

Resolution No. 201

NATIONAL VFW VETERAN CREATIVE WRITING AWARD

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States was founded to support veterans in all aspects of their lives and to ensure their voices, experiences, and service are honored and preserved; and

WHEREAS, the VFW motto No One Does More for Veterans calls upon the organization to seek meaningful ways to support veterans beyond traditional advocacy and assistance programs; and

WHEREAS, creative writing has long served as a constructive outlet for veterans and service members to process experiences and communicate stories that may otherwise go unheard; and

WHEREAS, extending eligibility beyond VFW membership to all veterans and current service members demonstrates the VFW commitment to serving all who have worn the uniform; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, establish a National VFW Veteran Creative Writing Award open to all veterans and current service members; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that each submission must include acceptable proof of military service and a signed non exclusive release permitting publication while ownership remains with the author; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW National Headquarters administer this award and may develop administrative procedures consistent with the eligibility requirements, submission criteria, and documentation standards set forth herein.

Submitted by Department of Oklahoma
To Committee on FINANCE & INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

REJECTED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 202
NATIONAL VFW VETERAN POETRY AWARD

WHEREAS, the VFW supports veteran voices and creative expression; and

WHEREAS, poetry provides a proven outlet for reflection and healing;
now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States,
establish a National VFW Veteran Poetry Award; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that submissions include proof of service and a non
exclusive publication release; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW National Headquarters administer
this award and may develop administrative procedures consistent with the eligibility
requirements, submission criteria, and documentation standards set forth herein.

Submitted by Department of Oklahoma
To Committee on FINANCE & INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

REJECTED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the
United States.

Resolution No. 203

NATIONAL VFW VETERAN ILLUSTRATED ART AWARD

WHEREAS, visual art provides veterans an expressive and healing medium; and

WHEREAS, recognizing veteran artists aligns with the VFW mission; now,
therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States,
establish a National VFW Veteran Illustrated Art Award; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that submissions include proof of service and a non
exclusive display release; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW National Headquarters administer
this award and may develop administrative procedures consistent with the eligibility
requirements, submission criteria, and documentation standards set forth herein.

Submitted by Department of Oklahoma
To Committee on FINANCE & INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

REJECTED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the
United States.

Resolution No. 204

VFW OUTSTANDING MILITARY LEADER AWARD

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States has long stood as the nation's preeminent combat veterans organization, leading the charge in advocacy for veterans, service members, and their families; and

WHEREAS, leadership at every level of military service has a direct and lasting impact on the morale, readiness, welfare, and lives of those they lead; and

WHEREAS, effective military leadership is not defined by rank or the number of personnel led, but by the character, integrity, mentorship, and positive influence a leader has on those entrusted to their care; and

WHEREAS, many outstanding leaders currently serving in the Active Duty, Reserve, and National Guard components exemplify ethical leadership and dedication to the well being and future success of their service members; and

WHEREAS, recognizing leadership during active service reinforces accountability, professionalism, and compassion within the Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, as an organization founded and led by combat veterans, the VFW is uniquely positioned to honor those who are currently leading service members in uniform; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, establish the VFW Outstanding Military Leader Award open to current Active Duty, Reserve, and National Guard service members; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that eligibility for this award includes leaders at any level of responsibility, with selection based on demonstrated impact on morale, mentorship, ethical leadership, and mission accomplishment rather than rank or size of command; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that nominations may be submitted by subordinates, leaders within the nominee's chain of command, chaplains, or other recognized leaders within the nominee's unit or command; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW National Headquarters administer this award and may develop administrative procedures consistent with the eligibility requirements, submission criteria, and documentation standards set forth herein.

Submitted by Department of Oklahoma
To Committee on FINANCE & INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

REJECTED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 205

PROTECTION OF VETERAN PRIVACY & OPERATIONAL SECURITY IN THIRD-PARTY DIGITAL PLATFORMS

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) is a trusted Congressionally-chartered organization dedicated to protecting the interests, well-being, and security of veterans, service members, and their families; and

WHEREAS, veterans frequently place significant trust in resources, programs, links, and organizations promoted through official VFW communication channels, affiliated platforms, or endorsed community spaces; and

WHEREAS, certain third-party veteran networking, social connection, military memory, and service-history platforms request, encourage, or facilitate the sharing of extensive personal and military-related information, including but not limited to service dates, duty stations, units, military occupational specialties, photographs, medals, awards, personal reflections, family relationships, operational experiences, military documents, and service-related narratives; and

WHEREAS, while veteran connection and camaraderie are critically important, the aggregation of personal and military-related information presents legitimate privacy, operational security (OPSEC), identity theft, foreign intelligence exploitation, social engineering, impersonation, and data security concerns; and

WHEREAS, Veterans experiencing loneliness, isolation, grief, trauma, cognitive decline, or a desire for reconnection may be particularly vulnerable to oversharing sensitive personal or military information in pursuit of community and companionship; and

WHEREAS, the appearance of a third-party platform within official or affiliated VFW communication channels may reasonably create the impression among veterans that such platforms have undergone formal privacy, cybersecurity, veteran-protection, and operational security review or endorsement by the Veterans of Foreign Wars; and

WHEREAS, the VFW has an obligation to exercise due diligence regarding organizations, platforms, or resources presented to veterans under the appearance of official trust or implied endorsement; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, refrains from formally endorsing, promoting, or advertising third-party veteran networking or military-history data collection platforms unless such entities have undergone meaningful review regarding:

1. Veteran privacy protections;
2. Data collection, sharing, retention, and deletion policies;
3. Cybersecurity safeguards;
4. Transparency regarding third-party information sharing;
5. Operational security risks associated with aggregated service-related information; and
6. Protections for vulnerable veteran populations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars encourage educational guidance for members regarding online operational security (OPSEC), digital privacy awareness, oversharing risks, and responsible disclosure of military service information on third-party platforms; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that until such review standards are established, the Veterans of Foreign Wars should avoid the appearance of official endorsement of any third-party veteran data aggregation or networking platform whose privacy, security, and veteran-protection practices have not been independently evaluated.

Submitted by Department of Georgia
To Committee on FINANCE & INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

REJECTED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 206

ESTABLISH A NATIONAL VFW SUICIDE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION PROGRAM

WHEREAS, suicide among veterans remains one of the leading causes of preventable death, impacting families, friends and communities across the nation; and

WHEREAS, research indicates that education, outreach and early intervention can significantly reduce suicide rates; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) is uniquely positioned to advocate for and implement initiatives that address the critical issue of suicide prevention among veterans, service members, and their families; and

WHEREAS, while the VFW currently supports various mental health initiatives, an organized, comprehensive national program would enhance the organization's ability to educate, provide resources, and offer direct support to those in crisis; and

WHEREAS, establishing a National VFW Suicide Awareness and Prevention Program would formalize these efforts, ensuring sustained and strategic action in addressing veteran suicide; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, establishes a National VFW Suicide Awareness and Prevention Program to strengthen and unify existing VFW suicide prevention initiatives; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this program shall include:

1. A National Suicide Prevention Task Force, comprised of VFW members, mental health professionals, and other key stakeholders, tasked with advising and guiding VFW policy and program initiatives.
2. Standardized training for VFW members and leadership in suicide prevention, crisis intervention and mental health awareness.
3. Partnerships with mental health professionals, VA services and community healthcare providers to ensure comprehensive access to resources for veterans and their families.
4. An outreach program that proactively engages veterans at risk through peer support networks, Post-level educational sessions and digital outreach efforts.
5. A dedicated funding strategy ensuring sustainability through existing VFW resources, grant opportunities and public private partnerships.

6. Annual assessment and reporting requirements, ensuring the effectiveness of the program and providing recommendations for continuous improvement; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the National Commander-in-Chief and the National Director of Programs shall oversee the implementation and ongoing evaluation of this program, making necessary adjustments to better serve VFW members and the veteran community; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW shall advocate for expanded suicide prevention resources, working alongside government agencies, nonprofit organizations and other stakeholders to strengthen national and local suicide prevention efforts.

Submitted by Department of Arizona
To Committee on FINANCE & INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

REJECTED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 207

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS MODERN ELIGIBILITY AND REMOTE SERVICE ACT (VFW MERit) ACT

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) was founded in 1899 to serve and advocate for veterans who placed themselves in harm's way on foreign soil, in overseas expeditions, and in hostile waters, and has historically focused on veterans whose service has been recognized by a campaign medal based on service and physical presence in foreign wars, insurrections, or expeditions; and

WHEREAS, the Congressional Charter of the VFW, codified in Title 36, United States Code, Chapter 2301, together with Article I – Members, Section 101 – Eligibility, of the VFW National Bylaws, currently restricts membership primarily to individuals whose qualifying service is defined by physical presence in a foreign theater, hostile waters, or an overseas expedition, or by specific campaign medal or hostile-fire criteria; and

WHEREAS, the 21st-century paradigm of warfare has evolved beyond physical geography, introducing remote and over-the-horizon combat operations—including unmanned aerial systems (UAS) and remotely piloted aircraft (RPA), cyber warfare, space and network operations, and persistent intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR)—through which operators actively engage, disrupt, and neutralize foreign adversaries from remote installations often thousands of miles from the point of impact; and

WHEREAS, retaining a 20th-century definition of geography in a 21st-century paradigm of warfare is unsustainable, and if the VFW wishes to remain the premier voice for those who fight America's wars, its Congressional Charter must evolve to recognize that in modern warfare the "front line" is no longer a place—it is a network; and

WHEREAS, under a functional theater-of-action metric, if a cyber operator actively breaches an adversary's grid in a hostile theater, or a drone operator controls airspace over a conflict zone, they are operationally in that foreign war regardless of their physical distance from the point of impact, and their service is integral to the conduct of hostilities; and

WHEREAS, these remote, cyber, and over-the-horizon Service Members therefore operate directly within the theater of action in a functional sense, face targeted retaliation in the cyber, information, and physical domains, bear significant psychological and moral burdens, and execute missions that directly result in the kinetic or digital destruction of enemy forces and the defense of U.S. and allied forces; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense and the military services recognize the distinct combat impact of these operations through unclassified operational awards and designations, including but not limited to remote combat campaign or effects medals,

combat-designated unit citations, and documented participation in named combat or contingency operations; and

WHEREAS, the United States Air Force has established the Remote Combat Effects Campaign Medal (RCECM) to recognize Airmen who directly participate in combat operations through remote means, and continues to award the Air Medal—for certain remotely executed missions—to recognize meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight or direct support to combat operations; and

WHEREAS, additional modernized, network-based, and remote-operations awards or devices may be created or revised by the Department of Defense or the military services in the future to recognize direct participation in, or direct support of, combat operations and armed hostilities conducted through such means; and

WHEREAS, modern warfare has fundamentally changed what it means to “bear the battle,” such that an ever-larger share of those who truly fight and support combat operations will do so from remote, classified, or non-traditional locations, and if the United States shifts increasingly—or even entirely—to over-the-horizon warfare, the number of new veterans earning traditional campaign medals may decline sharply toward zero; and

WHEREAS, new bipartisan legislation known as the Combat Action Recognition and Evaluation (CARE) for Remotely Piloted Aircraft Crews Act has been introduced as new legislation for drone crews, specifically to formally recognize off-site drone pilots and crew members who conduct combat missions as combat-relevant participants; and

WHEREAS, the CARE for RPA Crews Act directs the military services, in consultation with the Department of Veterans Affairs, to establish a specific “status identifier” that denotes combat participation for remotely piloted aircraft crew members, thereby creating a standardized and documentable means of identifying remote operators who have taken part in combat operations; and

WHEREAS, this status identifier is intended to ensure that drone crews receive appropriate consideration for veterans’ benefits, services, and mental healthcare tied to combat service, acknowledging that remote RPA crews may experience post-traumatic stress, moral injury, and operational fatigue comparable in some respects to traditional in-theater combat troops; and

WHEREAS, the CARE for RPA Crews Act further seeks parity with traditional combat troops by requiring that RPA crews’ combat contributions be treated in a manner similar to established combat designations when the Department of Veterans Affairs evaluates eligibility and support, thus reinforcing the principle that risk, responsibility, and combat impact—not mere physical proximity—should drive recognition; and

WHEREAS, similar legislation was introduced in the previous Congress, and related language from the CARE for RPA Crews framework has already been adopted as an amendment in the Senate-passed Fiscal Year 2026 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), now awaiting further congressional review, demonstrating legislative progress via the NDAA and clear, bipartisan momentum to codify remote combat recognition in federal law; and

WHEREAS, these emerging federal standards—combining medals, combat-designated unit citations, and status identifiers for remote operators—provide objective tools that the VFW can rely upon when modernizing its own membership criteria to recognize those who have borne the battle in digitally mediated and over-the-horizon forms of warfare; and

WHEREAS, if the VFW’s eligibility framework remains anchored solely in traditional geographic and campaign-medal constructs while the Nation’s wars are fought predominantly through networks, remote platforms, and cyberspace, the organization will, within one or two generations, face a vanishing pool of new eligible members and risk the fate of the Grand Army of the Republic—total institutional extinction once the last eligible generation passes away; and

WHEREAS, the VFW does not need to abandon its foundational mandate as an organization of veterans of foreign wars, but must pragmatically redefine what “foreign space” and “foreign service” mean in an era when combat power is projected through networks and constellations as much as through ships and divisions, so that its eligibility standards align with where and how modern wars are actually fought; and

WHEREAS, to remain faithful to its founding mission and to preserve its character as an organization of combat and combat-support veterans, the VFW must ensure that its membership standards fairly and consistently recognize honorable service in clearly defined combat-relevant roles—including over-the-horizon, cyber, remote, and digitally mediated functions—while maintaining appropriate guardrails against diluting the combat-focused nature of the organization; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, assembled at its National Convention, that we urge the Congress of the United States to enact legislation, to be known as the Veterans of Foreign Wars Modern Eligibility and Remote Service Act (VFW-MERit Act), to amend 36 U.S.C. §§ 230101 and 230103, and any related provisions of the VFW Congressional Charter, to modernize membership eligibility so that it explicitly recognizes combat-relevant over-the-horizon, remote, and cyber warfare roles performed in support of U.S. operations against foreign adversaries; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW-MERit Act shall establish a modern, combat-relevance-based eligibility standard for combat and combat-support service, thereby safeguarding both the wartime character of the organization and its long-term institutional viability, as follows:

1. COMBAT-RELEVANCE STANDARD.

Service Members whose official military records, as determined by competent military authority and recognized by the VFW National organization, establish: (a) direct participation in, or direct operational support of, combat or contingency operations conducted against foreign adversaries, including through modernized, network-based, cyber, space, remote, or over-the-horizon means; and (b) assignment to a unit, billet, or duty position, or receipt of an individual or unit award, specifically identified by competent military authority as conducting or directly supporting such combat or contingency operations—regardless of the geographical location from which such operations are conducted or whether traditional campaign medals have been awarded; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that for purposes of this combat-relevance standard, clear indicators of combat-relevant service shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Award of the Remote Combat Effects Campaign Medal;
2. Award of the Air Medal for remote or over-the-horizon combat or direct combat-support operations;
3. Award of any present or future Department of Defense or service-specific individual medal, ribbon, badge, device, or officially established status identifier—such as the combat participation identifier contemplated under the CARE for RPA Crews Act—expressly designated to recognize direct participation in, or direct support of, combat or contingency operations conducted through modernized, network-based, cyber, space, remote, or over-the-horizon means; and
4. Documented assignment, as reflected in official military orders or records, to units, billets, or duty positions identified by competent military authority as conducting or directly supporting named combat or contingency operations, including those executed through over-the-horizon, remote, cyber, or other digitally mediated means; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Article I – Members, Section 101 – Eligibility, of the VFW National Bylaws and the VFW Manual of Procedure be conformed, upon enactment of the VFW-MERit Act and corresponding amendments to the Congressional Charter, to add implementing language substantially as follows:

“An individual is eligible for membership if the individual’s official military records, as determined under procedures prescribed by the National organization, establish direct participation in, or direct operational support of, combat or contingency operations against foreign adversaries, as identified by competent military authority. Such participation or

support may occur through traditional in-theater service or through modernized, network-based, cyber, space, remote, over-the-horizon, or other digitally mediated warfare roles that directly employ, or enable the employment of, lethal or strategically decisive force in support of such operations, notwithstanding the absence of physical presence within the theater of operations.

Indicators of such combat-relevant service may include, but are not limited to:

(1) the Remote Combat Effects Campaign Medal; (2) the Air Medal awarded for remote or over-the-horizon combat or direct combat-support operations; (3) any present or future Department of Defense or service-specific individual award, medal, ribbon, badge, device, or combat participation status identifier—such as those established pursuant to a passed Congressional Act—expressly designated to recognize direct participation in, or direct support of, such operations; or (4) documented assignment to units, billets, or duty positions identified by competent military authority as conducting or directly supporting named combat or contingency operations.”

and that conforming references be included in the Manual of Procedure to authorize the National organization to promulgate and update detailed combat-relevance criteria and verification procedures—specifically including over-the-horizon, remote, cyber, and other digitally mediated warfare functions, any future Department of Defense awards for such roles, and any status identifiers adopted pursuant to legislation such as the CARE for RPA Crews Act or other future Congressional Act—consistent with this combat-relevance standard and the redefined understanding of “foreign space” and the “theater of action” in modern warfare; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW National Legislative Service be directed to actively seek sponsors for, and advocate for the passage of, the Veterans of Foreign Wars Modern Eligibility and Remote Service Act (VFW-MERit Act), or similar statutory measures that would amend the VFW Congressional Charter to enact this combat-relevance framework and ensure that the front lines of modern network and over-the-horizon warfare are legally recognized by this organization; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution, upon adoption by the National Convention, be implemented in conformity with the VFW National Bylaws, the Manual of Procedure, and the amended provisions of the Congressional Charter, so that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States may continue to credibly and visibly represent those who have borne the battle in both traditional and over-the-horizon forms of modern warfare, and to remain the enduring national voice of those who fight America’s wars even as the battlefield becomes a network as much as a place.

Submitted by Department of Europe
To Committee on FINANCE & INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

REJECTED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 208

ESTABLISHING A DESIGNATED FAMILY-FRIENDLY SPACE AT THE NATIONAL CONVENTION

WHEREAS, many Comrades and members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary are responsible for the care of children and grandchildren who are not yet eligible for membership; and

WHEREAS, the membership of the Veterans of Foreign Wars represents a wide range of ages, backgrounds, and family circumstances; and

WHEREAS, the purposes of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, as stated in Title 36, United States Code, § 230102, are fraternal, patriotic, historical, charitable, and educational, and include: (1) to preserve and strengthen comradeship among its members; (2) to assist worthy comrades; (3) to perpetuate the memory and history of our dead, and to assist their surviving spouses and orphans; (4) to maintain true allegiance to the Government of the United States, and fidelity to its Constitution and laws; (5) to foster true patriotism; (6) to maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom; and (7) to preserve and defend the United States from all enemies; and

WHEREAS, fostering an environment that allows members to attend the National Convention while also fulfilling family responsibilities supports these purposes; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States explore establishing a designated family-friendly space at the National Convention where Comrades and Auxiliary members may bring their children and grandchildren; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars consider providing or arranging for age-appropriate resources, such as coloring books, toys, games, movies, and snacks, so that families are able to utilize the space in a way that benefits the members, the Auxiliary, and the organization as a whole.

Submitted by Department of West Virginia
To Committee on FINANCE & INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 209

DECLARING THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES A PURPLE HEART ENTITY

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and our community have a great admiration and the utmost gratitude and respect for all men and women who have, and are selflessly serving their country and this community in the Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, have paid the significant price of freedom by leaving their families and communities and placing themselves in harm's way for the good of all; and

WHEREAS, the contributions and sacrifices of these men and women who serve or have served the Armed Forces have been vital in maintaining the freedoms and way of life enjoyed by our citizens; and

WHEREAS, many men and women in uniform have given the ultimate sacrifice by laying down their lives while serving in the Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, service members and citizens of our country and communities have received the Purple Heart Medal as a result of being wounded or killed while engaged in a direct or indirect action against an enemy, construed as a singularly meritorious act of essential service; and

WHEREAS, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States seeks to remember and recognize veterans who are recipients of the Purple Heart Medal; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we proclaim the organization a Purple Heart entity, and shall further honor the service and sacrifice of our nation's men and women in uniform, whom by their courageous actions were wounded or killed while serving to protect our freedoms.

Submitted by Department of Washington
To Committee on FINANCE & INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

REJECTED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 210

BAN ALL TOBACCO USAGE AND PRODUCTS FROM VFW FACILITIES

WHEREAS, a 2020 VA survey shows only 13.3% of veterans smoke, leaving an overwhelming 86.7% of veterans that do not smoke; and

WHEREAS, there are over 480,000 deaths in the United States due to cigarette smoking and secondhand smoke exposure; and

WHEREAS, the VA spends a lot of money annually on smoking related breathing issues that the VFW could, in a small way, help prevent by being “smoke free”; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars supported numerous laws such as the PACT Act to compensate veterans due to toxic exposure; and

WHEREAS, cigarette smoke contains over 250 harmful or toxic chemicals; and

WHEREAS, all U.S. military installations are non-smoking in their buildings; and

WHEREAS, the use of tobacco products inside VFW facilities deters youth programs and family-oriented activities; and

WHEREAS, the American Cancer Society recently gave the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania an “F” on their recent response to our smoking laws; and

WHEREAS, the Moose International has banned tobacco use from their facilities. While there was an adjustment period afterward, their membership is strong and have gained new members, proving smoking will deter many people becoming members of an organization; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars has the opportunity to be in the lead of other veteran’s, fraternal, and civic organizations; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, ban all tobacco usage and products within all structures owned by, leased by, used by, or rented by the Veterans of Foreign Wars (with the exception of designated outdoor smoking areas, huts or sheds) to protect the veterans, the veterans’ families and our guests from toxic exposure of tobacco.

Submitted by Department of Pennsylvania
To Committee on FINANCE & INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

Resolution No. 211

AMEND THE CONGRESSIONAL CHARTER TO INCLUDE UNITED STATES SPACE FORCE

WHEREAS, Section 230101(a) of Title 36, United States Code, defines membership using the terms soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen; and

WHEREAS, the United States Space Force is now an independent branch whose members may otherwise qualify for VFW eligibility; and

WHEREAS, inclusion of “Guardians” would modernize the Congressional Charter and recognize those veterans; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, petition the Congress of the United States to amend Section 230101(a), Title 36, United States Code, by inserting the words: “military service members” and striking “soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen”.

Submitted by Department of Colorado
To Committee on FINANCE & INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

APPROVED AS AMENDED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 301
SUPPORT FOR ESTABLISHING GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM
VETERANS DAY ON AUGUST 30

WHEREAS, the United States has been engaged in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) since September 11, 2001, with military operations conducted across multiple theaters, including Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, and other regions; and

WHEREAS, millions of American service members have served in combat and support roles during the Global War on Terrorism, making tremendous sacrifices in defense of the nation and its allies; and

WHEREAS, over 7,000 American service members have given their lives, and tens of thousands have been wounded in the fight against terrorism; and

WHEREAS, the service and sacrifices of these veterans, including those who continue to serve, deserve national recognition and appreciation; and

WHEREAS, the United States has established March 29 as National Vietnam War Veterans Day to honor those who served during the Vietnam War, recognizing their sacrifices and contributions; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting and proper to designate August 30 as Global War on Terrorism Veterans Day, a date which marks the official end of the U.S. combat mission in Afghanistan in 2021, as a national day of recognition for all veterans of the Global War on Terrorism; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States petitions Congress and the President of the United States to formally designate August 30 as Global War on Terrorism Veterans Day; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW encourages all Americans to recognize and honor the service and sacrifices of Global War on Terrorism veterans through appropriate ceremonies, educational programs, and community initiatives each year on this day.

Submitted by Department of Oklahoma
To Committee on GENERAL RESOLUTIONS

REJECTED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 302

NATIONAL RECOGNITION OF WOMEN VETERANS RECOGNITION DAY – JUNE 12

WHEREAS, on June 12, 1948, President Harry S. Truman signed the Women's Armed Forces Integration Act, granting women the right to serve as permanent and regular members of the United States Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, as of May 2023, only twenty (20) states and one (1) U.S. territory formally recognize June 12th as Women Veterans Recognition Day; and

WHEREAS, women have faithfully served this nation since the Revolutionary War, providing critical support to the Continental Army through mending, medical care, food preparation and logistical assistance with some women disguising themselves as men to fight in combat; and

WHEREAS, during the American Civil War, approximately 3,000 women served within the newly formed United States Army Nurses and an estimated 1,000 additional women participated in combat roles while disguised as men on both sides of the conflict; and

WHEREAS, in 1901, the United States Army Nurse Corps (ANC) was formally established expanding opportunities for women to serve in uniform; and

WHEREAS, World War I marked the first time in U.S. history that women were openly allowed to serve in the Armed Forces, despite not yet having the legal right to vote in the United States; and

WHEREAS, nearly 350,000 American women honorably served during World War II in critical non-combat roles including aircraft ferrying, vehicle maintenance, cryptology, parachute rigging, radio operations and service in the Army Nurse Corps, thereby freeing men for frontline combat duty; and

WHEREAS, during World War II, 432 American servicewomen were killed in action and 88 were taken prisoner demonstrating courage, sacrifice and valor; and

WHEREAS, following the war, very few women were permitted to continue military careers and many struggled for decades to obtain veterans' status and benefits for their honorable service; and

WHEREAS, while women have served in combat zones since 1775, the formal ban on women serving in combat roles was not lifted until 2013 by Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta; and

WHEREAS, today approximately 400,000 women serve in the United States Armed Forces, representing 17% of the active-duty force and 21% of the reserve components and continue to serve with honor and distinction; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that June 12th be recognized at the federal level as National Women Veterans Recognition Day, honoring the service, sacrifice and continued contributions of America's women veterans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution be forwarded to the appropriate congressional committees, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Office of the President of the United States for consideration and action.

Submitted by Department of California
To Committee on GENERAL RESOLUTIONS

REJECTED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

PRESERVE THE ALL-VOLUNTEER FORCE

WHEREAS, despite 20-plus years war, the United States has maintained an All-Volunteer Force for more than 50 years. America's All-Volunteer Force persists despite repeated combat tours, recruiting and retention challenges, and continues operations in an extremely dangerous and unpredictable world; and

WHEREAS, troops are worried that their concerns fall on deaf ears. They are concerned that elected and appointed officials cannot comprehend what it's like to serve in an All-Volunteer Force that has been overtasked for decades. They are concerned about rising costs of living, reductions in quality-of-life programs, and lack of access to mental health care. Moreover, military leaders are very concerned about burnout in a military that is continually tasked to do more with less human and financial resources; and

WHEREAS, worldwide commitments and challenges have increased with continuous military operations against radical forces aligned with terrorist organizations, heightened engagements in Africa, domestic activations to protect the border and assist with natural disasters, troop buildup in U.S. Indo-Pacific Command area to counter Chinese expansion, increasing rotations to Eastern Europe to support NATO's deterrence of Russian hostilities in Ukraine, and maintaining a continuous presence of service members fighting terrorist organizations across Southwest Asia; and

WHEREAS, recently Congress has not provided sufficient oversight and scrutiny to the use of military force and military decision-making both for domestic and foreign missions and has also demonstrated the inability to provide a stable, consistent defense budget without constant threats of arbitrary cuts. Instead, some in Congress have promoted misleading narratives about today's service members, while projecting partisan politics onto our fighting force, disrupting an institution whose sole purpose is to protect our nation and jeopardizing the nonpartisan nature of our military; and

WHEREAS, the cumulative impact of lower pay, quality of life shortcomings, partisan politics and a higher operations tempo have had a direct impact on morale, which in combination with a more predictable and safer civilian economy, has resulted in a dire recruiting and retention problem, thereby threatening the continued existence and viability of the All-Volunteer Force; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we will redouble our efforts to work with Congress and the Administration to preserve the All-Volunteer Force by calling for proper oversight and scrutiny to both the domestic and foreign military mission and decision-making, investment in military quality-of-life programs, and an end of arbitrary budget caps, offering solidarity to those who volunteer to serve in a military that must protect American interests in a very dangerous and unpredictable world.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief

To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 402

ELIMINATE SEXUAL ASSAULT AND HARASSMENT IN THE MILITARY

WHEREAS, sexual assault and harassment within the military and at the Military Service Academies are urgent, detrimental, and prevalent issues that impact individual well-being and morale, unit cohesion, recruiting, and retention and require aggressive action and accountability to eliminate; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense (DOD) Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military and Academic Program Year 2022-2023 Annual Report on Sexual Harassment and Violence at the Military Service Academies show that reports of sexual assault and harassment still continue to rise; and

WHEREAS, military sexual assault and harassment affect both men and women, occur on a “continuum of harm,” are enabled by entrenched culture, and are not always stereotypical in nature with women being disproportionately victimized; and

WHEREAS, it is widely held that a far greater number of sexual assault and harassment survivors do not come forward due to embarrassment, lack of trust in command support and accountability, and/or fear of personal and/or professional reprisal, to include real or perceived “red flags” in their military personnel folders; and

WHEREAS, DOD has implemented new and reformed programs, policies, and processes as a result of the 2021 Independent Review Commission (IRC) on Sexual Assault in the Military but is not estimated to be complete until FY 2030; and

WHEREAS, Congress has passed Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) reforms that will ensure investigation and prosecution of military sexual assault and harassment cases are independent of military chains of command; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly demand DOD become more aggressive in its efforts to eliminate sexual assault and harassment, to provide victims with proper and necessary medical and mental health care, as well as assistance with disability claims as may be required, to aggressively and diligently investigate every reported incident and punish attackers, as well as individuals involved in acts of retribution and retaliation, and that Congress perform rigorous oversight of IRC recommendations and the recently passed UCMJ reforms to ensure timely and proper implementation, and identify areas for improvement.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

APPROVED AS AMENDED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 403

ENSURE DOD COMPLIANCE WITH TAP LAW

WHEREAS, transition from military service is a very stressful and time-consuming period for service members and their families, and often presents psychological, financial, and professional challenges in addition to the need to find new housing, healthcare, resources, and programs to support the unique needs of each member and family; and

WHEREAS, Congress has mandated Transition Assistance Program (TAP) pre-separation counseling for all service members to ease the difficult transition from service into civilian life by offering job-search assistance, guidance on education and healthcare programs, and information on other benefits and post-service needs; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense (DOD) is required to abide by TAP reforms that were included in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 and directed, among other requirements, that all service members attend TAP at least 365 days prior to separation, complete a two-day career track if they are minimally prepared for transition, and be connected to resources in communities in which they plan to reside after service; and

WHEREAS, a December 2022 U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) report revealed that 70 percent of service members did not attend TAP on time and almost 25 percent of service members who needed to complete a two-day career track did not; and

WHEREAS, VFW surveys of transitioning service members (TSM) indicate findings that align with the GAO's report and show that nearly 34 percent of TSMs either were not or did not know if they were connected to community resources, while our accredited Benefits Delivery at Discharge program representatives hear that TSMs are not consistently getting connected to community resources; and

WHEREAS, new reforms to TAP require DOD and VA to grant accredited Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) access to and provide briefings on predischarge services like disability claims assistance to TSMs; and

WHEREAS, establishing a leadership position within DOD is needed to drive the necessary cultural change to prioritize transition services and provide Congress with a single point of accountability; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to pass the TAP Promotion Act, to ensure every TSM is allowed to attend TAP classes with sufficient time to participate in the Benefits Delivery at Discharge program and require DOD and its partner agencies to continuously improve TAP and maximize access to materials and resources for TSMs, veterans, and their families; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to require the Department of Defense to establish an Under Secretary of Defense for Transition Assistance to oversee, coordinate, and modernize all transition programs to ensure service members receive timely, effective, and standardized transition assistance; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call upon DOD to enforce existing TAP requirements, ensure full access to VSOs providing critical transition services, and implement policies that prioritize the long-term success of transitioning service members and their families; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that VFW calls on DOD to provide transparent, standardized reporting to Congress on TAP participation and outcomes, and ensure such data is publicly available so that implementation of congressionally mandated transition requirements can be effectively overseen and verified.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 404

KEEP DEFENSE BUDGET RELEVANT

WHEREAS, America's top priority is to defend itself, its citizens, and its interests, and Congress must provide the Defense Department with sufficient funding to properly train, equip and field a military that can defeat all enemies, as well as protect vital U.S. interests around the globe; and

WHEREAS, the claim the U.S. spends more on defense than the next 8 or 10 countries combined is a false narrative. Except for China and Russia, all the other countries are focused on homeland and/or shared theater defense alliances, whereas the U.S. has a worldwide commitment to project power, reliability, and leadership; and

WHEREAS, defense spending accounts for nearly half of all discretionary spending, which makes DOD a consistent target for lawmakers trying to reduce overall federal spending, which puts America's national security at the risk; and

WHEREAS, Russia's attack on Ukraine's sovereignty, the continuing threats by North Korea and Iran, and China's military expansion, make the world more dangerous and therefore increases the world's reliance on the United States to lead militarily against those threats; and

WHEREAS, state sponsored terrorist groups such as Hamas, Hezbollah and Houthis continue to attack civilian populations, infrastructure, and threatening to further destabilize their regions; and

WHEREAS, it is crucial that any proposed reduction in funding not jeopardize America's security or break faith with those who serve or have served our nation in uniform. A nation that cherishes its freedom and supports the troops can afford to do both; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly urge Congress to maintain current or increase funding for the readiness, training, modernization, healthcare, and quality of life initiatives for the armed forces of today and tomorrow.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

APPROVED AS AMENDED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 405

LINK MILITARY PAY INCREASES TO PRIVATE-SECTOR INCREASES

WHEREAS, military pay raises are linked by law to the increase in private-sector wages, as measured by the Employment Cost Index (ECI). The Administration's military pay raise request, however, can be more or less than the ECI, with Congress having the final approval; and

WHEREAS, the 4.6 percent military pay raise for FY 2023 was the largest increase in 20 years but was below the ECI, but the Department of Defense — in its continuing campaign to slow the growth of military compensation due to budget constraints — recommended that future pay increases be limited; and

WHEREAS, the raise in FY 2023 and proposed raise in FY 2024 would be the largest pay raise in over 40 years, but still does not raise pay and benefits such as Basic Allowance for Housing to be competitive with civilian markets; and

WHEREAS, changes to military pay and benefits is the top concern of military service members and their families. Continued efforts to slow the growth of military compensation, combined with a better civilian job market, and a sustained intense operational tempo have already impacted recruiting and retention, which jeopardizes the continued existence and viability of the All-Volunteer Force; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense is already facing a shortage in key fields, such as pilots and maintenance personnel, and must develop competitive pay and benefit scales to recruit talent in critical high-tech fields, such as cyber and space; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon Congress to maintain military base pay comparability with private-sector wages by ensuring annual military pay raise percentages match or exceed annual ECI increases.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 406

PROVIDE FULL CONCURRENT RECEIPT OF MILITARY RETIREMENT PAY AND VA DISABILITY COMPENSATION

WHEREAS, military retirement pay and VA disability compensation are fundamentally different benefits earned for two very different reasons; and

WHEREAS, the fiscal year 2004 National Defense Authorization Act allowed for the gradual phase-in of full concurrent receipt of military retirement pay and Department of Veterans Affairs disability compensation for service-connected wounds, illnesses or injuries; and

WHEREAS, the 10-year phase-in period ended in 2014, which means military retirees with 20 or more years of service and 50 percent or higher VA disability ratings no longer have their military retirement pay offset by the amount of their VA disability compensation; and

WHEREAS, the law, however, did not provide the same equity to service-connected disabled military retirees with VA ratings of 40 percent or below, or to Chapter 61 retirees who were medically retired with less than 20 years, regardless of VA disability rating; and

WHEREAS, more than 50,000 Chapter 61 retirees receive Combat Related Special Compensation from the Department of Defense, many of whom are Purple Heart recipients; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support legislation that allows for the concurrent receipt of military retirement pay and VA disability compensation without offset and regardless of disability rating percentage.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 407

PRESERVE THE INTEGRITY OF THE TRICARE BENEFIT

WHEREAS, changes to Tricare this past year increased costs of both the Select and the Prime plans. Changes included a complete change in the cost-share methodology for the new Tricare Select plan, which changed the beneficiary costs from a percentage of individual-services-used to an averaged, flat-rate co-payment and increased Tricare Prime fees; and

WHEREAS, Congress added additional costs by raising mail order and retail pharmacy fees for all Tricare beneficiaries, including Tricare for Life members. The additional costs included raising the costs of a 90-day mail order supply of generic medications from a \$0 co-pay to a \$12 per prescription co-pay, adding significant out of pocket costs to beneficiaries on maintenance medications for chronic conditions; and

WHEREAS, military health coverage is expensive, yet so is the personal investment someone makes to voluntarily commit to a military career. Any real or perceived erosion of benefits for career-minded personnel will undermine long-term retention, as well as recruiting of new service members; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we oppose all Tricare fee increases as well as any additional fee increases or attempts to erode the earned benefit of military healthcare; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge DOD to reform its healthcare programs by eliminating institutional inefficiencies before considering fee increases; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge Congress and DOD to ensure timely and equal access across the force, regardless of geographic location, to holistic healthcare services including medical and non-medical mental health counseling, reproductive health services, specialty care, and pharmacies.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 408

AWARDING THE ARMED FORCES EXPEDITIONARY MEDAL FOR EXPEDITIONARY OPERATIONS IN EASTERN EUROPE

WHEREAS, the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (AFEM) was established by Executive Order 10977, dated December 4, 1961 (DA Bulletin. 1, 1962) and Executive Order 11231, July 8, 1965; and

WHEREAS, the medal is authorized for (1) U.S. military operations, (2) U.S. operations in direct support of the United Nations, or (3) U.S. operations of assistance for friendly foreign nations; and

WHEREAS, the AFEM is awarded for services after July 1, 1958, meeting the following qualifications that military personnel must be a bona fide member of a unit and engaged in the operation, have served not less than 30 consecutive days in the area of operations, and be engaged in actual combat, or duty which is equally as hazardous as combat, during the operation with armed opposition, regardless of time in the area; and

WHEREAS, DOD has established precedent in awarding the AFEM for kinetic military operations supporting allied nations when individuals campaign medals have not yet been established; and

WHEREAS, United States military personnel have been assigned to eastern Europe under the operational banners of Operations Atlantic Resolve since February 24, 2022 to support NATO's deterrence and defense posture on its eastern flank; and

WHEREAS, since February 24, 2022, the United States has deployed units to the USEUCOM theater and has U.S. forces positioned in Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia. These are qualifying NATO countries with contiguous borders with Ukraine and are in direct support of NATO and friendly nations; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, supports and encourages Congress and the Secretary of Defense to designate Operations Atlantic Resolve since February 24, 2022 in support of NATO's deterrence and defense posture on its eastern flank as U.S. military operations that are eligible for the award of the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 409

PROTECT POW/MIA FULL ACCOUNTING MISSION FUNDING

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is deeply committed to achieving the fullest possible accounting of nearly 82,000 missing Americans that include approximately 72,000 from World War II, 7,544 from the Korean War, 1,584 from the Vietnam War, 126 from the Cold War, and 8 post-Vietnam that include Operations Eldorado Canyon (1), Desert Storm (2), Iraqi Freedom (3), Operation Prosperity Guardian (2); and

WHEREAS, public-private partnerships are increasing the ability to be at more sites and DPAA has strong bipartisan support on Capitol Hill, which has in the past provided additional funding required to support pending recovery operations in North Korea, which have been interrupted since 2005 due to U.S. safety and security concerns; and

WHEREAS, Congress has in recent years acknowledged the importance of the Fullest Possible Accounting mission by increasing DPAA funding above requested amounts; and

WHEREAS, it is critical that DPAA remain adequately funded. Recovering fallen Americans from long-ago battlefields is demanding and often dangerous work for investigation and recovery teams, but it is the most sacred of missions. It is our government's fulfillment of a soldier's pledge to never leave a fallen comrade on the battlefield, which is a promise that spans all generations; and

WHEREAS, additional money enables DPAA to efficiently plan, resource and accomplish its worldwide mission to recover, identify and return to their families all missing American service members from our nation's previous conflicts; and

WHEREAS, Congress has adopted nine continuing resolutions in the last ten-years and caused three shutdowns since 2013, which hinder operational planning and slow recoveries; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon Congress to continue to increase funding levels for the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency and all supporting organizations involved in the Fullest possible Accounting Mission; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress must pass advanced appropriations to prevent a slowdown in recoveries and allow for budget carry-over allowing DPAA to plan multi-year operations.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

REJECTED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 410

CALL FOR MORE UNILATERAL POW/MIA ACTIONS BY VIETNAM

WHEREAS, 2,646 Americans were listed as missing and unaccounted-for at the end of the Vietnam War. As of March 2022, the number of missing is now 1,584 due to a combination of increased U.S. Government emphasis, better research and identification technology, stronger diplomatic ties with host governments, and access to aircraft crash and ground battlefield sites; and

WHEREAS, Vietnam had a comprehensive wartime and post-war process to collect and retain information and remains, and, according to the National League of POW/MIA Families, this unilateral effort enabled the Vietnamese to locate, and return remains to U.S. custody; and

WHEREAS, joint U.S. – Vietnam field operations, first conducted 37-years ago, continue to provide answers to families of unaccounted for American servicemen; and

WHEREAS, Vietnam granted access to their National Archives I and II and the People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN) Library; and

WHEREAS, many of the grieving families may never live to see the return of their missing loved one; and

WHEREAS, Vietnamese museums contain many personal items which belonged to missing U.S. servicemen; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we encourage Vietnam to grant U.S. government analysts access to the PAVN archives where potentially valuable documents which could lead to case resolution may be located; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, in this cooperative effort, that we encourage the Vietnamese government to turn over any items of a personal nature from missing American servicemen that are currently in the custody of Vietnamese museums or other locations under their control so they may be returned to their grieving families.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 411

RECOGNITION FOR AFGHAN AND IRAQI COMBAT SUPPORT ROLES

WHEREAS, Afghan and Iraqi wartime allies were bridges to the Afghan and Iraqi people during U.S. operations against terrorism in those countries and mission success was directly dependent on close working relations between local nationals and U.S. agents; and

WHEREAS, our wartime allies often served consecutive tours with several different units to provide continuity and their lives and the lives of their family members were threatened for working with the Americans; and

WHEREAS, our wartime allies saved countless American lives and directly contributed to every level of tactical, operational, and strategic success during the missions in Iraq and Afghanistan; and

WHEREAS, Special Immigrant Visa recipients and Priority 2 Refugee Admissions Program recipients go through the strictest vetting and approval process of any category of person coming to the U.S.; and

WHEREAS, this initiative is supported by all post 9/11 former secretaries of defense as well as key national security leaders in the military, Department of State, and the intelligence community; and

WHEREAS, the former chairmen of the 9/11 Commission have stated, “As former chairman and vice chairman of the 9/11 Commission, we encourage Congress to do everything in its power to keep the nation’s promise to Afghan and Iraqi combat translators and to ensure these intrepid partners can achieve the American Dream. Special Immigrant Visas recipients from Afghanistan and Iraq loyally protected our men and women in uniform. Many directly saved American lives. Their future success will help to prevent the continued growth of Islamist terrorism – the third goal identified by the 9/11 Commission. A great nation keeps its promises”; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the President of the United States and the U.S. Congress to recognize the contributions of Afghan and Iraqi Combat Interpreter Immigrants who stood shoulder to shoulder with, assisted and protected U.S. military service members, U.S. diplomats and government agents, non-governmental organizations, and media organizations during U.S. involvement in those countries.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 412

SUPPORT THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA ON TAIWAN

WHEREAS, the Republic of China on Taiwan is a historic democratic ally of the United States, a valuable trading partner, and key link in the Western Pacific defense chain; and

WHEREAS, the Taiwan Relations Act (PL 96-8) codifies the policy of the United States to provide Taiwan with arms of a defensive character to bolster peace and stability in the cross-strait environment; and

WHEREAS, on January 1, 1979, then-President Carter terminated diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Taiwan, and instead established diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China to help maintain peace, security, and stability in the Western Pacific. This loss of diplomatic status prevents the President of Taiwan from receiving the same respect and courtesies afforded other Heads of State who visit the U.S.; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Administration and Congress to strictly adhere to the concepts of the Taiwan Relations Act by continuing to approve the sale of state-of-the-art military equipment, weapons, and technology to maintain an adequate defense capability; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call upon the Administration and Congress to support the admission of the Republic of China on Taiwan into the United Nations, and to provide the President of Taiwan the same respect and privileges due other visiting Heads of State.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 413

SUPPORT THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

WHEREAS, the Republic of Korea is a historic democratic ally of the United States, a valuable trading partner, and a key link in the Northeast Asia defense chain. Numerous treaties are in force with the Republic of Korea concerning economic and technical cooperation, education, maritime matters, trade and commerce, and the Mutual Defense Treaty, that was enacted on November 17, 1954; and

WHEREAS, South Korea's immediate neighbor, however, continues to maintain an extremely large and forward-deployed military force capable of launching no-notice offensive operations against South Korea; and

WHEREAS, North Korea maintains the ability to launch nuclear-capable missiles, including a missile capable of reaching the United States, and has conducted six underground nuclear explosions since 2006, and is a known exporter of ballistic missiles and its technology to countries adversarial to the United States, most notably Iran; and

WHEREAS, the continued unpredictability of North Korea makes the presence of U.S. ground and air forces inside South Korea even more critical as a deterrent to aggression; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the U.S. Government to maintain a substantial military presence in the Republic of Korea, and to increase military aid and assistance through modern weaponry and technology to help promote peace and stability in the region.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 414

SUPPORT THE STATE OF ISRAEL

WHEREAS, the State of Israel is a historic, democratic ally of the United States of America, and has continued to be a partner withing the ongoing fight against terrorist groups in the Middle East; and

WHEREAS, since its establishment in 1948 Israel has been under constant threat of attacks from terrorist groups sponsored by nations that share Israels borders culminating with the Hamas' attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, resulting in the death of over a thousand civilians, the imprisonment of 250 hostages committing rape and torture and violating humanitarian law by using the Palestinian people as human shields; and

WHEREAS, reestablishing peace between Israelis and Palestinians remains of strategic interest to the United States and other partners within the region; and

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the United States Government to continue to support the State of Israel both diplomatically and militarily and continue to work with them to ensure the safety of their borders and to emphasize regional stability in the Middle East, and elsewhere.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

APPROVED AS AMENDED by the 127th National Convention of the
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

SUPPORT OF NATO DETERRENCE AND SUPPORT TO UKRAINE

WHEREAS, throughout a 45-year Cold War, United States military personnel, who would later become members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW), were instrumental in leading North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) efforts to deter Soviet aggression in Europe, bring about the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, and the disintegration of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics; and

WHEREAS, in the ensuing thirty-odd years, many former Warsaw Pact countries embraced democracy and flourished under a participatory form of government, becoming suppliers of commodities and technology across the globe, and have become productive members of the European Union (EU), NATO, and numerous additional international organizations aimed at ensuring world and regional peace and economic prosperity; and

WHEREAS, for the past two years Ukrainians have been fighting heroically to repel Russia's war of occupation, annexation, and indiscriminate targeting of Ukrainian civilians, the likes of which have not been seen since Adolf Hitler embarked on such power-grabs in the 1930s; and

WHEREAS, the United States and European allies have been providing Western military equipment to replace Soviet era weaponry, increasing Ukraine's reliance on US manufacturers to maintain and replace weapons, munitions, and logistical equipment; and

WHEREAS, the 90% of funds provided from the United States to support Ukraine's fight against Russian aggression are paid to United States' military industries, helping to bolster the US economy; and

WHEREAS, Russia's invasion of Ukraine serves as a precursor for Russia to occupy, annex, and subjugate other free European countries that border Russia, such as Moldova, Lithuania and stated expansionist plans bear a direct threat to the freedom of the whole of Europe, NATO, the free world economy, and, thereby, the United States; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support the people and free government of Ukraine in their fight against Russian aggression; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW urges the President and Congress to decidedly exercise our position as leader of the free world to decidedly support Ukrainian people and armed forces with necessary humanitarian and military aid and encourage all of our allies to follow suit.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 416

DEPORTED VETERANS

WHEREAS, non-citizen United States Service members have been, and are currently being deported from the United States after serving in the United States military; and

WHEREAS, current United States Code provides that the term "national of the United States" means a citizen of the United States, or a person who, though not a citizen of the United States, owes permanent allegiance to the United States; and

WHEREAS, Federal law requires everyone who enlists or re-enlists in the Armed Forces of the United States to take the Oath of Enlistment to defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; and to bear true faith and allegiance to the same, are oaths that are performed in front of the United States Flag and other flags, such as the state flag, military branch flag and is similar to the Oath of Citizenship and of the states; and

WHEREAS, Veterans have served our nation in every war from WWII, Vietnam, Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan. We strongly believe their oath of enlistment is a permanent oath of allegiance to the United States of America. While mere subjective emotional allegiance to the United States and length of residence in the United States is insufficient to make an individual a national, we believe that raising your right hand, swearing this oath, putting on the uniform in times of both peace and war are in fact a permanent allegiance to the United States and, that the United States owes a permanent allegiance to all Veterans be they U.S. Citizens or Foreign Nationals; and

WHEREAS, when these veterans returned to civilian life without appropriate support for reintegration, psychologically, and economically, some veterans that fell into addictions and criminal activities, were arrested and, due to their legal permanent residence status, were deported regardless of their honorable service; and

WHEREAS, these exiled veterans face inherent barriers to accessing Veteran Affairs (VA) healthcare system as they earned during military service; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States that we urge Congress to amend the United States Code to clearly state "The following shall be nationals*, but not citizens of the United States: A person who, by Conscription or enlistment, entered any branch of the United States armed forces and served honorably, and, this shall be retroactive to service members/veterans previously removed from the United States.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 417

EXPAND THE DATES OF ELIGIBILITY FOR THE ARMED FORCES EXPEDITIONARY MEDAL

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense recognized service of the United States Armed Forces personnel in the Republic of Vietnam from 1 July 1958 to 3 July 1965, by awarding personnel the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal; and

WHEREAS, Executive Order 11231 establishes the Vietnam Service Medal as recognition of service in the Republic or contiguous waters from 3 July 1965 to 28 March 1973; and

WHEREAS, service in the Republic of Vietnam during Operation Frequent Wind during 29 to 30 April 1975, was recognized by awarding eligible personnel the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal; and

WHEREAS, Armed Forces personnel originally receiving the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal for service in the Republic of Vietnam during either from 1 July 1958 to 3 July 1965 or 29 to 30 April 1975, are now qualified to receive the Vietnam Service Medal in lieu of the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal; and

WHEREAS, after the Paris Peace Accords were signed 27 January 1973 and the last combat troops were withdrawn from the Republic of Vietnam on 29 March 1973 there were many members of the United States Armed Forces remaining in Thailand and on ships in the Vietnam coastal waters in support of the South Vietnamese Army from 29 March 1973 until Operation Frequent Wind thus placing United States personnel in harm's way, but not recognized by a campaign or service; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition Congress to direct the Secretary of Defense to authorize the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal for those that served in Thailand and on the ships in the coastal waters of Vietnam from 29 March 1973 to 30 April 1975 in Support of the Vietnamese Army.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 418

ARMED FORCES EXPEDITIONARY MEDAL FOR SUPPORT OF UKRAINE

WHEREAS, the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (AFEM) is a military award of the United States Armed Forces, awarded to members of the U.S. Armed Forces who participate in U.S. military operations, U.S. operations in direct support of the United Nations, or U.S. operations of assistance for friendly foreign nations; and

WHEREAS, the United States has been actively supporting Ukraine with arms, training, increased forward presence, and intelligence since the March 2014 annexation of the Crimea, but especially since the February 2022 full-scale Russian invasion; and

WHEREAS, since commencement of Operation ATLANTIC RESOLVE – a continuation of the 2014 U. S.-led enhanced deterrence of Russian aggression - the U.S. has deployed an Armored Brigade Combat Team on six to nine-month rotations in Poland as a deterrent to potential further Russian aggression in eastern Europe and the Black Sea region; and

WHEREAS, as part of deployment of forces to the Baltic States, U. S. and NATO ally aircraft provide enhanced forward presence by policing the skies over NATO states in and around Ukraine; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. has deployed, and continues to further deploy, anti-air and anti-missile defense systems, such as AEGIS Ashore, to other bordering states, most recently Romania and Poland; and

WHEREAS, these batteries have already played an active role in intercepting and defeating ballistic missile launches; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) believes that the criteria for the AFEM have clearly been met; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the VFW urges the Secretary of Defense to authorize the award of the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal to United States military personnel, including naval forces in the Black Sea, Baltic Sea, and elsewhere as appropriate, serving in direct support of expanded U. S. or NATO presence and operations supporting the defense of Ukraine and deterrence of further Russian aggression in eastern Europe, with an award start date of 18 March 2014 and an ending date to be determined.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 419

PROTECT POW/MIA FULL ACCOUNTING MISSION FUNDING

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is deeply committed to achieving the fullest possible accounting of nearly 82,000 missing Americans that include approximately 72,000 from World War II, 7,544 from the Korean War, 1,584 from the Vietnam War, 126 from the Cold War, and 8 post-Vietnam that include Operations Eldorado Canyon (1), Desert Storm (2), Iraqi Freedom (3), Operation Prosperity Guardian (2); and

WHEREAS, Congress has in recent years acknowledged the importance of the Fullest Possible Accounting mission by increasing DPAA funding above requested amounts; and

WHEREAS, it is critical that DPAA remain adequately funded. Recovering fallen Americans from long-ago battlefields is demanding and often dangerous work for investigation and recovery teams, but it is the most sacred of missions. It is our government's fulfillment of a soldier's pledge to never leave a fallen comrade on the battlefield, which is a promise that spans all generations; and

WHEREAS, additional money enables DPAA to efficiently plan, resource and accomplish its worldwide mission to recover, identify and return to their families all missing American service members from our nation's previous conflicts; and

WHEREAS, aid provided to host nations to mitigate the legacies of war have strengthened diplomatic relationships necessary to authorize DPAA's recovery efforts in foreign countries; and

WHEREAS, Congress has adopted nine continuing resolutions in the last ten-years and caused three shutdowns since 2013, which hinder operational planning and slow recoveries; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon Congress to continue to increase funding levels for the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency and all supporting organizations involved in the Fullest possible Accounting Mission; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress must pass advanced appropriations to prevent a slowdown in recoveries and allow for budget carry-over allowing DPAA to plan multi-year operations.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 420

ENSURE DOD COMPLIANCE WITH TAP LAW

WHEREAS, transition from military service is a very stressful and time-consuming period for service members and their families, and often presents psychological, financial, and professional challenges in addition to the need to find new housing, healthcare, resources, and programs to support the unique needs of each member and family; and

WHEREAS, Congress has mandated Transition Assistance Program (TAP) pre-separation counseling for all service members to ease the difficult transition from service into civilian life by offering job-search assistance, guidance on education and healthcare programs, and information on other benefits and post-service needs; and

WHEREAS, the DOD is required to abide by TAP reforms that were included in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 and directed, among other requirements, that all service members attend TAP at least 365 days prior to separation, complete a two-day career track if they are minimally prepared for transition, and be connected to resources in communities in which they plan to reside after service; and

WHEREAS, a December 2022 U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) report revealed that 70 percent of service members did not attend TAP on time and almost 25 percent of service members who needed to complete a two-day career track did not; and

WHEREAS, VFW surveys of transitioning service members (TSM) indicate findings that align with the GAO's report and show that nearly 34 percent of TSMs either were not or did not know if they were connected to community resources, while our accredited Benefits Delivery at Discharge program representatives hear that TSMs are not consistently getting connected to community resources; and

WHEREAS, new reforms to TAP require DOD and VA to grant accredited Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) access to and provide briefings on predischARGE services like disability claims assistance to TSMs; and

WHEREAS, establishing a leadership position within DOD is needed to drive the necessary cultural change to prioritize transition services and provide Congress with a single point of accountability; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to pass the TAP Promotion Act, to ensure every TSM is allowed to attend TAP classes with sufficient time to participate in the Benefits Delivery at Discharge program and require DOD and its partner agencies to continuously improve TAP and maximize access to materials and resources for TSMs, veterans, and their families; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to require the Department of Defense to establish an Under Secretary of Defense for Transition Assistance to oversee,

coordinate, and modernize all transition programs to ensure service members receive timely, effective, and standardized transition assistance; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call upon DOD to enforce existing TAP requirements, ensure full access to VSOs providing critical transition services, and implement policies that prioritize the long-term success of transitioning service members and their families.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

REJECTED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 421

RESEARCH BLAST OVERPRESSURE

WHEREAS, exposure to blast overpressure from explosions, heavy weapons fire, and other military operations has been linked to long-term neurological and physiological effects in service members; and

WHEREAS, emerging research indicates that repeated exposure to blast overpressure may contribute to cognitive impairment, psychological disorders, and neurodegenerative conditions such as chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE), Transient Ischemic Attack (TIA), Interface Axonal Scarring (IAS), and Diffuse Axonal Injury (DAI); and

WHEREAS, service members operating in close proximity to explosive weaponry, including, but not limited to, breachers, artillery personnel, and special operations forces, are at heightened risk for blast overpressure injuries; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense has yet to fully acknowledge the cumulative effects of blast overpressure exposure and implement comprehensive protective measures for at-risk personnel; and

WHEREAS, there is a critical need for increased research, improved monitoring, and enhanced safety protocols to prevent, identify, and mitigate the impact of blast overpressure on service members' long-term health; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to direct the Department of Defense to continue to conduct comprehensive research on the long-term health effects of blast overpressure exposure and to implement policies ensuring proper documentation, monitoring, and prevention of such injuries; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call upon the Department of Defense to acknowledge the risks associated with blast overpressure exposure, develop enhanced protective equipment and training protocols, and ensure service members receive appropriate medical care, screening, and long-term support for conditions related to blast overpressure injuries.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

APPROVED AS AMENDED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 422

REPATRIATE AMERICA'S FIRST FOREIGN WAR CASUALTIES

WHEREAS, the United States fought its first major foreign war against the Barbary States of North Africa to reign in piracy and secure trade routes during the First Barbary War in the early 1800s; and

WHEREAS, on July 14, 1804, during a daring mission in the Second Battle of Tripoli Harbor, 13 brave American sailors and Marines lost their lives seeking to cripple the enemy's fleet aboard the captured Tripolitan vessel renamed the USS Intrepid; and

WHEREAS, reports indicate that these 13 American service members have been interred in a small Protestant cemetery in Tripoli that has not only fallen into disrepair but is often defaced and vandalized; and

WHEREAS, the Department of the Navy has readily acknowledged the significance of this battle and the heroics of the men who perished aboard the USS Intrepid, but have not sought to repatriate their remains from a territory that remains unfriendly to Americans; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is a federally chartered organization of service members who have served in this nation's wars, campaigns, and expeditions on foreign soil and in hostile waters, making our organization uniquely postured to see the return of the first brave Americans who made the ultimate sacrifice in foreign service; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress, the Department of Defense, and the Department of State to seek the disinterment and repatriation of the 13 brave American Sailors and Marines who perished aboard the USS Intrepid during the First Barbary War in 1804 and who are currently interred in Libya; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge our grateful nation to welcome these Americans home, ensuring their interment in a place of honor at Arlington National Cemetery so that future generations of Americans may properly honor their unique sacrifice in our nation's first major foreign war.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 423

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION FORMS SSA-7161 AND SSA-7162

WHEREAS, the Social Security Administration (SSA) sends out approximately 15,000 SSA-7162 forms each year. As part of the Foreign Enforcement Program, which verifies the existence and identity of beneficiaries with a foreign address to ensure the SSA has accurate information about the beneficiary's address, contact number and any circumstances that may affect their benefits; and

WHEREAS, these forms can at the present time only be submitted exclusively via local international postal services to Wilkes-Barre, PA; and

WHEREAS, failure to return the form within 60 days can lead to suspension of benefits; and

WHEREAS, far too often these crucial documents are lost and never received and/or delivered resulting in discontinuation of essential entitlements; and

WHEREAS, to reinstate said entitlements the beneficiary must contact their respective Social Security Administration Office which are only located in some Federal Benefits Units (FBU) which may be located in another country (Example: The FBU for Thailand and Cambodia is located in the Philippines); and

WHEREAS, the consequences of this action often result in weeks or months without essential benefits depriving the recipient of sufficient funds to obtain medication, food and medical care; and

WHEREAS, there are currently digital technologies already in place that would allow for a secure and reliable means to submit these forms to the Social Security Administration and eliminating the need to submit them via an unreliable international postal system; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition Congress to enact legislation which would enable the Social Security Administration to initiate immediate reform to end the current unreliable method being used to submit these annual reports and allow for the use of a secure online reporting system; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that part of this legislation include procedures that would allow authorized beneficiaries to submit said forms to any U.S. embassy or U.S. Consulate worldwide.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 424

SUPPORTING THE SOVEREIGN RIGHTS OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES IN THE WEST PHILIPPINE SEA

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) is a congressionally chartered organization dedicated to supporting veterans, promoting patriotism, and ensuring the national security of the United States; and

WHEREAS, the VFW recognizes the importance of international law and the peaceful resolution of disputes in maintaining global stability and security; and

WHEREAS, the Republic of the Philippines is a long-standing ally and strategic partner of the United States, with a shared history of military cooperation and a commitment to democratic values in the Indo-Pacific region; and

WHEREAS, the West Philippine Sea (also known as the South China Sea) is of vital strategic and economic importance to the Philippines, the United States, and the international community, serving as a crucial waterway for global trade and commerce; and

WHEREAS, the Republic of the Philippines, as a sovereign nation, possesses legitimate and internationally recognized rights to its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and continental shelf in the West Philippine Sea, as defined by the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS); and

WHEREAS, an Arbitral Tribunal constituted under Annex VII of UNCLOS, in a landmark ruling on July 12, 2016, unanimously affirmed the Philippines' sovereign rights within its EEZ and continental shelf in the West Philippine Sea, and declared that certain actions by the People's Republic of China (PRC) are in violation of UNCLOS; and

WHEREAS, the VFW is deeply concerned by the increasing tensions and militarization in the West Philippine Sea, including actions that impede freedom of navigation, disrupt lawful economic activities, and undermine regional stability; and

WHEREAS, the VFW believes that upholding international law, protecting the rights of allies, and promoting a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific region are essential to the national security interests of the United States; and

WHEREAS, the PRC continues to disregard the ruling of the Permanent Court of Arbitration and continues its unlawful activities within the West Philippine Sea; and

WHEREAS, the PRC's actions continue to undermine the security and stability of the region; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly support the sovereign rights of the Republic of the Philippines in the West

Philippine Sea, as recognized under international law and affirmed by the 2016 Arbitral Tribunal ruling; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW urges the United States Government to Reaffirm its commitment to the Mutual Defense Treaty with the Philippines and work closely with the Philippine government to ensure its security and territorial integrity; continue to conduct freedom of navigation operations in the West Philippine Sea to uphold international law and ensure the right of all nations to navigate these waters freely; increase diplomatic and economic support to the Philippines to help it protect its sovereign rights and promote its economic development; work with allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific region to promote a rules-based order, deter aggression, and maintain peace and stability in the West Philippine Sea; publicly condemn the unlawful actions of the PRC within the West Philippine Sea; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW urges the United States Government to continue to conduct freedom of navigation operations in the West Philippine Sea to uphold international law and ensure the right of all nations to navigate these waters freely; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW urges the United States Government to increase diplomatic and economic support to the Philippines to help it protect its sovereign rights and promote its economic development; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW urges the United States Government to work with allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific region to promote a rules-based order, deter aggression, and maintain peace and stability in the West Philippine Sea; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW urges the United States Government to publicly condemn the unlawful actions of the PRC within the West Philippine Sea; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW will communicate this resolution to the President of the United States, Members of Congress, the Department of State, the Department of Defense, and the Embassy of the Republic of the Philippines in Washington, D.C.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

APPROVED AS AMENDED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 425

ADDING A 'RECOVERED AWAITING DNA CONFIRMATION' CATEGORY TO THE DEFENSE POW/MIA ACCOUNTING AGENCY (DPAA) AND IMPLEMENTING DNA MATCH NOTIFICATIONS THROUGH ANCESTRY WEBSITES

WHEREAS, the United States is committed to the fullest possible accounting for its missing service members from past conflicts; and

WHEREAS, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) is responsible for recovering and identifying missing personnel but currently lacks a formal category for remains that have been recovered and are awaiting DNA confirmation; and

WHEREAS, the creation of a 'Recovered Awaiting DNA Confirmation' category within the DPAA would provide greater transparency to families of missing personnel and allow for better tracking of ongoing identification efforts; and

WHEREAS, many American families have submitted DNA samples to commercial ancestry and genealogy websites, which have databases that could assist in identifying remains of missing service members; and

WHEREAS, implementing a system that allows these ancestry services to provide notifications to individuals if their DNA appears to be a potential match for an unidentified service member, with proper consent and privacy safeguards, could significantly aid in expediting identifications and providing closure to families; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States petitions Congress, the Department of Defense, and the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency to establish a 'Recovered Awaiting DNA Confirmation' category and to explore partnerships with ancestry and genealogy databases to facilitate responsible DNA matching for the identification of missing service members; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW supports the continued improvement of identification efforts for missing service members and the use of modern DNA technology to bring closure to their families.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 426

ARMED FORCES EXPEDITIONARY MEDAL ELIGIBILITY FOR UNRECOGNIZED MILITARY ACTIONS AND CONFLICTS

WHEREAS, the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (AFEM) is a military award of the United States Armed Forces, granted to service members who participate in U.S. military operations, operations in direct support of the United Nations, or operations of assistance to friendly foreign nations; and

WHEREAS, since the end of World War II, the United States has engaged in a number of military operations that involved active-duty U.S. military personnel in combat, combat support, or advisory roles that were publicly denied or unacknowledged at the time of their occurrence; and

WHEREAS, these unrecognized have included missions later revealed or declassified through official reports, media investigations, or veterans' testimonies, yet many remain undocumented in service records, preventing the affected personnel from receiving proper recognition and creating barriers to accessing earned benefits; and

WHEREAS, recognition of these operations has practical, ethical, and historical implications, as troops involved in covert or undeclared operations often faced the same or greater levels of danger and risk as in formally recognized conflicts, yet have been denied due honors; and

WHEREAS, lack of official documentation of such service has led to longstanding disadvantages for affected veterans, including denial of service-connected compensation, healthcare, and medals, all of which rely on accurate and complete service records; and

WHEREAS, formal acknowledgment by the U.S. government and appropriate award of the AFEM would honor and validate the sacrifices of these individuals, restore morale, and fulfill our national obligation to account for and support all who have served; and

WHEREAS, historical precedent exists for the retroactive recognition of previously unacknowledged or denied operations, as seen in the eventual acknowledgment of U.S. operations in Laos, Korea, and other regions; and

WHEREAS, specific conflicts have now been sufficiently documented to warrant consideration for AFEM eligibility, including but not limited to:

- Laos and Cambodia (1960s–1973) – MACV-SOG special operations,
- El Salvador (1980s) – U.S. Special Forces in combat zones,
- Honduras (1980s) – U.S. deployments near conflict zones,
- Bosnia (pre-1995) – covert Special Forces operations,
- Operation Enduring Freedom – Philippines (2002–2015) – U.S. combat and support missions,
- Yemen and Somalia (2000s–Present) – ongoing special operations with direct combat exposure,
- Niger and West Africa (2010s–Present) – confirmed combat fatalities and operations,
- and others, as identified by competent authorities;

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) urges the Secretary of Defense and the Congress of the United States to formally recognize previously unacknowledged U.S. military operations involving direct or near-direct combat roles, herein referred to as the “Forgotten Conflicts”; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW calls upon the Secretary of Defense to authorize the award of the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal to eligible U.S. military personnel who participated in these designated operations where the criteria of exposure to hostile action, combat conditions, or operational deployment were met, with retroactive effective dates to be determined per operation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW supports legislative or executive action to declassify records, issue service documentation, and enable access to earned veteran benefits for those who served honorably and at risk in these unacknowledged operations.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 427

RECOGNITION AND SUPPORT FOR ADDRESSING MORAL INJURY AMONG SERVICE MEMBERS AND VETERANS

WHEREAS, military service often places individuals in complex and high-stress environments where they may experience or witness events that conflict with deeply held moral or ethical beliefs; and

WHEREAS, such experiences can contribute to what researchers and clinicians increasingly recognize as moral injury, a form of psychological, social, and spiritual distress resulting from actions, inactions, or witnessing events that violate one's moral framework; and

WHEREAS, moral injury may manifest through guilt, shame, loss of trust, spiritual crisis, social withdrawal, and difficulty reintegrating into civilian life; and

WHEREAS, moral injury may occur in conjunction with other conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety, but is distinct in its origins and often requires different approaches to healing and recovery; and

WHEREAS, modern warfare increasingly involves remote and technologically mediated operations, including remotely piloted aircraft, cyber operations, and intelligence surveillance missions, where service members may participate in or witness lethal actions while physically removed from the battlefield; and

WHEREAS, these remote operators may experience unique forms of stress and moral conflict, particularly when they must rapidly transition between combat operations and civilian environments without the traditional decompression or unit cohesion experienced by deployed forces; and

WHEREAS, research and reports from the Department of Defense and academic institutions have highlighted significant burnout, operational stress, and mental health challenges among remotely piloted aircraft crews and other remote operators; and

WHEREAS, unresolved moral distress and psychological strain can contribute to long-term mental health challenges and may intersect with risk factors associated with military and veteran suicide; and

WHEREAS, acknowledging moral injury as a legitimate challenge faced by some service members and veterans can help reduce stigma, encourage earlier intervention, and support the development of effective programs to promote healing and resilience; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the VFW supports increased research into moral injury among service members and veterans, including those serving in remote or technologically mediated operational roles; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW urges the Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs to incorporate education and training on moral injury into programs supporting service member resilience, military-to-civilian transition, and veteran health care; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW supports the development and expansion of programs addressing moral injury through interdisciplinary approaches, including mental health care, peer support, spiritual care, and community reintegration; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW encourages collaboration among federal agencies, veteran service organizations, academic institutions, and community partners to advance understanding of moral injury and its potential relationship to suicide risk among service members and veterans.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 428

CONGRESS TO HONOR THE OATHS OF U.S. SERVICE MEMBERS AND REPEAL THE 2001 AUTHORIZATION FOR USE OF MILITARY FORCE

WHEREAS, recognizing, that our active-duty service members and veterans swear a sacred oath to defend the Constitution and the people of the United States; and that oath needs to be honored by ensuring these brave men and women are only sent to war when it's been debated, justified, and properly declared; and

WHEREAS, Article I, Section 8, Clause 11 of the U.S. Constitution grants Congress the power to declare war, yet our elected representatives have not debated and declared war since World War II; and

WHEREAS, Congress signed the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force three days after 9/11, leaving the geographical scope undefined, no time frame, and no clear conditions for victory; and

WHEREAS, the 2001 AUMF has been used to justify U.S. military action more than 40 times in over 20 countries, placing American servicemembers in harm's way for more than 25 years; and

WHEREAS, the conflicts engaged in under the 2001 AUMF has cost more than \$8 trillion and killed a million people worldwide; and

WHEREAS, the Constitution demands appropriation for war shall be for no longer than two years, meaning the responsibility to debate and declare war has been abdicated by Congress ten times; and

WHEREAS, millions of active duty servicemembers and veterans are suffering the effects of trauma from combat deployments to undeclared wars; and

WHEREAS, Congress has only sought to end the 2002 & 1991 AUMFs, leaving the 2001 AUMF in place; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon Congress to honor their most sacred duty to debate and officially declare wars before sending American troops into harm's way, and to immediately repeal the 2001 AUMF.

Submitted by Department of Alaska
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

REJECTED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 429

RECOGNITION OF ADDING 74 SAILORS ON THE VIETNAM MEMORIAL WALL

WHEREAS, on June 3, 2025, marks the 56th anniversary of the collision between the Australian Aircraft Carrier HMAS Melbourne and the US Destroyer USS Frank E. Evans DD754 in the South China Sea. In this collision the Evans was cut in half and 74 Sailors were killed. Seventy-three Sailors went down with the bowels of the ship and one-Sailor was recovered at Sea; and

WHEREAS, the USS Evans was in support of American troops in Vietnam on different orders from the years 1966 until the night of the collision. Although they left Vietnam after their 5, May 1969 operation to re-arm at Subic Bay Philippines. While at Subic Bay the USS Evans was ordered to participate in a multination operation called SEA SPIRIT; and

WHEREAS, Operation SEA SPIRIT was conducted off the coast of Vietnam as defined as the outer edge of Market Time. This area disqualified these 74 Sailors from being enshrined on the Vietnam Memorial Wall. Although exceptions to the geographic limit rule have been made for other personnel killed as part of the Vietnam Conflict, but not in Vietnam itself; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress and DOD to reconsider and make exceptions to have these 74 Sailors be enshrined on the Vietnam Memorial Wall with their brothers and sisters.

Submitted by Department of New Jersey
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 430

PRESERVE U.S. ARMY RESERVE’S DEDICATED AEROMEDICAL EVACUATION CAPABILITY

WHEREAS, among the goals of any armed conflict is to minimize casualties and return as many servicemembers back to their families as possible; and

WHEREAS, from the introduction of aeromedical evacuation in the waning days of World War II, to the lauded “Dust-Off” operations of Vietnam and subsequent conflicts, the Department of the Army has been funded, equipped, and staffed to provide dedicated aeromedical evacuation (MEDEVAC) and capabilities to our Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, said MEDEVAC capabilities, which include specially trained U.S. Army Reserve personnel operating distinctly configured aircraft, have proven to reduce casualty mortality; and

WHEREAS, since the U. S. military’s adoption of the “Golden Hour” principle – requiring evacuation and delivery of critically injured personnel to advanced medical care within 60 minutes – rapid U.S. Army MEDEVAC and life-sustaining treatment enroute, are attributed to saving between 30,000 and 35,000 lives during Iraq and Afghanistan wars alone; and

WHEREAS, force transformation plans suggest that the U.S. Army Reserve is abandoning these dedicated capabilities and integrating MEDEVAC capabilities into general-purpose aviation units while simultaneously reducing the size of those units; and

WHEREAS, such a move would eliminate the Geneva Convention non-combatant protections afforded dedicated MEDEVAC units while simultaneously reducing approximately 4,600 personnel across twelve states and eliminating as many as 141 specifically configured aircraft from the MEDEVAC force; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW), many of whose members are alive today because of dedicated U. S. Army MEDEVAC capabilities believes that preservation of these capabilities is essential to saving lives while preserving and enhancing force morale, cohesion, and combat effectiveness; and

WHEREAS, the bipartisan *Retaining Essential Support for Combat and Unified Evacuation (RESCUE) Act of 2025* (S. 1951) would codify the necessity for Congressional approval to reallocate MEDEVAC capabilities into general purpose aviation units absent an accompanying formal risk assessment; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we encourage Congress to pass the RESCUE Act of 2025 and encourage the President of the United States to sign it into law.

Submitted by Department of Virginia
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 431

COLD WAR CAMPAIGN MEDAL FOR OVERSEAS VETERANS

WHEREAS, Cold War veterans' contributions deserve recognition for their unique overseas service. Unlike traditional wars, the Cold War involved a complex mix of diplomacy, proxy conflicts, and strategic posturing that often avoided direct combat between superpowers but still required significant commitment and sacrifice. U.S. veterans who served abroad during this era should be honored with a Congressional campaign medal, as their service exemplifies the standards of danger, sacrifice, and historical importance met by other recognized campaigns; and

WHEREAS, overseas Cold War duty meant constant readiness against a very real adversary—the Soviet bloc and its allies. U.S. forward-deployed units, nuclear forces, and intelligence assets were always on alert, often within minutes of potential combat. The U.S. victory in the Cold War is the direct result of those who served abroad, defending democracy and personal freedoms against totalitarian threats; and

WHEREAS, Cold War overseas service included, but was not limited to:

- Submarine and naval patrols in contested waters
- Reconnaissance flights and border observation under threat of interception or shoot-down
- Stationing near the Iron Curtain, in Germany, Korea, the Arctic, and other tense regions
- Training accidents, hostile incidents, and exposure to hazardous environments. Many Service Members were killed or injured in incidents directly tied to Cold War tensions, even if no war was officially declared; their sacrifice must be acknowledged; and

WHEREAS, the peaceful end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet bloc were neither automatic nor accidental. They resulted from decades of deterrence, alliances like NATO, and the ongoing forward presence and sacrifices of the U.S. military. Overseas U.S. forces served as both the visible projection of power and the backbone of that deterrence, helping to prevent a catastrophic hot war or nuclear exchange; and

WHEREAS, Veterans of WWII, Korea, Vietnam, and the Gulf Wars have campaign medals that publicly recognize their roles in history. Cold War overseas veterans often served in equally demanding conditions and critical locations, yet without a distinctive medal, their specific and significant contributions have gone unrecognized; and

WHEREAS, creating a Cold War campaign medal for overseas service would align recognition of this long, dangerous commitment with how we honor other major military efforts. A campaign medal is about recognition, not financial benefits. It explicitly acknowledges that standing watch abroad, deterring enemies, and

maintaining peace under nuclear threat are combat-relevant services deserving of national recognition and gratitude; and

WHEREAS, an official Cold War campaign medal would become part of how schools, museums, and ceremonies explain the 20th century: that millions served abroad in a long, tense struggle whose success and sacrifice are measured by the wars that didn't happen; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that Congress be urged to establish a Cold War Campaign Medal for overseas veterans because they stood on the front lines of a prolonged, dangerous, and historically significant conflict—one whose very success (no world war) has made their sacrifices too easy to overlook without formal recognition.

Submitted by VFW Department of Europe
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 432

CONGRESSIONAL RECOGNITION OF OVERSEAS U.S. VETERANS AS A STRATEGIC NATIONAL RESOURCE

WHEREAS, hundreds of thousands of U.S. veterans live abroad in Europe, the Indo-Pacific, the Middle East, and other key regions, and many of them previously served in forward-deployed, high-readiness units that formed the backbone of U.S. deterrence during the Cold War and the Global War on Terror; and

WHEREAS, these overseas veterans retain critical skills in leadership, logistics, medical support, intelligence, engineering, communications, cyber, and civil-military operations that can be leveraged in times of crisis, contingency, or other emergency mobilization; and

WHEREAS, veterans living abroad often possess extensive experience with host-nation systems, languages, cultures, and security environments, and can act as trusted links between U.S. embassies, allied governments, local communities, and currently serving U.S. forces and their families; and

WHEREAS, overseas veterans naturally create networks of mentorship and support for active-duty personnel, Guard and Reserve members, and dependents stationed abroad, thereby strengthening morale, family readiness, and the willingness of Service Members to undertake challenging or remote assignments and tours; and

WHEREAS, the lived experience of overseas veterans offers ground-truth insights into how U.S. policies and systems outside the continental United States function—such as TRICARE Overseas, VA benefits delivery, and coordination with host-nation healthcare—which is essential for enhancing force health protection and medical resilience for the entire overseas military community; and

WHEREAS, the treatment and recognition of overseas veterans sends a powerful message to current Service Members about the Nation's support for those who served, regardless of where they live after service; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to officially recognize U.S. veterans living abroad as a strategic national resource whose presence, expertise, and community ties contribute directly to American security, alliance strength, and global stability posture; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW urges Congress to direct relevant Departments and agencies—including the Department of Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Department of State—to identify, consult with, and include overseas veterans as stakeholders in planning for:

1. Force health protection and medical support overseas, including reforms to TRICARE Overseas and related programs to ensure that the needs and insights of overseas veterans and their families inform resilient, U.S.-directed medical support to forward-deployed forces;
2. Crisis and contingency planning, including non-combatant evacuation operations, surge medical capacity, reception and staging of forces, and civil-military coordination, where overseas veterans' skills, language abilities, and local knowledge can enhance readiness and response; and
3. Public diplomacy and alliance support, recognizing that veterans living abroad often serve as informal ambassadors of the United States and can help strengthen public understanding of the U.S. commitment to collective defense and shared democratic values; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW urges Congress to ensure that legislative and regulatory changes affecting overseas healthcare, veteran benefits, or data protections explicitly consider the impact on overseas veterans as part of maintaining a credible, sustainable, and strategically sound presence; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Secretary of State, and to the Members of Congress, with the request that they give it full and favorable consideration.

Submitted by VFW Department of Europe
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 433

MEDICARE ACCESS FOR OVERSEAS VETERANS

WHEREAS, veterans residing overseas are currently excluded from utilizing Medicare benefits despite paying into the system; and

WHEREAS, this exclusion creates inequity between veterans living in the U.S. and those abroad; and

WHEREAS, Title 38 CFR and U.S.C. §111 establish obligations to provide equitable care for service-connected veterans; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress and the Department of Health and Human Services to extend Medicare coverage to eligible veterans residing overseas, ensuring parity with domestic beneficiaries.

Submitted by Department of Pacific Areas
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

REJECTED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 434

PROTECTING GRACE PERIODS FOR MILITARY & OVERSEAS VOTERS

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Congressional Charter, as outlined in Sect. 230102, declares among its core purposes the fostering of true patriotism and the maintenance and extension of American freedoms, among which the right to vote is fundamental; and

WHEREAS, voting is an expression of true patriotism, a foundational American freedom, and a franchise that has been expanded to more citizens throughout our country's history; and

WHEREAS, since the War of 1812, there is a proud history of states allowing their military service members to vote absentee); and

WHEREAS, during the Civil War, 19 Union states passed laws allowing soldiers to cast ballots from the battlefield, with the 1864 presidential election marking the first widespread use of absentee voting in U.S. history; and,

WHEREAS, in 1986, Congress enacted the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA), requiring all states and territories to allow members of the United States Uniformed Services and Merchant Marine, and their family members, to register and vote absentee in elections for Federal offices; and, most states and territories have their own laws allowing citizens covered by UOCAVA to register and vote absentee in state and local elections as well; and,

WHEREAS, in 2024 over 540,00 Uniformed Services members (and/or their family members) were registered as UOCAVA Voters; and

WHEREAS, currently, at least 20 states offer Election Day grace periods for Military or Overseas Voters to allow ballots that are postmarked by Election Day, and cast in accordance with state law, to be counted if they are received after Election Day; and

WHEREAS, voting while on Active Duty—especially when forward deployed or overseas—can be extremely difficult due to operational demands, frequent relocation, and reliance on military and international mail systems and, as such, Election Day grace periods are an essential tool for maximizing military servicemember (and, military family) participation in our elections; and

WHEREAS, it is unreasonable to expect Military and Overseas (UOCAVA) Voters to mail in their ballots well in advance of Election Day when substantial candidate information and events can change in the final days of any election; and

WHEREAS, in our country's federalist system, and in accordance with Article I, Section 4 of the United States Constitution (the "Elections Clause"), states are the primary authority for administering elections; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars shall advocate for the rights of states to determine their own election laws and rules as they pertain to reasonable Election Day grace periods for Military and Overseas (UOCAVA) voters; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we shall oppose any federal legislation (or, Executive Order) that would eliminate or restrict Election Day grace periods for Military and Overseas (UOCAVA) Voters, or any legislation making it more difficult for states to fully count every single Military and Overseas (UOCAVA) vote, within the parameters of state law.

Submitted by Department of Montana
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

REJECTED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 435

PROTECTING MAIL-IN BALLOTS AND GRACE PERIODS FOR OVERSEAS VOTERS

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Congressional Charter, as outlined in Sect. 230102, declares among its core purposes the fostering of true patriotism and the maintenance and extension of American freedoms; and

WHEREAS, voting is an expression of true patriotism, a foundational American freedom, and a franchise that has been expanded to more citizens throughout our country's history; and

WHEREAS, since the War of 1812, there is a proud history of states allowing their military service members to vote absentee; and

WHEREAS, during the Civil War, 19 Union states passed laws allowing soldiers to cast ballots from the battlefield, with the 1864 presidential election marking the first widespread use of absentee voting in U.S. history; and

WHEREAS, in 1986, Congress enacted the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA), requiring all states and territories to allow members of the United States Uniformed Services and Merchant Marine, and their family members, to register and vote absentee in elections for Federal offices; and, most states and territories have their own laws allowing citizens covered by UOCAVA to register and vote absentee in state and local elections as well; and

WHEREAS, in 2024 over 540,00 Uniformed Services members (and/or their family members) were registered as UOCAVA Voters; and

WHEREAS, currently, at least 20 states offer Election Day grace periods for Military or Overseas Voters to allow ballots that are postmarked by Election Day, and cast in accordance with state law, to be counted if they are received after Election Day; and,

WHEREAS, voting while on Active Duty, especially when forward deployed or overseas, can be extremely difficult due to operational demands, frequent relocation, and reliance on military and international mail systems and, as such, Election Day grace periods are an essential to ensuring these citizens are not disenfranchised; and

WHEREAS, substantial candidate information and events can change in the final days of any election, it is unreasonable to expect Military and Overseas (UOCAVA) Voters to mail their ballots well in advance of Election Day; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we advocate for the rights of states to determine their own election laws and rules as they pertain to reasonable Election Day grace periods for Military and Overseas (UOCAVA) voters; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we shall oppose any federal legislation (or, Executive Order) that would eliminate or restrict the use of mail-in ballots and/or Election Day grace periods for Military and Overseas (UOCAVA) Voters, or any legislation making it more difficult for states to fully count every single Military and Overseas (UOCAVA) vote, within the parameters of state law.

Submitted by Department of Colorado
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 436

SUPPORT THE CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL FOR WWII NURSES

WHEREAS, during World War II, more than 59,000 Army nurses and 14,000 Navy nurses volunteered to serve, providing critical medical care in combat zones, aboard hospital ships, and in evacuation aircraft, often under fire and in extreme conditions; and

WHEREAS, these nurses endured bombings, sniper attacks, and captivity as prisoners of war, while continuing to care for wounded service members with skill and compassion, contributing to a historically low mortality rate among American soldiers; and

WHEREAS, their service extended beyond the battlefield to post-war humanitarian missions, including caring for victims of the atomic bombings in Hiroshima and preventing disease outbreaks in refugee camps across Europe; and

WHEREAS, The WWII nurses included women of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, such as African-American, Chinese-American, Japanese-American and nurses from the American territories of Guam, Hawaii and the Philippine Commonwealth, who overcame discrimination to serve honorably and heroically; and

WHEREAS, despite their valor, many of these nurses served without full military status, equal pay, or veteran benefits, and their contributions have not been adequately recognized; and

WHEREAS, S.2195 (introduced by Senator Tammy Baldwin and cosponsored by Senators Steve Daines and Ben Ray Lujan) and H.R.4901 (introduced by Representative Elise Stefanik and cosponsored by Representatives Christopher Deluzio and Jennifer Kiggans) seeks to honor these nurses with a Congressional Gold Medal, one of the highest civilian honors in the United States; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the U.S. Congress must pass the WWII Nurses Congressional Gold Medal Act.

Submitted by Department of California
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 601

ADEQUATE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS BUDGET

WHEREAS, there are more than 18 million living veterans; and

WHEREAS, Department of Veterans Affairs anticipates that enrollment in the Veterans Health Administration will grow to nearly 10 million veterans and more than 7.2 million of those veterans will be seen by VA for health care; and

WHEREAS, the passage of favorable legislation, such as the PACT Act, more veterans will seek to use VA for numerous other benefit programs including education programs, recipients of disability compensation, and insurance policies; and

WHEREAS, the complexity of conditions that veterans which receive VA health for care will add demands to the system for years to come; and

WHEREAS, even though appropriations for VA continues to increase, proposals to return to previous funding levels will create a disparity that is detrimental to the services VA is obligated to provide; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress of the United States to authorize appropriations for the Department of Veterans Affairs which fully fund all staffing and maintain the integrity and enhancement of veteran entitlement programs and health care system.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 602

VA CLAIMS WORKLOAD

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has made significant progress in addressing claim workloads for compensation, pension, education benefits and appeals, yet submissions and appeals continues to grow; and

WHEREAS, Congress has provided increased funding for staffing at VA and improved its oversight. Yet, the attrition rate and quality of new hires and retirement of journeymen claims processors continues to challenge VA's ability to train and maintain a technically proficient workforce; and

WHEREAS, VA has attempted to increase workload production by implementing arbitrary timeliness goals that rarely account for the complexity of claims; and

WHEREAS, VA continues to order redundant and often unnecessary examinations when the evidence of record is sufficient to make a determination, or claimants submit adequate medical records and legitimate doctor's opinions; and

WHEREAS, after dozens of Congressional hearings, numerous studies, changes of VA leadership, altered workflow, amended work processes, erratic IT development, as well as fruitless pilot programs and experimental initiatives, it is clear that there are no easy, simple or quick solutions that lead to the speedy reduction of the workload; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that Congress require Department of Veterans Affairs to accept legitimate private medical evidence and opinions in lieu of VA examinations whenever they are sufficient for rating purposes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we continue to advise that Congress exercise its oversight authority and provide the vital resources necessary to sustain a sufficient workforce capable of effectively managing the workload and provide quality and timely service to those claiming benefits or appealing decisions from VA; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the VA should revisit their production goals to reduce error rates; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress bolsters its oversight and funding of VA technology initiatives to ensure that they are constructive, relevant and effective in streamlining claims processing and improving quality of entitlement decisions.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 603

VFW OPPOSES BUDGET CUTS THAT HARM VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES

WHEREAS, the United States of America has a sacred obligation to care for those who have borne the battle and burdens caused by military service as well as their families; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States has a similar sacred honor to honor the dead by helping the living; and

WHEREAS, the United States of America seeks ways to cut spending to address a national debt that has been described as a threat to the continued existence and security of our nation; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) was established to make cuts and suggestions for cuts to address said deficits; and

WHEREAS, recommended cuts include research for illnesses impacting veterans and their families such as Lou Gehrig's Disease, conditions related to Agent Orange and Burn Pits, funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs suicide prevention hotline, and more; and

WHEREAS, recommended and actual cuts can cause irreparable damage including increases in rates of suicide among veterans due to a lack of economic security; and

WHEREAS, balancing budgets on the backs of veterans and the military is something the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States has never supported; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, supports fiscal discipline that does not harm veterans, the military, or their families; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call upon Congress and the President of the United States to reject proposed cuts and reverse implemented cuts that harm veterans, the military, and their families.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 604

APPEALS MODERNIZATION AND LEGACY REMANDS

WHEREAS, VA beneficiaries had to wait years to have VA review unfavorable benefits decisions under the legacy appeals process. VA implemented the Appeals Modernization Act (AMA) of 2019 designed to streamline the VA appeals process by creating different avenues claimants may use when disagree with benefit decisions; and

WHEREAS, the Appeals Modernization Act intended to reduce the appeals backlog by prohibiting claimants from continuously submitting additional evidence throughout the appeal. Claimants may still submit additional evidence if the claimant submits a supplemental claim or if the claimant provides the evidence at the time the appeal is filed; and

WHEREAS, VA has a duty to assist claimants by obtaining federal records in conjunction with claims and by providing examinations to evaluate the severity of the condition and obtain a nexus linking the claimed condition to the Veterans service when necessary; and

WHEREAS, VA is still addressing the diminishing legacy appeals backlog due to the continuous cycle of remanded claims which need additional development that was not performed when the claim was first processed and BVA is now experiencing an increased inventory in AMA appeals and still has not provided a viable appeals management system; and

WHEREAS, VA adjudicators regularly assign later effective dates negatively impacting veterans despite claims being continuously pursued within the framework of AMA; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs enforces proper development and timely adjudication of VA claims by obtaining all pertinent records when claims are initially processed and ensuring the Board expeditiously and ethically discharges its pending workload without arbitrary bureaucratic hurdles; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs enforces policies mandating that exams are requested with accurate information and eliminating biases caused by improper phrasing on exam order requests; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs enforces policies authorizing the assignment of earlier effective dates when claims are continuously pursued without the veteran submitting an additional appeal for the effective date.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief

To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 605

USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AT THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States has long supported modernization efforts that improve the delivery of benefits and services to veterans, service members, survivors, and their families; and

WHEREAS, the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence technologies presents opportunities to enhance efficiency, accuracy, and timeliness within the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

WHEREAS, the implementation of artificial intelligence systems must be approached with caution to ensure transparency, accountability, and the protection of sensitive veteran data; and

WHEREAS, the claims and benefits process requires human judgment, advocacy, oversight, and accountability to ensure veterans receive fair and accurate decisions; and the use of artificial intelligence must not replace or diminish the critical role of trained employees and accredited representatives who assist veterans in navigating complex systems; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States maintains that technological advancements should support, not supplant, the workforce dedicated to serving veterans; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon the Department of Veterans Affairs, Congress, and other relevant stakeholders to ensure that any adoption of artificial intelligence enhances service delivery through VA's fully staffed, highly-trained, and accountable workforce dedicated to serving veterans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that artificial intelligence tools must be implemented in a manner that preserves human oversight, protects veteran data, and strengthens—rather than replaces—the workforce committed to assisting veterans, service members, survivors, and their families.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

DIGITAL CLAIMS PROCESS

WHEREAS, advancements in technology have created an expectation among many Americans to conduct business in real time in a secure, digital space; and

WHEREAS, Department of Veterans Affairs now processes nearly all its workload in a digital environment; this includes claims for compensation, pension, survivor benefits and appeals, but still fails to offer timely access to this digital environment to veterans' representatives in the benefits process; and

WHEREAS, VA has committed to developing tools, such as the Automated Development Support (ADS) Tool, that allows adjudicators to process claims more efficiently using artificial intelligence. Proper training and implementation of these tools and the adjudicator's assessment are vital to ensure quality benefit decisions; and

WHEREAS, VA has created new self-service tools for veterans to file claim actions, but has failed to similarly invest in secure resources that would allow VSOs to provide quality claims assistance to veterans in real time, relying instead on its antiquated Personal Identity Verification (PIV) credentialing process, the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) has unsuccessfully tried to engage with VA to assist in developing cutting-edge digital tools for VA-accredited representatives to provide high quality assistance anytime, anywhere; and

WHEREAS, in the interim, VSOs have been forced to either contract with third-party vendors or develop internal ad-hoc solutions at substantial cost to the VSOs and without proper insight or oversight from VA; and

WHEREAS, VSOs have had to request VA's Office of General Counsel intervention in executing the same principal functions in a digital environment which VSOs previously performed with paper claims; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Department of Veterans Affairs to update regulations to authorize VSOs the same advocacy rights in the digital environment as were allowed in the paper-based claims process and honor proof of digital transmission to VA as the effective date; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW supports the use of Automated Decision Support in assisting RVSRs to accurately adjudicate claims for benefits, we encourage the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to continue to work with all VA-accredited entities to develop real-time, secure access to tools that allow advocates to provide comprehensive assistance to clients in real time; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge VA to integrate their current antiquated claims management systems into one modern data management system.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 607

PROTECTING VA ACCREDITATION

WHEREAS, VA has established regulations ensuring claimants are able to obtain assistance from accredited representatives to assist in the preparation, presentation, and prosecution of claims for VA benefits; and

WHEREAS, VA accredits national organizations, attorneys, and claim agents to assist claimants file for VA benefits once they have completed training approved by VA's Office of General Counsel. Accredited attorneys and claim agents may only charge fees that have been deemed reasonable by VA and these fees may only be applied at specific steps within the claims process; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars provide representation to VA beneficiaries free of charge; and

WHEREAS, there is a prevalence of non-accredited companies and individuals that the VFW calls "Claim Sharks" preying on VA beneficiaries by illegally charging exorbitant fees that clearly violate federal statutes and regulations; and

WHEREAS, there is a growing industry of artificial intelligence programs designed to automate the claims system and bypass accredited representation, often charging excessive fees for their services, and

WHEREAS, these non-accredited entities have lobbied congress attempting to pass legislation that would fundamentally dismantle the basic consumer protections offered through VA accreditation and legalize predatory fee structures contrary to well-established veteran consumer protection standards to the detriment of all VA beneficiaries; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to pass legislation protecting VA beneficiaries from predatory companies, organizations, agencies and individuals attempting to by-pass the VA accreditation process and monetize the wartime illnesses and injuries of our veterans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge federal law enforcement agencies to investigate and prosecute companies, organizations, agencies and individuals that prey on our nation's veterans and their dependents by charging exorbitant fees under the guise of providing claims assistance.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 608

FAIR AND FAVORABLE EFFECTIVE DATES

WHEREAS, by regulation VA assigns effective dates for disability compensation based on the date the entitlement arose and can be as early as the day following separation from active service if the claim is submitted within one year of separation; and

WHEREAS, if a claim is not submitted within one year following separation from active service, VA assigns effective dates based on the date entitlement arose or the date VA receives a claim for disability compensation, whichever is later; and

WHEREAS, veterans regularly suffer from disabilities and diseases for years prior to filing a claim for compensation due to myriad reasons, resulting in lost compensation from the government; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress pass veteran-centric legislation granting effective dates based on when the entitlement arose, regardless of the date a claim is received by VA.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 609

UNDERSERVED VETERANS

WHEREAS, as our nation has become more diverse, so too has our military and veterans' population, and understanding a veteran's gender, race, ethnicity, and orientation can help identify high risk concerns; and

WHEREAS, women, LGBTQ+, racial, and ethnic minority veterans face barriers and challenges across different life domains and access to VA benefits; and

WHEREAS, the demographic of the United States is everchanging resulting in the need to remain fluid to ensure that all veteran demographics can access VA benefits relevant to their needs; and

WHEREAS, VA does not have sufficient data to fully understand the barriers certain veterans face and determine whether certain veteran demographics are underserved; now; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge VA to improve data collection and better analyze results to identify challenges and disparities in benefits of underserved veterans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge VA to implement favorable changes to the benefit of underserved veterans based on findings of fact and not anecdotal or arbitrary statistics.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 610

**SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE FOR SURVIVING FAMILY MEMBERS OF
VETERAN SUICIDE**

WHEREAS, the mental health crises that veterans face from various service endeavors, resulting in suicide, whose only resolution is programs that are reactive; and

WHEREAS, family members and caregivers affected by veteran suicide whose support is provided through unrelated and underfunded services; and

WHEREAS, Suicide is very often Service related; and

WHEREAS, the need for this resolution to elevate national support and garner the attention of federal legislators; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition Congress to enact legislation which would provide support and assistance for surviving family members to include a review of all eligible benefits, bereavement counseling, career counseling and job placement assistance for next of kin of covered veterans who are deceased as the result of suicide.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 611

TINNITUS AND HEARING LOSS PRESUMPTIVE COMPENSABLE SERVICE CONNECTION

WHEREAS, veterans of the armed services who served in combat and certain occupational specialties have a high incidence rate of hearing loss or tinnitus as a direct result of acoustic trauma; and

WHEREAS, veterans, from earlier, were not afforded a comprehensive audiological examination upon entrance and discharge from the military services, but instead were subject to highly inaccurate test methods; and

WHEREAS, in recent years the second leading disability granted service connection by Department of Veterans Affairs was for hearing loss or tinnitus; and

WHEREAS, the VA has the authority to grant service connection for disabilities associated with combat-related diseases or injuries even if medically undocumented at the time of service; and

WHEREAS, in 2005 the Institutes of Medicine (IOM) (now referred to as the National Academy of Sciences) released a study that showed that nearly all service members are exposed to acoustic trauma at some point during their military service and that many experience hearing loss and/or tinnitus as a result, often years after service. However, “after the fact, hearing loss or tinnitus incurred as a result of military service cannot be distinguished with certainty from subsequent noise-induced hearing loss...” Given these findings, reasonable doubt must be resolved in favor of veterans who suffered acoustic trauma in service; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we urge Congress and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to grant service connection on a presumptive basis for any veteran diagnosed after discharge with hearing loss or tinnitus when the evidence shows that the veteran participated in combat or worked in a position or occupational specialty likely to cause acoustic trauma; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to amend the Schedule for Rating Disabilities to provide a minimum compensable evaluation for any service-connected hearing loss for which a hearing aid is medically indicated.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 612

TOXIC EXPOSURES

WHEREAS, the PACT Act has acknowledged that veterans who have been exposed to toxic substances suffer from an array of conditions and diseases, and should not continue to have to undergo a burdensome claims process; and

WHEREAS, for decades VA was reluctant to establish a clear procedure for establishing additional presumptive conditions related to toxic exposures in service. In compliance with the PACT Act, VA has created a process to research, review, and add presumptive conditions based on association with toxic exposures; and

WHEREAS, veterans of current and past conflicts were exposed to numerous environmental hazards, including open air burn pits, the anti-malaria drug mefloquine, radioactive substances, herbicides and other hazards; and

WHEREAS, the United States military has conducted testing, monitoring, and clean-up operations related to various chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear weapons resulting in exposure both within the borders of the United States and abroad; and

WHEREAS, veterans and family members stationed at Camp Lejeune who consumed contaminated water and now suffer from associated conditions and have recently benefited from the passage of the PACT Act and while VA acknowledged this fact. There are differences in what conditions are compensable and those which only receive reimbursement for medical care. Additionally, the requirement to be stationed on the base for 30 days is arbitrary and ignores thousands who graduated from training in less time; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to invest adequate resources to study, diagnose, and treat conditions and illnesses associated with toxic exposures and provide oversight of VA's presumptive decision process; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge Congress and the Department of Veterans Affairs to grant a presumption of service connection for all conditions and illnesses that are deemed by scientific evidence to be at least as likely as not associated with or caused by exposure to a toxic substance or environmental hazard, to be transparent about the presumptive decision process, and to include input from veterans on what exposures and conditions will be reviewed; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, urge Congress to direct the Department of Veterans Affairs to conduct comprehensive research on the correlation between environmental conditions aboard submarines, including the submarine atmosphere and ionizing radiation, and the medical conditions diagnosed and treated in Active-Duty and Veteran Submariners; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge Congress and the Department of Defense to reduce or eliminate the use of known toxins on and around military installations and disclose known and potential toxic exposures during all military operations and at facilities within the United States and abroad; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress ensures that the Department of Defense expedites declassification efforts related to exposure events and that the Department of Veterans Affairs extends presumptive service connection to veterans suffering from conditions or illnesses found to be associated with exposure to toxic substances.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 613

FEMALE REPRODUCTIVE CANCERS AND OTHER GYNECOLOGICAL CONDITIONS DUE TO TOXIC EXPOSURE

WHEREAS the Department of Veterans Affairs does not recognize as presumptive any reproductive issues to include cancers suffered by female veterans as attributed to exposure to either the class of tactical herbicides commonly known as “Agent Orange” in Southeast Asia or to the contaminated water at Camp Lejeune; and

WHEREAS female military personnel did serve in Vietnam and within the 12 mile off-shore limits of the Republic of Vietnam and at the Camp Lejeune Marine Corps base complex and the only thing the Department of Veterans Affairs currently recognizes as presumptive are birth defects but no other issues specific to females only to those females that served in the Vietnam Theater of Operations and not to those stationed at Camp Lejeune; and

WHEREAS under the PACT ACT for personnel who served in Southwest Asia are granted a presumption of service connection for reproductive cancers but does not recognize birth defects of children born to these veterans; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon the Department of Veterans Affairs to recognize as presumptive, any and all female reproductive cancers and other gynecological conditions after exposure in Southeast Asia and Camp Lejeune and to include, as presumptive, birth defects to the children of any veteran who has served in areas effected by chemical contamination both overseas and within the United States and its overseas territories.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 614

JUSTICE FOR ALS VETERANS

WHEREAS, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig's Disease, is a fatal neurodegenerative disease that destroys the nerve cells that control voluntary muscle function, eventually impacting the ability to move, speak and breathe; and

WHEREAS, numerous international institutes have been unable to determine causation or cure for ALS in more than a century of research, but have concluded that the incidence of ALS impacts veterans, especially deployed veterans, at nearly twice the rate that it impacts the general populations; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has acknowledged this disproportionate affliction in the veteran population to the effect that it has established presumptive causation between ALS diagnosis and military service of as short as 90 days duration; and

WHEREAS, under Title 38, U. S. C., Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) is available to the survivors of veterans who die due to service-related disabilities; and

WHEREAS, also under Title 38, a monthly increase of DIC is available to those survivors who were married to veterans for eight (8) years prior to their death, if the VA had rated said veteran was disabled for a full eight (8) years prior to their death; and

WHEREAS, since its discovery in 1869, the prognosis for those stricken with ALS today has largely remained the same – death within an average of only two to five years; and

WHEREAS, the survival prognosis of this aggressive, presumptive service-connected disease is insufficient to meet the eight-year rule; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon the VA to carve out an exception to the eight-year disability rule to allow survivors of veterans who die from ALS to receive the increased monthly DIC payment; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call upon Congress to renew efforts to legislate and fund such action as a matter of extreme urgency.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 615

DOMICILIARY PROGRAMS AND TEMPORARY TOTAL RATINGS

WHEREAS, Department of Veterans Affairs provides free medical treatment for service connected disabilities; and

WHEREAS, VA grants temporary total ratings for veterans hospitalized in excess of 21 days due to service connected disabilities; and

WHEREAS, veterans are not able to work while participating in VA domiciliary and day programs; and

WHEREAS, VA has mischaracterized the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims decision *Mangham v. Shinseki* and now no longer considers domiciliary and day programs as “hospital care” for temporary 100 percent disability ratings; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that Congress restore eligibility for temporary 100 percent ratings to include medical treatment provided by all domiciliary and day programs provided the program is treating a service-connected disability.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 616

IMPROVE BENEFITS FOR SURVIVORS

WHEREAS, Dependents Indemnity Compensation (DIC) provide to dependents of fallen servicemembers and veterans who succumb to service-connected conditions has not had any significant increases since 1993, and

WHEREAS, the DIC rate is paid at forty-three percent of one hundred percent permanent and total disability, while other federal survivor programs are paid at fifty-five percent; and

WHEREAS, the Survivors and Dependents Educational Assistance Program provides educational support to eligible dependents (spouse or children) of a service member who died on active duty or a veteran who died or is permanently and totally disabled due to a service-connected disability; and

WHEREAS, DEA benefits increase annually, they fail to increase at the same rate as tuition; and

WHEREAS, Congress recently increased the monthly allowance for DEA while also decreasing the amount of months to utilize the benefit; and

WHEREAS, nothing can replace the enormity of the loss and sacrifice of military survivors, increasing benefits that align with other federal programs will provide them the opportunity to build a meaningful and productive future for themselves and their children; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to increase Survivors and Dependents benefits on par with comparable federal survivor programs; and to reflect the rising costs of living and education expenses, with future increases indexed to reflect the average cost of living increase by the Department of Social Security and tuition costs as reported by the Department of Education.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 617

VA LIFE INSURANCE PROGRAM

WHEREAS, Department of Veterans Affairs has established life insurance designed to support veterans whom might otherwise be uninsurable due to service-connected disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs has expanded the VA life insurance program making it more competitive with the private sector and opening enrollment to all service-connected veterans without a time-limit to apply; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress and Department of Veterans Affairs to continue to ensure that VA life insurance rates are competitive with private insurance company rates; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to pass legislation to index for inflation the maximum coverage rate of the VA Life Insurance program.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 618

RECOGNITION OF MILITARY SEXUAL VIOLENCE

WHEREAS, 1.4 million post-9/11 service members have been affected by military sexual violence, as defined in the Uniform Code of Military Justice § Section 10 Article 120, indicating that one in three service members have experienced such violence; and

WHEREAS, this prevalence shows no significant gender difference, with statistical suicide rates reflecting higher incidences among males being raped in combat zones; and

WHEREAS, while Department of Defense official statistics report 30,000 incidents of sexual assault to service members annually, the actual prevalence was 75,569 in 2021 and 73,695 in 2023, demonstrating that the rates of military sexual violence are two to four times higher than reported; and

WHEREAS 35,000 service members each year, while on active duty, either attempt suicide or experience suicidal ideation, with a greater number attempting suicide; and

WHEREAS, of the 1.4 million service members in the 20 years post-9/11, 700,000 have attempted or completed suicide due to the infliction of military sexual violence; and

WHEREAS, a Day of Recognition for Military Sexual Violence should be established on October 11th each year to expose the great injustices inflicted on our bravest service members, whose courage to stand up to defend this Nation, while concurrently fighting to heal from criminal acts perpetrated against them while protecting the United States, is recognized; now, therefore

BE RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon the Department of Defense and all branches of the military to acknowledge the severity of military sexual violence and to implement comprehensive measures to prevent such incidents; and

BE FURTHER RESOLVED that the VFW supports the establishment of October 11th as the Day of Recognition for Military Sexual Violence to honor and support survivors, raise awareness, and promote necessary reforms within the military to address and prevent sexual violence.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 619

DESIGNATION AND PROTECTION OF MILITARY GRAVES AS SACRED GROUND

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) is dedicated to honoring the memory of all veterans who have served our nation with valor, and recognizes the profound importance of preserving their final resting places with the utmost respect; and

WHEREAS, military graves represent the hallowed ground where the brave men and women who have defended our freedoms are laid to rest, and as such, these sites must be treated with the highest reverence and dignity; and

WHEREAS the conversion of cemeteries containing military graves into parks or other public spaces undermines the sanctity of these burial grounds and dishonors the memory of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our country; and

WHEREAS, the VFW believes that all military graves should be permanently recognized as sacred ground, protected from any alteration or repurposing that would detract from their intended use as places of remembrance and honor; and

WHEREAS, it is imperative that any cemeteries that have been converted into parks or other uses be restored to their original status as cemeteries and preserved exclusively for that purpose; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon all levels of government—federal, state, and local—to recognize all military graves as sacred ground, ensuring that no changes are made to these locations that would convert them into parks or any other type of public space; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW strongly urges the immediate restoration of all cemeteries containing military graves that have been converted into parks or other non-cemetery uses, and that these cemeteries be returned to their proper status, to honor the memory and sacrifice of our nation's veterans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution be forwarded to the President of the United States, members of Congress, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, state governors, and other relevant authorities, urging their support and action on this matter of national significance.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 620

GOVERNMENT HEADSTONES

WHEREAS, VA Form 40-1330 of August 2022, item # 16 describes periods of War Service that were defined by congress that are optional, to include a box for OTHER; and

WHEREAS, the designated War Service Period is used by VA even if the deceased veteran did not serve in the actual place of war, country or geographical area; and

WHEREAS, the instructions for VA Form 40-1330 do not currently provide an option for era of service when service was not performed in the actual place of war; and

WHEREAS, VA policy does provide for specific country of war service such as Afghanistan and Iraq if the individual actually served in that country; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition the Department of Veterans Affairs, National Cemetery Administration, to amend the instructions for VA Form 40-1330 and the implementing policies, to allow for the option of “Era” to be inscribed following the inscription of any period of war that is listed in item # 16, if the individual did not serve in the actual place of war, without additional inscription charge.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 621

VSO INVOLVEMENT WITH VA SCHEDULE FOR RATING DISABILITIES

WHEREAS, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs' primary strategic goal is to consistently communicate with stakeholders to assess and maximize performance, evaluate needs and build long-term relationships and trust; and

WHEREAS, proposing changes which negatively affect veterans without collaborating with Veteran Service Organizations erodes trust between the Department of Veterans Affairs and the veterans entrusted to their care; and

WHEREAS, changes to the VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities must undergo a concurrence process requiring review by over a dozen offices prior to publishing change proposals in the Federal Register; and

WHEREAS, VA must provide the public with a 60-day period to provide comments on proposed changes after which the proposed changes must undergo an additional concurrence process requiring review by over a dozen offices prior to publishing a final rule; and

WHEREAS, during the most recent proposed VASRD changes VA did not collaborate with VSO stakeholders on changes prior to drafting and publishing proposed changes; and

WHEREAS, VA received more than 2.5 thousand comments highlighting concerns of proposed changes of the rating schedule for a single body system which VA must review and address prior to publishing a final rule; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to collaborate with VSO stakeholders prior to proposing any regulation or policy changes which impact our nation's veterans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide updates to the VSO community providing the status of proposed and final rules whenever there are significant delays in the rule making process.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 622

EXPAND VETERAN TREATMENT COURTS

WHEREAS, the United States military instills a sense of honor, duty, leadership, commitment and respect, evident in the millions of veterans who have returned home to their communities as productive citizens, strengthened by their military experience; and

WHEREAS, an estimated twenty percent of veterans has symptoms of a mental disorder or cognitive impairment, and about 1 in 10 veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan seen in the VA healthcare system have a substance use disorder and there is a well-established link between substance abuse and combat-related mental illness and an unprecedented number of veterans nationwide are appearing in the courts to face charges stemming directly from these issues; and

WHEREAS, Drug Courts evolved out of the necessity for a solution-based approach to an influx of drug abusing offenders before the courts; and the Drug Court model and the Mental Health Court model are the nation's most successful, cost effective, and scientifically validated tool to deal with substance abuse and mental health issues in the criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS, Veterans Treatment Courts are hybrid Drug Courts and Mental Health Courts and have evolved out of the growing need for a treatment court model designed specifically for justice-involved veterans to maximize efficiency and economize resources while making use of the distinct military culture consistent among veterans; and

WHEREAS, Veterans Treatment Courts build upon this camaraderie by allowing participants to go through the treatment court process with people who are similarly situated and have common past experiences; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we advocate for the continued use and expansion of Veteran Treatment Courts across the country.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

VETERAN HOUSING AND FOOD SECURITY PRIORITIES

WHEREAS, homelessness among veterans has significantly decreased due to coordinated efforts across multiple agencies of government and the ambitious goal of the Department of Veterans Affairs to eliminate homelessness among veterans; and

WHEREAS, a growing number of female veterans experience homelessness, many of whom have dependents in their care; and

WHEREAS, local and state homeless veteran agencies and programs are federally funded by the Department of Veterans Affairs Grant and Per Diem program and the Department of Labor Homeless Veterans Reintegration program; and

WHEREAS, programs such as VA's Supportive Services for Veteran Families and the joint Housing and Urban Development and VA's Supportive Housing program are showing signs of success in reducing homelessness; and

WHEREAS, research has found that among 18- to 64-year-olds, veterans are 7.4 percent more likely to live in a food-insecure household than nonveterans, while veterans also use food assistance programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) at lower rates than civilians; and

WHEREAS, the VA acknowledges its obligation to maintain comprehensive assistance to veterans who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness to the best of its capabilities; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the President and Congress to continue to address veterans' homelessness by increasing the availability of safe and affordable housing for veterans and their families, expanding educational and employment opportunities and training and providing gender-specific services; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Department of Veterans Affairs should periodically adjust Grant and Per Diem program rates for inflation to ensure sufficient operation of homeless veteran assistance programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that VA compensation and non-service connected pension should not be considered countable income by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and Department of Agriculture in determining program eligibility; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Department of Veterans Affairs should annually adjust grant and per diem program rates for inflation, based on separate instances for food and housing, with the latter adjusted for local variations in housing cost based on the Variable Housing Allowance Tables used by the Department of Defense to ensure sufficient operation of homeless veteran assistance programs.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief

To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 624

CONSUMER PROTECTIONS FOR VETERANS

WHEREAS, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) reports that fraudulent and predatory activities affecting service members, veterans, and their families are on the rise; and

WHEREAS, predatory companies use a plethora of discreditable tactics ranging from high-interest auto and payday loans to phishing scams and identity theft; and

WHEREAS, predatory companies and bad actors prey upon individuals that are known to have financial savings, stable income, or consistent government entitlements such as disability compensation and social security benefits; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to pursue legislation criminalizing unscrupulous business practices and fraudulent scams that prey upon service members, veterans, and their families; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Department of Justice to pursue criminal charges and convictions when deplorable business practices and scams are identified.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 625

ENSURE VETERAN SUCCESS IN EDUCATION

WHEREAS, our nation has consistently supported the future success of our warfighters through robust veterans' education benefits, historically molding generations of proven leaders; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States has worked to secure and preserve quality education benefits for all generations of veterans; and

WHEREAS, Department of Veterans Affairs enrolled nearly one million veterans across all G.I. Bill programs in the past academic year; and

WHEREAS, despite significant improvements to consumer resources for student veterans and increasing GI Bill rates by 2.8%, there is inconsistent access to quality consumer information and financial hardships that continue to drive perceptions in Washington that student-veterans are not succeeding in higher education; and

WHEREAS, many combat veterans do not fully qualify for the Post-9/11 GI Bill benefit; and

WHEREAS, certain schools and programs seek to circumvent benefit guidelines in order to reap significant financial benefit; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to ensure proper oversight of Department of Veterans Affairs educational benefit programs by developing quality metrics with which to demonstrate student veteran success in higher education, and close financial loopholes through which certain academic programs can exploit GI Bill reimbursement models; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress ensure veterans receive equitable access to benefits like housing payments and quality pre-enrollment educational information to ensure veterans are academically and financially prepared to succeed in higher education; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to increase stipends for books, electronic devices such as laptops and tablets, instructional support applications and cost of living adjustments to give student veterans the proper resources and tools to be successful in their pursuit of higher education; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we work to extend full GI Bill benefits for all combat veterans and preserve quality GI Bill benefits for all current conflict veterans and future conflict veterans to ensure they have access to quality education assistance programs.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 626

FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID

WHEREAS, prospective and current college students need to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) form to apply for federal student aid such as federal grants, work-study funds and loans; and

WHEREAS, dependent student must report their parent's information in addition to their own on the FAFSA® form; and

WHEREAS, the FAFSA® requires parents to disclose any untaxed income to include veteran noneducation benefits such as Disability, Death Pension or Dependency & Indemnity Compensation (DIC) and/or VA Educational Work-Study allowances; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Education utilizes this Untaxed Income to calculate the parent's Expected Family Contribution; and

WHEREAS, any increase in the parent's Expected Family Contribution reduces the amount of aid awarded to the dependent student, thereby financially harming the dependent student; and

WHEREAS, the veteran and/or surviving spouse parent was awarded these benefits for injury or death related to their service, NOT to pay for the education of their dependent children; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Department of Education to remove any questions related to a parent's Untaxed Income related to veteran benefits from the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 627

SUPPORT VETERANS EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars recognizes that it is in the best interest of our nation to have a strong and viable veterans employment and training system; and

WHEREAS, Congress has recognized that veterans of all eras, especially recently separated service members and veterans with service connected disabilities find it difficult to obtain meaningful employment and careers; and

WHEREAS, while there are certain employment and educational programs in place for veterans such programs must have a proactive, long-term career focus; and

WHEREAS, programs designed to encourage federal employment of veterans, assist veterans in finding employment in their communities, and encourage federal contractors to hire veterans demand reasonable funding and responsible oversight to ensure success; and

WHEREAS, state agencies who receive federal funding are not held to the same veteran hiring standards as the federal government; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support viable and effective veterans employment and training systems, such as the Jobs for Veterans State Grant program and other Department of Labor Veterans Employment and Training Service programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to improve and enforce federal veteran-hiring mandates for contractors who do business with the federal government as outlined in Title 38 USC 4212; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that federal veteran hiring initiatives and programs must be held accountable for the effectiveness of the services provided and funding should be adjusted to reflect abilities in creating long-term meaningful careers for veterans, and state agencies that receive federal funding must be held to the same standards and report to Congress on the success of veteran hiring initiatives.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 628

VA HOME LOAN CORRECTION

WHEREAS, the VA home loan guarantee program was created through the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, enabling veterans since World War II to purchase homes without a down payment, making homeownership more accessible to those who served in the military; and

WHEREAS, some veterans were denied use of their VA home loan benefits due to segregation practices, discrimination of minorities and women, and a lack of accurate information provided to all veterans from World War II and after; and

WHEREAS, for veterans who did not have the opportunity to use the home loan, this impacted generational wealth-building for the families affected; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enable veterans from World War II and after, who were unable or prohibited from using their VA home loan benefit, to be able to transfer their benefit to their descendants; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Congress and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs provide the VA home loan benefit to the descendants of deceased veterans from World War II and onward who were unable or prohibited from using the benefit while alive.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 629

VETERAN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

WHEREAS, government reports consistently indicate that many federal agencies fail to reach their three-percent contracting goal for disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, many veterans and disabled veterans lack access to the necessary capital to invest in small business opportunities; and

WHEREAS, the federal government has failed to deliver adequate tools to veterans, offering the opportunity to fulfill the three-percent federal contracting mandate; and

WHEREAS, the Small Business Administration remains underfunded and understaffed to fulfill its mission of establishing and maintaining robust veterans' programs; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that Congress expand entrepreneurial education and networking programs for veterans via veterans small business centers and other entrepreneurship programs funded through the Small Business Administration; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress expand veteran's and disabled veteran's access to capital by expanding direct loan programs through the Small Business Administration; but such programs should never come at the expense of other earned veterans' benefits; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress hold Department of Veterans Affairs accountable for its duty to properly verify veteran entrepreneurs to help achieve the federal government's three-percent veterans contracting goal.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 630

VETERAN READINESS AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

WHEREAS, the period of eligibility for Department of Veterans Affairs Veteran Readiness and Employment benefits is 12 years from the date of separation from the military or the date the veteran was first notified by VA of a service-connected disability rating; and

WHEREAS, many veterans do not understand their eligibility to VR&E services and the benefits of the program until later in life when they become so disabled that their disabilities create an employment barrier; and

WHEREAS, VR&E lacks quality performance measures that measure readiness based on the long-term effects of disability and the likelihood that a disability may require further rehabilitation; and

WHEREAS, VR&E can take more than 90 days from enrollment to the start of services; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to change the eligibility delimiting date for Department of Veterans Affairs Vocational Readiness and Employment program by eliminating the 12-year-delimiting date for eligibility to Chapter 31 benefits and allow all veterans with employment impediments or problems with independent living to qualify for VR&E services for life; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VA must restructure performance measures to emphasize long-term readiness versus the current short-term indicators of success. Furthermore, VR&E should continually follow up with veterans considered to be rehabilitated to ensure that the rehabilitation and employment placement plans have been successful and if unsuccessful, to ensure the reasons and bases are clearly communicated to the veteran; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that VA streamlines eligibility and entitlement to VR&E programs to provide more timely intervention and assistance to all disabled veterans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that VA must provide better information about VR&E during the Transition Assistance Program Class for separating service members.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 631

PROTECTING HEALTH CARE AND BENEFITS

WHEREAS, for more than a century, the Veterans of Foreign Wars has been successful in achieving major legislative and policy changes to secure benefits and services for veterans, survivors, and families; and

WHEREAS, due to the complexities of federal law and regulation, the general public may not be aware of nor fully understand eligibility for veteran disability and medical benefits, in addition to benefits provided to service members, survivors, and families; and

WHEREAS, various news media outlets have published articles suggesting that veterans benefits are too generous; and

WHEREAS, Congressional Budget Office consistently makes unacceptable recommendations like means testing service-connected disability, cutting off temporary disability individual unemployability ratings for elderly veterans, or suspending paid ratings for minor disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the American public asked its all-volunteer force to prosecute two decades of conflict that has subjected Americans to repeated combat deployments and other hazardous conditions; and

WHEREAS, the standard enlistment contract, DD Form 4, commits our nation's leaders to furnishing benefits to those who complete their honorable service; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the President, Congress, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Department of Defense to "Honor the Contract" and protect the current suite of benefits and services for veterans, service members, survivors, and their families.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 632

DENTAL CARE ELIGIBILITY

WHEREAS, VA eligibility for no-cost dental care is only afforded to veterans who are service-connected with a dental disability or former prisoner of war or rated at 100 percent permanent disabled; and

WHEREAS, veterans enrolled in VA's Homeless Veterans Dental Program or Veteran Readiness and Employment Program may only receive limited VA dental care; and

WHEREAS, of the 9 million veterans who are eligible for VA health care, about 85% are not eligible for dental coverage or care; and

WHEREAS, it is reported that veterans pay 65% more in out-of-pocket dental costs, on average, compared to non-veterans; and

WHEREAS, studies have shown that poor oral health is linked to other general health conditions, and some medical conditions may affect an individual's dental health; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to authorize Department of Veterans Affairs to expand eligibility for no cost dental coverage and care to all service-connected veterans enrolled in VA health care which will improve the health of all service-connected veterans and can reduce the overall healthcare costs of veterans since dental health impacts all other health care concerns.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 633

ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORD MODERNIZATION (EHRM)

WHEREAS, Department of Defense (DoD) and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) are the two largest government agencies in the United States which maintain their own medical records for the service members and veterans under their charge; and

WHEREAS, the delay of transferring medical records from DoD to VA impacts benefits veterans are eligible to receive and the transfer delay can result in lapses of medical care and the denial of veteran's benefits; and

WHEREAS, other government agencies such as the U.S. Public Health Services and Coast Guard are in the process of migrating the remainder of their medical records to Oracle Cerner, but VA's migration continues to lag caused by poor oversight and frequent leadership changes overseeing the project with failures in change management at all levels causing multiple platform deployment delays; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge VA to provide competent command and control from VHA leadership and to enforce standardization of the electronic health record (EHR) integration across VHA facilities and continued partnership and collaboration with VSO stakeholders; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Secretary of Veteran Affairs to adopt best practices from DoD to work with the vendor and VHA facilities to implement the EHR on schedule.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution 634

FOREIGN MEDICAL PROGRAM (FMP) REFORM

WHEREAS, many veterans living overseas continue to support American interests and the American military mission as either employees of the Departments of Defense and State, or as contractors supporting these agencies – yet overseas veterans are afforded a lower standard of care from Department of Veterans Affairs, which only offers reimbursement for medical care for service-connected disabilities through its outdated Foreign Medical Program; and

WHEREAS, veterans seeking treatment for service-connected disabilities must pay the cost of the care and mail a paper-based claim to VA for reimbursement or request the service provider submit a paper-based claim on their behalf and communications with FMP managers is inconsistent; and

WHEREAS, the reimbursement process takes six months to a year for resolution with VA issuing a US Treasury check and mailing it to the foreign address of the veteran or service provider if they reside overseas; and

WHEREAS, both DoD and VA contract with third-party administrators to deliver care to active-duty service members and military families and complete evaluative exams for the adjudication of VA service-connected disability claims, while VA care delivery remains unstructured and unpredictable; and

WHEREAS, the VFW views this lower standard of care and the antiquated mechanisms of reimbursement for veterans supporting American interests overseas as risks to national security; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge VA to revise its antiquated paper-based system and utilize Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT), to allow veterans and service providers to file claims and receive reimbursement from VA through electronic means; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to address the statutory loophole that restricts FMP to only providing reimbursement for service-connected care, offering similar care access for overseas veterans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge Congress and VA to provide structure to the Foreign Medical Program by potentially utilizing a third-party administrator to coordinate and deliver care for overseas veterans, similar to TRICARE Overseas, VA contract compensation and pension exams, and VA's domestic Community Care programs.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 635

FOREIGN MEDICAL PROGRAM MEDICAL RECORDS

WHEREAS, Foreign Medical Program (FMP) is an overseas community care program with nearly 6,500 active users averaging more than 62,000 claims per year; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) community care network providers in the United States are required to share medical records with VA for inclusion in the Veterans Health Administration's (VHA) medical records system; and

WHEREAS, VA does not integrate veterans FMP medical records into the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) medical records system nor the Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS); and

WHEREAS, VA not integrating FMP medical records into the VHA system is detrimental to the health of the veteran, resulting in critical gaps in medical history, delaying proper medical care and earned benefits; and

WHEREAS, the lack of VA integrating FMP medical records into VA's VBMS significantly delays timely VA service connection claims for increase; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Department of Veterans Affairs to fully integrate Foreign Medical Program medical records into the Veterans Health Administration medical system and Veterans Benefits Administration, Veterans Benefits Management System upon receiving medical reimbursement claims by veterans.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief

To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 636

HEALTHCARE PROGRAM FOR OVERSEAS VETERANS

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) plays a pivotal role in providing healthcare services to the veteran population. However, the unique needs and challenges faced by the overseas veteran population necessitate the establishment of a specially tailored healthcare program; and

WHEREAS, one of the critical problems faced by overseas veterans is limited access to appropriate healthcare services. These veterans currently have no access to VA Medical Facilities, or any medical treatment options provided by the VA, rendering them geographically disadvantaged and medically vulnerable. The VA's current healthcare system caters to veterans residing within the United States, which creates delays, difficulties, and gaps in availability for this overseas population; and

WHEREAS, geographic location must not be used to justify ignoring those whose past service and continued service to our nation have earned the benefits awarded to all veterans, not just those residing in the U.S.; and

WHEREAS, veterans remain overseas for many reasons. Many wish to continue to serve as government employees and contractors, acting as combat multipliers, especially during high operational tempo and times of war. Some remain overseas because they have built a life and family. The VA must make every effort to incorporate the use of earned benefits and programs by all veterans, living in both in the U.S. and abroad. Excluding a significant portion of the veteran population from accessing critical resources and benefits based on their geographic location is inherently unjust; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the VA to commit to leveraging technological tools and resources to enroll all veterans, regardless of location into a VA Healthcare program.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 637

VA TO REIMBURSE ELIGIBLE OVERSEAS VETERANS FOR URGENT CARE AND EMERGENCY ROOM VISITS

WHEREAS, the VA aims to meet the medical needs of veterans, especially those who have served and are living overseas, a significant gap in coverage exists when it comes to reimbursing eligible veterans for urgent care and emergency room visits incurred abroad; and

WHEREAS, overseas United States Military Veterans, who have dutifully served their country, often face difficulties in accessing urgent medical care under the VA's current reimbursement policy. Under these regulations, veterans are not reimbursed for urgent care and emergency room visits incurred outside the United States, leaving them financially burdened and potentially compromised in their healthcare options. The eligibility criteria for reimbursement needs to be revised to ensure veterans receive proper financial assistance for urgent medical needs while abroad; and

WHEREAS, denying reimbursement for overseas veterans' emergency medical expenses places an undue financial burden on veterans. This policy hampers their ability to seek necessary medical treatment, potentially leading to delayed or inadequate care. This not only impacts the well-being of the veteran but also contradicts the fundamental mission of the VA, which is to provide high-quality healthcare services to all eligible veterans; and

WHEREAS, it is the moral responsibility of a nation to care for its veterans, regardless of their geographic location. By adequately reimbursing these expenses, the VA can honor its commitment to provide essential healthcare services to those who have put their lives at risk in service to their country; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the VA to promptly amend this policy to include reimbursement for such services incurred abroad, the VA can alleviate financial burdens on eligible veterans, honor its commitment to their well-being, and ensure that they have access to adequate and timely medical care, regardless of their location.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 638

VA MEDICARE REIMBURSEMENT

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States views it as essential that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care system provide qualifying veterans with timely and accessible care; and

WHEREAS, VA collects third-party payment for treatment, but current law prevents VA from collecting from the Medicare Trust Fund in certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS, a large number of VA's patients are eligible for Medicare; and

WHEREAS, VA medical care collections are used to supplement the appropriations VA receives from Congress to deliver efficient and effective health care at a lower cost than private sector health care providers; and

WHEREAS, with the increased demand on its health care system in association with the enactment of the Honoring our PACT Act of 2022, it is now absolutely essential that VA is authorized to collect federal dollars to supplement its annual appropriations to ensure adequate funding for the Veterans Health Administration; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support enactment of legislation authorizing the Department of Veterans Affairs to receive reimbursement for the cost of non-service-connected care that is provided to veterans who are enrolled in Medicare.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief

To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 639

MEDICARE

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States views the abolishment of penalties for delayed enrollment to Medicare for veterans as essential to the veteran population; and eliminate penalties, but ultimately to eliminate the mandate for veterans enrolled in Department of Veterans Affairs health care to register for Medicare; and

WHEREAS, veterans with limited income or complex health issues may struggle to pay fines associated with delayed Medicare enrollment and these fines accumulated over time making it harder for veterans to access needed care and afford the fines; and

WHEREAS, nearly 8 million veterans are 65 years and older, and eligible for Medicare; and

WHEREAS, there is a confusion around veteran enrollment to Medicare because many veterans utilize the VA Health Care and don't realize the need to enroll in Medicare; and

WHEREAS, these penalties of 10% for each 12-month period you were eligible but did not sign up may discourage veterans from enrolling in Medicare potentially leaving the veteran without necessary health options because these penalties stay with you the remainder of their life; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support the abolishment of penalties for veterans for delayed Medicare enrollment; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to authorize veterans enrolled in Department of Veterans Affairs health care to be exempt from registering for Medicare if they so choose.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 640

REQUIRE CIVILIAN HEALTH AND MEDICAL PROGRAM OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERAN AFFAIRS (CHAMPVA) ACCEPTANCE

WHEREAS, CHAMPVA is a health benefits program in which the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) shares the cost of covered medical care services and supplies with spouses, children, survivors, and certain caregivers of veterans who meet eligibility criteria under 38 U.S.C. 1781; and

WHEREAS, those eligible for CHAMPVA coverage include the spouse or widow(er) and the children of a Veteran who is rated permanently and totally disabled due to a service-connected disability, OR was rated permanently and totally disabled due to a service-connected condition at the time of death, OR died of a service-connected disability, OR died on active duty, and these dependents are not otherwise eligible for Department of Defense TRICARE benefits; and

WHEREAS, beneficiaries enrolled in a Veteran family member program – CHAMPVA, Spina Bifida Health Care Benefits Program, and the Children of Women Vietnam Veterans Health Care Benefits Program – administered by the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Office of Integrated Veteran Care (IVC) have the flexibility to choose their own provider, as the program does not have a provider network; and

WHEREAS, all hospitals that participate in Medicare, and hospital-based health care professionals who are employed by, or contracted to, such hospitals are required by law to accept the VHA IVC allowable amount for inpatient hospital services; and

WHEREAS, all other health care professionals are NOT required to accept CHAMPVA. For the beneficiaries, who have the flexibility to choose their own provider, this means that when the medical provider does not accept assignment, the cost will include not only the deductible amount but also their share of the CHAMPVA determined allowable amount, and any charges over the allowable amount; and

WHEREAS, finding a provider that accepts assignment, or seeing a provider that does not accept assignment, puts an undue burden on the beneficiary when trying to access the care that was earned through the sacrifices made by the sponsoring veteran; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to amend the necessary statutes to mandate ALL medical providers and facilities that accept Medicare to accept all beneficiaries enrolled in a Veteran family member program, including CHAMPVA.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 641

VA PHARMACEUTICAL CO-PAYMENTS

WHEREAS, veterans, other than those with a service-connected disability rating of 50 percent or greater, those who are receiving medications for their service-connected conditions or those whose incomes fall below the nonservice-connected pension threshold, must pay a co-payment for each 30-day supply of medications obtained through the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

WHEREAS, there have been repeated proposals to change VA pharmaceutical co-payments, placing an undue hardship on many veterans; and

WHEREAS, the increase in costs of the benefit would likely place an undue burden on veterans, limit access to earned benefits, and serve to inequitably balance the federal budget on the backs of veterans; and

WHEREAS, pharmaceuticals are part of the VA's standard health benefits package and must be provided to all eligible veterans; and

WHEREAS, VA is required by current law to charge veterans for life saving preventive medicines which are cost-free under private sector insurance and other public health care options; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we oppose increases in Department of Veterans Affairs pharmaceutical co-payments; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress must exempt preventive medicines from VA pharmaceutical co-payment requirements.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution 642

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY CARE OPTIONS

WHEREAS, members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States report being satisfied with the health care they receive from the Department of Veterans Affairs and believe the VA health care system must be improved to ensure all veterans have timely access to high quality care; and

WHEREAS, the VFW has consistently worked with Congress and VA to improve the health care VA provides our nation's veterans through community care programs to ensure veterans have a seamless experience; and

WHEREAS, the veteran population is a shifting demographic with evolving health care needs, which necessitates that VA identify new and innovative ways to deliver timely access to high quality, comprehensive, and veteran-centric health care; and

WHEREAS, VA is now allowed to charge veterans copayments for service-connected care they receive from networked urgent care clinics in the community; and

WHEREAS, the networks of VA community care programs, to include dependent care delivered through CHAMPVA, are limited by factors that influence the willingness of private sector providers to participate in these programs; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that Congress must provide Department of Veterans Affairs with the oversight, appropriations and assets necessary to properly implement the VA MISSION Act as intended by Congress; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that VA comply with federal prompt payment requirements and incentivize private sector health care providers to participate in its community care programs, while ensuring veterans and eligible dependents are not held financially liable for services furnished through such programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that VA must remain the guarantor and coordinator of care for enrolled veterans and that the VFW remains opposed to privatizing VA or eroding VA's ability to provide direct care to veterans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW opposes any out-of-pocket costs for care coordinated by VA for service-connected disabilities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress and VA must furnish and conduct proper outreach to ensure veterans are fully aware of their health care options.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 643

NURSING HOME ELIGIBILITY

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States has called upon Congress to enact legislation to regulate and expand eligibility for Department of Veterans Affairs health care and provide all veterans with mandated access to the full continuum of VA health care services which include nursing home care; and

WHEREAS, current VA regulations extend VA eligibility for nursing home care to those veterans who are service-connected at 70 percent or above or those seeking nursing home care for a service-connected disability; and

WHEREAS, recent reports indicate that state veteran nursing homes and non-VA contracted community nursing homes operate without strong oversight from the Department of Veterans Affairs, meaning they may often set inconsistent eligibility criteria from state to state or provide care inconsistent with VA standards, resulting in inequity among veterans that are eligible to receive services; and

WHEREAS, VA nursing home care is considered the “safety net” for VA outpatient services such as residential care, respite care, hospital-based home care, adult day health care, homemaker/home health aid services and other extended care programs; and

WHEREAS, through their own statements, VA recognizes the difference in eligibility for nursing home care and inpatient hospital care as inconsistent with the principles of sound medical practice, which support continuity of care for veterans; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge VA to ensure that Community Nursing Homes, state nursing homes, and contract nursing homes receive proper oversight and are accountable to the same high standards expected through the VA Healthcare System; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to establish a standard Department of Veterans Affairs and state veteran nursing home entitlement for all veterans enrolled in the VA health care system.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief

To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 644

VA NURSING HOME ANNUAL INSPECTIONS

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States views it essential to hold the Department of Veterans Affairs accountable to conduct annual inspections, per their regulations, allowing for proper oversight to ensure VA standards of care are being upheld within all VA, state veterans homes, and contracted long-term care facilities; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs oversees all state veterans' homes and paid nearly \$1.5 billion annually for care provided to approximately 20,000 veterans and their families, which represents the majority of veterans who receive care in nursing homes; and

WHEREAS, veterans are increasing in age, nearly half the veteran population is over the age of 65; and

WHEREAS, it is a requirement of the Veterans Health Administration, outlined in VHA Directive 1143.2 to undertake an annual inspection of VA Nursing Homes, State Veterans' Homes, and VA contracted nursing homes, yet there is little to no mechanism of enforcement to ensure standards are met and maintained; and

WHEREAS, Federal law and VA policy prevent VA from making payment to state veterans homes until it determines that they meet applicable quality care and other standards; and

WHEREAS, Officials of the Department of Veterans Affairs report that they rely on the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid inspections to provide feedback on inspections results and any corrective actions needed; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs only has one recourse to enforce standards, which is to withhold per diem payments to the nursing facility, which the VA has never done; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support VA's engagement to increase the quality of care and improve the physical environment provided in nursing homes and long-term care facilities, to include the creation of additional enforcement measures to require compliance with VA care standards when receiving funds for the care of a veteran; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to compel the Department of Veterans Affairs conducts annual onsite inspections of all VA, State Veterans Homes and contracted long-term care facilities within VA's scope to promote compliance with standards.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 645

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY HEALTH CARE

WHEREAS, nearly 67% of service members and veterans have experienced at least one Traumatic Brain Injury with nearly 1 in 4 veterans testing positive for probable TBI and associated effects; and

WHEREAS, veterans with blast injuries, blunt trauma, motor vehicle accidents, and falls are at risk for TBI which often goes unrecognized; and

WHEREAS, veterans with severe TBI require a lifetime of intensive services to care for their injuries, yet many Department of Veterans Affairs medical facilities are neither properly staffed to provide the necessary screening and comprehensive health care services that veterans suffering from TBI require, and even patients with mild TBI may have long-term health consequences; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to provide sufficient funding to the Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure that appropriate screening, diagnostic services, treatment and life-long case management services are available to every veteran suffering from conditions associated with service-connected head trauma to include, but not limited to Traumatic Brain Injuries; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to improve research pertaining to screening methods, diagnostic tools, and treatment of conditions associated with all TBIs regardless of if they are caused by blast injuries, blunt traumas, motor vehicle accidents, falls and other related injuries to ensure veterans who have experienced a TBI receive effective health care.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief

To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 646

VA HEALTH CARE FOR WOMEN VETERANS

WHEREAS, the total number of women veterans continues to grow, as does the number of women utilizing the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits; and

WHEREAS, VA reports that as of FY 2023 only 44 percent of women veterans utilize VA health care facilities; and

WHEREAS, VA currently has two Women's Health Primary Care Providers (WH-PCP) at all of the VA's health care systems. In addition, there are WH-PCPs in 85 percent of the community-based outpatient clinics; and

WHEREAS, women veterans have reported that VA staff continue to confuse them for spouses or caregivers and even challenge their veteran status; and

WHEREAS, women veterans also reported concerns regarding the gender specific competencies of VA health care professionals resulting in half of women veterans enrolled in VA Healthcare often seeking reproductive services (mammograms, pregnancy care, OB/GYN) in the community; and

WHEREAS, VA reported in FY 2023 that more than 600,000 women veterans are enrolled and assigned to a Designated Women's Health Provider (DWHP), who have experience and training in women's health care; and

WHEREAS, we acknowledge that the VA has improved the care and services it provides women veterans to include Women's Mental Health Services, Sexual Health Evaluation and Treatment, etc.; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge VA to continue to improve the staffing, equipping, monitoring and consistency of health care and reproductive services available to women veterans at all VA medical facilities and expand its designated women's health program to mental health care to ensure access to mental health care providers who understand women-specific mental health conditions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Secretary of Veteran Affairs to improve outreach to women veterans, allow women to choose the gender of their VA health care providers and properly train VA's workforce to treat women veterans with the respect and dignity they have earned and deserve, to include ensuring that every VA facility has a zero tolerance policy towards sexual harassment for employees and patients.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 647

MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has indicated that treating Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and providing Mental Health Care among returning war veterans is one of its highest priorities, and the VA operates a nationwide network of nearly 200 specialized PTSD outpatient treatment programs; and

WHEREAS, the early and accurate screening, diagnosis and treatment for PTSD, depression, substance use, and other mental health disorders, yields optimal patient outcomes, and statistics have shown that these conditions, left untreated or poorly treated, can lead to increases in suicide attempts or death by suicide among a host of other negative consequences; and

WHEREAS, Complex-PTSD (CPTSD) is a relatively new and developing diagnosis that should be further studied to understand its prevalence and impacts within the veteran population; and

WHEREAS, studies conducted by VA show that social determinants of health, like financial stability, access to housing, and pathways to a quality career serve as protective factors against suicide. Each time a veteran uses a VBA economic opportunity program or benefit is an opportunity to provide resources and treatment; and

WHEREAS, the National Center for PTSD found that there are nearly 1.5 million veterans compensated for PTSD since September 2023; and

WHEREAS, available research has not sufficiently evaluated the clinical effectiveness of treatment programs for veterans diagnosed with and/or suffering from the effects of traumatic brain injuries, PTSD, CPTSD, or other mental health conditions, and adequate research into the brain's response to internal and external influences that could result in mental illness has yet to be undertaken; and

WHEREAS, service members and veterans are increasingly prescribed psychiatric medications, but do not need to provide informed consent on the ever-growing side effects such as withdrawal, suicidal ideation, or sexual side effects, and recent research indicates that veterans prescribed such medications may actually be at greater risk of suicide; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly urge the Department of Veterans Affairs to continue to adequately staff VA mental

health treatment and research programs, and ensure clinicians are equipped to properly identify and diagnose veterans' symptoms; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to dedicate adequate resources to address the alarming rate at which veterans die by suicide to include moving the Office of Suicide Prevention from Veterans Health Administration to the enterprise level of the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Department of Veterans Affairs to research different treatments or practices that are most effective in helping our veterans cope with their PTSD and CPTSD, understanding that there is no one-size-fits-all treatment plan and each veteran must be evaluated and treated holistically; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that VA institute strong signatory informed consent protocols on all mental health medications, implement proper and ethical deprescribing guidelines for veterans seeking to stop medication, train prescribers on the emerging reports on psychotropic and psychiatric drugs, and publicize all data to inform the growing concern of overprescription and harm in the veteran community related to psychiatric drugs.

Submitted by Commander in Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 648

MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA (MST)

WHEREAS, the continued prevalence of military sexual assault continues to grow and has been the subject of numerous military reports, Congressional hearings, documentaries and media stories. Military Sexual Trauma (MST) is a heinous crime which is a disgrace to all of those who have worn the uniform of the Armed Services; and

WHEREAS, DoD and VA have made progress towards developing and implementing a policy that creates a tangible, visible deterrent to perpetrators through consistent prosecutions or other severely negative consequences to one's military careers, both departments must commit to improving their Integrated Mental Health Strategy; and

WHEREAS, the effects of untreated MST can be devastating to the overall health of veterans and in the successful transitioning back into their families and communities; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States that we call on DoD to continue to enhance its MST awareness programs, and calls on VA to continually improve its MST treatment programs and to disseminate evidence-based clinical practice guidelines to clinicians who care for veterans who have suffered from MST; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call upon Congress to continue its oversight and hearings related to military sexual trauma care and benefits with the goal of improving VA and DoD collaboration and improving policies and practices for military sexual trauma care and disability compensation.

Submitted by Commander in Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 649

THE IMPERATIVE OF THE VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION PROVIDING NEXUS STATEMENTS

WHEREAS, within the context of veterans' disability claims, a Nexus statement serves as a connection or link between a veteran's current disabilities and the events that caused or aggravated them during military service. Nexus statements must be based on medical evidence and are crucial in determining the eligibility for disability benefits. Under current policy, veterans who rely solely on the VA for healthcare may seek third-party assistance, such as claim sharks, for obtaining Nexus statements, leading to potential exploitation; and

WHEREAS, the involvement of claim sharks in the claims process not only harms veterans financially but also erodes trust in the VA's ability to provide reliable assistance. Advocating VHA healthcare teams to providing medically valid Nexus statements when appropriate to veterans, the need for veterans to seek external assistance from claim sharks would diminish significantly. Claim sharks would lose their exploitative foothold, thereby reducing the instances of fraudulent practices targeting vulnerable veterans; and

WHEREAS, the implementation of policies promoting evidence-based Nexus statements be provided by Veterans Health Administration (VHA) health care providers encourages consistency and accuracy across different healthcare providers within the VHA. These statements serve as a standardized method for evaluating claims, reducing the possibility of erroneous or subjective decisions. By ensuring consistency, the VHA can minimize the number of claims that require additional review or appeal, thus saving time and resources. The utilization of Nexus statements provided by the VHA providers, also helps alleviate the administrative burden placed on both veterans and the VHA. By the VHA Healthcare teams providing clear and medically valid evidence, veterans are less likely to face repeated examinations or appeals, streamlining the claims process. Additionally, VHA resources can be allocated more efficiently, reducing costs associated with unnecessary administrative procedures; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge VA to change all current policies preventing VHA Healthcare providers from producing Nexus statements that are appropriate and supported by medical evidence and/or military service. By doing this, VHA providers will alleviate the unnecessary burden placed on many veterans to prove the relationship between their current medical condition

and their military service through a third party. This expedites the adjudication process, significantly reducing the time and effort required for veterans and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to reach a fair resolution at the same time reducing the risk of the Nation's veterans falling prey to exploitation and abuse.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 650

SUPPORTING PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS/ASSOCIATES (PAS)

WHEREAS, chronic health care staffing vacancies in the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) has been a major driver of longer wait times for veterans seeking VA care, veterans' demand for care is increasing since enactment of the Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act; and

WHEREAS, over a million mental health integration visits take place annually in VA Medical Centers (VAMC), improving mental health and suicide prevention is a VFW priority, thus effective multidisciplinary clinical staffing recruitment programs to address persistent VHA staffing shortages are necessary to improve access to mental health services, women's health, geriatric, emergency medicine, and rural and primary care; and

WHEREAS, the VA released its National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report of 2025, which reported daily rate of veteran suicide is 17.5 lives lost; and

WHEREAS, in conjunction with P.L. 1991 Health Care Personnel Education and Training Programs Act, and after a five-year successful pilot program providing veteran PAs thirty-five Health Profession Scholarships (HPSP) university scholarships annually, the VHA reduced these PA veteran HPSP scholarships to twenty-five in 2024, and announced in February 2025, the elimination of the HPSP for veterans who want to become PAs, thus decreasing educational support for VHA employed veterans; and

WHEREAS, PAs are highly educated health care professionals licensed to diagnose, treat, and prescribe medications. The PA profession arose from returning Vietnam War combat medics and corpsmen in 1967, who have been treating veterans for over 58-years. Among their extensively broad medical and surgical curriculum is psychiatry with mental health clinical rotations; and

WHEREAS, PA training programs are nationally accredited by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA), and PA training is adopted from the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME); and

WHEREAS, four VAMC's established PA one-year mental health residencies in 2018, which offered only a total of ten residencies annually from 2021 to 2024 despite shortages of clinical mental health providers. Of the 29 post-graduate PA residents who graduated, the VAMC's only hired 12 (43%) of these highly trained PAs. The VHA will not expand these slots; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that VFW urges the VA to recruit and hire the most qualified health care occupations, including PAs. Physician Assistants/Associates shall be included for vacancies to strategically expand in critical areas; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that PAs should be included as a care team provider within mental health services; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that VFW supports the continuation of the HPSP scholarships for veterans employed by the VHA to become PAs.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 651

**FULLY SUPPORT PRESIDENT TRUMP'S EXECUTIVE ORDER HOLDING
THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS ACCOUNTABLE TO
UTILIZING THE WEST LOS ANGELES CAMPUS AS INTENDED, AND
MORE, BY ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL CENTER FOR WARRIOR
INDEPENDENCE (NR 25-3)**

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs' management, or lack thereof, of at the West Los Angeles Campus has resulted in the Department benefiting financially by leasing portions of the campus to businesses and organizations for purposes unrelated to providing medical care or treatment at the expense of the well-being of our nation's heroes since 2011; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs continued to ignore the plight despite rulings by a District Court regarding their misuse of the property and were granted an emergency stay pending further adjudication; and

WHEREAS, for more than a decade, the Department of Veterans Affairs has proven itself unwilling or unable to restore the campus to its historical purpose as a National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition Congress to ensure that the Department of Veterans Affairs carries out the full intent of the President's Executive Order forthwith.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that implementation of any redevelopment, construction, or operational changes associated with the Executive Order shall prioritize the welfare of veterans currently residing on the campus and shall include a continuity of care and housing plan that guarantees no veteran loses access to housing or essential services as a result of these actions.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief

To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED AS AMENDED by the 127th National Convention of the
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 652

SUPPORT LEGISLATION FOR SPINAL CORD INJURY RESEARCH

WHEREAS, spinal cord injuries (SCI) are debilitating, permanent central nervous system conditions for which no cure currently exists, and which require lifelong medical management; and

WHEREAS, SCI leads to numerous secondary health complications beyond loss of motor and sensory function, including bowel, bladder, and sexual dysfunction; autonomic dysregulation; chronic neuropathic pain; vulnerability to systemic infections; muscle spasticity and atrophy; osteoporosis; metabolic disorders; and significant mental and behavioral health challenges; and

WHEREAS, SCI significantly reduces individual quality of life and results in substantial opportunity loss to communities, including approximately 70 percent post-injury unemployment, reduced community engagement, and high personal and public costs for long-term care and medical complications; and

WHEREAS, more than 42,000 U.S. service members live with SCI, many of whom sustained their injuries during military service, and between 2000 and 2009 alone, 5,928 new SCI cases were reported in the military—occurring at a rate nearly eight times higher than in the general U.S. population; and

WHEREAS, approximately one-third of all spinal cord injury research funding in the United States originates from federal sources, including the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Department of Defense (DoD), and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); and

WHEREAS, the FY25 federal budget removed or reduced multiple NIH research lines, including programs directly supporting neurological and regenerative research, thereby limiting national capacity to advance SCI science and slowing progress toward functional recovery for veterans and civilians; and

WHEREAS, twenty years ago, there were no viable pathways toward restoring function after spinal cord injury, yet today—because of federal investment—researchers have developed promising interventions including neuromodulation, electrical stimulation, regenerative therapies, advanced rehabilitation technologies, and early-stage clinical trials demonstrating partial restoration of movement and autonomic function; and

WHEREAS, continued progress depends on stable, predictable, and expanded federal funding to support the next generation of SCI research, accelerate clinical translation, reduce long-term healthcare costs, and honor the nation's obligation to veterans living with these life-changing injuries; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to restore and expand federal funding for spinal cord injury research within the National Institutes of Health, the Department of Defense Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs, and the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we strongly support federal legislation that advances SCI research focused on improving treatment options, restoring function, enhancing quality of life, and reducing the long-term personal and public costs associated with spinal cord injury; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we will advocate for sustained national investment in scientific and clinical research—public, private, and within the VA system—aimed at achieving meaningful functional recovery for veterans and the general population affected by spinal cord injury.

Submitted by Department of Wisconsin
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 653

ENHANCE VETERAN PATIENT ADVOCACY ACCOUNTABILITY

WHEREAS, veterans seeking care at VA healthcare facilities are often met with systemic barriers that impede timely, effective access to a patient advocate; and

WHEREAS, the decentralization and digital-only access to patient advocacy services limit the ability of many veterans—especially elderly, disabled, or technologically disadvantaged individuals—to receive meaningful support; and

WHEREAS, current practices at many VA healthcare facilities exclude the assignment of a physically present, full-time patient advocate, in violation of the intended implementation of VHA Directive 1003.04, which requires patient advocacy services to be readily accessible and responsive to veterans' needs; and

WHEREAS, the absence of a physically present patient advocate undermines compliance with federal mandates concerning patient rights and fails to meet the ethical and legal obligations the VA owes to those who have served; and

WHEREAS, this systemic absence erodes trust in the VA system and results in prolonged suffering, delayed care, and an inability for veterans to effectively resolve grievances or seek guidance regarding their treatment; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition the Department of Veterans Affairs for the mandatory placement of a full-time, physically present, and clearly identified patient advocate at all VA healthcare facilities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Patient Advocate shall maintain an on-site presence during all regular business hours, with clearly posted office location and contact information, and shall engage directly with veterans to assist with complaint resolution, care coordination, and the protection of patient rights.

Submitted by Department of Georgia
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 654

CAREGIVER PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY ABROAD

WHEREAS, the VA Caregiver Program provides critical assistance to veterans with severe service-connected disabilities; and

WHEREAS, overseas veterans are excluded from caregiver benefits despite having equal need for support; and

WHEREAS, this exclusion places undue burden on families abroad, forcing them to absorb costs and responsibilities without assistance; and

WHEREAS, providing caregiver support overseas could represent a cost-saving measure compared to the higher expenses of administering the stateside caregiver program; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Department of Veterans Affairs to extend caregiver program eligibility to veterans residing overseas, ensuring equitable family support while potentially reducing overall program costs.

Submitted by Department of Pacific Areas
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 655

TRAVEL PAY FOR OVERSEAS VETERANS

WHEREAS, veterans overseas often must travel long distances, sometimes across borders, to access care; and

WHEREAS, current travel pays policies do not adequately reimburse overseas veterans; and

WHEREAS, this creates financial hardship and discourages care-seeking; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we advocate for expanded travel pay reimbursement policies that account for overseas distances and costs, ensuring veterans abroad can access necessary care without undue burden.

Submitted by Department of Pacific Areas
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 656

TRI-CARE COVERAGE FOR OVERSEAS VETERANS

WHEREAS, Tri-Care provides essential healthcare coverage for military retirees and their dependents; and

WHEREAS, overseas veterans often face limited provider networks and significant reimbursement challenges; and

WHEREAS, when hospitalized abroad, veterans are frequently assigned to non-Tri-Care doctors, forcing them to pay out-of-pocket for care without reimbursement; and

WHEREAS, such circumstances undermine the intent of Tri-Care as a comprehensive and equitable benefit for all beneficiaries; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, to advocate for expanded Tri-Care provider networks, equitable coverage for hospitalization abroad, and streamlined reimbursement processes to ensure veterans and their dependents residing overseas receive the same level of care and financial protection as those within the United States.

Submitted by Department of Pacific Areas
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 657

WOMEN VETERANS REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH EQUITY

WHEREAS, the population of women veterans continues to grow and represents one of the fastest-growing cohorts within the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care system; and

WHEREAS, women veterans have earned access to comprehensive health care benefits through honorable military service to the United States; and

WHEREAS, reproductive and gynecological health care is an essential component of comprehensive health care for women veterans; and

WHEREAS, continuity of care within the VA system promotes improved medical outcomes, reduces fragmentation, and strengthens trust between veterans and their providers; and

WHEREAS, exclusions or limitations in reproductive health coverage may result in delayed care, financial hardship, re-traumatization – particularly among survivors of military sexual trauma – and inequitable access compared to other veteran populations; and

WHEREAS, medical decisions regarding reproductive health are best determined through the patient-provider relationship in accordance with prevailing professional standards of care; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support ensuring women veterans have access to comprehensive reproductive and gynecological health services through the Department of Veterans Affairs, consistent with prevailing medical standards of care; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that such services include, but are not limited to, contraception, fertility services, prenatal and postnatal care, miscarriage management, treatment following sexual assault, management of high-risk pregnancies, and other clinically indicated reproductive health services as determined by medical necessity and the patient-provider relationship; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW supports policies that promote parity of care, continuity within the VA health care system, and the fulfillment of earned benefits for women veterans without exclusions that create inequitable or fragmented access to care.

Submitted by Department of Illinois
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 658

SUPPORT FOR EXPANDED ADDICTION RECOVERY AND REHABILITATION PROGRAMS FOR VETERANS

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) is chartered to advocate for the care, welfare, and well-being of veterans who have served in overseas conflicts; and

WHEREAS, alcohol and substance use disorders are recognized by medical science as chronic, treatable diseases of the brain, often associated with or secondary to service-connected conditions including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury (TBI), chronic pain, and sleep disorders; and

WHEREAS, many veterans experience moral injury—the psychological, emotional, and spiritual distress resulting from actions taken, witnessed, or failed to prevent in combat or service—which can significantly contribute to substance misuse, relapse risk, and barriers to recovery when left unaddressed; and

WHEREAS, untreated or under-treated addiction among veterans contributes to increased rates of homelessness, unemployment, incarceration, family instability, suicide risk, and preventable medical complications; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recognizes substance use disorder as a diagnosable medical condition, yet access to veteran-specific, peer-supported recovery and long-term rehabilitation programs remains inconsistent across regions; and

WHEREAS, evidence demonstrates that structured, veteran-centered addiction recovery programs reduce healthcare costs, emergency medical utilization, and recidivism while improving long-term health outcomes and quality of life; and

WHEREAS, veterans respond most effectively to recovery models that include peer support, accountability, mission-oriented structure, and culturally competent care; and

WHEREAS, the VFW has historically played a critical role in advancing recognition and treatment of service-connected health conditions—including PTSD, Agent Orange exposure, and TBI—and continues to serve as a leading voice for unmet veteran healthcare needs; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly support the expansion of Department of Veterans Affairs funding, access, and infrastructure for addiction rehabilitation, recovery, and long-term relapse-prevention programs tailored specifically for veterans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we encourage the development and support of peer-based, veteran-led recovery programs in partnership with accredited treatment providers and veteran service organizations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call upon the Posts, Districts, and Departments to promote addiction recovery through education, stigma reduction, sober-supportive programming, and outreach efforts consistent with the VFW mission; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW National Legislative Service is urged to advocate for federal legislation and appropriations that expand veteran-specific addiction recovery and rehabilitation services within the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Submitted by Department of Colorado
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 659

BURIAL BENEFITS FOR NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVE MEMBERS

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs, National Cemetery Administration states their mission "...honors Veterans and their eligible family members with final resting places in national shrines and with lasting tributes that commemorate their service and sacrifice to our nation"; and

WHEREAS, 38 U.S.C. § 101, states a veteran is someone who "served in the active military, naval, air, or space service" and received a discharge under conditions other than dishonorable; and

WHEREAS, under 38 U.S.C.S. § 2402 National Guard and Reserve members do not qualify for VA burial benefits unless they meet specific criteria such as dying during active duty or training or as a result of an injury or disability incurred during those times or if they are eligible for retirement and in all cases under other than dishonorable conditions; and

WHEREAS, the members of the National Guard have faithfully served in every war and conflict since December 13, 1636; and

WHEREAS, members of the Reserve have served this nation since its inception during the Civil War and of note, almost a quarter of a million served during the Korean War alone and supported operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Guantanamo Bay, and Homeland Defense with over 300,000 service years; and

WHEREAS, since 9/11, the employment of the National Guard and Reserve has migrated from a strategic reserve concept to one of operational reserve and there is a foundational ideology shift from the citizen-soldier to the soldier-citizen; and

WHEREAS, the National Guard and Reserve are expected to train, ready and equip their members to be prepared for activation and deployment at a moment's notice; and

WHEREAS, members of the National Guard and Reserve deserve the same internment honors and burial benefits; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we advocate for legislation to provide full burial benefits to National Guard and Reserve members that meet the same requirements as Active Duty members.

Submitted by Department of Colorado
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 660

ACCOUNTABILITY ACROSS BORDERS: RAISING THE BAR FOR VA C&P EXAMINERS GLOBALLY

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) relies on Compensation & Pension (C&P) examinations and medical opinions to adjudicate veterans' disability claims accurately and fairly; and

WHEREAS, VA conducts C&P examinations both within the United States and overseas, including through VA-employed examiners and contracted by VA examiners abroad, to serve transitioning Service Members and veterans residing or stationed outside the United States; and

WHEREAS, VA increasingly utilizes contracted C&P examiners, both domestically and overseas, outside VA facilities to conduct these examinations; and

WHEREAS, inadequate, incomplete, or poorly reasoned medical opinions by some C&P examiners—whether domestic or overseas, VA-employed or contracted—have resulted in unnecessary remands, requests for further development, and delays in the adjudication of disability claims; and

WHEREAS, such delays can cause significant hardship for veterans and their families, including prolonged financial and medical uncertainty, and may disproportionately affect veterans living overseas who can face additional logistical, communication, and access barriers; and

WHEREAS, there is a need for transparent and continuous quality control, monitoring, and enforcement of standards for all C&P examiners, including those conducting Contracted by VA examinations overseas, to ensure that examinations and medical opinions meet the requirements necessary to properly adjudicate claims; and

WHEREAS, the VA Office of Inspector General (OIG) and other appropriate VA oversight entities are charged with identifying systemic deficiencies and promoting accountability within VA programs and contracts, including those involving overseas examinations; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Department of Veterans Affairs to establish and maintain transparent, continuous quality control and monitoring mechanisms for all C&P examiners—VA-employed and Contracted by VA, domestic and overseas; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that such mechanisms include clear, uniform certification and training requirements; periodic audits of examination reports and medical opinions; corrective action for examiners who fail to meet standards; and

public reporting of aggregate quality metrics, including data specific to overseas examinations, to the extent permitted by law; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VA Office of Inspector General be requested to conduct regular reviews and, when appropriate, investigations into the adequacy and accuracy of C&P examinations and medical opinions—domestic and overseas—and to issue recommendations to improve examiner performance and claim adjudication outcomes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States support legislative or regulatory changes, as necessary, to ensure that all C&P examinations and medical opinions, whether conducted within the United States or overseas and whether by VA-employed or contracted examiners, fully comply with accepted medical and legal standards required to fairly adjudicate veterans' claims.

Submitted by Department of Europe
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTION

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 661

SUPPORT FOR THE DIVESTMENT OF UNAVAILABLE SAVINGS TO LIVE (DUSL) ACT

WHEREAS, veterans who are rated 100 percent service-connected disabled or entitled to Total Disability Individual Unemployability (TDIU), and/or their spouses, often face significantly reduced life expectancy, chronic medical conditions, and substantial financial burdens resulting from military service; and

WHEREAS, many of these veterans and/or their spouses have contributed to retirement savings accounts but are penalized under current federal law if these funds are accessed prior to retirement age through early withdrawal penalties and taxation; and

WHEREAS, these penalties unjustly prevent severely disabled veterans and/or their spouses from utilizing their own earned savings during their lifetime when such resources are most critically needed; and

WHEREAS, the Divestment of Unavailable Savings to Live (DUSL) Act would allow eligible veterans and/or their spouses to access retirement savings without penalty or federal taxation and without jeopardizing eligibility for Department of Veterans Affairs benefits or other means-tested programs; and

WHEREAS, the DUSL Act does not create new federal entitlement spending but instead restores financial autonomy to disabled veterans and their families by allowing access to their own accrued assets; and

WHEREAS, enabling access to these funds would improve quality of life, provide financial stability, and support the dignity of veterans and/or their spouses and families during periods of severe disability; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly support the immediate passage of the Divestment of Unavailable Savings to Live (DUSL) Act; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW National Legislative Service actively advocate for this legislation before the United States Congress and urge its prioritization for prompt enactment; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution be transmitted to appropriate members of Congress, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and other relevant federal agencies to advance this critical measure.

Submitted by Department of Texas
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 662

RETURN OF IN-PERSON APPEAL HEARINGS TO DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS REGIONAL OFFICES

WHEREAS, veterans who honorably served their country and suffered service-related injuries are rightfully entitled to be fully compensated by the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs discontinued the time-honored practice of in-person appeal hearings at Regional Offices due to the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic is no longer a public health concern; and

WHEREAS, the number of appeals that have been granted has decreased in the absence of in-person appeals; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs is striving to reduce operating costs, improve efficiency and effectiveness, while remaining fair to those who served their country; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon Congress to direct the Department of Veterans Affairs to return to the pre-COVID practice of in-person appeal hearings at Department of Veterans Affairs Regional Offices.

Submitted by Department of Nebraska
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE SOLUTIONS

REJECTED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 663

APPROVE THE CRUCIFIX AS AN ELIGIBLE EMBLEM OF BELIEF ON VETERAN HEADSTONES OR MARKERS

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs fulfills a vital mission in caring for those who have served our nation's military, honoring them from the moment they raise their right hand in defense of our Constitution to the day they are laid to rest; and

WHEREAS, our veterans deserve the utmost care, honor, and service and no greater, more solemn duty exists than to ensure our nation's veterans are laid to rest with reverence befitting their service and sacrifice to their nation and their Creator; and

WHEREAS, in preparation for their burial, veterans and their next-of-kin are afforded the opportunity to select an optional emblem of belief for inscription on their headstone or marker; and

WHEREAS, the National Cemetery Administration currently offers nearly one hundred different optional emblems of belief for inscription on standard government headstones and markers, representing several different belief systems, including various denominations of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and several other faiths, as well as emblems for atheists, humanists, and Wiccans; and

WHEREAS, despite this wide array of options, Catholic veterans do not currently have the option to select a crucifix, an emblem of belief that most accurately represents the faith of nearly twenty percent of all veterans; and

WHEREAS, the pursuit and expression of religious freedom are fundamental rights guaranteed by the First Amendment to our Constitution; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly urge the Department of Veterans Affairs and the National Cemetery Administration to officially offer the crucifix as an eligible emblem of belief for inscription on requested standard government headstones or markers.

Submitted by Department of Connecticut
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 664

PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR H.R. 6022

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States has long stood in support of Veterans, service members, and their families; and

WHEREAS, Veteran suicide remains a national crisis that has deeply affected military families, surviving family members, fellow Veterans, and communities across the United States; and

WHEREAS, families who have lost a Veteran to suicide often experience grief, stigma, isolation, and a lack of public recognition for the unique nature of their loss; and

WHEREAS, H.R. 6022, the Sgt. Walter F. Hartnett IV Green Star Veterans Service Act, has been introduced in the 119th Congress to provide federal recognition for families of Veterans who died by suicide; and

WHEREAS, public acknowledgment of these families is consistent with the VFW's long-standing commitment to honor Veterans, support surviving families, and address the ongoing crisis of Veteran suicide; and

WHEREAS, public support for H.R. 6022 would not require the VFW to assume responsibility for lobbying, implementation, administration, or inclusion of the bill within its formal legislative priority agenda; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we publicly support H.R. 6022, the Sgt. Walter F. Hartnett IV Green Star Veterans Service Act, as a federal recognition measure for families of Veterans who died by suicide; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution is intended only as a public statement of support for H.R. 6022 and shall not be interpreted as directing the VFW to lobby, administer, implement, or adopt H.R. 6022 as a formal legislative priority unless separately approved through VFW procedures.

Submitted by Department of New Jersey
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

REJECTED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 665

AMEND THE BLUE WATER NAVY VIETNAM VETERANS ACT OF 2019

WHEREAS, Public Law 116-12, known as the “Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019”, is a US law that addresses disability benefits for veterans presumed to have been exposed to Agent Orange grants presumptive service connection for conditions related to Agent Orange exposure to those who served on vessels operating within 12 nautical miles seaward of the demarcation line of the waters of Vietnam and Cambodia between January 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975. This allows these veterans with specific Agent Orange-related medical conditions to be presumed exposed and potentially receive benefits. The law took effect on January 1, 2020; and

WHEREAS, carriers operated at distances of more than 12 nautical miles from the coast of Vietnam, deploying (launching and recovering) both fixed wing and fighter aircraft that flew imminently close to the ground during ground support missions therefore becoming covered in dust and foliage from dirt, blown-up trees, etc.; and

WHEREAS, upon return to the carrier(s) they were serviced to include the washing of all aircraft and resultant dust and dirt disseminated on both the hanger bay and deck spaces, thus exposing literally all crew to said dust and dirt that had Agent Orange imbedded within; and

WHEREAS, after the House of Representatives passed the Act unanimously at 382-0; and

WHEREAS, Senator Gillibrand (D-NY) who had championed this act with numerous co-sponsors since 2017 said “It is unacceptable that for the past sixteen years, the VA has denied health benefits to our Blue Water Navy vets just because of an arbitrary rule blocking veterans who served on boats off Vietnam’s coast from the benefits they have earned and deserve. It’s outrageous that a couple of Senators are now blocking these benefits too by refusing to pass the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act”; and

WHEREAS, Senator Tester (D-MT) stated “If we aren’t willing to take care of our veterans when they come home, we should not send them in to harm’s way”; and

WHEREAS, Senator Daines (R-MT) said, “The intent of Congress was to ensure that those who served in Vietnam and were exposed to Agent Orange are getting the care they need and deserve; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we encourage the United States Congress to amend the Blue Water Navy

Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019 in addition to the 12 nautical mile limit with “and those aircraft carriers (CVAs) who launched and recovered aircraft that experienced combat within the limits of the geographical area denoted as Vietnam”.

Submitted by Department of New York
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 666

OVERSEAS BUT NOT SECOND CLASS: GUARANTEEING EQUAL ONLINE ACCESS TO VA BENEFITS

WHEREAS, millions of veterans, Service Members, and their families reside or are stationed outside the continental United States, including in U.S. territories, foreign postings, and host-nations around the world; and

WHEREAS, access to Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits, healthcare, records, and services is increasingly dependent on secure online portals, including but not limited to VA.gov, which rely on digital identity verification partners such as Login.gov, ID.me, DS Logon; and

WHEREAS, veterans and Service Members living abroad frequently encounter barriers when attempting to create and verify accounts through Login.gov and other VA sign-in partners, including, but not limited to:

- Requirements for a recent U.S. residential address or credit history, which many overseas veterans do not maintain;
- Reliance on U.S.-based phone numbers or carriers for multi-factor authentication, with SMS and voice codes often unavailable or unreliable for foreign numbers;
- Geo-blocking, network security controls, or sanctions-related restrictions that impede access from certain countries or IP address ranges;
- Technical limitations in document upload, webcam verification, and recognition of older or non-standard U.S. identity documents; and
- Inadequate support for overseas identity proofing methods, including APO/FPO/DPO addresses and other forms of proof of service and identity maintained within the Department of Defense (DoD) and VA; and

WHEREAS, these barriers effectively create an inequality of access, whereby veterans and Service Members living abroad are denied or delayed in accessing the same digital VA services, benefits information, and healthcare coordination tools that are readily available to those residing in the United States; and

WHEREAS, this digital access gap is inconsistent with the nation's commitment to support its warfighters and all who have served, regardless of location, and could result in benefits lapses, healthcare interruptions, delayed claims, and greater hardship for veterans and their families overseas; and

WHEREAS, VA, in coordination with the General Services Administration (GSA) (which operates Login.gov), other Federal identity providers, and the U.S. Congress, has the authority and responsibility to ensure that its identity verification and authentication methods are inclusive of veterans and Service Members residing abroad; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly urge the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in coordination with the Administrator of General Services and other relevant Federal agencies, to:

1. Eliminate or mitigate barriers to account creation and verification for veterans and Service Members living abroad, including:
 - Enabling reliable multi-factor authentication for foreign phone numbers and email addresses;
 - Expanding and documenting support for authenticator applications and non-SMS verification methods suitable for overseas users;
 - Reducing over-reliance on U.S. credit and address records and incorporating alternative identity proofing methods, including service records, VA records, and DoD data; and
 - Ensuring APO/FPO/DPO and other legitimate overseas addresses are fully recognized and accepted by identity verification systems.
2. Develop and publish clear guidance and dedicated support channels for overseas users of VA.gov and related digital services, including:
 - Step-by-step instructions tailored to veterans and Service Members abroad;
 - International or DSN-accessible help desk numbers and support hours;
 - Escalation procedures for manual verification or exception processing when automated checks fail due to overseas status.
3. Conduct a comprehensive review and assessment of digital access for veterans abroad, to include:
 - Measuring failure rates and barriers specific to overseas account creation and login attempts;
 - Consulting with veterans' service organizations, including the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, and with overseas veteran communities; and
 - Reporting findings publicly along with a corrective action plan and implementation timeline.
4. Ensure that future modernization efforts for VA digital services explicitly include requirements and testing for usability and accessibility by veterans, Service Members, and eligible dependents residing overseas, including those in U.S. territories and foreign countries.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States urges the U.S. Congress to:

1. Exercise robust oversight of VA and GSA to ensure timely remediation of the digital access barriers affecting veterans and Service Members abroad;
2. Provide any necessary funding, statutory authority, or direction to support inclusive, secure, and globally accessible identity verification and multi-factor authentication methods for VA.gov and other Federal veteran-facing digital services; and

3. Require regular reporting to Congress on progress made to improve digital access and identity proofing for overseas veterans, including measurable performance indicators and user feedback.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States will actively advocate for these changes before the Department of Veterans Affairs, the General Services Administration, and the U.S. Congress, and will work with other veterans' service organizations to ensure that no veteran or service member is denied or delayed access to VA services solely because they reside outside the United States; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution be transmitted to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Administrator of General Services, the President of the United States, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and to each member of Congress, and that it be made known that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States stands firmly in support of equal digital access to VA services for all veterans and Service Members, regardless of where they live.

Submitted by VFW Department of Europe
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 667

ENSURING MEANINGFUL HUMAN OVERSIGHT OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND AUTOMATED SYSTEMS AT THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs increasingly uses automated systems, algorithms, artificial intelligence tools, and other technology-driven processes in administrative functions, claims processing, healthcare operations, communications, and other services affecting veterans; and

WHEREAS, veterans are entitled to fair, accurate, transparent, and accountable decisions and communications that are not based solely on automated or artificial intelligence-generated outputs; and

WHEREAS, the use of automation, artificial intelligence, and automated communication processes in matters affecting veterans requires meaningful human oversight, independent judgment, and active verification at every stage of review and communication; and

WHEREAS, there is legitimate concern that reviewers and personnel may place undue reliance on automated recommendations, notices, correspondence, summaries, alerts, and other machine-generated outputs without adequately determining whether such outputs are flawed, incomplete, misleading, unsupported, inconsistent with the evidence of record, or otherwise inappropriate; and

WHEREAS, overdependence on artificial intelligence, automated systems, and automated communication processes may erode the knowledge, judgment, and adjudicative skills necessary for Department of Veterans Affairs employees, reviewers, raters, and other personnel to independently and correctly evaluate veterans' claims and communications under applicable law, regulation, and policy; and

WHEREAS, if reviewers, raters, and personnel lose the practical experience and analytical ability required to properly evaluate claims and veteran-facing communications without reliance on automation, veterans may face increased risk of error, inconsistency, confusion, delay, denial of due process, and unjust outcomes; and

WHEREAS, random integrity testing, unannounced quality-control reviews, and regular auditing are reasonable and necessary measures to verify that personnel are conducting independent reviews, critically evaluating automated or artificial intelligence-generated recommendations and communications, and identifying and correcting errors before any final decision, notice, or communication is issued; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that the VFW urges the Department of Veterans Affairs to maintain meaningful human oversight over any automated system, artificial intelligence tool, algorithm, or automated communication process used in support of decisions, notices, correspondence, or other actions affecting veterans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW urges the Department of Veterans Affairs to implement random, periodic, and unannounced integrity tests and quality-control reviews of employees, reviewers, raters, and other personnel to verify that they are independently reviewing claims, notices, correspondence, and other veteran-facing outputs and can identify flawed, incomplete, inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise questionable automated or artificial intelligence-generated recommendations and communications before any final decision, notice, or communication is made or sent; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW urges the Department of Veterans Affairs to require that such testing include claims and communication scenarios designed to determine whether personnel can recognize errors produced by automated processes or artificial intelligence, including misstatements of fact, failure to consider relevant evidence, incorrect application of law or policy, unsupported recommendations, misleading explanations, and inaccurate or confusing communications to veterans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW urges the Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure that its employees, reviewers, raters, and other personnel retain the training, experience, legal knowledge, communication competency, and independent adjudicative skills necessary to correctly evaluate and decide veterans' claims and to ensure the accuracy, clarity, and fairness of veteran-facing communications without improper dependence on automated or artificial intelligence-generated recommendations or messages; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW urges the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide ongoing training, supervision, performance standards, auditing, and documentation designed to preserve human competency, accountability, transparency, fairness, and the protection of veterans' rights in all claims adjudication, decision-making, and communications processes involving automation or artificial intelligence; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW urges the Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure that no automated or artificial intelligence-generated recommendation, notice, correspondence, or communication is treated as final, binding, or dispositive without accountable human review.

Submitted by the Department of Europe
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

REJECTED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 668

VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION TRANSPARENCY INITIATIVE

WHEREAS, the U.S. Veterans Health Administration (VHA) manages the Foreign Medical Program. Currently, the VHA does not allow veterans to track Foreign Medical Program (FMP) claims through VA's online portal, VA.gov; and

WHEREAS, the digital tools available to access Veterans Health Administration claims records, medical visits, and diagnostics juxtaposed against access to Foreign Medical Program (FMP) claims reveal significant disparities in clarity, accessibility, and operational procedures. Addressing these disparities is imperative for the continuous improvement of veteran healthcare services, ensuring that all veterans, regardless of their geographic location, whether traveling or residing abroad enjoy equitable access to medical care and the associated benefits; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans Health Administration manages the Foreign Medical Program under the Community Care Program. However, the claim history or status of current or past FMP claims is not accessible to the veteran, unlike other Community Care Program claims. Access to Veterans Health Administration records follows established procedures that prioritize transparency and patient rights. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and relevant Veterans Health Administration regulations guarantee veterans the right to access their records, including those related to their Community Care Program claims. Veterans can request their records through official channels, such as online portals like VA.gov or by direct request to VHA facilities. All inquiries related to the Foreign Medical Program should be directed exclusively through the AskVA portal; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans Health Administration has created a framework that gives veterans structured access to their community care claim records. According to the guidelines established by the VHA, veterans are entitled to review their medical records, including claims submitted for community care services. This access is provided through the VA's digital platform (VA.gov), which enables veterans to download electronic copies of their health records, including community care claims. Additionally, under the provisions of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), veterans can request information related to their health and treatment records, including community care claims. Transparency in this process is important because it helps veterans track their healthcare, pursue appeals, and have informed conversations with their VA healthcare providers; and

WHEREAS, both the Veterans Health Administration's Community Care Program and the Foreign Medical Program are designed to serve veterans' healthcare needs, the transparency and ease of access of these programs differ significantly. Community care claims are easier to access through established online platforms and follow clear regulations that protect veterans' rights to information.

Conversely, the FMP claims process is hindered by a lack of transparency and administrative barriers, which limit a veteran's ability to effectively manage their healthcare; and

WHEREAS, the gap in resources allocated to managing the Veterans Health Administration Community Care program compared to the Foreign Medical Program worsens transparency issues. The VHA has established systems and technologies to efficiently handle community care claim history and medical record requests, while the FMP is not integrated into the VA digital system and does not offer the same level of support or clarity regarding claims. As a result, information asymmetry becomes more pronounced, leading to frustration and confusion among veterans trying to use the FMP; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Department of Veterans Affairs to utilize current and emerging technologies for all veterans, regardless of their location or program type. The framework of transparency must be accessible to all veterans and applied uniformly across all Department of Veterans Affairs programs.

Submitted by Department of Europe
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 669

VULNERABILITY TO ADVANTAGE: REFORMING OVERSEAS MILITARY HEALTHCARE

WHEREAS, Congress should direct and resource a modernized overseas military health system that provides U.S.-controlled urgent, routine, and key specialty care for Service Members and their families because reliance on host-nation healthcare creates avoidable political, security, and readiness vulnerabilities, while expanding organic U.S. medical capabilities enhances force health protection, preserves commanders' operational freedom, and strengthens deterrence against adversaries; and

WHEREAS, stronger Readiness and Force Health Protection consistently uphold quality and standards: U.S.-run or closely supervised facilities can enforce DoD guidelines for trauma care, infection control, mental health, rehab, and chronic disease management. This results in faster recovery, fewer complications, and more Service Members returning to duty. Improved chronic care enhances deployability: Conditions like dental, behavioral health, and orthopedic injuries can be managed according to U.S. standards, reducing lost duty days and the number of medical non-deployable Service Members; and

WHEREAS, reducing political and operational dependence on host-nations lessens their leverage over U.S. forces. If the U.S. owns most of its medical capabilities, host governments have fewer opportunities to use access to care as leverage during basing or cost-sharing negotiations. Maintaining U.S. healthcare capabilities ensures continuity during crises; in war, civil unrest, sanctions, or diplomatic breakdowns, host-nation hospitals might close to foreigners or prioritize their own citizens. U.S. organic capability offers commanders a more reliable medical support system, even when the political climate deteriorates. Commanders can plan with realistic operational resources and known medical capacities instead of optimistic assumptions about local hospitals. This results in more accurate risk assessments and safer operations overseas; and

WHEREAS, when medical support for the warfighter is not dependent on local politics, commanders have greater flexibility in where and how they train, deploy, surge, or reposition forces, and greater operational freedom. Keeping care within U.S. or trusted systems limits foreign access to medical records, injury patterns, specialty referrals, and mental health data that could reveal unit locations, mission types, or readiness. Concentrating high-risk treatments and rehab inside secure U.S. facilities makes it harder for adversaries to exploit predictable appointment patterns at local clinics for surveillance, tracking, or attacks. U.S. facilities can enforce background checks, force protection measures, and counterintelligence awareness among staff in ways often impossible for host-nation personnel. This enhances security, intelligence protection, and OPSEC, ensuring control of sensitive health information data; and

WHEREAS, aligned standards of care and ethics require better clinical oversight and accountability. U.S.-directed care can follow U.S. laws and DoD policies on privacy, informed consent, behavioral health, reproductive care, and care for LGBTQ+ members—areas where host-nation norms may conflict. Using U.S.-credentialed providers enables direct monitoring of outcomes and can address deficiencies instead of depending on various foreign licensing systems. When issues occur, U.S. systems provide clear legal and administrative pathways for investigation, redress, and systemic improvement—much more predictable than cross-national malpractice environments; and

WHEREAS, more resilient U.S.-controlled medical logistics supply chains can stockpile and manage critical items such as blood, trauma supplies, medications, and vaccines without depending on fragile host-nation supply networks vulnerable to strikes, shortages, or disruptions and sanctions; and

WHEREAS, supporting surge capacity for contingencies by having purpose-built U.S. and joint facilities that can be scaled for mass-casualty events or high-tempo operations—something local civilian systems, already busy with their own populations, often cannot do. For conditions like trauma, stroke, sepsis, or heart attack, delays in transferring patients from a local facility to a higher-level U.S. or regional military hospital can be fatal. Complex reliance chains (Medical Treatment Facilities → Tricare → Tricare contractors → host-nation OCONUS providers → regional overseas military hubs → CONUS) add friction to this time-sensitive process. Incompatible systems, such as differences in medical record systems, language, equipment, and clinical protocols, can cause errors during handoffs, medication mistakes, or misdiagnosis; and

WHEREAS, trust in visible, competent U.S. medical support overseas signals that the nation is willing to invest in the health and safety of its Service Members. That directly impacts morale and willingness to accept high-risk or remote tours. Dependents have reliable access to pediatric, OB/GYN, behavioral health, and special-needs services under U.S. standards, reducing stress and distraction for the service member. Overseas assignments are more attractive and sustainable when healthcare is perceived as safe, accessible, and high quality—especially for critical, hard-to-recruit positions and specialties; and

WHEREAS, Europe faces widespread shortages of health workers due to aging populations, workforce limitations, limited training capacity, migration, underinvestment, and slow regulatory adaptation. Pacific Island countries struggle with very few medical professionals because of small, scattered populations, remoteness, low funding, brain drain, weak infrastructure, and high disease burdens, especially in rural and outer islands. South Korea and Japan have strong, universal health systems and enough doctors overall, but experience maldistribution: physicians tend to cluster in cities and avoid certain specialties and

rural areas, making their challenge more about policy and incentives than basic capacity; and

WHEREAS, the TRICARE Overseas Program (TOP) provides healthcare for active-duty Service Members and their families outside the continental U.S. Instead of owning hospitals, TOP currently partners with private contractors (like International SOS) to establish networks of host-nation providers. TOP then coordinates with overseas military treatment facilities, manages referrals, authorizations, billing, and support. For most non-emergency care, active-duty members need a referral or authorization before seeing host-nation providers. The contractor confirms covered services and may arrange direct billing, although members sometimes must pay upfront and seek reimbursement. In emergencies, members go to the nearest suitable facility, after which the contractor and MTF coordinate transfer, billing, and ongoing care. The system is complex because it must integrate U.S. and foreign healthcare systems, which can burden Service Members; and

WHEREAS, it is strategically sound for the overseas U.S. military to support both urgent and ongoing medical needs of its community using U.S.-controlled resources because medical support is not just a welfare issue—it is a critical part of combat capability, deterrence, and operational flexibility. Relying primarily on host-nation providers introduces avoidable political, security, and readiness risks that can be mitigated through a combination of stronger U.S. organic medical capabilities abroad, tighter oversight of host-nation partners, improved data protections, and contingency plans for when host-nation care becomes unavailable or limited; and

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to review current capabilities and establish an end-state military health service support system overseas where life, limb, eyesight, dental care, routine primary care, and a significant portion of specialty and surgical care can be provided by U.S. organic (military or DoD-controlled) capabilities that support overseas warfighters and dependents. Ensure host-nation resources are supplementary and not critical single points of failure for a military commander overseas. Require that the systems in place are scalable from peacetime to contingency and conflict.

Submitted by Department of Europe
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 670

ENDING THE HIDDEN COST OF VA EXAMS FOR OUR TROOPS

WHEREAS, Service Members participating in the Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) and Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) processes are often required to attend Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Compensation and Pension (C&P) examinations at locations that may be a significant distance from their duty stations or residences; and

WHEREAS, Service Members assigned to duty stations outside the continental United States, including overseas and remote locations, may be required to undertake international travel at significant personal cost and logistical burden to attend required C&P examinations when such examinations are not reasonably available in-theater or near their duty station; and

WHEREAS, current policy and practice frequently place the financial burden of necessary travel—including transportation, lodging, meals, and incidental expenses—on the individual Service Member or, in some cases, on the operating budget and mission capability of the Service Member’s military command; and

WHEREAS, these required C&P examinations are an integral and mandatory component of the VA disability evaluation and benefits determination process, and are ordered not for the convenience of the Service Member or the command, but to fulfill statutory and regulatory obligations of the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

WHEREAS, financial obligations related to travel, including potential international travel for those stationed overseas, can pose a serious hardship for transitioning Service Members and their families, many of whom are already experiencing financial uncertainty due to impending separation or retirement; and

WHEREAS, requiring military units to fund such travel from limited operational and training budgets can degrade readiness, reduce mission capability, and create an inequitable strain on units that support a high number of Service Members undergoing BDD or IDES processing; and

WHEREAS, the timely and accurate completion of VA C&P examinations is crucial to ensure that Service Members receive the appropriate and earned disability benefits upon separation, and any financial or administrative barriers that discourage or delay attendance at such examinations directly undermine the transition process and the welfare of veterans and their families; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly urge the United States Congress and the Department of Veterans Affairs, in coordination with the Department of Defense, to establish and implement clear, uniform policies that:

1. Relieve Service Members and their military commands of the financial burden for travel related to mandated VA Compensation and Pension examinations under the BDD and IDES processes, including international travel for those stationed abroad;
2. Provide direct VA-funded travel arrangements and reimbursement mechanisms for all reasonable and necessary transportation, lodging, meals, and incidental expenses associated with such exams, in accordance with federal travel regulations, whether travel is domestic or international;
3. Guarantee that no Service Member is denied, delayed, or discouraged from completing required C&P examinations due to inability to afford travel costs, including those for overseas or international travel, or because of a lack of command funds;
4. Develop interagency agreements and standard procedures between the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense to streamline the scheduling and funding of these exams, utilizing mobile exam teams, telehealth options where suitable, and closer-to-duty location facilities whenever possible, especially for Service Members stationed outside the continental United States; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall support and advocate for any legislation, regulatory changes, or policy directives necessary to ensure full government coverage of travel-related costs for required VA C&P examinations in the BDD and IDES processes, including international travel for those stationed overseas.

Submitted by the Department of Europe
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 671

EXPANDING POST-9/11 GI BILL TRANSFERABILITY

WHEREAS, the Post-9/11 GI Bill provides career service members the option to transfer education benefits to dependents under certain conditions; and

WHEREAS, current law limits transfer eligibility strictly to spouses and dependent children, leaving no option for veterans who cannot have children of their own or whose spouse does not require educational benefits; and

WHEREAS, this limitation prevents otherwise fully eligible service members from using the earned benefit to support family members who could greatly benefit from educational access, such as nieces, nephews, siblings, or grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, expanding GI Bill transferability would honor the intent of the benefit – to invest in the education of military families – while correcting an inequity faced by childless veterans and those whose immediate dependents cannot use the benefit; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition the Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Defense, and the United States Congress to amend existing law to allow Post-9/11 GI Bill education benefits to be transferred to extended family members (e.g. nieces, nephews, siblings, or grandchildren) when a service member has no spouse or dependent children who can use them.

Submitted by Department of California
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTION

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 672

SUPPORT FOR IMPROVED PROCESSING, TRACKING, AND ASSISTANCE FOR OVERSEAS DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION (DIC) CLAIMS

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) is committed to ensuring that all Veterans and their survivors receive timely and equitable access to earned benefits, regardless of geographic location; and

WHEREAS, surviving spouses and dependents residing outside the United States face significant structural barriers in filing and completing Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) claims, including lack of access to county and state Veterans service offices, limited VSO coverage, and reduced access to VA.gov and U.S. mail systems; and

WHEREAS, foreign death certificates frequently require translation, clarification, or medical interpretation, and foreign medical facilities often lack electronic records, charge retrieval fees, or do not respond to U.S. government requests, resulting in delays of months beyond standard domestic timelines; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) does not currently publish or track DIC claim processing times by geographic region, preventing transparency, oversight, and identification of disparities affecting survivors residing overseas; and

WHEREAS, survivors abroad often lack the infrastructure, support systems, and institutional knowledge available to families in the United States, resulting in incomplete submissions, repeated evidence requests, and extended duty-to-assist cycles; and

WHEREAS, these systemic delays impose emotional, financial, and administrative burdens on grieving families who rely on DIC as a primary source of income following the death of a Veteran; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly urge the Department of Veterans Affairs to track, publish, and report DIC claim processing times for survivors residing outside the United States; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW urges the VA to establish dedicated procedures, timelines, and support mechanisms for overseas DIC claims, including improved coordination with foreign medical facilities, translation services, and the Foreign Medical Program (FMP); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW advocates for expanded VSO access and survivor assistance for families residing overseas, including virtual intake support, standardized evidence checklists, and improved communication channels; and be it further

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW calls upon the VA to recognize and mitigate the documented structural disadvantages faced by overseas survivors to ensure equitable access to earned benefits.

Submitted by Department of Pacific Areas
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 673

UNLOCKING GLOBAL CLASSROOMS FOR AMERICA'S VETERANS

WHEREAS, the United States has long recognized the importance of educational benefits for veterans as a core component of earned compensation for honorable military service, including under the Post-9/11 GI Bill (Chapter 33) and Survivors' & Dependents' Educational Assistance (DEA, Chapter 35); and

WHEREAS, many veterans and eligible family members seek to pursue courses of study at foreign institutions of higher learning, both to advance their individual educational and career goals and to strengthen international understanding and cooperation consistent with United States national interests; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), pursuant to Section 208.3 of Title 31, Code of Federal Regulations, has implemented Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) policies requiring that all VA education payments to institutions of higher learning be made by direct deposit; and

WHEREAS, on March 23, 2023, VA issued an EFT policy letter requiring foreign institutions participating in VA education benefit programs to:

- Establish a checking or savings account with a U.S. financial institution capable of receiving Automated Clearing House (ACH) payments, and/or
- Utilize approved third-party financial services to receive ACH payments on behalf of the institution, thereby effectively conditioning approval of programs of education on a foreign institution's ability to access U.S. domestic banking infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, on June 7, 2023, VA issued an amended policy letter superseding the March 23, 2023, guidance, eliminating the previous third-party option and requiring that foreign institutions themselves provide banking information, including:

- The name and address of a U.S.-based or foreign financial institution;
- A nine-digit ACH bank routing number **or** SWIFT code; and
- A U.S. bank account number **or** IBAN, with the explicit requirement that all foreign institutions participating in Chapters 33 and 35 must comply with these EFT requirements as a condition of new or continued program approval; and

WHEREAS, foreign institutions of higher learning—such as public universities in the Federal Republic of Germany and other allied nations—often do not require SWIFT-capable or ACH-compatible accounts for their domestic operations, and their banking partners frequently assess additional fees for international services such as SWIFT, resulting in material costs that these institutions are understandably unwilling to absorb solely to accommodate U.S.-specific regulatory requirements; and

WHEREAS, VA approves programs of education, not only institutions, such that any new or modified program at a foreign university that was not previously

“grandfathered” before the 2023 policy changes must now meet the amended EFT requirements, thereby creating a hidden barrier that prevents many veterans from using their earned benefits abroad even when the university is otherwise academically qualified and willing to enroll them; and

WHEREAS, from the veteran’s perspective, this barrier typically becomes apparent only after the veteran has applied, selected a foreign program, and submitted VA Form 22-0976 or similar documentation, at which point VA, during its internal approval process, denies certification because the foreign institution lacks an EFT-compliant account, leaving the veteran with limited recourse and significant disruption to educational plans; and

WHEREAS, the practical effect of VA’s current EFT policies is to de facto restrict or block access to VA education benefits for a large number of veterans and eligible family members seeking to study at foreign institutions whose programs were not approved under prior, less restrictive rules; and

WHEREAS, the VA’s stated or understood motivation for these policies includes compliance with U.S. Treasury regulations and prevention of money laundering and financial fraud; nevertheless, the unintended consequence has been to impose disproportionate administrative and financial burdens on foreign institutions, while offering no standardized, cost-neutral solution; and

WHEREAS, individual veterans and advocates have had to undertake complex, ad hoc efforts to identify cost-free or low-cost international banking solutions (such as certain online financial institutions providing SWIFT/IBAN services without fees to the foreign university) and to persuade individual universities, regional ministries, and, where applicable, national ministries of education to adopt such solutions in order to restore access to VA benefits; and

WHEREAS, these efforts, while promising in specific test cases, are fragmented, dependent on the initiative and persistence of individual veterans, and lack institutional support or recognition from VA, resulting in inequitable access and inconsistent opportunities for similarly situated veterans worldwide; and

WHEREAS, the inability of veterans to readily use VA education benefits at allied foreign institutions diminishes opportunities for people-to-people engagement, cross-cultural understanding, and long-term professional and academic relationships between the United States and partner nations, thereby undermining broader U.S. strategic, diplomatic, and security interests; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the U.S. Congress to direct the Department of Veterans Affairs to review, revise, and, where appropriate, amend its Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT)

policies governing payments to foreign institutions of higher learning, with the explicit aim of restoring practical, broad-based access to VA education benefits for veterans and eligible dependents seeking to study overseas; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call upon Congress to require VA, in coordination with the U.S. Department of the Treasury and other relevant agencies, to develop and publish one or more standardized, cost-neutral or low-cost mechanisms for foreign public and private institutions to receive VA tuition and fee payments, including but not limited to:

- Reinstating and formalizing the use of vetted third-party financial service providers capable of receiving ACH payments and forwarding funds to foreign institutions in compliance with anti–money-laundering regulations; and/or
- Establishing, endorsing, or facilitating access to pooled or umbrella banking arrangements—whether through U.S.-based partner institutions, accredited exchange consortia, or trusted financial intermediaries—that can satisfy EFT and due diligence requirements without imposing undue financial burdens on individual foreign universities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge Congress to require VA to:

- Assess and report to Congress on the number of veterans and eligible beneficiaries adversely affected by the 2023 EFT policy changes, including estimates of lost or delayed access to foreign education programs;
- Consult with representatives of foreign public and private universities, relevant foreign ministries (where appropriate), U.S. institutions participating in exchange programs, and veteran service organizations to identify practical compliance pathways that balance financial integrity with reasonable access; and
- Implement clear, transparent, and timely communication to veterans, schools, and veteran service organizations regarding any current and future EFT requirements, including listing compliant banking models and step-by-step procedures for foreign institutions that wish to participate; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States calls upon on Congress to affirm, as a matter of policy, that VA education benefits should remain fully portable to qualified foreign institutions of higher learning, subject to appropriate academic and security vetting, and that administrative or banking requirements must not, in practice, nullify or unduly restrict this portability while maintaining robust safeguards against fraud, waste, and abuse.

Submitted by Department of Europe
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTION

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 674

SUPPORT FOR THE POST-9/11 GI TRANSFERABILITY REFORM BILL OF 2025

WHEREAS, veterans discharged between January 1, 2015 and December 31, 2019 were denied the opportunity to transfer unused Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits post-separation due to restrictive policy; and

WHEREAS, the proposed legislation establishes tiered transfer eligibility for veterans with 20 or more years of qualifying service, allowing up to 24 months of tuition-only benefits to be transferred to one dependent aged 18–22 enrolled full-time in an accredited bachelor's or master's program; and

WHEREAS, the bill includes provisions for waiver authority, survivor flexibility, and disability-based transfer options to ensure equitable access for veteran families; and

WHEREAS, the legislation promotes accountability and affordability through institutional cost sharing requirements, use-or-lose timelines, and a sunset clause to limit long-term fiscal exposure; and

WHEREAS, the bill supports outreach and education through VSO grants, county VSO funding, and federal campaigns to ensure veterans and dependents are informed of their rights and opportunities; and

WHEREAS, the bill aligns with the core mission of VSOs to advocate for veterans' benefits, family support, and educational advancement; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we formally endorse the Post-9/11 GI Transferability Reform Bill of 2025 and urges Congress to pass it without delay; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we shall include this proposal in its legislative priorities and communicate its support to federal lawmakers, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and partner organizations.

Submitted by Department of Michigan
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

REJECTED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 675

ENSURE READINESS AND POST-SERVICE EMPLOYMENT THROUGH CREDENTIALING

WHEREAS, ensuring a well-educated, qualified, and competent workforce is essential to the combat effectiveness of the United States Armed Forces and for the subsequent safety, comfort, and confidence of American citizens, while ensuring the economic welfare and expansion of our Nation; and

WHEREAS, the United States established vocational credentialing programs nearly a century ago, expanding the apprenticeship, education, professional credentialing, and certification standards to enhance the performance and quality of American servicemembers during their military service as well as to maximize their post-service employability and economic welfare filling critical roles in society; and

WHEREAS, Congress has repeatedly legislated that the Department of Defense (DoD) establish and fund cross-service standardized credentialing programs, to include funding for tuition, classroom and hands-on training, test and other related fees, books, supplies, and equipment required for enrollment and attendance in recognized post-secondary credentialing programs leading to professional credentials, Federal occupational licenses, State-imposed and professional licenses, professional certifications; and

WHEREAS, such licenses and credentials increase the professionalism of America's servicemen and women while setting them up for post-service success; and

WHEREAS, despite issuing guidance for a Department-wide standard credentialing policy and procedure, DoD's efforts lack adequate internal controls or resource support, continue to be service-specific, are applied inconsistently, and subordinate non-degree-issuing credentialing programs behind degree programs, thus bypassing the opportunities to enhance the skillsets of active duty forces by passing any credentialing burden on to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for funding via its Veterans in Technology (VetTEC), GI Bill, or Vocational Rehabilitation and Education (VR&E) programs; and

WHEREAS, ensuring that veterans leave the service with the necessary credentials to immediately fill critical positions in society such as commercial truck drivers, emergency medical technicians, nurses, air traffic controllers, nuclear power-plant operators, cyber security professionals, and multiple forms of tradesmen would greatly reduce veteran unemployment and homelessness while increasing veteran small business ownership; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) is Congressionally Chartered to assist worthy veterans; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge DoD to ensure compliance with its own guidance (DoDI 1322.33 – *DoD Credentialing Programs*) by retitling it in the singular and developing and applying a single Department-wide Credentialing Assistance program with uniform standards, limits, definitions, and policy; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW urges Congress to implement a reporting requirement for DoD to provide reasonable assurance periodically that such a program has been implemented, is being professionally managed, and is yielding the results sought by 10 USC § 2015, et. seq., including controlling costs, consistent opportunities to participate, and adequate reimbursement to participants or appropriately vetted providers in accordance with legislative mandates.

Submitted by Department of Virginia
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED AS AMENDED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 676

EDUCATION BENEFITS FOR OVERSEAS DEPENDENTS

WHEREAS, the GI Bill and related programs are designed to support veterans and their families; and

WHEREAS, veterans and their dependents overseas are required to attend VA-approved education schoolhouses, yet while enrolled in VA-approved training programs, Chapter 35 dependents are still required by law to receive only half the pay compared to those attending similar programs elsewhere in Asia; and

WHEREAS, dependents overseas face additional barriers in accessing approved institutions and programs, creating inequities in educational opportunities; and

WHEREAS, in 2023, Congresswoman Jen Kiggans introduced the Filipino Education Fairness Act (H.R. 1669), which passed the House but was never enacted into law; and

WHEREAS, this legislative attempt demonstrates Congressional recognition of the need to extend Chapter 35 and GI Bill benefits to institutions in the Philippines, but the failure to enact it left overseas dependents without equitable access; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, to petition the Department of Veterans Affairs and Congress to expand recognition of overseas institutions, eliminate inequitable pay restrictions, and ensure full and equitable access to Chapter 35 education benefits for dependents abroad, building upon the intent of H.R. 1669.

Submitted by Department of Pacific Areas
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Resolution No. 677

**SUPPORT FOR EXPANDED SURVIVOR OUTREACH AND
ASSISTANCE FOR FAMILIES RESIDING OVERSEAS**

WHEREAS, survivors abroad lack access to county and state Veterans service offices, funeral homes familiar with VA processes, and local support networks; and

WHEREAS, overseas survivors frequently struggle with VA.gov access, document uploads, and communication delays; and

WHEREAS, the VFW has a unique global presence and responsibility to support these families; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the VA to expand survivor outreach, virtual support, and educational resources for families residing overseas; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we encourage the development of standardized survivor intake checklists, multilingual guidance, and improved communication channels for overseas families.

Submitted by Department of Pacific Areas
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED by the 127th National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.