

# VFW Calls on Sen. Tommy Tuberville to Lift Hold on Military Promotions

## VFW sends letter to Senator, while VFW National Commander admonishes “this is not the way Congress should do business”

Sep 18, 2023

**WASHINGTON** – [In a letter sent Sept. 18](#), the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) is calling on Alabama Sen. Tommy Tuberville to lift his hold on the routine promotion of military general and flag officers.

“The line in the sand for the VFW is simple: Political disputes must be handled by politicians – not within the ranks of the all-volunteer force. Sen. Tuberville’s hold on these routine promotions has consequences up and down the active-duty force that will take years to fix,” said VFW Commander-in-Chief Duane Sarmiento. “By sending this letter, the VFW is making our voice very clear – this is not the way Congress should do business.”

As of today, the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps no longer have confirmed heads of their services, with hundreds of other routine uniformed promotions stalled behind them, due to Sen. Tuberville’s refusal to allow confirmations to proceed without unnecessary bureaucratic procedures. VFW members have shared their own experiences and frustrations with how the force is being affected, to include key leaders and staff holding multiple collateral positions, stalled decision-making in critical areas, as well as delayed family and staff relocations.

“One of the VFW’s top national security priorities is preserving the all-volunteer force,” said VFW Washington Office Executive Director Ryan Gallucci in the letter. “At a time of military recruiting challenges, the instability caused by this hold will have far-reaching consequences for the brave Americans who volunteer to serve in today’s military and those who may consider future military service.”

This is not the first letter sent by the VFW on the issue. In July, a [letter](#) demanding the confirmation of critical military positions was sent to Senate Majority Leader Chuck

### NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

406 W. 34th Street  
Kansas City, MO 64111  
Office 816.756.3390  
Fax 816.968.1157

### WASHINGTON OFFICE

200 Maryland Ave., N.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20002  
Office 202.543.2239  
Fax 202.543.6719

[info@vfw.org](mailto:info@vfw.org)  
[www.vfw.org](http://www.vfw.org)

Schumer and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell. Later that same month, VFW members voted at the 2023 VFW National Convention in Phoenix, Ariz., that preserving the all-volunteer force was the 124-year-old organization's top national security priority.

"The VFW called on the Senate to resolve this matter earlier this summer and now we call on you directly to end this hold before we set the very dangerous precedent of harming American service members as leverage in Washington political battles," said Gallucci.

In a survey conducted Sept. 7 – 9, VFW members overwhelmingly voiced that political civilian leaders should be held accountable for disagreements over policy, that politicians should not be able to harm the troops over political disagreements, and that political decisions that harm the troops will affect the decisions of VFW members in upcoming elections. Last week, VFW members took to Capitol Hill, sharing the results of the survey with their legislators, many of whom echoed their concerns over the hold having a dire impact on national security.

"Critics have said our survey seemed loaded, but to the VFW, the choice is straightforward: Can politicians use uniformed service members and military families as leverage in political disputes? In the context of the all-volunteer force, the VFW says no," said Gallucci when asked about the survey. "To promote the effective civilian control of our military, our nation has been very deliberate to frame the all-volunteer military as a non-partisan and trusted institution that transcends party politics."

VFW members have also expressed their worries Sen. Tuberville's hold on the confirmation process will not only affect those whose promotions are currently stalled, but also compel emerging leaders to leave the military for more suitable civilian opportunities.

"It's easy to look at this issue and think that only generals are affected, but the military doesn't just hire generals off the street," said Sarmiento. "Generals start at the bottom and choose to grow in the military, just like everyone else who wears the uniform. If you're a major, a captain, or an ensign today, are you sticking around to see if this happens to you to?"

The survey was completed by more than 7,000 VFW members representing every state and overseas territory where VFW members reside. Complete survey results are:

- Who should be held accountable for disagreements over policies in Washington, D.C.?  
Political Civilian Leaders: 87% Uniformed Service Members: 13%
- Do you believe politicians should be able to harm the troops over political disagreements? No: 91% Yes: 9%
- Will political decisions that harm the troops affect your decisions in upcoming elections? Yes: 90% No: 10%

“The world is still a dangerous place and brave Americans remain stationed around the world, intent on keeping these dangers far from our shores. This is why the VFW is calling on you to stop this dangerous game,” Gallucci concluded in the letter. “Games may belong on the football field, but not in halls of the U.S. Senate.”