



Protect the American flag

The American Legion urges Congress to introduce and approve an amendment to the U.S. Constitution that would permit Congress and the states to pass legislation to protect the U.S. flag from physical desecration. The U.S. House of Representatives has routinely passed such an amendment. Every state has endorsed it. And a majority of Americans agree the flag should be protected.

(Resolution 303, Aug. 30 - Sept. 1, 2016)

Support for Gold Star families

The families of our fallen servicemembers forever bear the burden of the loss of their loved one who gave their last full measure of devotion in defense of our great nation, security and freedom. The American Legion is dedicated to ensuring Gold Star families receive the absolute best care and services from the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(Resolution 14, Oct. 17-18, 2018)

The American Legion is the voice of 2 million U.S. military veterans and servicemembers. As a resolution-based organization, The American Legion's positions represent the views of its members and are based on our four pillars: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism, and Children & Youth.

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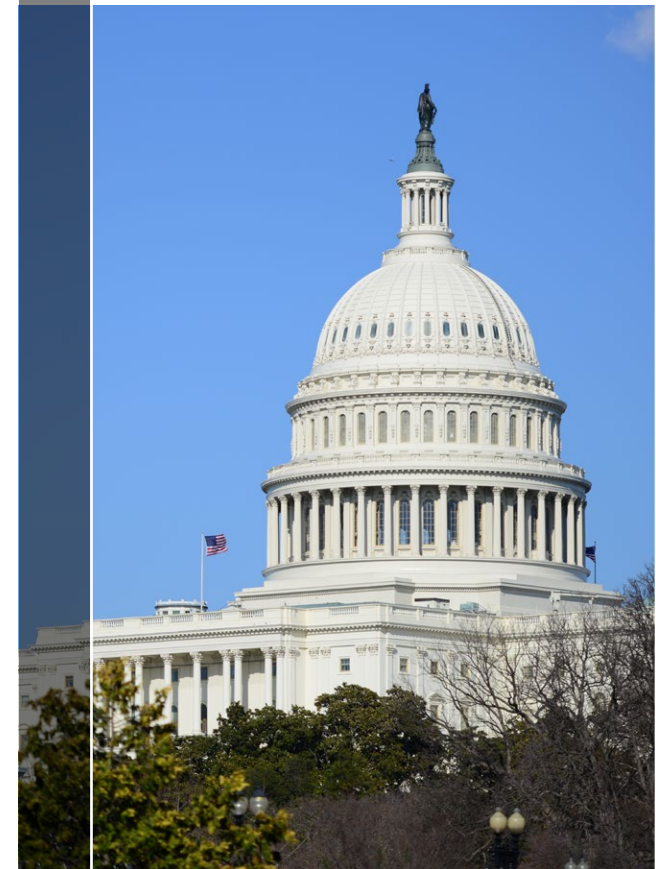
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THE AMERICAN LEGION LEGISLATIVE AGENDA for the 116th Congress

First Session



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THE AMERICAN LEGION LEGISLATIVE AGENDA FOR THE 116TH CONGRESS

Redefine “wartime service” period

More than 1,600 U.S. military men and women since the end of World War II have been killed or were wounded during times of armed conflict not recognized by the U.S. government. History is clear that the United States has been in a continuous state of wartime activity since the attack at Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941. In fairness to all who have served and sacrificed, not just those who fall within a government-defined window of dates, The American Legion passed Resolution 1 at its Fall 2018 National Executive Committee meeting calling on Congress to direct VA to expand the definition of “wartime veteran” to include all military personnel who served honorably under Title 10 orders for at least one day during this continuous period of armed conflict.

(Resolution 1, Oct. 17-18, 2018)

Support VA’s suicide-prevention efforts

An estimated 20 veterans end their lives every day. Most were not receiving care or support through VA that may have saved them. The American Legion supports expanding and promoting mental health treatment for veterans and urges Congress to provide VA necessary funds to hire mental health professionals and proper staffing for its Integrative Health and Wellness Program.

(Resolution 20, May 9-10, 2018)

Implement, oversee new laws

The 115th Congress passed multiple American Legion-supported bills that help veterans and their families, from the backlog-aimed VA Appeals Modernization Act to the omnibus VA MISSION Act. The Legion now calls on the 116th Congress to ensure these measures are accurately and quickly implemented, as designed.

(Multiple resolutions)

Fully fund a superior national defense

The American Legion supports a defense budget that reverses sequestration and its effects, rebuilds U.S. military end strength and weaponry and fairly compensates military personnel, especially in an ongoing time of global warfare.

(Resolution 35, Aug. 28-30, 2018)

Improve health care for women veterans

VA must continue to develop and expand health-care services for the fast-growing population of female veterans, a large percentage of whom do not enroll for VA health care for a number of reasons, according to surveys. Among the factors are limited gender-specific treatment services and awareness of VA benefits. All veterans, regardless of gender, must receive fair and equal VA health-care services.

(Resolution 147, Aug. 30-Sept. 1, 2016)

Expand Agent Orange benefits

Efforts by the 115th Congress fell short of finally extending fairness to Blue Water Navy Vietnam War veterans exposed to the toxic defoliant Agent Orange while at sea. The American Legion remains firm in its position that all veterans exposed to Agent Orange – on land, sea or air – deserve service-connected disability benefits for adverse health conditions presumed to be linked to such exposure.

(Resolution 246, Aug. 30-Sept. 1, 2016)

Programs to end veteran homelessness

To fully implement VA’s pledge to eradicate veteran homelessness, Congress must continue making investments in affordable housing and programs such as Supportive Services for Veteran Families that move veterans and their families off the streets and into stable housing with supportive services.

(Resolution 340, Aug. 30-Sept. 1, 2016)

Re-employment rights for veterans

Veterans should not lose their jobs while deployed to protect the freedoms all Americans enjoy. When servicemembers deploy, worrying about whether they will still have employment can hinder mission focus. The American Legion urges Congress to prohibit employers from pressuring servicemembers into waiving their employment rights and protections through arbitration agreements.

(Resolution 85, Aug. 22-24, 2017)

Access to business capital via GI Bill

As times change, so must the GI Bill. For veteran entrepreneurs, access to capital for starting, purchasing or expanding small businesses is a serious obstacle. The American Legion supports legislation that would expand GI Bill benefits to assist veterans in obtaining access to small business capital.

(Resolution 150, Aug. 30 - Sept. 1, 2016)

Citizenship for honorable service

Immigrants to the United States often join the U.S. Armed Forces as a route to citizenship. Many veteran immigrants say they have been deported after discharge because they failed to acquire U.S. citizenship while in service. The American Legion supports measures to ensure the process of naturalization through military service is completed prior to discharge.

(Resolution 15, Oct. 17-18, 2018)

Repeal unfair VA offsets

Many military retirees must forfeit a portion of their pensions to receive VA service-connected disability compensation. It is equally outrageous when VA survivor benefits are offset from military Survivor Benefit Plan annuities. The American Legion supports legislation to repeal both of these unjust offsets.

(Resolution 224, Aug. 30-Sept. 1, 2016)