Continue To Amplify



**Congress must provide
assisted living care for all
service-connected
disabled veterans!**



Thank You!

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Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

Jon Retzer
Assistant National Legislative Director

August 2, 2024

Critical Policy Recommendations

DAV urges Congress / VA to:

1. Reduce rates of suicide among veterans
2. Fund lethal-means safety efforts
3. Improve specialized programs and services critical to preventing suicide
4. Increase staffing levels of VA mental health providers
5. Improve clinical competence of providers in VA Community Care Network

Congressional And VA Clinical Priority

- An obligation to ensure that our veterans have timely access to the mental health services they need
- Congress and the VA have been working diligently to address the epidemic of veteran suicide
- We must work collectively until we get that number down to zero

Improve Specialized Programs And Services Critical To Preventing Suicide

- REACH-VET (Recovery Engagement and Coordination for Health–Veterans Enhanced Treatment) program
 - REACH VET analyzes existing data from Veterans' health records to identify those at a statistically elevated risk for suicide, hospitalization, illness or other adverse outcomes
- Increased risk with specific substance use disorders related to opioid, cocaine, cannabis and stimulant use
- Increased suicide by those not using mental health or substance use disorder services



Improve Specialized Programs And Services Critical To Preventing Suicide

- VA should reevaluate its screening instruments and programming to capture more of the unidentified veterans at risk for suicide and improve treatment options and programs for veterans with substance use disorders
- VA must improve tailoring of prevention and intervention services to the needs, issues, and resources unique to veteran subpopulations

Improve Specialized Programs And Services Critical To Preventing Suicide Cont.

Congress must enact legislation,

- H.R. 5633: Veteran Suicide Prevention Act and
- H.R. 4400: Veteran Over Medication and Suicide Prevention Act,
- To direct the VA to conduct a review of the deaths of certain veterans who died by suicide

Improve Clinical Competence Of Providers In VA Community Care Network (CCN)

- Veterans who “received Community Care services only” had higher suicide rates than those who “received VHA direct care alone”
- All community care providers can assist with reducing firearm veteran suicide by taking this training about how to incorporate discussions about secure storage within their clinical care

Improve Clinical Competence Of Providers In VA CCA

- Congress and VA must require all providers in the Veterans Community Care network complete the same suicide prevention training and lethal means safety counseling mandated for VA providers
- Congress should require VA to include comparable quality metrics into its scheduling system so that veteran patients can make informed decisions when choosing care options

Improve Clinical Competence Of Providers In VA CCN Cont.

- Congress must enact legislation, H.R. 3811, Veterans Mental and Behavioral Health Quality of Care Act,
 - to require the VA to conduct a study on the quality-of-care difference between behavioral and mental health care provided by health care providers of the VA compared to non-Department providers
- VA must advance suicide prevention meaningfully into non-clinical support and intervention services, including financial, occupational, legal, and social domains

DAV Can Campaigns

S. 132, the Daniel J. Harvey Jr. and Adam Lambert Improving Servicemember Transition to Reduce Veteran Suicide Act

- The bill would create a pilot project coordinated by VA and the DOD to educate transitioning service members about challenges and risks of separating from service, including readjusting to their families and communities, and protective behaviors that may assist them in a successful transition
- Also provide a warm hand-off to a VA provider to screen individuals for risks, introduce them to appropriate VA services and provide them with contact information if they are likely to be eligible for services
- Nearly 16,000 actions taken

DAV CAN Campaigns

H.R. 236, Designate a week as "Battle Buddy Check Week"

- VA to designate one week per year as "Battle Buddy Check Week" for the purposes of organizing outreach events and educating veterans on how to conduct mental health wellness checks
- Nearly 7,000 actions taken



Thank You!

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Vision for Veterans for the 119th Congress

Peter Dickinson
Senior Executive Advisor

August 2, 2024



Vision for **VETERANS** for the 119th Congress

1. Do Not Reduce, Offset, or Tax Veterans' Disability Benefits
2. Strengthen DIC Support for Survivors of Disabled Veterans
3. Make Dental Care a Health Benefit for All Service Disabled Veterans
4. Provide Assisted Living Care Options for Service Disabled Veterans
5. Reform the Process for Creating Toxic Exposure Presumptives
6. Create New Planning and Funding Mechanisms for VA Infrastructure
7. Exempt All Veterans Programs, Benefits and Services from PAYGO and Budget Caps



- Do Not Reduce, Offset, or Tax Veterans' Disability Benefits
- Strengthen DIC Support for Survivors of Disabled Veterans





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■ Reform the Process for Creating Toxic Exposure Presumptives

➤ Ending the Wait Report

➤ September 18, 2024





Vision for **VETERANS** for the 119th Congress

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- Create New Planning and Funding Mechanisms for VA Infrastructure
- Exempt All Veterans Programs, Benefits and Services from PAYGO and Budget Caps





Thank You!

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