



December 11, 2020

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1. VFW Testifies Before House Subcommittee: On Tuesday, VFW National Legislative Service Director Patrick Murray testified before the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity. The hearing was held to discuss legislative priorities for the 117th Congress including services for homeless veterans, employment and education benefits, and information technology upgrades. Murray stated, "The VFW would like to thank this subcommittee for their engagement and productivity during the 116th Congress. These past two years, the House of Representatives has passed 74 veteran bills, 28 of which have become law, and many originating in this subcommittee." The VFW thanks Chairman Mike Levin (D-CA) and Ranking Member Gus Bilirakis (R-FL) for their continued partnership with the VFW on issues related to economic opportunity. [Watch the hearing](#) or [read the testimony](#).

2. House Holds Hearing on Toxic Exposures: On Wednesday, the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorials Affairs held a hearing on toxic exposures and VA's presumptive service connection determination process. VFW National Legislative Service Associate Director Kristina Keenan submitted a statement for the record in which she explained the difficulties veterans face when filing VA disability claims for conditions related to toxic exposures due to the lack of documentation proving direct service connection. Keenan expressed the need for a comprehensive framework for VA to study, assess, and grant presumptive service connection for past, present, and future veterans affected by toxic exposures. This framework is described in detail in VFW-supported [S. 4393](#), *Toxic Exposure in the American Military (TEAM) Act of 2020*. [Watch the hearing](#) or [read the testimony](#).

3. President Signs Mental Health Care and Services Bill: President Trump signed into law the VFW-supported [H.R. 8247](#), the *Veterans Comprehensive Prevention, Access to Care and Treatment (COMPACT) Act*. This legislation will enhance a wide variety of much-needed services related to improving transition, suicide prevention, and care and services for women veterans. [Read more](#).

4. HVAC Women Veterans Task Force Holds Roundtable: On Wednesday, members of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Women Veterans Task Force, VA, women veterans, and VSOs discussed the [2020 Report of the Department of Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee on Women Veterans](#). The report recommends financial relief for female student veterans between school sessions, measurable standards for women veteran health coordinators, incentives for women's health providers to ensure a continuum of care, establishing a breast imaging services national strategic plan, assessing the End Harassment Campaign, and other critical issues specific to women veterans. Chairwoman Julia Brownley (D-CA) concluded the roundtable by quoting Dr. Mary Edwards Walker, the only female Medal of Honor recipient, "Let the generations know that women in uniform also guaranteed their freedom." [Watch the roundtable](#).

5. CHAMPVA to Cover Autism Treatment: The Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA) will now support the treatment of children with autism. Applied Behavior Analysis is an evidence-based treatment for autism spectrum disorder that will now be available for the first time. [Learn more](#).

6. TRICARE Open Season About to End: TRICARE [Open Season](#) ends on **Dec. 14, 2020**. This is the last chance for beneficiaries to enroll in or change their health care coverage. Any changes will go into effect on Jan. 1, 2021. This year it is important to note that TRICARE Select Group A retirees will be required to pay an enrollment fee beginning on Jan. 1, 2021. Beneficiaries must set up an allotment with their regional contractors for the enrollment fee to begin on Jan. 1, 2021. Individuals who do not set up their allotment by the deadline will be unenrolled due to nonpayment. [Learn more](#).

7. MIA Update: The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced one new identification for service members who have been missing and unaccounted-for from World War II. Returning home for burial with full military honors is:

-- **Navy Chief Warrant Officer John G. Connolly**, 48, was assigned to the battleship USS Oklahoma, which was moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when the ship was attacked by Japanese aircraft on Dec. 7, 1941. The USS Oklahoma sustained multiple torpedo hits, which caused it to quickly capsize. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 429 crewmen, including Connolly. Interment services are pending. [Read about Connolly](#).

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