

## Support today's veterans & military

Help us ensure that an adequate VA system will be there for the millions of current and future veterans.

When you visit your congressional representatives, please stress that these are the issues we will be fighting for in the 114th Congress. These goals reflect the resolutions passed and supported by the men and women of the VFW and our Auxiliaries. To find out who your congressional representatives are, visit the VFW website at [www.vfw.org](http://www.vfw.org) and click on the "VFW in D.C." Action Corps link.

## Play a role in the process

Ensure that these Priority Goals are enacted. Sign up today for the VFW's Action Corps Weekly e-newsletter at [www.vfw.org/weekly](http://www.vfw.org/weekly).



# — 2016 — Priority Goals

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# — 2016 — Priority Goals



## Budget

- End budget sequestration.
- Adjust budget caps to reflect the growing demand on DOD and VA services.
- Provide sufficient funding for all VA budget accounts.

## Accountability

- Pass meaningful accountability legislation.
- Develop standardized staffing models and hiring practices throughout VA.
- Design Performance Measures that capture VA employees' quality of work not just quantity.

## Health Care

- Expand timely access to direct VA health care through appropriate staffing models for each health care specialty, patient density thresholds for each VA medical facility, and a modular capital infrastructure that enables VA to adjust to changes in the veteran population.
- Reform and improve VA's Care in the Community process to ensure veterans have the choice to receive timely and seamless access to high-quality care in their communities when VA health care is not readily available. However, VA must remain the guarantor and coordinator of health care for all enrolled veterans.
- Consolidate all current non-VA care models into a single model.
- Modernize VA's scheduling system to ensure VA's scheduling process is seamless, veteran centric, and not susceptible to data manipulation.
- Expand the current caregiver benefits to those who care for severely injured, ill, and wounded veterans of all eras.
- Strengthen VA and DOD mental health programs to ensure service members and veterans who suffer from mental health conditions have access to robust mental health care services.
- Expand women's health care services to all VA medical centers to ensure the growing number of women veterans have access to gender-specific services.
- Authorize VA to receive reimbursement for non-service connected health care provided to

Medicare beneficiaries.

- Ensure veterans who were exposed to toxic substances receive care and benefits for all associated health conditions.
- Properly fund homeless veterans programs to ensure the Administration is able to meet its goal of ending veterans' homelessness.
- Increase funding for VA research on the effects of Traumatic Brain Injury, how combat related injuries affect men and women veterans, and whether descendants of veterans who were exposed to toxic substances suffer from adverse health conditions associated with such exposures.

## Compensation and Benefits

- Fully fund the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) so that they can sustain the necessary workforce and IT systems to ensure claims are completed in an accurate and timely manner.
- Hold VBA accountable for the backlog of all claims and appeals, not just the compensation and pension claims that they define as their "workload."
- Ensure that VA exercise its authority to accept private medical evidence when processing disability compensation claims.
- Provide veterans the option to receive more timely appeal decisions by instituting the Fully Developed Appeals initiative.
- Demand that VA reverse its current policy that prevents veterans from submitting informal claims for benefits.
- Insist that VA improve its notification letter so veterans can understand the evidence used in making their rating decision.

## Transition Assistance

- Conduct discharge reviews for veterans who suffer from PTSD/TBI and who were discharged under Other Than Honorable conditions.
- Congress must properly fund homeless veterans programs to ensure VA can reach its goal of ending veteran homelessness.
- Improve vocational rehabilitation and employment by removing the 12-year delimiting period and tracking veterans' employment placement for at least 12 months post job placement.
- Ensure the Transition Assistance Program curricula

meets the needs of service members and all veterans at all phases of the transition process.

## Education and Employment

- Protect the integrity and future sustainability of veterans' education benefits.
- Invest in developing small business opportunities for veterans.
- Ensure service members receive civilian credentials or academic credit for the professional training they receive during service.
- Insist that the federal government meets its veteran hiring and contracting obligation.

## Defense/Homeland Security

- Fully support U.S. troops and their mission to fight the war on terrorism, as well as to protect our nation's citizens and interests around the world.
- Halt the development and/or proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.
- Fully fund and deploy a U.S. missile defense system.
- Secure America's borders.

## Military Quality of Life

- Ensure DOD maintains a quality and comprehensive benefits and retirement package that is the backbone to a quality all-volunteer force.
- Preserve the integrity of TRICARE to ensure service members and their families have timely access to high-quality health care.
- Protect service members' and their family members' on-base quality of life programs.
- Pass full concurrent receipt of military retirement pay and VA disability compensation.
- Eliminate the SBP/DIC offset for surviving military retiree spouses.

## POW/MIA

- Achieve the fullest possible accounting of U.S. military personnel missing from all wars.
- Ensure Congress fully funds the POW/MIA Accounting mission.
- Insist the U.S. government keeps POW/MIA recovery a national priority.