

VFW, SVA Now Accepting 2016 Legislative Fellowship Applications

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WASHINGTON — The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. and Student Veterans of America (SVA) are seeking student veteran candidates to participate in the 2016 VFW-SVA Legislative Fellowship program. The fellowship will once again offer 10 selected student veterans the unique opportunity to meet face-to-face with their legislators next spring as part of the VFW National Legislative Conference, as well as additional academic opportunities for fellows to substantively address veterans' issues in their communities. Student veterans interested in applying for the 2016 VFW-SVA Legislative Fellowship must complete an application package that includes an essay proposal on one of four specific legislative issues. The proposal should include a discussion of why the issue is important to the veterans' community, and how the fellowship candidate plans to address the issue through community-based advocacy. Selected fellows will then be flown to Washington, D.C., to storm Capitol Hill alongside fellow veterans' advocates as part of the 2016 VFW Legislative Conference, Feb. 28-March 3.

"The VFW is the nation's strongest veterans' advocate, which is a legacy we are looking to extend to a new generation of student veteran leaders," said VFW National Commander John A. Biedrzycki Jr., a retired high school history teacher who earned bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Pittsburgh after serving in the Army from 1967-1970. "These annual fellowships provide 10 hard-charging student veterans the opportunity to share their passions and concerns on veterans' issues directly with our nation's lawmakers, which will help make a difference not only for their generation but for those who will follow."

"SVA recognizes the assets and potential that student veterans bring to the table at all levels of the policy discussion," said Will Hubbard, SVA Vice President of Government Affairs.

"We look forward to continuing our strong relationship with the VFW, with the focus of informing members of Congress on the major successes and opportunities for student veterans, while demonstrating the value and return on investment of the G.I. Bill."

VFW-SVA Legislative Fellowship opportunities are open to currently-enrolled student veterans at colleges and universities with active SVA chapters. Candidates must also satisfy VFW membership criteria, which can be [found here](#). For the application essay proposal, applicants must select one of the following veterans' issues to write about:

- The effects of budget sequestration on military and veteran programs;

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- Challenges in the transition from military to civilian life;
- Fostering veteran success in higher education; or
- Access and accountability in delivering veterans' health care.

All applications must be submitted by close-of-business Oct. 30, 2015. Selected fellows will be notified before Thanksgiving, with a formal announcement of the fellowship class at the SVA National Conference in Orlando, Fla. For full details about the fellowship and to apply, visit: www.vfw.org/StudentFellowship.

The VFW-SVA Legislative Fellowship is another example of the strong collaboration between VFW and SVA that resulted from a memorandum of understanding signed by the two organizations at the SVA National Conference in January 2013. To date, the collaboration has resulted in a variety of initiatives such as commissioning VFW Student Veteran Liaisons in every state, establishing the 1 Student Veteran education benefits assistance program, and successfully pushing for in-state tuition for veterans via the 2013 #InState4Vets campaign.

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ABOUT THE VFW: The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. is a nonprofit veterans service organization comprised of eligible veterans and military service members from the active, Guard and Reserve forces. Founded in 1899 and chartered by Congress in 1936, the VFW is the nation's largest organization of war veterans and its oldest major veterans organization. With more than 1.7 million VFW and Auxiliary members located in more than 6,800 Posts worldwide, "*NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.*" The VFW and its Auxiliaries are dedicated to veterans' service, legislative advocacy, and military and community service programs. For more information or to join, visit our website at www.vfw.org.

About Student Veterans of America: SVA is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit coalition of 1,200-plus student veteran organizations representing 440,000 veterans in higher education. SVA's mission is to provide military veterans with the resources, support and advocacy to ease veteran and active military students' transition into higher education and leverage military experience to launch successful careers in high-demand fields. For more information, visit us at www.studentveterans.org and follow us on Twitter [@studentvets](https://twitter.com/studentvets).

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