

111th Congress

VFW-supported legislative accomplishments that became law

P.L. 111-81, Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act of 2009

Advanced Appropriations for VA Health Care

- Provides funding for VA medical accounts a year in advance beginning with FY2011.
- Guarantees funding is available on time every year with adjustments to account for inflation and enrollment increases.
- Provides Congress annual information on estimates of appropriations needed for VA budget to include Medical Services, Medical Support and Compliance and Medical Facilities Accounts.
- Directs the VA Secretary to report annually to Congress on the sufficiency of VA resources for the preceding fiscal year with respect to the provision of medical care, including estimates of the workload and demand data for that fiscal year.

P.L. 111-82, Authorize Major Medical Facility Leases for FY 2010

- Authorizes VA to carry out major medical facility leases in FY2010 in specified locations in Alabama, California, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Texas.
- Authorizes appropriations for such leases.

P.L. 111-84, FY 2010 National Defense Authorization Act

- Promises a hold on any TRICARE fee increases.
- Authorizes a 3.4% pay raise for active duty, Guard and Reserve members.
- Allows premium-based TRICARE coverage for "gray area" Reserve retirees who are under age 60.
- Authorizes special compensation on behalf of caregivers of severely wounded warriors while on active duty.
- Requires a medical examination before administrative separations of members affected by traumatic brain injury or PTSD.
- Protects absentee voting rights for military members and families.
- Expands active-duty TRICARE eligibility for activating Guard/Reserve members and their families.
- Directs DOD to establish a task force on care, management and transition of recovering wounded, ill and injured servicemembers.

P.L. 111-97, Military Spouses Residency Relief Act

- Amends the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to allow a military spouse the option to claim one state of domicile, regardless of where they move.
- Removes the need for military spouses to update drivers' licenses, filing tax returns for multiple states, and changing vehicle and voter registrations with each active duty assignment.
- Suspends land rights residency requirements for spouses accompanying servicemembers serving under military orders.

P.L. 111-137, Amends title 38, United States Code, to expand veteran eligibility for reimbursement by VA for emergency treatment in a non VA facility

- Reimburses a veteran for the cost of emergency care provided outside a VA facility.

P.L. 111-163, Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010

- Directs VA to establish a program of comprehensive assistance for family caregivers of veterans.
- Provides instruction, training and ongoing technical support for care services; including mental health services, respite care and a monthly stipend.
- Authorizes VA to provide medical care for primary provider (caregiver).
- Makes caregiver eligible for VA counseling and mental health services.
- Reimburses caregivers for travel expenses incurred in connection with treatment of veterans.
- Requires VA to report to Congress any barriers to care for women veterans.
- Directs VA to provide training, certification and continuing medical education for mental health professionals who provide care to veterans suffering from MST and PTSD.
- Authorizes VA to furnish care to newborn child of a women veteran receiving maternity care services at VA facilities.
- Conducts a two-year pilot program on feasibility of providing child care for veterans receiving regular health care services at VA.
- Expands care in rural areas.
- Authorizes VA to pay travel expenses for veterans receiving treatment at VA facilities at 41.5 cents a mile.
- Prohibits catastrophically disabled veterans from making any copayment for care in conjunction with VA medical services.
- Increases grants for supportive services for homeless veteran programs

P.L. 111-246, to enable State homes to furnish nursing home care to parents any of whose children died while serving in the Armed Forces.

- Authorizes VA to permit a state home to provide nursing home care to parents of children who died while serving in the Armed Forces.

P.L. 111-275, Veterans Benefits Act of 2010

- Extends through June 30, 2013, the authority for VA work-study as part of the veterans' educational assistance program.
- Authorizes DOL grant program that provides dedicated services for homeless women veterans and homeless veterans with children. Requires the grants to be used to provide job training, counseling, placement services, and child care services to help reintegrate veterans into the labor force.
- Increases from \$20,000 to \$30,000, the maximum authorized amount of VA supplemental insurance for totally disabled veterans.
- Increases the maximum amount under Veterans' Mortgage Life Insurance from \$90,000 to \$150,000 and, up to \$200,000 after January 2012.
- Increases from \$300 to \$700 burial and funeral expenses of a veteran who dies in a VA hospital, nursing home, or domiciliary care facility; and increases the plot allowance to \$700 for a veteran eligible for burial in a national cemetery.
- Authorizes higher levels of veterans' disability compensation for veterans who experience difficulty using prostheses after the loss of hands, arms, or legs and those in need of aid and attendance from residuals of traumatic brain injury.
- Allows VA to provide automobile and adaptive equipment assistance to disabled veterans and veterans with severe burn injuries.
- Increases from \$11,000 to \$18,900 automobile and other adaptive equipment to accommodate disabilities. Requires the amount to be adjusted annually by the percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index.
- Amends the Veterans Benefits Act of 2003 by extending through 2012, VA's authority to provide medical disability evaluations by contract physicians.
- Amends the Veterans Benefits, Health Care, and Information Technology Act of 2006 to increase the amounts authorized for major medical facility projects at VA medical centers in New Orleans, Louisiana, and Long Beach, California.

P.L. 111-339, a bill to require reports on the management of Arlington National Cemetery

- Directs the Secretary of the Army to submit to Congress (Defense, Homeland Security, and VA committees) an accounting of the gravesites at Arlington National Cemetery, including, details regarding correctly identified, labeled, and occupied plots.
- Requires the Comptroller General to report to such committees on the management and oversight of burial operations contracts at Arlington Cemetery.

P.L. 111-346, Helping Heroes Keep Their Homes Act

- Amends the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008 to extend through December 31, 2012, protection for servicemembers against mortgage foreclosure, for the period of nine months.

P.L. 111-377, Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Improvements Act of 2010

- Includes National Guard and Reserve components under the definition of "active duty" for purposes of eligibility under the post-9/11 veterans' educational assistance program (VEAP). Makes change retroactive as of August 1, 2009.
- Provides the monthly living allowance for more than half-time study in pursuit of a degree; a program of education in a foreign country; and more than half-time study solely by distance learning.
- Provides an annual rate of assistance for programs of education pursued while on active duty, at a net cost for in state tuition and fees equal to \$17,500.
- Allows a lump-sum quarterly payment for books, supplies, equipment, and associated educational costs, effective as of October 1, 2011.
- Provides for the payment for programs other than degree programs, including for programs pursued on a half-time basis or less, resident training, distance learning, apprenticeships or other on-job training, flight training, or correspondence.
- Authorizes in most cases the payment of a monthly stipend similar to that paid to individuals enrolled in degree programs.
- Requires monthly housing stipends payable during an academic year to be determined using rates for Basic Housing.
- Allows education payments for multiple career licensing or certification tests.
- Provides an alternate subsistence allowance amount for veterans entitled to both VEAP assistance and VA vocational training and rehabilitation due to service-connected disabilities.
- Reduces from eight to four weeks during any year the time between educational programs enrollment periods during which VA interval payments are authorized.