



Washington Update

Check out the [PVAAction Force](#) page to view legislative campaigns and a list of key legislation. [Sign the petition](#) in support of the VA's SCI/D system of care.

HOUSE PASSES SEVEN VETERAN-RELATED BILLS

Before leaving for a two-week recess, the House passed seven veteran-related bills. One of the House-passed bills, the Clear Communication for Veterans Claims Act (H.R. 1039), directs the VA to enter into an agreement with a federally-funded research and development center for an assessment of notice letters that the VA sends to claimants. PVA believes the VA should place greater emphasis on simplifying communications with veterans, and focus less on legalese. Therefore, we appreciate and strongly support efforts like this to help demystify the VA claims process. Meanwhile, the Deliver for Veterans Act (H.R. 877), would modify the VA's Adaptive Vehicle Grant Program to cover shipping costs for adaptive vehicles. This will help ensure that more veterans with service-related disabilities can access adaptive vehicles, regardless of their location or financial situation.

A third bill, the Fairness for Servicemembers and their Families Act of 2025 (H.R. 970), requires the VA to periodically review and report on the maximum coverage available under the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance and Veterans' Group Life Insurance programs. The bill would ensure that life insurance packages for servicemembers and veterans adjust for increases in cost of living and inflation.

Finally, the Prioritizing Veterans' Survivors Act (H.R. 1228) aims to clarify the organization of the VA's Office of Survivors Assistance. Specifically, it seeks to elevate the Office of Survivors Assistance within the VA by placing it directly under the Office of the VA Secretary.

The three remaining bills were the VETT Act (H.R. 981), the Montgomery GI Bill Selected Reserves Tuition Fairness Act of 2025 (H.R. 983), and the Vietnam Veterans Liver Fluke Cancer Study Act (H.R. 586, as amended). A press release about these bills passing can be viewed [here](#).

EO SUBCOMMITTEE HOLDS MARKUP

On April 9, the Economic Opportunity (EO) Subcommittee for the House Veterans' Affairs Committee held a [markup](#) on several pieces of legislation that PVA offered feedback on in a previous [hearing](#).

The bills mainly focused on VA education benefits, such as the Post 9/11 GI Bill and the Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) program. PVA provided extensive feedback on H.R. 1793, the Veterans Readiness and Employment Transparency Act of 2025, which would codify the outreach done by the VR&E program, as well as authorize VR&E experts to provide feedback through



the Education Call Center, an existing help line that is available for student veterans using the Post 9/11 GI Bill. Currently, VR&E participants have no direct line to ask questions of VA when they encounter issues, and this bill seeks to solve that problem. The bill also establishes requirements for the VR&E program to offer information sessions to covered institutions of higher learning, as well as for school certifying officials. Several recommendations provided by PVA were incorporated into the legislation that we believe will strengthen the bill while avoiding unrealistic expectations of VR&E counselors.

Another bill PVA supported is H.R. 1458, the Veterans Education and Technical Skills (VETS) Opportunity Act of 2025. This bill will authorize certain independent study programs approved by VA to allow for increased hybrid delivery models. The legislation would require hybrid programs to have “regular and substantive interaction between students and instructors,” which should help protect veterans from predatory schools and allow VA to disapprove programs that serve no benefit to veterans. This is important for SCI/D veterans who may prefer online education which can be more accessible for them.

Finally, the subcommittee also passed an amended version of the Automotive Support Services to Improve Safe Transportation (ASSIST) Act (H.R. 1364). The ASSIST Act would clarify the equipment that can be provided to disabled veterans as part of the medical benefits package to adapt their vehicles by providing greater flexibility regarding what can be classified as “adaptive equipment.” Passage of this legislation is a priority for PVA. Please send a message to your members of Congress [here](#).

FULL HOUSE COMMITTEE HEARING FOCUSING ON BIOMEDICAL INNOVATION AT VA

On April 1, the House Veterans’ Affairs Committee held a hearing titled, “Harnessing Biomedical Innovation: Modernizing VA Healthcare for the Future.” The committee invited several companies to share how they contribute to medical advances and support for veterans.

Participants represented at the hearing were Boston Scientific, Podometrics, Philips North America, and the University of Arizona Health Sciences Department. The witnesses represented experts in the field of diabetes and sleep apnea, as well as representatives for medical technology companies that include radiology equipment and other critical pieces of care delivery.

The hearing was unexpectedly contentious along party lines where members of the majority praised the witnesses and their medical contributions to the VA and minority members stressed the need for staff and funding that allows for appropriate delivery of care to implement the new technologies.

You can watch the hearing [here](#).

SENATE INTRODUCES COMPANION BILL TO IMPROVE VETERANS’ ACCESSIBILITY AT VA

The Veterans Accessibility Act (S. 1383) has been reintroduced in the Senate by Senators Rick Scott (R-FL), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Jerry Moran (R-KS), and Richard Blumenthal (D-CT). The Veterans Accessibility Act is the companion bill for the Veterans Accessibility Advisory Committee Act (H.R. 1147), which was introduced earlier this year by Representatives David Valadao (R-CA) and Morgan McGarvey (D-KY).

The two bills have small differences, but the intent is the same, to create a Federal Advisory Committee (FAC) focused on accessibility across the VA, ensuring that it is in full compliance with federal disability laws and offering guidance on ways to improve programs, facilities, and delivery of care. The FAC will be comprised of 15-members ranging from veterans service organizations focused on various disabilities, accessibility experts currently working for the VA, and outside stakeholders with an expertise in disability access.

Last Congress, the House bill cleared the chamber but not the Senate. We want to see the bill signed into law. You can help by sending your members of Congress a message urging their support for the legislation. You can

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find our PVAction Force campaign [here](#).

SENATOR BLUMENTHAL REINTRODUCES BILL TO IMPROVE CLAIMS PROCESS FOR ASSAULT SURVIVORS

The Ranking Member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), has reintroduced S. 1245, the Servicemember and Veteran Empowerment and Support (SAVES) Act. The SAVES Act has been a priority piece of legislation that expands authorized evidence for survivors of military sexual trauma (MST). The bill would also authorize mental health conditions related to MST such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and depression. The legislation seeks to improve the benefits process for survivors by allowing veterans to have their compensation and pension exam done by the VA or a contracted provider. Lastly, it would allow former guard and/or reservists to access mental health counseling provided by the VA.

Please send a message of support or thanks to your Senators through our PVAction Force [campaign](#).

NEWS OF NOTE

PVA Serves as Panelist at the PTE World Air Travel Conference

On April 9, Chief Policy Officer Heather Ansley was asked to present as part of a panel of experts on accessibility and air travel at PTE (Passenger Terminal Expo) World in Madrid, Spain. PTE World is the leading international airport conference and exhibition. The panel discussion titled, "From Raising Awareness to Taking Action to Making Progress," featured speakers from the UK, USA, and Switzerland. Discussions included advocating to increase disability access in air travel, steps that airlines and airports can take to improve the travel process, and the future of accessible air travel.

House Veterans' Affairs DAMA Subcommittee Holds Markup

On April 9, the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs (DAMA)

conducted a markup on six bills, including H.R. 1286, Simplifying Forms for Veterans Claims Act, and H.R. 2303, Board of Veterans' Appeals Attorney Retention and Backlog Reduction Act. PVA previously submitted testimony for a hearing that discussed all of the pending bills. To read our testimony on the bills, click [here](#). To view the markup, click [here](#).

Work on Section 107 of the Senator Elizabeth Dole Act Begins

A provision in the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act (P.L. 118-210) requires the VA to establish a working group that would guide the department's implementation of bill section 107. Specifically, the section requires the VA Secretary to develop a strategic plan to implement value-based care in the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). Among other things, the strategic plan must include the current state of VHA, an assessment of the current model of health care delivery used by the department in its medical facilities, and an assessment of VHA's future capacity needs over a five-year period, beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act. Additionally, within 180 days after the VA submits the strategic plan to Congress, the Secretary, coordinating through the Center for Innovation for Care and Payment, will commence a three-year pilot program implementing the strategic plan for the delivery of primary care, inpatient and outpatient mental health treatment, inpatient and outpatient substance abuse treatment, spinal cord injury and disorder care, and polytrauma care. PVA was one of the groups chosen to serve on the working group and we intend to update you on its efforts as we are able. You can view a section by section of the Senator Elizabeth Dole Act, including section 107, by clicking [here](#).

House Veterans' Affairs DAMA Subcommittee Oversight Hearing

On April 9, the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs (DAMA) conducted an oversight hearing titled, "Examining VA Efforts to Decrease Delays in Veterans' Disability Compensation Claims." Representatives from the VA included the Assistant Deputy Undersecretary, Field

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Operations Mr. Kenneth Smith; Executive Director Benefits and Memorial Services Mr. Robert Orifici; and from the American Federation of Government Employees, President James Swartz. PVA submitted a statement for the record. To watch the hearing, [click here](#).

Veterans' Committee Activities

Please visit the [House](#) and [Senate](#) Veterans' Affairs Committee webpages for information on previous and upcoming hearings and markups.

WEBINARS, PVACTION FORCE, & COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

Storytelling Webinar Recording Now Available

The recording for PVA's April 3 advocacy storytelling webinar is now available on [our website](#). We were honored to have Maureen Elias, in partnership with Armed Services Arts Partnership (ASAP), teach us how to advocate through telling our story. As part of the webinar, we created a worksheet to help you guide and craft your story. Let's get ready to own our stories and help guide legislation in the process. Watch the webinar by clicking [here](#). Make sure you use the worksheet located [here](#). And a copy of the PowerPoint slides are located [here](#).

PVA Needs You – Sign Today!

Over the last couple of years, we have seen VA health care staffing shortages, a lack of investment in infrastructure, and an overall growing trend towards care in the community. In light of our ongoing concerns about changes at the VA, we created an online petition to quantify the need to improve funding and support of the VA's spinal cord injuries and disorders system of care. Over 2,700 individuals have already signed the petition. Click [here](#) to sign your name and show your support. We need veterans, caregivers, and supporters to sign!

Please also take a look at our [2025 PVA Policy Priorities](#) and the issues important to our members. If you are interested in more ways to extend your advocacy efforts, click [here](#) to view our current campaigns on bills we support on our advocacy platform, PVACTION Force. We continue to add more campaigns as additional bills are introduced.

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