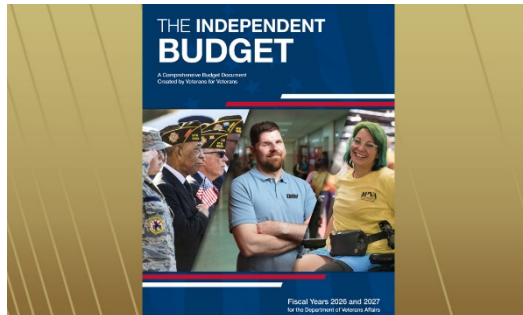




February 17, 2025



Independent Budget Released: Leading veterans service organizations — Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), DAV (Disabled American Veterans), and Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) — have released *The Independent Budget Recommendations for the Department of Veterans Affairs for Fiscal Years 2026-2027*. This report serves as a roadmap to ensure VA is fully funded and capable of carrying out its mission to serve veterans and their families, both now and in the future. “While the Independent Budget is now complete, it is imperative that Congress and VA work together, along with veterans service organizations and other stakeholders, to make the needs and interests of all veterans a top priority,” said VFW Washington Office Executive Director Ryan Gallucci. “We have co-authored this report and offered budgetary recommendations to ensure the timely delivery of specialized health care and earned benefits for the men and women who served.” [Read the report.](#)



VFW Presents Education Legislative Priorities: VFW National Legislative Deputy Director Kristina Keenan spoke on a legislative panel at the midwinter meeting of the National Association of State Approving Agencies. These agencies have responsibility to review, approve, and monitor all programs and schools for quality education for students using VA benefits. Keenan presented the VFW's legislative priorities regarding education opportunity, including National Guard and Reserve GI Bill parity to ensure that each day in uniform for which reserve component service members receive pay counts toward earning their GI Bill benefits. This is currently limited to specific active duty statuses, creating disparities among the armed forces. She also stressed the need for student veterans who take

some or all college courses online to receive a more realistic monthly housing allowance, currently set at half the national average. The VFW supports increasing this amount to ensure that veterans do not experience housing insecurity while pursuing an education.



House Passes Veteran Homelessness Bill: The House passed VFW-supported H.R. 965, *Housing Unhoused Disabled Veterans Act*. This bill would exclude VA disability compensation from income calculations for housing programs supported by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Veterans with injuries or illnesses resulting from military service may have significant barriers to employment and be at a higher risk for homelessness. The risks may also increase for those with higher disability ratings. Excluding this earned compensation would facilitate greater veteran eligibility for supported housing programs. The VFW thanks Rep. Sherman (CA-32) for introducing this important legislation, and urges the Senate to swiftly pass it as well. [Read the bill.](#)



Bill to Safeguard VA Benefit and Second Amendment Rights: Chairmen Moran and Bost of the Senate and House Committees on Veterans' Affairs, and Sen. Kennedy of Louisiana, have introduced a bill to preserve the Second Amendment rights of veterans with VA-assigned fiduciaries. Under current law, VA must submit the names of veterans with fiduciaries to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS), prohibiting them from purchasing or possessing firearms. The proposed legislation would not allow a name referral to NICS without a judicial finding that a veteran is a danger to self or others. "Veterans should never be forced to choose between receiving assistance from VA to manage their benefits and their fundamental Second Amendment rights," said Chairman Moran. [Read more.](#)



MIA Update: The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced one burial update for a service member who has been missing and unaccounted for from the Korean War.

Update:

-- [Korean War Army Master Sgt. Luther Grace](#),
Georgia

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