

American Legion Department of Illinois



Legislative Commission Agenda 9/28/2019

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Veterans Legislation Proposed for Illinois 101st Session

HB3508 *101st General Assembly*

Short Description: DEPT VET AFF-TRANSITION

Synopsis As Introduced

Amends the Department of Veterans' Affairs Act. Provides that by July 1, 2019, the Department of Veterans' Affairs shall develop a Transition Assistance Program for veterans who have been discharged from the Armed Forces of the United States or the National Guard of any state. Provides that the program shall be designed to assist veterans in successfully transitioning from military to civilian life in Illinois and shall complement the transition program offered by the United States Department of Defense. Provides that the program shall include specified Illinois-specific transition assistance resources and information covering specified topics. Provides that the program shall provide information to noncitizens who are leaving military service in Illinois or who have already been discharged from military service in Illinois. Provides that the information shall detail how to become United States citizens, including where to acquire State legal assistance. Provides that the Illinois National Guard shall inform its members that it will assist noncitizen members in acquiring United States citizenship as soon as they are eligible. Provides that if a noncitizen member requests such assistance, then the Illinois National Guard shall assist the member in filing all forms and paperwork necessary to become a United States citizen. Effective immediately.

Yes ☒ No ☐

Last Action

Date	Chamber	Action
3/29/2019	House	Rule 19(a) / Re-referred to Rules Committee

HB3502 101st General Assembly**Short Description: DEP VET AFF-JOB PREFERENCES**

Synopsis As Introduced

Amends the Department of Veterans' Affairs Act of the Civil Administrative Code of Illinois. Provides that the Department of Veterans' Affairs shall provide an annual update to municipalities detailing any non-profit organizations' or federal, State, or local governments' programs or benefits regarding job preferences that are available to veterans.

Yes__x__ NO_____

Last Action

Date	Chamber	Action
4/3/2019	House	Tabled

HB3424 101st General Assembly**Short Description: DEPT VET AFF-TASK FORCE**

Synopsis As Introduced

Amends the Department of Veterans' Affairs Act. Creates the Veterans' Disability Compensation Task Force. Provides specified objectives for the Task Force. Provides that the Task Force shall consist of 15 members appointed by the chairs of the Veterans Affairs Committees in the House of Representatives and the Senate. Provides that the members of the Task Force shall be members of different Illinois counties' Veterans Assistance Commissions, Veteran Service Officers, VITAS officials, and AMVETS officials. Provides that the Task Force shall meet once each month and that joint hearings of the Veterans Affairs Committees of the House of Representatives and Senate shall be held once each month. Provides that the Department of Veterans' Affairs shall provide administrative and other support to the Task Force. Provides that the Task Force shall prepare a report of its findings and recommendations and submit it to the Governor and the General Assembly on or before May 1, 2020. Effective immediately.

Yes__x__ NO_____

Last Action

Date	Chamber	Action
3/29/2019	House	Rule 19(a) / Re-referred to Rules Committee

HB3017 101st General Assembly**Short Description: VETERANS CYBER ACADEMY PILOT****Synopsis As Introduced**

Creates the Veterans Cyber Academy Pilot Program Act. Provides that the Department of Veterans' Affairs shall establish and implement a pilot program to provide veterans residing in the State with access to cyber security training, certification, apprenticeships, and additional resources to enter the cyber security field of work. Provides that the pilot program shall run from January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2023. Provides specified requirements to the Department in implementing the pilot program. Effective immediately.

Yes ☒ NO ☐

Last Action

Date	Chamber	Action
3/29/2019	House	Rule 19(a) / Re-referred to Rules Committee

HB0835 101st General Assembly**Short Description: HONOR AND REMEMBER FLAG****Synopsis As Introduced**

Amends the Flag Display Act. Provides that the Honor and Remember Flag is designated as the symbol of our State's concern and commitment to honoring and remembering all members of the United States Armed Forces who have lost their lives while serving our country in the line of duty and their families. Provides for the location of display, dates of display, and manner of display for the Honor and Remember Flag. Provides that specified provisions shall not be construed so as to require any employee to report to work solely for the purpose of providing for the display of the Honor and Remember Flag. Provides for the procurement of Honor and Remember Flags. Provides for the adoption of rules as necessary to carry-out specified requirements. Effective immediately.

Yes ☒ NO ☐

Last Action

Date	Chamber	Action
4/12/2019	House	Rule 19(a) / Re-referred to Rules Committee

HB2803 101st General Assembly**Short Description: HIGHER ED VETERANS SERVICE ACT****Synopsis As Introduced**

Amends the Higher Education Veterans Service Act. With regard to the requirement to advertise the office location and phone number of and Internet access to the Coordinator of Veterans and Military Personnel and Student Services, provides that the advertisement must also include the website and any social media accounts of the public college or university. Requires each public college and university to annually report to the Board of Higher Education on the efforts of the public college or university in attracting, recruiting, and retaining veterans and military personnel. Effective immediately.

Yes ☒ NO ☐

Last Action

Date	Chamber	Action
3/29/2019	House	Rule 19(a) / Re-referred to Rules Committee

HB2293 *101st General Assembly*

Short Description: VEH CD-MARINE CORPS PLATES

Synopsis As Introduced

Amends the Illinois Vehicle Code. Provides that the money in the Marine Corps Scholarship Fund shall be paid to the Marine Corps Coordinating Council of Illinois, Inc. (instead of the Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation, Inc.). Authorizes the Marine Corps Coordinating Council of Illinois to provide grants to the Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation, the Young Marine National Foundation, and the various chapters of the Marine Corps League throughout the State. Provides that any grant money paid from the Marine Corps Scholarship Fund shall be used for any academic, financial assistance, or monetary award to veterans or veterans' families that are located within the State of Illinois. Effective July 1, 2019.

Yes__x__ NO__

Last Action

Date	Chamber	Action
7/19/2019	House	Public Act 101-0089

HB0034 *101st General Assembly*

Short Description: PROP TX-SURVIVING SPOUSE

Synopsis As Introduced

Amends the Property Tax Code. In a Section concerning the homestead exemption for veterans with disabilities, provides that: (1) for taxable years prior to 2015, "surviving spouse" means the surviving spouse of a veteran who obtained the exemption prior to his or her death; (2) for taxable years 2015 through 2018, "surviving spouse" means (A) the surviving spouse of a veteran who obtained the exemption prior to his or her death and (B) the surviving spouse of a veteran who was killed in the line of duty in the current taxable year or any preceding taxable year; and (3) for taxable year 2019 and thereafter, "surviving spouse" means (A) the surviving spouse of a veteran who qualified for the exemption prior to his or her death, (B) the surviving spouse of a veteran who was killed in the line of duty in the current taxable year or any preceding taxable year, (C) the surviving spouse of a veteran who did not obtain the exemption before death, but who would have qualified for the exemption if he or she had survived, and (D) the surviving spouse of a veteran whose death was determined to be service-connected who is a current recipient of Dependency and Indemnity Compensation. Effective immediately.

Yes__x__ NO__

Last Action

Date	Chamber	Action
3/29/2019	House	Rule 19(a) / Re-referred to Rules Committee

HB0120 *101st General Assembly***Short Description: GOVERNMENT-TECH****Synopsis As Introduced**

Amends the Freedom of Information Act. Makes a technical change in a Section concerning the short title.

Replaces everything after the enacting clause. Amends the Department of Veterans' Affairs Act.

Creates the Veterans' Service-Related Ailments Task Force. Provides that the Task Force shall review and make recommendations regarding veterans' service-related ailments that are not recognized by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, including exploring why certain service-related ailments are not recognized and determining what may be done to have them recognized. Provides who shall serve on the Task Force. Provides that the Task Force shall meet at least once every 2 months beginning July 1, 2019. Provides that the Department of Veterans' Affairs shall provide administrative and other support to the Task Force. Provides that the Task Force shall prepare a report that summarizes its work and makes recommendations resulting from its study and shall submit the report to the Governor and the General Assembly by December 31, 2019. Provides that the Task Force is dissolved on December 31, 2020. Effective immediately

Yes ☒ NO ☐

Last Action

Date	Chamber	Action
8/9/2019	House	Public Act 101-0225

HR0060 *101st General Assembly***Short Description: AGENT ORANGE-VETS****Synopsis As Introduced**

Urges Congress to pass legislation in support of the expansion of the presumptions for Agent Orange exposure for veteran treatment purposes.

Yes ☒ NO ☐

Date	Chamber	Action
3/13/2019	House	Resolution Adopted

SJR0015 101st General Assembly**Short Description: CPL. JANSSEN MEMORIAL HIGHWAY****Synopsis As Introduced**

Designate the section of Interstate 39 in Illinois from Exit 22 to Exit 27 as the "Cpl. Robert D. Janssen Memorial Highway".

Yes__x__ NO_____

Last Action

Date	Chamber	Action
2/6/2019	Senate	Referred to Assignments

SB0122 101st General Assembly**Short Description: PROCUREMENT-VETERAN PREFERENCE****Synopsis As Introduced**

Amends the Illinois Procurement Code. Allows an authorized official of Cook County under the county's veteran-owned business program to certify to the Department of Veterans' Affairs that Cook County's certification standards do not conflict with the requirements of the Code concerning veteran-owned businesses. Requires that, upon certification, the Department of Central Management Services will notify Cook County businesses of certain information concerning the notification and ensure that parties who obtain certification under Cook County's program are immediately registered with the State as certified and qualified businesses under the Code. Requires the Department to contribute money to support the program under available appropriations. Effective immediately.

Yes__x__ NO_____

Last Action

Date	Chamber	Action
5/10/2019	House	Rule 19(a) / Re-referred to Rules Committee

SB1127 101st General Assembly**Short Description: AIRPORT REGULATION MIA FLAG****Synopsis As Introduced**

Amends the Illinois Aeronautics Act. Provides that the Division of Aeronautics of the Department of Transportation shall require the display of an MIA flag at any airport in its jurisdiction, either upon the same flag-staff as the United States national flag or otherwise. Effective immediately.

Yes__x__ NO_____

Last Action

Date	Chamber	Action
8/23/2019	Senate	Public Act 101-0538

SB1244 *101st General Assembly*

Short Description: VETERAN MEMORIAL MARKERS

Synopsis As Introduced

Amends the Cemetery Oversight Act. Provides that no cemetery authority shall charge a consumer an amount exceeding \$500 for the placement of a headstone or memorial marker that is provided for a United States Veteran by the United States Government. Defines "placement". Makes related changes to provide that a cemetery authority claiming a partial exemption under the Act shall be required to comply with this requirement. Effective immediately.

Yes ☒ NO ☐

Last Action

Date	Chamber	Action
8/9/2019	Senate	Public Act 101-0317

SR0056 *101st General Assembly*

Short Description: HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS-VETERANS

Synopsis As Introduced

Urges healthcare providers to verify a patient or resident's military status and to provide training to staff on the best practices for providing healthcare to veterans.

Yes ☐ NO ☐

Last Action

Date	Chamber	Action
2/21/2019	Senate	Resolution Adopted

Bill Status of SB0110 101st General Assembly

Short Description: PROP TX-SURVIVING SPOUSE

Synopsis As Introduced

Amends the Property Tax Code. Provides that, for the 2015 taxable year and thereafter, the exemption for veterans with disabilities also carries over to the surviving spouse of a veteran who was killed in the line of duty in the current taxable year or any preceding taxable year. Provides that, for the 2019 taxable year and thereafter, the exemption for veterans with disabilities also carries over to (i) the surviving spouse of a veteran who did not obtain the exemption before death, but who would have qualified for the exemption in the current taxable year if he or she had survived and (ii) the surviving spouse of a veteran whose death was determined to be service-connected and who is certified by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs as being a current recipient of Dependency and Indemnity Compensation. Provides that, in the case of a surviving spouse who is certified by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs as being a current recipient of Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, the property is exempt. Effective immediately.

Yes___x___ NO_____

Last Action

Date	Chamber	Action
5/10/2019	House	Rule 19(a) / Re-referred to Rules Committee

Federal Legislation

(Resolution 303, Aug. 30 - Sept. 1, 2016)

Protect the American flag

The American Legion urges Congress to introduce and approve an amendment to the U.S. Constitution that would permit Congress and the states to pass legislation to protect the U.S. flag from physical desecration. The U.S. House of Representatives has routinely passed such an amendment. Every state has endorsed it. And a majority of Americans agree the flag should be protected.

(Resolution 14, Oct. 17-18, 2018)

Support for Gold Star families

The families of our fallen service members forever bear the burden of the loss of their loved one who gave their last full measure of devotion in defense of our great nation, security and freedom. The American Legion is dedicated to ensuring Gold Star families receive the absolute best care and services from the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(Resolution 1, Oct. 17-18, 2018)

Redefine “wartime service” period

More than 1,600 U.S. military men and women since the end of World War II have been killed or were wounded during times of armed conflict not recognized by the U.S. government. History is clear that the United States has been in a continuous state of wartime activity since the attack at Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941. In fairness to all who have served and sacrificed, not just those who fall within a government-defined window of dates, The American Legion passed Resolution 1 at its Fall 2018 National Executive Committee meeting calling on Congress to direct VA to expand the definition of “wartime veteran” to include all military personnel who served honorably under Title 10 orders for at least one day during this continuous period of armed conflict.

(Resolution 20, May 9-10, 2018)

Support VA’s suicide-prevention efforts

An estimated 20 veterans end their lives every day. Most were not receiving care or support through VA that may have saved them. The American Legion supports expanding and promoting mental health treatment for veterans and urges Congress to provide VA necessary funds to hire mental health professionals and proper staffing for its Integrative Health and Wellness Program.

(Multiple resolutions)

Implement, oversee new laws

The 115th Congress passed multiple American Legion-supported bills that help veterans and their families, from the backlog-aimed VA Appeals Modernization Act to the omnibus VA MISSION Act. The Legion now calls on the 116th Congress to ensure these measures are accurately and quickly implemented, as designed.

(Resolution 35, Aug. 28-30, 2018)

Fully fund a superior national defense

The American Legion supports a defense budget that reverses sequestration and its effects, rebuilds U.S. military end strength and weaponry and fairly compensates military personnel, especially in an ongoing time of global warfare.

(Resolution 147, Aug. 30-Sept. 1, 2016)

Improve health care for women veterans

VA must continue to develop and expand health-care services for the fast-growing population of female veterans, a large percentage of whom do not enroll for VA health care for a number of reasons, according to surveys. Among the factors are limited gender-specific treatment services and awareness of VA benefits. All veterans, regardless of gender, must receive fair and equal VA health-care services.

(Resolution 246, Aug. 30-Sept. 1, 2016)

Expand Agent Orange benefits

Efforts by the 115th Congress fell short of finally extending fairness to Blue Water Navy Vietnam War veterans exposed to the toxic defoliant Agent Orange while at sea. The American Legion remains firm in its position that all veterans exposed to Agent Orange – on land, sea or air – deserve service-connected disability benefits for adverse health conditions presumed to be linked to such exposure.

(Resolution 340, Aug. 30-Sept. 1, 2016)

Programs to end veteran homelessness

To fully implement VA's pledge to eradicate veteran homelessness, Congress must continue making investments in affordable housing and programs such as Supportive Services for Veteran Families that move veterans and their families off the streets and into stable housing with supportive services.

(Resolution 85, Aug. 22-24, 2017)

Re-employment rights for veterans

Veterans should not lose their jobs while deployed to protect the freedoms all Americans enjoy. When service members deploy, worrying about whether they will still have employment can hinder mission focus. The American Legion urges Congress to prohibit employers from pressuring service members into waiving their employment rights and protections through arbitration agreements.

(Resolution 150, Aug. 30 - Sept. 1, 2016)

Access to business capital via GI Bill

As times change, so must the GI Bill. For veteran entrepreneurs, access to capital for starting, purchasing or expanding small businesses is a serious obstacle. The American Legion supports legislation that would expand GI Bill benefits to assist veterans in obtaining access to small business capital.

(Resolution 15, Oct. 17-18, 2018)

Citizenship for honorable service

Immigrants to the United States often join the U.S. Armed Forces as a route to citizenship. Many veteran immigrants say they have been deported after discharge because they failed to acquire U.S. citizenship while in service. The American Legion supports measures to ensure the process of naturalization through military service is completed prior to discharge.

(Resolution 224, Aug. 30-Sept. 1, 2016)

Repeal unfair VA offsets

Many military retirees must forfeit a portion of their pensions to receive VA service-connected disability compensation. It is equally outrageous when VA survivor benefits are offset from military Survivor Benefit Plan annuities. The American Legion supports legislation to repeal both of these unjust offsets.

ONE HUNDRED AND FIRST NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE AMERICAN LEGION
Indianapolis, Indiana August 27, 28, 29, 2019

Resolution No. 1: Amendments to the American Legion National Constitution and By-Laws Origin:

Resolution No. 1 (NEC) May 2019 Submitted by: Convention Committee on Constitutional Amendments (As Amended) WHEREAS, The American Legion is very careful and cautious in the drafting of its National Constitution and National By-Laws; and WHEREAS, A complete and thorough review of the National Constitution and National By-Laws has not occurred in a number of years; and WHEREAS, Since this last review numerous changes have taken place within The American Legion, including but not limited to, the election of Past National Commander Denise Rohan, the election of numerous female national vice commanders and national officers; and WHEREAS, The National Executive Committee, along with the Internal Affairs Commission and the Constitution and By-Laws Committee, has reviewed these changes and submits to the National Convention that it recommends amending of the National Constitution and National By-laws as attached; now, therefore, be it **RESOLVED**, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, August 27, 28, 29, 2019, That The American Legion's National Constitution and National By-Laws be amended to read as attached hereto.

Resolution No. 57: Coin Commemoration Of The 75th Anniversary Of The End Of World War II

Origin: Convention Committee on Internal Affairs Submitted by: Convention Committee on Internal Affairs WHEREAS, The National World War II Museum was designated as "America's National World War II Museum" by the United States Congress in 2004; and WHEREAS, The mission of The

National World War II Museum is to tell the story of the American experience in the war that changed the world - why it was fought, how it was won, and what it means today - so that all generations will understand the price of freedom and be inspired by what they learn; and WHEREAS, The United States entered World War II as a result of the surprise Japanese attack against our fleet at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on December 7, 1941, which killed 2,403 people of the United States; and WHEREAS, The United States joined the wartime Allied cause against the militarist, fascist, and racist dictatorships of Germany, Japan, and Italy (the Axis), fighting for President Franklin D. Roosevelt's "Four Freedoms" (freedom of speech, of worship, from want, and from fear); and WHEREAS, The United States placed 16,000,000 of its citizens into uniform in the course of the struggle, enduring a string of early defeats, recovering to conduct a total war on land, sea, and 'air, and eventually establishing total dominance over its enemies; and WHEREAS, The war took the lives of 405,399 United States military personnel, fellow citizens who made the supreme sacrifice in a perilous moment in the history of the United States, giving their lives for the cause of democracy and peace; and WHEREAS, The conflict led to a comprehensive transformation of the home front from a civilian economy dedicated to peacetime production into the mightiest engine of military might in human history (labeled the "Arsenal of Democracy"), demanding the participation of the entire citizenry and thus leading to increased opportunities for racial minorities and women; and WHEREAS, The war ended on September 2, 1945, after the unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and Imperial Japan, amounting to a total victory for the United States and the Allies; and WHEREAS, The generation of United States citizens who fought World War II is passing away with the march of time, and that therefore the urgent need to give honor to those who served is all the more critical; and WHEREAS, The period from May 8, 2020, to September 2, 2020, will mark the 75th anniversary of the end of the involvement of the United States in World War II and the surrender of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan; respectively; and WHEREAS, The commemoration of the end of World War II is not only an appropriate time to mark the achievement of the World War II generation, but to further the mission of The National World War II Museum in telling the story of the American experience in the war that changed the world - why it was fought, how it was won, and what it means today - so that all generations will understand the price of freedom and be inspired by what they learn; and WHEREAS, In recent years, commemorative coin programs have been successfully conducted for other worthy causes related to veterans and the military; and WHEREAS, The United States Mint, in compliance with the Commemorative Coin Reform Act of 1996 ("CCRA of 1996"), Public Law 104-208, conducts commemorative coin programs to honor a person, place or event; and WHEREAS, Consistent with the CCRA of 1996, The National World War II Museum has demonstrated the ability to raise funds from private sources, "in an amount that is equal to or greater than the total amount of the proceeds of such _surcharge derived from the sale of such numismatic item"; and WHEREAS, The proceeds from the sale of this 75th anniversary of the end of World War II commemorative coin will benefit the educational mission of The National WWII Museum to tell the story of the American experience in the war that changed the world - why it was fought, how it was won, and what it means today - so that all generations will understand the price of freedom and be inspired by what they learn; and WHEREAS, The Commemorative Coin Program provides for surcharge payments to be made from proceeds received from the sale of commemorative coins; and WHEREAS, Consistent with the CCRA of 1996, The National World War II Museum must submit an audited financial statement and submit the results of the annual audits to demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the secretary of Treasury, that it has qualified for surcharge proceeds and is properly expending them; now, therefore, be it RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, August 27, 28, 29, 2019, That The American Legion supports The National World War II Museum proposed legislation to mint coins commemorating the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II by the United States Mint with the understanding that the surcharge payment will be earmarked to benefit the educational mission of The National World War II Museum.

Resolution No. 11: Environmental Exposures At Fort McClellan Origin: Kansas Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation WHEREAS, Fort McClellan, Alabama has been acknowledged to be a former United States military installation and home to several contractor presences in the areas or disciplines of chemical warfare and battlefield chemical use, to include herbicides and deforestation chemicals; and WHEREAS, Numerous reports and studies by both independent and governmental agencies delineate a high concentration of chemicals similar or identical to those found in herbicides already known to cause significant illness, injury and damage to personnel working in close proximity to them, such as PCBs; and WHEREAS, The following excerpt from the January 1998 US Army Environmental Center Final Environmental Baseline Study clearly states the presence of environmental contaminants in a dangerous concentration to occupants in its executive summary, located on page ES-1: "The BRAC environmental restoration program requires investigation and cleanup as necessary of federal properties prior to transfer to the public domain. The BRAC environmental restoration program is similar to the Army's Installation Restoration Program (IRP), except that it has been expanded to include environmental issues such as asbestos, lead-based paint, radon, radiological hazards, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), unexploded ordnance (UXO), chemical warfare materiel (CWM), and other environmental concerns not typically addressed by the IRP."; and WHEREAS, The potential pool of connected victims of exposure to toxic chemicals and radioactive materials is known to number in excess of 700,000 service members, spouses, dependent children and associated support staff; and WHEREAS, A House resolution has been introduced in all but 2 of the last 6 years directing the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to create a registry of sufferers for the purpose of identification and service; and WHEREAS, It has been noted that congressional actions regarding Fort McClellan move from the committee in which they are introduced to the Subcommittee on Health with ever-increasing rapidity and stall there; and WHEREAS, The vast majority of claimants having served at Fort McClellan seeking VA service connection for themselves, their co-located dependents and immediate descendants have been repeatedly denied connection of the same disabilities inherent with PCB-based chemicals, such as Monsanto's Agent Orange, one of the chemical herbicides stored and tested there; now, therefore, be it RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, August 27, 28, 29, 2019, That The American Legion urges Congress to support and foster legislation to grant and ensure service connection and compensation for feasible claims, to include spouses and child dependents, who were exposed at Fort McClellan between dates established that concentrations of dangerous chemicals and radiological materials were present; and, be it further RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges Congress to direct that a list of presumptive conditions similar to the list existing for Agent Orange exposure in Vietnam veterans be created and maintained for the purposes of expeditious handling of claimants' filings; and, be it finally RESOLVED, That The American Legion desires this resolution to be applied to the reiteration list, as adopted, until a final congressional determination be made, and listed for retention on addendum for the pertinent congressional committee(s).

Resolution No. 17: Department Of Veterans Affairs Provide Dental Care For Veterans With A Complicating Medical Condition Origin: Minnesota Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation WHEREAS, 38 C.F.R. 17.38 states medical need is a treatment, procedure, supply, or service considered medically necessary when, in the judgment of an appropriate clinical care

provider, and in accordance with generally-accepted standards of clinical practices, the treatment, procedure, supply, or service: (1) Promotes health by: (a) Enhancing quality of life or daily functional level; (b) Identifying a predisposition for development of a condition or early onset of disease, which can be partly or totally improved by monitoring or early diagnosis and treatment; and (c) Preventing development of future disease; (2) Preserves health by: (a) Maintaining the current quality of life or daily functional level; (b) Preventing progression of disease; (c) Curing disease; and (d) Extending life span; (3) Restores health by restoring the quality of life or the daily functional level that has been lost due to illness or injury; and WHEREAS, 38 C.F.R. 17.38 states dental care for eligible veterans must be provided in a manner consistent with the following core values: timely access, quality outcomes, cost effectiveness, evidence-based care, patient and provider satisfaction, and patient safety; and WHEREAS, 38 CFR 17.160-17.166 also states the goal of VA Dental Services is to provide high quality, cost-effective and evidence-based dental treatment to eligible veterans; and WHEREAS, All VA dentists are to be knowledgeable regarding the scope of care to be provided under each dental classification; and WHEREAS, 38 CFR 17.160-17.166 further states eligibility for dental care under Class VI (medical need) is under the authority of the VA Dental Chief to make eligibility determination; and WHEREAS, VA established an Outpatient Dental Program, which is categorized into classifications; and Class VI was created to provide dental services to a veteran that is receiving care and requires dental care for a condition complicating a medical condition currently under treatment; and WHEREAS, The following list identifies the patient categories that are to be provided dental care in compliance with applicable VA regulations and directives: Inpatients with a compelling medical need, such as a defined dental condition which has a significant negative impact on the medical management of the patient, regardless of service connection; veteran for whom outpatient dental care is reasonably necessary to complete dental care that was initiated while they were inpatients; outpatient Dental Class I through VI beneficiaries; and individuals with dental emergencies who are provided outpatient dental care on a humanitarian basis; now, therefore, be it RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, August 27, 28, 29, 2019, That if a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) dentist removes a veteran's teeth under Classification VI (Medical Need) that the VA is required to provide dentures in accordance with its medical benefits package promoting health, enhancing quality of life and daily function.

Resolution No. 41: Protection Of The POW/MIA Flag Origin: Ohio Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security WHEREAS, In 1970, Mrs. Michael Hoff, an MIA wife and member of the National League of POW/MIA Families, recognized the need for a symbol of our POW/MIAs, following approval by the League's Board of Directors at a meeting held January 22-23, 1972, POW/MIA flags were manufactured for distribution; and WHEREAS, On March 9, 1989, an official League flag – flown over the White House on National POW/MIA Recognition Day 1988 – was installed in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda as a result of legislation passed overwhelmingly during the 100th Congress; and WHEREAS, The League's POW/MIA flag is the only flag ever displayed in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda where it stands as a powerful symbol of America's determination to account for U.S. personnel still missing and unaccounted-for from the Vietnam War; and WHEREAS, On August 10, 1990, the 101st Congress passed U.S. Public Law 101-355, which recognized the League's POW/MIA flag and designated it "the symbol of our Nation's concern and commitment to resolving as fully as possible the fates of Americans still prisoner, missing and unaccounted for in Southeast Asia, thus ending the uncertainty for their families and the Nation"; and WHEREAS, The importance of the POW/MIA flag lies in its continued visibility, a constant reminder of the plight of America's unreturned veterans, other than "Old Glory," the League's POW/MIA flag is the only flag ever to fly over the White House, displayed since 1982 in this place of honor on National POW/MIA Recognition

Day; and WHEREAS, Passage by the 105th Congress of Section 1082 of the 1998 Defense Authorization Act required that the League's POW/MIA flag fly six days each year: Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day, National POW/MIA Recognition Day and Veterans Day, and it must be displayed at the White House, the U.S. Capitol, the Departments of State, Defense and Veterans Affairs, the headquarters of the Selective Service System, major military installations as designated by the secretary of defense, all federal cemeteries and all offices of the U.S. Postal Service; and WHEREAS, In addition to the specific dates stipulated, the Department of Veterans Affairs voluntarily displays our POW/MIA flag 24/7; and WHEREAS, The National Vietnam Veterans, Korean War Veterans and World War II Memorials are now also required by law to display the POW/MIA flag daily - most state capitols have adopted similar laws, as have local governments nationwide; and WHEREAS, It has been reported in the news and on social media outlets that the POW/MIA flag has been taken down and replaced by another supplemental flag which is a disgrace to America's unreturned veterans and their families; now, therefore be it RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, August 27, 28, 29, 2019, That the American Legion takes a stand in protecting the integrity of the POW/MIA Flag; and, be it finally RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges the U.S. Congress to pass a resolution for not replacing the POW/MIA flag with any other symbol.

Resolution No. 32: Veterans Burial/Plot Allowance Payment Origin: Illinois Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation WHEREAS, The American Legion is a national organization of wartime veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of community, state, and nation; and WHEREAS, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) currently pays a burial allowance and plot allowance when a veteran dies in a Veterans Administration hospital, nursing home, from a service-connected condition or at the time of death was getting paid Veterans Administration compensation or pension; and WHEREAS, This benefit ranges from approximately \$1,500 up to \$2,000 depending on the cause of death of the veteran; and WHEREAS, The intent of this benefit is to help reimburse the cost of the funeral and burial; and WHEREAS, Under the current law, this benefit is paid to the first living person who files a claim in any of the following groups, spouse, children regardless of age, parents of the veteran or the executor or administrator of the estate of the veteran; and WHEREAS, Our service officers in various departments have experienced sad situations where an estranged spouse or prodigal son or daughter knows the benefit is paid to the first one who files a claim, had nothing to do with the payment of the funeral/plot expenses and yet gets this VA benefit; and WHEREAS, We believe the original intent of this law was to help reimburse those who bore the cost of the funeral/plot expenses of the deceased veteran; now, therefore, be it RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, August 27, 28, 29, 2019, That The American Legion support legislation to amend this law found in Title 38 United States Code, to pay the burial/plot allowance only to the person, related to the veteran or not, who actually paid these expenses; and, be it finally RESOLVED, That if the burial/plot expenses were prepaid before the veteran's death then this benefit be paid to the surviving spouse of the veteran, and if no surviving spouse then to the estate of the veteran.

Resolution No. 16: Coast Guard Pay Discrimination Origin: Minnesota Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security (As Amended) WHEREAS: The longest government shutdown in American history caused undue hardship in a discriminating manner by withholding pay to thousands of United States Coast Guard members, chartered in the Department of Homeland Security, while

continuing to pay all other active duty members of the Armed Forces; and WHEREAS: 14 U.S. Code § 1 - Establishment of Coast Guard states: “The Coast Guard, established January 28, 1915, shall be a military service and a branch of the Armed Forces of the United States at all times.”; and WHEREAS: Every member of the armed forces of the United States shall complete a DD Form 4, Enlistment/Reenlistment Document Armed Forces, including Section H, Paragraph 22A 22a. IN A REGULAR COMPONENT OF THE ARMED FORCES: I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend The Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. So help me God; and WHEREAS: U.S. Coast Guard members are members of a military service and a branch of the armed forces of the United States at all times; and WHEREAS: U.S. Coast Guard members affirm the Confirmation of Enlistment Oath (DD Form 4); now, therefore, be it RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, August 27, 28, 29, 2019, That The American Legion advocates for the president of the United States and the United States Congress to take measures to ensure all active duty members, of the U. S. Coast Guard, armed forces of the United States, shall not experience discrimination in the future; to include pay and benefits the same as the other armed forces receive.

Resolution No. 26: Amending The POW/MIA Empty Chair Ceremony Origin: Connecticut Submitted by: Convention Committee on Internal Affairs WHEREAS, The American Legion is the nation’s largest veterans service organization, which firmly believes that no comrade should be left behind, which is why it is important for The American Legion to remember our POW/MIAs; and WHEREAS, The American Legion performs the POW/MIA Empty Chair Ceremony at all official meetings as a reminder to spare no effort to secure the release of any American prisoners from captivity, the repatriation of the remains of those who died bravely in defense of liberty, and a full accounting of those missing; and WHEREAS, Resolution No. 288, titled “Support “Empty Chair” Program (POW/MIA)”, calls for the implementation of the POW/MIA Empty Chair Ceremony at all official meetings of The American Legion; and WHEREAS, Resolution No. 288 was adopted at The American Legion’s 67th National Convention; and WHEREAS, The POW/MIA Empty Chair Ceremony currently reads, “...the thousands of American POW/MIAs still unaccounted for...”; and WHEREAS, Due to fluctuations which may increase or decrease the actual number of American POW/MIAs still unaccounted for, from all conflicts with the United States of America; now, therefore, be it RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, August 27, 28, 29, 2019, That in the POW/MIA Empty Chair Ceremony, the phrase “...the thousands of American POW/MIAs still unaccounted for...” be changed to read “...the many American POW/MIAs still unaccounted for...”; and, be it finally RESOLVED, That any and all American Legion publications that contain the POW/MIA Empty Chair Ceremony be updated to reflect this change.

Resolution No. 59: Establish Green Alert System Interagency Group Or Committee For Veterans In Crisis Origin: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation WHEREAS, A Green Alert system is an emergency notification system that is activated for veterans with a history of service-related mental health issues,

including neurocognitive disorders, suicide attempts or impulses, or substance use disorder, and these veterans go missing; and WHEREAS, A Green Alert system will work similarly to other well-known Amber and Silver Alert systems currently in use in the United States; and WHEREAS, Congress has pending legislation to establish an interagency committee on development of Green Alert systems; and WHEREAS, At present, no interagency group or committee exists that develops best practices and provides technical assistance to states that are attempting to establish Green Alert systems; now, therefore, be it RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, August 27, 28, 29, 2019, That Congress enact legislation to establish an interagency group or committee regarding the development of Green Alert systems for veterans.

Resolution No. 52: Antidepressant Harms Analysis Origin: Michigan Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation (As Amended) WHEREAS, According to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) an average of twenty (20) veterans died by suicide each day in 2014, approximately 6,079 veterans died by suicide in 2016, and veterans now account for eighteen (18) percent of all deaths by suicide among U.S. adults; and WHEREAS, According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, the average suicide rate for veterans who used Veterans Health Administration (VHA) services between 2005 and 2016, were on average 32% higher than for veterans who did not use VHA services; and WHEREAS, According to the Defense Suicide Prevention Office (DPSO), Quarterly Suicide Report (QSR), 3rd Quarter, CY 2018, from CY 2016-2018, 797 Active Component service members, 575 Reserve Component service members and 346 National Guardsmen died by suicide; and WHEREAS, Veterans who have access to Veterans Health Administration (VHA) services have greater access to psychiatric care than veterans who do not have access to VHA services; and WHEREAS, Veterans who have been diagnosed with a mental health condition and have access to psychiatric care are more likely to be prescribed antidepressant drugs than veterans who do not have access to psychiatric care or VHA services; and WHEREAS, According to the VA, the suicide rate for male veterans between the ages of 18-34 is 451/100,000, and it is this veteran population at the greatest risk to die by suicide; and WHEREAS, A study comparing suicide rates between seven (7) different types of antidepressants, found that the suicide rate for the first ninety (90) days of treatment for six (6) of those seven (7) drugs studied, had suicide rates greater than 451/100,000, more than ten (10) times that of even the most at risk veteran population, male veterans between the ages of 18-34; and WHEREAS, According to the Congressional Research Service, there have been over 128,000 deployed veterans diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) between 2000-2014, and WHEREAS, According to a study by the Department of Defense (DoD), antidepressants were prescribed to 70-80% of service members that had been diagnosed with depression or PTSD; and WHEREAS, Veterans and service members have been prescribed antidepressant drugs that could take months and years to safely withdraw from, but may not have provided informed consent related to those withdrawal risks; and WHEREAS, Antidepressant drug makers are required by the Food & Drug Administration to include a "Black Box Warning" that antidepressants can increase the risk of suicidal thoughts and behaviors in young adults; and WHEREAS, In spite of the "Black Box Warnings" and other indicators listed above that identify the use of antidepressants could be causing veteran suicides and other physiological and psychological harms, the word "antidepressant" is not mentioned one time in the United States Department of Veterans Affairs 42 page "National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide, 2018-2028"; now, therefore, be it RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, August 27, 28, 29, 2019, That The American Legion urge the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Department of Defense (DoD) to investigate the role antidepressants have in veteran, active and reserve component service members and National Guard personnel suicides; and, be

it further RESOLVED, That the VA and DoD conduct a comprehensive “Antidepressant Harms Analysis” to investigate the harm antidepressants may cause, to include, but not be limited to: suicides, homicides, violent crimes, job loss, relationship failures, homelessness, lifelong disabilities, and depression or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD); and, be it further RESOLVED, That the VA and DoD investigate the possible harms caused to veterans, service members and members of the National Guard who were prescribed antidepressant drugs, but who may not have been provided information to allow them to provide informed consent for the need to taper off of these drugs over the course of many months and years, once they have begun treatment; and, be it further RESOLVED, That The American Legion research the role antidepressants have in veteran suicides, homicides, violent crimes, job loss, relationship failures, homelessness, and permanent disabilities from PTSD, and may instead be the side effects of antidepressant drugs exacerbating existing depression or PTSD; and, be it further RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge Congress to require the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense to conduct a comprehensive antidepressant harms analysis as it relates to the role of antidepressants in veteran and service member suicides, homicides, violent crimes, job loss, relationship failures, homelessness, and lifelong disabilities that may be the side effects or withdrawal effects of antidepressant drugs exacerbating pre-existing depression or PTSD; and, be it further RESOLVED, That the completed antidepressant harms analysis be provided to the president of the United States, the United States Congress and The American Legion to show the total number of acts of suicide, homicide and violent crimes that veterans and service members committed while they were actively taking or had recently withdrawn from an antidepressant drug, and should also show the number of Veterans Health Administration (VHA) using veterans and service members who have open prescriptions for antidepressants and have not recently seen a psychologist or counselor; and, be it further RESOLVED, That the report also detail veteran and service members information related to job loss, relationship failures, homelessness and disabilities that may be related to antidepressant drugs; and, be it finally RESOLVED, That every veteran or service member who has an open prescription for an antidepressant and has not recently been seen by a psychologist or counselor shall receive a wellness check from the VHA or DoD health-care providers to ensure the veteran or service member patient’s health and safety, and that the veteran or service member be reenrolled in counseling services at the patient’s request.

Resolution No. 58: Department Of Veterans Affairs Accreditation Of Individual Claims Agents Origin: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation WHEREAS, Title 38 United States Code 5901 stipulates that no individual may act as an agent or attorney in the preparation, presentation, or prosecution of any claim under laws administered by the secretary of veterans affairs unless such individual has been recognized for such purposes by the secretary; and WHEREAS, The secretary may recognize representatives of the American National Red Cross, The American Legion, the Disabled American Veterans, the United Spanish War Veterans, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and such other organizations as the secretary may approve, in the preparation, presentation, and prosecution of claims under laws administered by the secretary, as set forth in 38 C.F.R. 5902 (a) (1); and WHEREAS, Subsection (b)(1)(A) of 38 C.F.R. 5902 stipulates no representative of a recognized organization shall be recognized under this section unless the individual has certified to the secretary that no fee or compensation of any nature will be charged any individual for services rendered in connection with any claim; and WHEREAS, The secretary may suspend or exclude from further practice before the department any agent or attorney who has failed to comply with any other condition specified in regulations prescribed by the secretary under subsection (b) 38 C.F.R. 5904; and WHEREAS, The Office of General Counsel (OGC) reports that in 2018, a claims agent was almost 30 times more likely than an attorney and almost 20 times more

likely than a veterans service organization representative to be the subject of a complaint received by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and that the high number of complaints against claims agents demonstrates that veterans are significantly less satisfied with the representational services provided by claims agents than by any other type of representative; and WHEREAS, The VA OGC opined that it appears that over half of all accredited agents are not using their accreditation to provide representation before VA, which is the purpose of VA accreditation, but instead are using the accreditation to promote a separate business interest; now, therefore, be it RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, August 27, 28, 29, 2019, That Congress enact legislation to amend Title 38, to remove authority to accredit individuals as Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recognized claims agents for the purpose of preparing, representing or prosecuting any VA claims on behalf of veterans.

Resolution No. 18: Payment For Emergency Transportation To A Department Of Veterans Affairs Medical Facility Origin: Minnesota Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation WHEREAS, Veterans who encounter a medical emergency as defined by Public Law 106-117, Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits Act, can have their emergency ambulance transportation expenses paid by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in accordance with the requirements set forth Title 38 United States Code 1725 and corresponding regulations, 38 Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) 1000 through 1008; and WHEREAS, 38 C.F.R. 1003, covers payment or reimbursement for ambulance services, including air ambulance services, if the conditions set forth in 38 C.F.R. 1003 (a) through (e) are met; and WHEREAS, Subsection (a) of 38 C.F.R. 1003 requires that the emergency treatment be provided at a non-VA facility; and WHEREAS, Emergency transportation companies are required by law to transport patients to the nearest medical facility; which can result in VA denying payment of a veterans emergency ambulance transportation expenses if the veterans is transported to a VA medical facility and the veteran is not eligible for payment of emergency ambulance transportation expenses under VA's beneficiary travel rules set forth in Title 38 U.S.C. 111 and corresponding regulations 38 CFR Part 70, Subpart A Beneficiary Travel and Special Mode Transportation; and WHEREAS, A veteran whose emergency ambulance transportation would have been reimbursed by VA under Title 38 U.S.C. 1725 and VA's corresponding regulation 38 C.F.R. 1000 through 1008 if the veteran was taken to a non-VA facility; and; WHEREAS, VA is denying payment of the emergency ambulance transportation expenses because the veteran was transported to a VA medical facility, had no choice in the decision where they are transported, and does not qualify for payment under Title 38 U.S.C. 111 and VA's corresponding regulations 38 CFR Part 70, Subpart A Beneficiary Travel and Special Mode Transportation; now, therefore, be it RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, August 27, 28, 29, 2019, That Congress enact legislation to resolve the inequity between Title 38 U.S.C. 111 and Title 38 U.S.C. 1725 and allow the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to pay for a veteran's emergency transportation when the veteran is transported by an emergency transportation company to a VA medical facility, does not qualify for payment of emergency transportation expenses under Title 38 U.S.C. 111 but meets all of the payment requirements set forth under Title 38 U.S.C. 1725.

Resolution No. 28: Department Of Veterans Affairs To Provide A Wider Variety Of Sleep Apnea Equipment Origin: Illinois Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation (As Amended) WHEREAS, The American Legion is a national organization of wartime veterans who have dedicated themselves to the service of community, state, and nation; and WHEREAS, The

Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) hospitals and community based outpatient clinics provide various machines to treat sleep apnea including continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP), automatic positive airway pressure (APAP) and bi-level positive airway pressure (BiPAP) machines; and WHEREAS, The VA also provides replacements for masks, hoses, filters and straps; and WHEREAS, The cleaning of these devices is the responsibility of the veteran and they are instructed to use baby shampoo and water to clean the mask, hose, tank and filter; and WHEREAS, Many veterans may not do a good cleaning job of these machines which may cause the build-up of mold, germs and bacteria; and WHEREAS, There are several machines on the open market that can thoroughly and effortlessly sanitize these devices; now, therefore, be it RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, August 27, 28, 29, 2019, That The American Legion shall encourage the Department of Veterans Affairs to offer a wider variety of sleep apnea machines that can be easily sanitized for veterans.

Resolution No. 40: Gold Star Children Access To Base Exchange, Commissaries And MWR Facilities
Origin: Florida Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security WHEREAS, The American Legion (TAL) and the nation have a responsibility to ease the grief of children who have survived the loss of a parent that died in the performance of military service; and WHEREAS, A historic role of TAL has been to support the entire military "family," including widows and surviving children; and WHEREAS, The Headquarters, Defense Human Resources Activity, has informed TAL, that the current policy of the Department of Defense (DoD) is to end their access to Base Exchange, Commissary and Morale, Welfare and Recreation facilities upon the survivor's attaining an age of 21 to 23 years (DoD Manual 1000.13, Vol.1); and WHEREAS, The death of a military parent is a permanent loss to the surviving dependent, the current policy merely extends benefits temporarily; and WHEREAS, These benefits aiding the children of our fallen comrades will support the morale of active troops and support the military family; now, therefore, be it RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, August 27, 28, 29, 2019, That The American Legion shall sponsor and support efforts to ensure the Base Exchange, Commissary and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) access for all (Gold Star) children of service members who died on active military duty, regardless of age will not cease.

Resolution No. 22: Support The Immediate Refund Of All Improperly Received VA Home Loan Guaranty Funding Fees
Origin: Texas Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Employment & Education (As Amended) WHEREAS, The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) administers the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Home Loan Guaranty Program; and generally, veterans must pay a funding fee to the VA on the day the veteran borrower signs the final loan application; this fee offsets the costs of administering the VA Home Loan Guaranty; and WHEREAS, Veterans are exempt from paying the VA funding fee if they are entitled to receive VA disability compensation for service-connected disabilities; and WHEREAS, A 2019 Office of the Inspector General review audit estimates that approximately 72,900 veterans paid the funding fee at loan origination despite qualifying for the funding fee exemption; the range of funding fees paid were from a low average of \$4,483 and as high as \$19,470; and WHEREAS, An Office of the Inspector General review of the VA Home Loan Guaranty Program's funding fee procedures and policies estimates that between CY 2012 and CY 2017, the VA has not returned approximately 53,000 of the 72, 900 total exempt veterans their home loan funding fee refunds for charges totaling approximately \$189 million; in CY 2017 and 2018, the VA Home Loan Guaranty Program generated \$2.2 and \$2.0 billion respectively for the Department of

Treasury; and WHEREAS, Effective immediately the VBA's Loan Guaranty Service management should take immediate steps to establish policies and institute program-wide continuous improvement and controls to prevent future incorrect home loan funding fee charges; and WHEREAS, Effective immediately, the VBA's Loan Guaranty Service management should be accountable and transparent in their plans to refund all improperly received funding fees to exempt veterans; now, therefore, be it RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, August 27, 28, 29, 2019, That The American Legion supports the immediate refund of all improperly received Department of Veterans Affairs Home Loan Guaranty funding fees.

Resolution No. 55: Mandatory Use Of The Veterans First Contracting Program Origin: Convention Committee on Veterans Employment & Education Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Employment & Education WHEREAS, Assistance to veterans who have honorably served our country is a veterans benefit that dates back to the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944; and WHEREAS, Benefits to veterans have always included assistance in creating and operating veteran-owned small businesses; and WHEREAS, The Veterans First Contracting Program (Vets First) at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) was created to grow the veteran small business industrial base; and WHEREAS, VA has been hesitant in fulfilling the statutory intent of the Veterans First Contracting Program; and WHEREAS, VA might outsource supply chain contract administration tasks to large businesses or other federal agencies in order to work around Veterans First Contracting Program; and WHEREAS, VA's resistance to utilization of veteran small businesses led to low participation rates among veteran small businesses; now, therefore, be it RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, August 27, 28, 29, 2019, That The American Legion supports legislation requiring mandatory use of the Veterans First Contracting Program (Vets First) on all Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) contract actions, regardless of the entity (public or private) that fulfills the contractual terms; and, be it further RESOLVED, That if it is VA dollars, Vets First applies; and, be it finally RESOLVED, That The American Legion fully supports legislation requiring Vets First be applied to all contract actions, including micro-purchases.

Resolution No. 54: GI Bill Eligibility for Reserve and National Guard Service Origin: Convention Committee on Veterans Employment & Education Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Employment & Education (As Amended) WHEREAS, Reserve and National Guard service members may only attain eligibility for the Post-9/11 GI Bill through authorized active duty service; and WHEREAS, 38 USC §3311(b)(2)(A) affirms that armed services individuals are entitled to 100 percent GI Bill eligibility after "...discharge or release from active duty in the Armed Forces for a service-connected disability"; and WHEREAS, National Guard service members may while on deployment sustain injuries that trigger "Release from Active Duty" orders transferring them back to respective National Guard home stations, whereupon further review, said National Guard units may initiate "Line of Duty" investigations that result in medical retirement discharges issued with NGB Separation Form 22; and WHEREAS, Since this discharge is not technically release from active duty, said discharge is not entitled to 100 percent GI Bill entitlement; now, therefore, be it RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, August 27, 28, 29, 2019, That The American Legion supports legislative action to amend 38 USC §3311 to provide NGB 22-discharged service members commensurate Post-9/11 GI Bill eligibility with DD214-discharged National Guard service members.

Resolution No. 56: Appreciation To Host City Origin: Convention Committee on Internal Affairs
Submitted by: Convention Committee on Internal Affairs WHEREAS, The 101st National Convention has been held in Indianapolis, Indiana, August 27, 28 and 29, 2019; and WHEREAS, There has been a spirit of cooperation and friendship along with mutual helpfulness evidenced by the Legionnaires of Indiana, the officers of the convention corporation and the department, and by the officials and the people of Indianapolis, Indiana; now, therefore, be it RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, August 27, 28, 29, 2019, That we express our deep appreciation to Governor of Indiana Eric Holcomb; Mayor, City of Indianapolis, Joseph Hogsett; the state of Indiana and city of Indianapolis officials, Indiana, including the fire department, police department, and other public safety officials, the Department of Indiana and The American Legion National Convention Corporation of Indiana, Inc., and, be it finally RESOLVED, These officials and organizations built the moving force that provided for every necessity that made for a successful and enjoyable convention.

LEGION Act signed into law

The American Legion

JUL 30, 2019

In a significant legislative victory for The American Legion, President Trump signed a bill July 30 that declares the United States has been in a state of war since Dec. 7, 1941.

The American Legion sought the declaration as a way to honor approximately 1,600 U.S. servicemembers who were killed or wounded during previously undeclared periods of war.

The LEGION Act (Let Everyone Get Involved In Opportunities for National Service Act) also opens the door for approximately 6 million veterans to access American Legion programs and benefits for which they previously had not been eligible.

“Recognizing the service of these wartime veterans is the right thing to do and it is long overdue,” National Commander Brett Reistad said. “The families of those who were killed or wounded during these wartime acts should take pride in knowing that we recognize their sacrifice and service. Moreover, we are proud to welcome any of the six million living veterans from the previously unrecognized periods into our organization and call them ‘Legionnaires.’”

Now that the legislation has been signed, The American Legion’s eligibility criteria immediately changes from seven war eras to two: April 6, 1917, to Nov. 11, 1918, and Dec. 7, 1941 to a time later determined by the federal government. No other restrictions to American Legion membership are changed.

The law’s journey began on Feb. 14 when Sen. Kyrsten Sinema, D-Ariz., introduced S. 504, along with Sen. Thom Tillis, R-N.C. A companion measure, H.R. 1641, was introduced in the House by Reps. Lou Correa, D-Calif., and Ben Cline, R-Va.

Reistad expressed gratitude to the bipartisan members of Congress for passing the legislation.

“We are grateful that President Trump fully acknowledges the importance of The American Legion by signing the LEGION Act in the White House today – just one week after it passed the House of Representatives,” Reistad said. “In an era of partisan gridlock, Republicans and Democrats in Congress overwhelmingly recognized the importance of allowing thousands of honorable but previously ineligible veterans the right to join the largest and most influential veterans organization in the country.”

Reistad pointed out that existing American Legion membership applications are in the process of being updated but can still be used. “In the meantime, I recommend that prospective Legionnaires and recruiters write ‘LEGION Act’ in the eligibility date section of American Legion membership applications if they fall outside the previous war eras,” Reistad said. “The larger pool of veterans now eligible for The American Legion will also open their family members to eligibility in the Sons of the American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary as well.”

Illinois Resolution Submitted to National Convention

2019 Illinois Resolutions Submitted to National Convention					
NAT #	NATIONAL TITLE	REFERED TO COMMITTEE	IL #	ILLINOIS TITLE	ACTION
28	Department of Veterans Affairs to Provide a Wider Variety of Sleep Apnea Equipment	Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation	1	VA Offer Variety of Sleep Apnea Machines	APPROVED WITH AMENDMENTS
29	2 Levels of Compensation for Tinnitus	Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation	2	2 Levels of Compensation for Tinnitus	REJECTED
30	Designate Prisoners of War, Purple Heart and Medal of Honor Recipients as Priority Group 1	Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation	3	Prisoners of War, Purple Heart & Medal of Honor Medical Benefits	RECEIVED & RECORDED
31	Department of Veterans Affairs Choice Program and Routine Office Visits	Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation	4	No Pre-Approval for Routine Visits Under CHOICE Program	REJECTED
32	Veterans Burial/Plot Allowance Payment	Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation	6	Pay Burial Plot Allowance to Who Actually Paid Expenses	APPROVED
33	Department of Veterans Affairs Child Care Program	Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation	7	Pay for or Provide Child Care for Vets Travelling to and from VA	RECEIVED & RECORDED
34	Interment of War and Service Dogs in National Cemeteries	Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation	12	Service Dogs Interred in VA National Cemeteries	REJECTED
35	Dual Member Legion/Sons Cap	Internal Affairs	13	French Blue Crown on Dual Member Caps	REJECTED

It is my sad duty to report the death of a member of our Legislative Commission, Past Department Commander Hank Robards.

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Opposition to Recreational Marijuana

Medical Responses to Legalizing Marijuana

1. **American Academy of Pediatrics against legalizing marijuana —** *"American Academy of Pediatrics, report calls on doctors to help protect patients' developing brains and bodies from the health harms of marijuana amid increased legalization — 2017"*
2. **American Medical Association opposes legalizing marijuana —** *"Our AMA urges legislatures to delay initiating full legalization of any cannabis product until further research is completed on the public health, medical, economic and social consequences of use of cannabis and instead, support the expansion of such research."*
3. **American Society of Addiction Medicine is against legalizing marijuana —** *"ASAM does not support the legalization of marijuana and recommends that jurisdictions that have not acted to legalize marijuana be most cautious and not adopt a policy of legalization until more can be learned from the 'natural experiments' now underway in jurisdictions that have legalized marijuana."*
4. **American Heart Association warns against marijuana —** *"A minute of secondhand marijuana smoke may damage blood vessels, and younger marijuana users were twice as likely as not-users to experience a weakening of the heart muscle that occurs more commonly in older women."*
5. **American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry warns against marijuana —** *The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry warns "Marijuana-related policy changes, including legalization, may have significant unintended consequences for children and adolescents."*
6. **Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago does not support initiatives to legalize the use of marijuana for non-medical purposes by adults because of both the short-term and long-term risks for children and adolescents.**
7. **Illinois Society of Addiction Medicine does not recognize marijuana as a medicine —** *Their conclusion is that marijuana legalization would not be in the interest of public health*

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Groups Opposing Marijuana Legalization (Recreational Marijuana)

1. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People – NAACP
2. Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police – (IACP)
3. Illinois Drug Enforcement Officers Association – IDEOA
4. Illinois Sheriff's Association
5. Illinois Catholic Bishops — Catholic Conference of Illinois
6. Illinois Farm Bureau
7. Concerned Christian Americans
8. Chicago Crime Commission
9. School Resource Officers Association
10. Catalyst – Stevenson High School, Lincolnshire, IL
11. Illinois Church Action on Alcohol and Addiction Problems – ILCAAAP
12. Illinois Family Institute
13. Educating Voices
14. Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks
15. Concerned Women of America Legislative Action
16. Trucking Industry

The IL American Legions name has been added to the list opposing legalizing marijuana.