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Mount Vernon Chapter

The Despatch

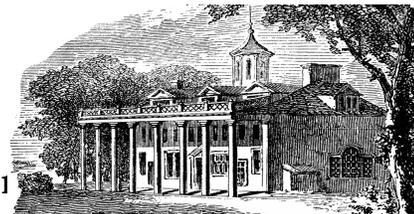


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Virginia General Assembly Adjourns (WTVR, Richmond)

This year we want Virginia state law to be reformed through a Virginia Constitutional Amendment to include *died on active duty* in the section that addresses surviving spouses of members of the armed forces who were “killed in action.” This is an amendment initiated by MOAA’s Virginia Council of Chapters (VCOC) and sponsored by Senator Jeremy S. McPike (SJ231). It was approved by the Senate and the House of Delegates and is now in the Governor’s Action Database.

Virginia Legislature Adjourns 25 Feb; Four JLC Initiatives Move Forward

By CDR John Prevar, USN (Ret), Legislative Chair

The Virginia General Assembly has adjourned, and four out of six Joint Leadership Council (JLC) of Veterans Service Organizations 2023 initiatives now await the governor’s signature.

A version of JLC 2023-01 *Expand Tax Relief for Surviving Spouses of Military Members to also include “Died in the Line-of-Duty”*, was passed last year, but it is a law that can only be adopted at the local level. This

Another VCOC initiative is JLC 2023-06 *Virginia National Guard Income Tax Exemption*, which would increase the amount of excluded from State Income Tax from \$3,000 to \$6,000 and increase the pay grade eligibility to LTC (O5 pay grade). This is in bill **SB1210**, sponsored by Senator T. Montgomery “Monty” Mason, which passed the Senate and the House of Delegates and is also in the Governor’s Action Database. The Governor has until 11:59 PM on 27 March to sign this and any other bills into law.

The two other remaining JLC-sponsored initiatives are JLC 2023-04, which would eliminate spouse burial fees at Virginia State Veterans Cemeteries, and JLC 2023-5, which would grant free admission and parking at Virginia State Parks for Virginia National Guard members. Both have identical bills, passed by the House of Delegates and the Senate, which have been sent to the Governor.

A summary of all the JLC initiatives is on page 5.



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Volume 51 Number 3
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Smash on Station**Esteemed Colleagues,**

I sent this theme out last year, and it is still pertinent today. The mission of MOAA is the task that we have decided to undertake for the future veterans of the United States Armed Forces.

When I was a naïve company grade officer, I felt everyone in the unit was putting their full effort into the unit's mission. It wasn't until I was an XO, then CO, then DCAG and finally CAG that I came to understand this was not the case. A few, very few, let their personal agendas drive their actions in lieu of the mission of the organization.

During my doctoral studies and research in Organization Leadership and Management, I evaluated over 60 organizations from their websites and the primary business social media. You can learn a lot about an organization from what it has as a public facing presence. You can also learn a lot about the people in the organization, MOAA included, from what the members provide in any social media and their biographies on the organizational website.

My message here is that personal agendas should not drive our efforts at the strategic, operational or tactical levels of the Military Officers Association of America, but mission focus and mission accomplishment should be our driving force across the three levels of our organization. We owe that focus to those serving currently on active duty, as those before us did providing this organization to assist current and future veterans.

March Observances – Daylight Savings Time began on Sunday the 12th, and for you so inclined as I am, two days later was PI Day (3.14159265 or 22/7ths).

The Luck of the Irish and St Patrick's Day on the 17th, where everyone wears green. (Most of us wore green for the majority of our military careers.)

The First Day of Spring on the 20th, which coincides with the start of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003 on 19 March. On the 25th of March, we salute all heroes with Congressional Medal of Honor Day. March 29th is National Vietnam War Veterans Day - we commemorate those who fought in the Vietnam War on National Vietnam War Veterans Day.

“If we are to guard against ignorance and remain free, it is the responsibility of every American to be informed.” – Thomas Jefferson.

Never stop serving our great Nation.

Semper Fidelis,

Continuing to Serve,

Smash



NEVER STOP SERVING



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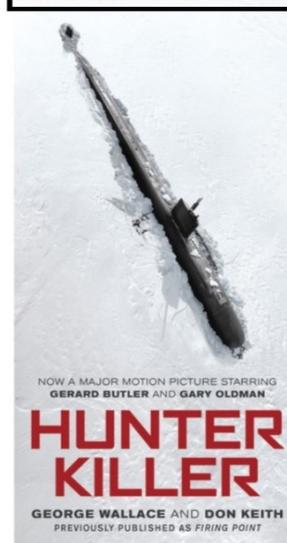
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From Pay Raise to PACT Act, What You Need to Know About the Biden Budget

Edited from a 15 March MOAA article by Col Dan Maury, USAF (Ret) and CDR Rene Campos, USN (Ret)

The president's budget request for FY 2024 comes in at \$6.8 trillion — can such a hefty request survive this Congress? It will take several months to assess the support from both parties and chambers. In the mix will be strong debates about the budget's impact on Medicare, taxes on the wealthy, and the nation's growing deficit.

Defense

The budget requests \$880 billion for defense programs (an increase of 3.3% over last year). From those programs, DoD garners \$842 billion (\$26 billion more than FY 2023) and nearly \$100 billion more than FY 2022. The remaining portion of that overall budget includes \$38 billion to DoD to maintain a strong nuclear deterrent.

This budget includes a 5.2% pay raise for uniformed servicemembers — consistent with the statutory requirement to keep pace with the Employment Cost Index. Although some news outlets are reporting this increase as "[the largest military pay raise in 20 years](#)," our servicemembers' pay is still 2.6% behind ECI after falling short of the index from 2014 to 2016. The budget also includes a 5.2% pay increase for federal civilians, an area where competition for talent has struggled with the private sector.

Per budget documents, one of the administration's focus points is to ensure the budget "Fulfills America's Commitment to Military Families." Noted is the continued support for families, which are key to readiness and the well-being of the all-volunteer force. The proposed budget acknowledges program increases for things like expansion of community-based child care fee assistance, and efforts to address the challenges of child care capacity. MOAA will follow this closely to understand the actual amounts committed and the effectiveness of these concerted efforts.

Overall military end strength, both the active and reserve components, increases by 12,355. This includes a reduction in the Army Reserve by 2,200, and plus-ups for the Marines (683), Navy (6,247) and Air and Space Force (7,625).

The budget includes \$1.45 billion to subsidize commissary operations, \$27 million more than last year.

Veterans

The budget requests \$325 billion for the VA, a 5% increase over the previous year. The proposal includes over \$142 billion in discretionary funding, much of which goes toward veterans' health care, and over \$182 billion in mandatory funding to cover compensation and pensions, readjustment benefits, and insurance and indemnities accounts. As required by law, the administration is also requesting advance appropriations of \$134 billion for medical care and \$193 billion for benefits programs for FY 2025.

Budget cont. on p.6

Summary of 2023 JLC Initiatives as of 13 March

Policy Papers: <https://www.dvs.virginia.gov/dvs/joint-leadership-council-veterans-service-organizations-2>

Initiative	Recommendation	Bill/Resolution
JLC 2023-01 <i>Expand Tax Relief for Surviving Spouses of Military Members to also include "Died in the Line-of-Duty"</i>	That the Governor and General Assembly reform the Virginia state law, Tax Relief for Surviving Spouse of a Member of the Armed Forces "Killed in Action" through a Virginia Constitutional Amendment to include <i>died on active duty</i> in the section that addresses surviving spouses of members of the armed forces killed in action.	SJ231 (McPike): 2/3/23 read third time and agreed to by Senate. 2/25/23 House ADOPTED ; 3/8/23 signed by Senate President and House Speaker.
JLC 2023-02 <i>Real Property Tax Exemption Effective Date</i>	That the Governor and General Assembly Amend the Veteran Real Property Tax law to make explicit that local jurisdictions must provide a veteran or surviving spouse the exemption as far back as the veteran or surviving spouse is eligible, but not earlier than January 1, 2011, regardless of when the veteran or surviving spouse applies.	HB1470 (Watts): 1/31/23 House passed; 2/1/23 Senate referred to Committee on Finance and Appropriations; 2/24/23 left in Finance and Appropriations.
JLC 2023-03 <i>Removal of Age Requirement Income Tax Subtraction</i>	That the Governor and General Assembly remove the 55-year age limitation on exemption of military retirement income from state tax.	HB1436 (McGuire): House passed; 2/8/23 Senate passed by indefinitely by Committee on Finance and Appropriations.
JLC 2023-4 <i>Increase GF Support for State Veterans Cemeteries; Eliminate Spouse Burial Fees</i>	That the Governor and General Assembly appropriate an additional \$300,000 (GF) to the Virginia Department of Veterans Services so that the spouse burial charge may be eliminated at Virginia State Veterans Cemeteries, and that Virginia work with Congress to secure the funding (in the VA budget) to extend the VA plot allowance to spouses at all state veterans cemeteries nationwide.	HB2362 (Wiley): 1/31/23 House passed; 2/10/23 Senate passed with substitute; 2/14/23 House ADOPTED ; 2/20/23 House: Bill as passed House and Senate – HB2362ER . SB924 (DeSteph) 1/30/23 Senate passed; 2/17/23 House passed; 2/20/23 Senate passed; 2/23/23 Senate: Bill as passed by Senate and House – SB924ER ; 2/23/23 House signed by Speaker; 2/25/23 Senate signed by President.
JLC 2023-05 <i>Virginia National Guard State Park Admission</i>	That the Governor and General Assembly grant free or reduced price admission to Virginia State parks to members of the Virginia National Guard.	HB1388 (Fowler): 2/7/23 House passed; 2/15/23 Senate passed; 2/20/23 House: Bill as passed by House and Senate – HB1388ER . SB915 (Morrisey): 2/3/23 Senate passed; 2/13/23 House passed; 2/15/23 Senate: Bill text as passed by Senate and House – SB915ER ; 2/15/23 House signed by Speaker; 2/16/23 Senate signed by President.
JLC 2023-06 <i>Virginia National Guard Income Tax Exemption</i>	That the Governor and General Assembly adjust increase the amount of income excluded from State Income Tax from \$3,000 to \$6,000 and increase the pay grade eligibility to LTC (05 pay grade).	SB1210 (Mason): 2/3/23 Senate passed; 2/15/23 House passed with substitute; 2/15/23 Senate rejected substitute; 2/22/23 Conference: amended by conference committee; 2/24/23 Senate approves conference report; 2/25/23 House approves conference report; 2/25/23 House VOTE – adoption by House; 3/8/23 signed by House Speaker and Senate President; 3/13/23 communicates to Governor, who must sign bill by 11:59 PM 3/27/23.



MVC-MOAA 2023 Events-Calendar

DATE	LOCATION	EVENT / SPEAKER / TOPIC
Wed. Mar 1 7 pm–9 pm	Virtual	 BOD Meeting: EOY-audit results; start LOE award pkg-submit May 1; non-renewal letters/drop from rolls; Apr VCOC meeting/report; JROTC medals.
Sat. Apr 15	Heritage Presby. Church 8503 Ft. Hunt Rd	 Scholarship Candidate Interviews.
Wed. May 3 7 pm–9 pm	Virtual	 BOD Meeting: IRS reports due; Scholarship certificates/checks, JROTC medal presentations; 2 nd QTR VCOC Report; VA Corp. Commission fee; renew PO box rental.
Sat. May 13 11 am–1 pm	La Fiamma Restaurant 6124 Franconia Rd, Alexandria	Lunch brunch. (Speaker) <i>Lunch served at 11:30 am, Speaker to follow.</i>
Wed. Sep 6 7 pm–9 pm	Virtual	 BOD Meeting: Appoint Nomination Cmte for Nov Officer election; need volunteers for Ft. Belvoir Retirees Activities Day in Sep; confirm speakers.
Wed. Sep 20 6 pm–9 pm	The Fairfax Community CTR (tentative) 9140 Belvoir Woods Parkway	Dinner. Speaker TBD. <i>Social Hour (Cash Bar) 6-7 pm. Buffet served at 7 pm, Speaker at 8 pm.</i>
Wed. Oct 4 7 pm–9 pm	Virtual	 BOD Meeting. 4 th QTR VCOC report; Legislative Cmte proposes Natl objectives; MOAA Conference, Slate of officers; notice for membership dues/scholarship fund donations, Veterans Day observances; prep Dec Wreaths Across America (WAA) & Social; update bank account cards as needed.
Sat. Nov 18 11 am–1 pm	La Fiamma Restaurant	Lunch Brunch. Annual Business Meeting. Speaker TBD. <i>Lunch served at 11:30 am. Officer Installation and Speaker to follow.</i>
Sat. Dec 16 1130–3 pm	Alexandria Natl Cemetery; Social	 Wreath Laying  Holiday Social

Budget cont. from p.4

The budget proposal supports many of MOAA's [legislative priorities for veterans](#) with the 118th Congress, as recently highlighted during a joint session of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees on March 8, stressing the need to implement toxic exposure reforms, modernize and fully fund the VA, preserve and expand servicemembers' consumer protections, and help reserve component members access the benefits they've earned.

What's Next for the Budget?

Like other federal program proposals in the budget, more information on the specific departments will become known in the coming weeks. The president's budget serves as a starting point for lawmakers' negotiations. Department secretaries will be required to justify their budget proposal before the House and Senate committees starting this month.

Keep up with the latest budget developments at [MOAA's Advocacy News page](#), and watch for how you can make your voice heard to your legislators on this and other critical issues at [MOAA's Legislative Action Center](#).

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