

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission

Saturday September 29, 2018

The Department of Illinois Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission met at Legion headquarters in Bloomington, Illinois on September 29, 2018. The meeting was called to order at 10:00. The following members were present:

Rodger Bennett (4th Div.) Chairman
Tom Nebgen (3rd Div.) Vice Chairman
Raymond Toczek (1st Div.)
Ashley "Dave" Davis (2nd Div.)
Krystle Huelsmann (5th Div.)

Guests: Jos Piento (7th Dist) and Carolina Contreras (VA&R Service Officer)

Bennett will continue as chair, Nebgen as vice-chair. Secretary has been changed to Huelsmann.

The Dept. Commander Michael M. Carder and Sr. Vice Commander Roy Weber stopped by for a few moments to encourage us for the upcoming year and thanking us for our commitment to veteran's issues. The American Legion is celebrating its 100 years of service and asking help to support four programs. Special Olympics, Boys State, Gifts to the Yanks, and the Oratorical Contest. A very special pin has been designed to encourage both of the 100 years celebration and the four programs. The four pillar pin will be sold for \$100.00 and 100% of the amount will be split evenly to the above mentioned programs.

Our Commission had 29 resolutions passed at the State Convention. At the National Convention eight were approved, 17 were received and recorded, 2 rejected and 2 referred for further study. Here are the results with the National resolution number:

APPROVED

Res. No. 48 "DIC changes"
Res. No. 49 "Exempt certain income for Non-Service Connected pension purposes"
Res. No. 50 "Increase income tax deduction for volunteer mileage"
Res. No. 53 "Means test for married vets"
Res. No. 58 "Minimum 10% for hearing loss"
Res. No. 64 "Dental care 50% or more"
Res. No. 68 "Hep C routine blood work"
Res. No. 79 "SMC-K increase"

RE

FERRED FOR FURTHER STUDY

Res. No. 55 "CPAP sanitation"

Res. No. 63 "Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims own Bldg."

REJECTED

Res. No. 56 "3 year routine visits under CHOICE"

Res. No. 62 "Exempt Purple Heart co-pays"

RECEIVED AND RECORDED

Res. No. 46 "Urn Markers"

Res. No. 47 "10% for vets who take hypertension meds"

Res. No. 51 "Vets in US census"

Res. No. 52 "Forgive student loans, vets rated 100%"

Res. No. 59 "Automatic waiver of under \$300 debts"

Res. No. 60 "Blue Water Navy Vietnam vets"

Res. No. 61 "Research into delayed hearing loss"

Res. No. 65 "Depleted Uranium"

Res. No. 70 "Interest on delayed Board of Veterans Appeals decisions"

Res. No. 71 "Incarcerated vets, eliminate loophole"

Res. No. 72 "I/U and Agent Orange"

Res. No. 73 "\$90 pension rate certain vets in nursing homes"

Res. No. 74 "RH insurance 5 yr. window"

Res. No. 75 "Increase in RH insurance"

Res. No. 76 "Service Dog allowance"

Res. No. 77 "Two vets and home loans"

Res. No. 78 "WWII vets and priority group six"

Those wishing to see the full text of these resolutions can visit www.legion.org

Wayne Macejak, current Department Service Officer will be retiring November 1st. His replacement will be Carolina Contreras. Carolina is one of 2 other Service Officers in the Chicago office. That office will be looking to hire a new full-time Service Officer. Interested candidates should visit the Department website at www.illegion.org for further information and an application.

Flu shots are now available at all VA hospitals. Shingle shots are also available. The success rate for the current shots is higher than previous shingle shots.

During routine blood work the HEP C test can be requested. Once tested no further testing is needed unless the veteran feels they may have again been exposed to the virus.

Restoring trust in the VA and the computerization updates are topics of discussion. Especially the future of DOD and VA systems working together. The VA is time pressured to finish many claims which can lead to errors in processing. The RAMP is in effect but individuals should be cautious in switching programs. A much quicker decision is made but it doesn't mean it will be a successful award of benefits.

Regarding the DC conference in 2019; we have budgeted \$3,000 and that will be divided by as many Commission members that attend with a cap of \$1,500 each if only two are able to make it.

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:00. The next meeting will be held in the spring, date to be announced.

Respectfully submitted,

Krystle Huelsmann
Secretary, VA&R Commission