

**2019
PRIORITY
GOALS**

VFW
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.

BUDGET

To fully fund veterans and defense programs, Congress must:

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

HEALTH CARE

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

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

DISABILITY ASSISTANCE & MEMORIAL AFFAIRS

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

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

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT & TRANSITION ASSISTANCE

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

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

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

MILITARY QUALITY OF LIFE

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

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

NATIONAL SECURITY, FOREIGN AFFAIRS & POW/MIA

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

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