

**2019  
PRIORITY  
GOALS**



## Support today's veterans and military

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

When you visit your congressional representatives, please stress these are the issues we will be fighting for in the 116th Congress. These goals reflect the resolutions passed and supported by the men and women of the VFW and its Auxiliary. To find out who your congressional representatives are, visit [vfw.org/actioncorps](http://vfw.org/actioncorps).

## 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 [vfw.org/actioncorps](http://vfw.org/actioncorps).



*Delivering the promise to our  
veterans, service members,  
and their families.*

### VFW Washington Office

200 Maryland Ave., N.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20002  
Tel: 202.543.2239  
Fax: 202.543.0961

### VFW National Headquarters

406 W. 34th Street  
Kansas City, MO 64111  
816.756.3390  
[vfw.org](http://vfw.org)



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## BUDGET

**To fully fund veterans and defense programs, Congress must:**

- ✓ Reform the dysfunctional federal budget process and end sequestration.
- ✓ Authorize VA to receive reimbursements from TRICARE and Medicare.
- ✓ Ensure the POW/MIA Accounting mission is fully funded.
- ✓ Never reduce one veteran's benefits to pay for another.

## HEALTH CARE

**To ensure service members and veterans receive timely access to high-quality health care without increasing cost shares, Congress, VA and DOD must:**

- ✓ Properly implement the VA Mission Act of 2018.
- ✓ Reduce the number of service members and veterans who die by suicide.
- ✓ Preserve the integrity of TRICARE.
- ✓ Modernize VA and DOD health IT systems.
- ✓ Strengthen health care and research for mental health and traumatic brain injuries (TBI).
- ✓ Expand gender-specific programs and competencies.
- ✓ Research and effectively treat health conditions associated with toxic exposures.
- ✓ Prevent the increase of pharmaceutical copayments and remove copayment requirements for preventative medicines.
- ✓ Research the efficacy of medical cannabis.
- ✓ Expand telehealth services.
- ✓ Make nursing home eligibility part of the VA health benefits package.
- ✓ Keep community care reimbursement rates competitive with private health insurance.

## DISABILITY ASSISTANCE & MEMORIAL AFFAIRS

**To ensure veterans and their dependents have timely access to earned benefits, Congress and VA must:**

- ✓ Properly implement the modernized appeals process.
- ✓ Consider treatment of presumptive conditions as a claim for disability compensation.
- ✓ Establish presumptive disability compensation benefits for hearing loss, tinnitus, TBI and for health conditions associated with toxic exposures.
- ✓ Increase burial allowances to account for inflation and include spouses' information on all headstones.
- ✓ Authorize more than one adaptive automotive grant for disabled veterans.
- ✓ Reform the Gulf War Illness Disability Benefits Questionnaire.
- ✓ Transfer control of the Mare Island Naval Cemetery to the NCA.
- ✓ Update regulations and laws governing claims to account for digital claims processing.
- ✓ Expand VA wartime benefits to early Vietnam veterans.

## EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT & TRANSITION ASSISTANCE

**To ensure veterans succeed after leaving military service, they must have access to:**

- ✓ High-quality and sustainable education benefits.
- ✓ Strong employment and training programs.
- ✓ Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment services throughout their lifetime.
- ✓ Small business development opportunities.
- ✓ Civilian credentials or academic credit for military training.
- ✓ Hiring preferences in the civil service and with large government contractors.
- ✓ National veterans treatment court advocates.
- ✓ Education and training in new and expanding career fields.
- ✓ Timely and improved transition assistance including access to programs for veterans after they leave military service.

- ✓ Affordable housing and wraparound services to avoid homelessness.
- ✓ Equitable education benefits for dependents regardless of where they live.
- ✓ Improved character of discharge review and appeals procedures.

## MILITARY QUALITY OF LIFE

**To maintain a quality, comprehensive benefits and retirement package that is the backbone for an all-volunteer force, Congress and DOD must:**

- ✓ Increase military base pay comparability with private sector wages.
- ✓ Protect and improve on-base quality of life programs.
- ✓ Ensure that military housing is safe and free of toxic substances.
- ✓ End the military retirement pay and VA disability compensation offset.
- ✓ Eliminate the Survivor Benefit Plan/Dependency and Indemnity Compensation offset.
- ✓ Increase the government's Thrift Savings Plan contribution.
- ✓ Eliminate sexual assaults in the military.
- ✓ Establish the Armed Forces University.
- ✓ Improve stability and support for military families.

## NATIONAL SECURITY, FOREIGN AFFAIRS & POW/MIA

**To fully support U.S. troops and their mission to fight the war on terrorism and protect our nation's citizens and interests around the world, Congress, DOD and DHS must:**

- ✓ Expand partnerships with host nations and private/public organizations to achieve the fullest possible accounting of U.S. military personnel missing from all wars.
- ✓ Secure America's borders.
- ✓ Preserve the all-volunteer force.
- ✓ Maintain a substantial military presence in the Republic of Korea.