

Dedicated to the memory of
General George Washington



Mount Vernon Chapter

The Despatch

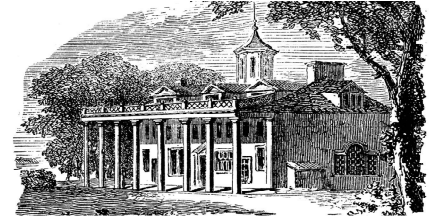


Mount Vernon, Virginia Chapter - MOAA
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Bills Span Improving Healthcare Access, Government Accountability and Benefits for Education and Workforce Readiness.

By Linda F. Hersey, Stars and Stripes

Summarized by MAJ Peter Chen, USA (Ret), Despatch Editor

A whopping 27 bills for reauthorizing specific veterans' programs and policies were presented at an unusual hearing of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee that focused on eventually combining many of the initiatives into a single omnibus package for a vote in Congress.

The bills spanned improving health care access, government accountability and benefits for education and workforce readiness. Several pieces of legislation focused on efforts to update infrastructure, operations and processes at the Department of Veterans Affairs — affecting how medical facilities are managed, how quickly new drugs are made available and how research is prioritized on veterans' health.

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“These bills aim to address ongoing issues that have hindered VA health care delivery over the years due to excessive bureaucracy and cumbersome processes, which has shifted the focus away from placing veterans at the center of everything VA does,” said Rep. Mike Bost, R-Ill., the committee chairman, at the start of the two-hour hearing. Some statutes and polices have not been meaningfully updated for 30 years, Bost said. “When programs fall short, it is the duty of this committee to ask questions, demand answers and make the legislative changes to fix the problems. Reauthorization is not a procedural exercise. It is how Congress evaluates whether programs are working as intended,” he said.

The bills included 12 Republican-led and 15 Democrat-led pieces of legislation. Bills would align the VA's national drug formulary with health care industry standards, update VA's leasing and construction practices, and reform processes for issuing contracts and making procurements. Other bills sought to establish or significantly broaden veterans access to specific health programs. They included an initiative to expand dental coverage to more veterans and for the first time provide VA mental health care to incarcerated veterans with PTSD, traumatic brain injuries and other service-connected conditions.

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Smash on Station



Esteemed colleagues,

We have scheduled our JROTC Candidate Scholarship Interviews on the 9th of May at the Pohick Regional Library. If you wish to participate, please contact Martin Schaller.

Meet & Greet - Come and join us at a Mount Vernon Chapter MOAA Meet & Greet/Happy Hour Meeting at Kilroy's Restaurant (5250A Port Royal Road, Springfield, VA) on Wednesday 29 April from 1700 (5PM) to 1900 (7PM). This is a great chance to meet and network with Active/Retired/Former Military Officers in our area. Meet new friends and catch-up with old ones in a fun, informal atmosphere. This is your chance to explore what a local MOAA Chapter does in our area.

Member Spotlight - We've had a few members who have submitted their stories in the past, and I'd like to see us start anew. Send your stories with photos to Peter Chen or me for inclusion in a future Despatch.

Final Thoughts:

In these days of divide attention and divided intentions across the Nation, I am reminded of:

"I do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic, that I will bear truth faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without and mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office upon which I am about to enter; SO HELP ME GOD."

Never stop serving our great Nation.

Semper Fidelis,

Smash



NEVER STOP SERVING

3.

Celebration of Life for CDR JOHN EDWARD PREVAR (1946-2026)

Please join the family and friends of John Prevar for a reception in honor of his life. You are invited to drop in and share your memories. Light refreshments will be served

Saturday April 11th 2026 2.00 - 5.00 p.m.

The Roundhouse, 343 Roundhouse Lane, Alexandria VA 22314

If you would like to RSVP (drop in is also fine) or obtain further information please e mail

pamelaprevar@hotmail.com

<https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/alexandria-va/john-prevar-12758395>

Continues from Page 1

VA officials said they do not support the Dental Care for Veterans Act, led by Rep. Julia Brownley, D-Calif. The agency has “significant concern” about costs to implement the bill, said Phillip Christy, a principal executive director and chief acquisition officer at the VA. Of the approximately 9 million veterans enrolled in VA health care, only about 2.4 million currently qualify for coverage for dental services, he said. “VA anticipates that there would be a large initial surge in demand for dental care,” Christy said in written and oral testimony.

The Get Justice-Involved Veterans Back Home Act — which is still in draft form — would direct the VA to furnish mental health services to veterans in prison with services that include telehealth, mobile care units and other means, said Rep. Herb Conaway, D-N.J., a physician and Air Force veteran. Veterans with serious mental health problems have a higher incarceration rate, Conaway said. The bill also would ensure resumption of disability benefits upon release.

Rep. Mark Takano, of California, the top Democrat on the committee, spoke in support of the Ensuring Veterans’ Smooth Transition Act, or the EVEST Act. The bill would automatically enroll in VA health care eligible service members leaving the military. “Veterans earned this care through service to this nation,” Takano said. “For us to gatekeep their access to that care does nothing to improve their outcomes. We know that the months following transition can be stressful, and risk factors are elevated, including for mental health.” Six out of 10 of veterans who died by suicide in 2023 were not receiving VA health care in the year before their death, according to the most recent National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report.

The VISN Reform Act would change how the VA runs its regional health networks, known as VISNs, which oversee hospitals and clinics that care for millions of veterans. The bill would reduce the number of networks from 18 to eight, creating a new map with much larger regions. Supporters argued that consolidation would streamline authority.

The VA National Formulary Act would update VA management of prescribed medications, including how quickly it evaluates new drugs and makes them available to veterans.

The VA Research Reform Act aims to update research practices and standards by creating a centralized database and prioritizing studies for enhancing health outcomes. The bill requires “veteran impact forecasts” to ensure that clinical studies focus on improving veteran health.

The VA Funding and Workforce Protection Act, led by Rep. Tim Kennedy, D-N.Y., would help shield the VA workforce from layoffs. The bill would add protections for the 30% of VA staff who are military veterans.

Mount Vernon Chapter

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MVC MOAA Legislative Corner

Summarized by Desptach Editor

Commonwealth of Virginia

Virginia Senate Bill 315 Safeguarding American Veteran Empowerment Act (Passed on 3/2/2026): The act regulates the practices of persons seeking to receive compensation for preparing, presenting, prosecuting, advising, consulting, or assisting any individual regarding any veterans benefits matter, as defined in the bill. The bill provides that a violation of its provisions constitutes a prohibited practice under the Virginia Consumer Protection Act. This bill is identical to HB 398.

Virginia HB1018 Sec/ of Veterans & Defense Affairs study to recommend plan to guide legislation related to veterans (with House Committee as of 2/6/2026): Directs the Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs to convene a work group every four years to study and develop recommendations for implementing a state wide strategic plan to guide legislation and budget decisions relating to veterans in the Commonwealth. The bill requires the work group to submit a report to the Governor and the General Assembly by November 1, 2026, and every four years thereafter.

U.S. Congress Key Bills Introduced/Pending in 2026:

H.R. 6047 (Sharri Briley and Eric Edmundson Veterans Benefits Expansion Act of 2026): Proposes increasing DIC and other monthly benefits, along with VA home loan fee changes.

S.3653 (Veterans' Bill of Rights Act of 2026): Aims to establish a set of rights for veterans regarding their VA benefits.

S.3726 (National Veterans Strategy Act of 2026): Requires the development of a National Veterans Strategy to define veteran success.

H.R. 333 (Disabled Veterans Tax Termination Act): Aimed at eliminating the taxon disabled veterans, particularly impacting those with TDIU (Total Disability Individual Un-employability).



VA Reauthorization Initiatives: House lawmakers are considering sweeping changes to VA healthcare to improve accountability and reduce red tape.

Source: U.S. Congressional Budget Office www.cbo.gov



MVC-MOAA 2026 Events-Calendar



DATE	LOCATION	EVENT / SPEAKER / TOPIC
Wed. Apr 29 5pm-7pm	Kilroy's	Meet & Greet/Happy Hour at Kilroy's restaurant with MVC/MOAA. All MOAA members and guests are invited. We will be at the covered patio at the back of the restaurant.
Wed. May 6 7pm-9pm	Virtual	BOD Meeting: IRS reports due; scholarship certificates/checks, JROTC medal presentations; 2 nd QTRVCOC Report; VA Corp. Commission fee; renew PO box rental.
Sat. May 9 12pm-1:30pm	Pohick Library	Scholarship Candidate Interviews.
Wed. Sep 2 7pm-9pm	Virtual	BOD Meeting: Appoint Nomination Cmte for Nov Officer election; need volunteers for Ft. Belvoir Retirees Activities Day in Sep; confirm speakers.
Wed. Sep 23 (Tentative) 6pm-9pm	TBD	Dinner. Speaker TBD. Social Hour (Cash Bar) 6-7pm. Buffet served at 7pm, Speaker at 8pm.
Wed. Oct 7 7pm-9pm	Virtual	BOD Meeting. 4 th QTR VCOC report; Legislative Cmte proposes Natl objectives
Sat. Nov 18 11am-1pm	TBD	Lunch/Brunch. Annual Business Meeting. Speaker TBD. <i>Lunch served at 11:30 am. Officer Installation and Speaker to follow.</i>
Sat. Dec 12 9:30am-3pm	Alexandria Natl Cemetery; Social location Whiskey and Oysters	 Wreath Laying  Holiday Social This is becoming an annual tradition for the Mount Vernon Chapter. Please join us for the annual Wreaths Across America day at Alexandria National Cemetery. We will be joining veterans from local VSOs, Boy Scouts, various military affiliated youth organizations, and numerous supporters from around the community. Following the wreath laying, we will conduct our holiday social at Whiskey and Oysters.

...and more from our much-appreciated sponsors



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Comments or letterstotheeditormay be senttothe above address or email: peter.chen2282015@gmail.com

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