



National Military and Veterans Alliance **GOALS for the 112th Congress**

The National Military and Veterans Alliance (NMVA) was founded in 1996 as an open umbrella group of military associations and veterans organizations in order to advance common goals and to secure common interests. NMVA offers its association members a forum to discuss its membership's interests and ensure Alliance understanding and support.

The National Military and Veterans Alliance expands the military and veteran community's ability to present a united front to the Department of Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Congress and the White House. By working together, the 36 military associations and veterans organizations present a stronger voice that helps promote the objectives of the uniformed services community concerning a wide-range of military quality of life issues, including pay, personnel, medical, survivor benefits, military housing, education, veterans and military retiree issues.

The National Military and Veterans Alliance represents more than 3.5 million members. Collectively, our organizations represent some 80 million Americans – those who serve or have served their country and their families.

The Alliance Membership:

American Logistics Association	Military Order of Foreign Wars
American Military Retirees Association	Military Order of the World Wars
American Military Society	National Association for Uniformed Services
American Retirees Association	National Gulf War Resource Center
American WWII Orphans Network	Naval Enlisted Reserve Association
AMVETS (American Veterans)	Paralyzed Veterans of America
Armed Forces Marketing Council	Reserve Enlisted Association
Armed Forces Top Enlisted Association	Reserve Officers Association
Army Navy Union	Senior Citizens League
Association of the United States Navy	Society of Military Widows
Catholic War Veterans	The Flag and General Officers' Network
Families United for our Troops	The Retired Enlisted Association
Gold Star Wives of America	Tragedy Assistant Program for Survivors
Hispanic War Veterans Association	Uniformed Services Disabled Retirees
Japanese American Veterans Association	Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States
Korean War Veterans Foundation	Veterans of Modern Warfare
Legion of Valor	Vietnam Veterans of America
Military Order of the Purple Heart	Women in Search of Equity

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Uniformed Services Health Care

Goal: Ensure comprehensive, lifelong medical and dental care for all Uniformed Services beneficiaries regardless of age, status or location, as promised.

Objectives:

- ☞ Promote adequate funding of the Defense Health Program Budget to provide access to the military healthcare system for all uniformed services beneficiaries.
 - Protect the TRICARE Benefit from unwarranted cost shifting to the beneficiary.
 - Guard against conversion of military healthcare personnel to civilian positions.

- ☞ TRICARE Coverage
 - Stop or minimize increases in TRICARE fees, deductibles or copays.
 - Enhance the program to ensure quality provider participation.

- ☞ Maintain a comprehensive Uniform Pharmacy benefit.
 - Stop or minimize any future co-payment increases.
 - Monitor the placement or removal of drugs from the DoD Uniform Formulary.
 - Promote wider usage of the TRICARE Mail Order Pharmacy.

- ☞ Medicare
 - Fix the Medicare/TRICARE Physicians Reimbursement to ensure access to care providers for military retirees using TRICARE for Life (TFL).
 - Pursue Medicare subvention to military facilities as provided civilian care providers.

- Health Reform
 - Continue to protect earned healthcare benefits from unintended consequences that may arise from the implementation of National Health Reform.
 - Bar any form of taxation of TRICARE, TRICARE For Life, or VA health care.
 - Preserve beneficiary choice in TRICARE and VA healthcare programs.
- Enact improvements in Health Care for National Guard and Reserve Components.
 - Ensure mobilized IRR members and retirees qualify for TRICARE Reserve Select.
 - Subsidize employer for employee health care as option for mobilized SELRES.
 - Monitor implementation of Gray Area Reservists buy-in to TRICARE and ensure accurate calculation of premiums.
- Support worldwide programs to end the counterfeiting of prescription drugs and sale of illicit and dangerous prescription drugs that threaten the safety and security of legitimate drug supply chains.
- Oppose actions that would weaken current drug importation controls and support strong Food and Drug Administration (FDA) enforcement and oversight to keep the nation's drug supply safe.
- Maintain support for the Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences (USUHS).

Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP)

Goal: Provide for concurrent receipt of Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) and the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP).

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC)

Goal: Increase the monthly rates of veterans' dependency and indemnity compensation payable to surviving spouses through the Department of Veterans Affairs.

- Increase flat-rate Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) to 55% of the amount a 100% disabled veteran receives as VA Disability Compensation. Increase rank-based DIC by a percentage equal to the increase in flat-rate DIC. (This would be 12%.)

Pay and Compensation

Goal: Maintain a strong national defense with a high quality, all volunteer force based on competitive pay for active forces and inflation protected pay for retired forces.

Objectives:

- Pay
 - Ensure annual military pay raise exceeds the Employment Cost Index (ECI) unit, until pay gap with civilian sector is closed.
 - Increase rates of Special Pay/Special Duty Assignment Pay
- Housing
 - Phase up housing allowances to fulfill mandate for full cost of housing.
 - Increase funding for the construction and renovation of family housing and barracks.
 - Change the square-footage and dwelling type (by rank) standard to determine the formula for the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) to financially protect the entire "military family" regardless of rank.

- Retiree COLA
 - Advocate for equitable annual retiree cost-of-living adjustments (COLA).
 - Protect seniors from Medicare part B premium increases when there is no increase in Social Security COLA.
- Enact “premium conversion” to let military retirees pay health insurance premiums on a pre-tax basis, making healthcare insurance more affordable.

Veterans’ Health Care

Goal: Ensure adequate healthcare funding, so all eligible veterans and survivors are provided comprehensive medical care in accordance with established access standards at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Objectives:

- Ensure adequate resources to provide quality care and accessible medical services for veterans and stop enactment of enrollment or related fees.
- Ensure adequate oversight for two-year advanced funding of VA health care.
- Authorize Medicare subvention to allow VA to collect and retain Medicare dollars for treatment of Medicare-eligible VA patients.
- Enhance timely implementation of seamless transition activities between VA and DoD with bi-directional, interoperable electronic medical records, post-deployment health assessments, electronic DD214s, and effective congressional oversight.
- Provide pharmacy benefit to Priority 8 veterans at formulary cost to VA.

VA Benefits, Claims and Other VA Issues

Goal: Improve and streamline the processing, adjudication and appeal of veterans benefits claims, including programs at the Small Business Administration (SBA) and other agencies.

Goal: Ensure adequate funding for the timely and accurate processing of veterans claims for disability compensation and improve programs at Small Business Administration for veterans.

Objectives:

- Ensure sufficient funding for hiring and training of qualified claims processing personnel and providing necessary up-to-date IT equipment and software.
- Significantly reduce claims backlog to manageable level.

Goal: Overhaul disability ratings system to ensure “wounded warriors” receive fair rating for benefits prior to medical separation, as recommended by the Veterans Disability Benefits Commission.

- Promote military health history as part of the national electronic health record.
- Improve VA formulary and protect the Federal Supply Schedule pricing.

Concurrent Retirement and Disability Pay

Goal: Provide full concurrent receipt to all active duty and reserve component disabled retirees regardless of disability rating or cause.

Objectives:

- Implement full concurrent receipt for all service-connected disabled military retirees.
- Provide concurrent receipt to Chapter 61 retirees discharged from service prior to 20 years due to service-connected disability.
- Maintain the Combat Related Special Compensation (CRSC) program to preserve the tax-free status of awards for combat wounded and injured.

Force Policy and National Initiatives

Goal: A strong National Defense supported by strong Armed Services.

Objectives:

- Urge the President and Congress to increase defense spending to a minimum of five percent of Gross Domestic Product to cover procurement and prevent unnecessary personnel end strength cuts.
- Stabilize and increase personnel end-strength, to achieve targeted dwell period, in both the Active and Reserve forces to increase flexible response to worldwide threats.
- Support increased shipbuilding rates for the U.S. Navy.
- Support action to increase domestic oil production and to develop alternative sources of energy including bio-fuel, wind, sun and other promising technologies.

Fix New Post 9/11 GI Bill and Enhance Military Education Benefits

Goal: Improve implementation of Post 9/11 GI Bill and Fry Scholarship programs.

Goal: Upgrade benefits for Selected Reserve and include Selected Reserve members in Post 9/11 Bill.

Objectives:

- Restore basic Reserve MGIB-SR (chapter 1606) at historic benchmark 47 percent, to \$660 per month from \$329 per month.
- Enact academic protections for mobilized Guard and Reserve students, including refund guarantee and exemption from Federal student loan payments during activation.
- Track Chapter 35 Education benefits for surviving spouse and children of servicemember who died on active duty to reflect the improvements made to the Post 9-11G.I. Bill.
- Transfer chapter 35 to Title 32.
- Increase Chapter 35 education benefits for survivors and spouses and children of 100% disabled veterans to a level commiserate with current college tuition, fees, books and living expenses. Include

an annual monetary increase in benefits based on the annual increase in college education costs to keep payments in line with rising education costs.

Commissary and Exchange Benefits

Goal: Maintain current commissary and exchange benefits.

Objectives:

- ↻ Ensure full funding of the current commissary system to assure continuation of the benefit and to preclude an increase in the customer surcharge.
- ↻ Promote Status of Forces Agreements (SOFAs) to allow overseas U. S. military retirees to use military commissaries and exchanges.
- ↻ Stop any initiatives to consolidate or privatize the military exchange services.
- ↻ Support the repeal of Section 511 of the Tax Increase Prevention and Reconciliation Act of 2005 (PL 105-222), which mandates 3 percent withholding by federal, State, and local governments from payments for goods and services. The law will devastate the military resale services and, in effect, reduce military compensation.

National Guard and Reserve

Goal: Modernize retirement for Guard and Reserve to reflect the enormous sacrifice and contribution to the defense and security of the Nation.

Objectives:

- ↻ Lower the retirement pay eligibility age to 55 for all Reserve Component members.
- ↻ Provide all Reserve Component members who served on active duty in support of a contingency operation eligibility for early receipt of retirement pay retroactive to deployment since Sept. 11, 2001.
- ↻ Allow credit for all accrued inactive duty points in the computation of retirement pay.

Goal: Protection of the Guardsman and Reservist.

Objective:

- ↻ Provide stipend to employers to maintain employee health coverage on recalled Reservists to provide family continuity of health care.
- ↻ Request a congressional study on Compensation Protection for Reservists to explore mobilization insurance or pay differential.
- ↻ Seek GAO review of TRICARE Guard and Reserve programs and premiums.
- ↻ Restore the full tax deductibility of non-reimbursable expense by Guard and Reserve members.

Goal: Upgrade the financial, mortgage and healthcare protections covered by the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act and Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).

Uniformed Services Former Spouse Protection Act (USFSPA)

Goal: Identify USFSPA inequities

- ✓ Insert “unremarried” before “former husband or wife” in 10 USC 1408(a)(6)
- ✓ Protection to military personnel who are abused by their spouses in 10 USC 1408(h)
- ✓ Eliminate all but the first 20 words, in 10 USC 1408(d)
- ✓ Require jurisdictions to resolve all USFSPA related issues in the final divorce decree
- ✓ Relocate 10 USC 1408(c) to the Servicemember’s Civil Relief Act (50 USC App 501 Et Seq)
- ✓ Eliminate the term “RETIRED” from DD FORM 2

Objectives:

- Encourage DoD to adequately brief all personnel on the USFSPA and its possible implications to a military career and tragic service personnel suicides.
- Call on Congress for hearings regarding the USFSPA prior to the markup of the ~~2010~~ 2012 National Defense Authorization Act.
- Identify members of Congress to address the problems, for all parties, that currently exist within the USFSPA.

Guarantee Voting Rights for Members of the Uniformed Services

Goal: Fortify process of military absentee ballots to make sure every vote is counted.

Objective: Monitor the Military and Overseas Empowerment (MOVE) Act to protect voting rights for members of the Armed Forces and their families to ensure military voters are not disenfranchised in future elections.