



February 23, 2026



VFW Issues Statement Demanding VA Rescind Disability Rule Change: The VFW released a statement demanding the VA rescind its recent rule change on how disability ratings will now be determined. Published in the Federal Register without public comment, the rule directs VA claims examiners to consider medication-induced improvements when they rate veterans' disabilities for new claims, claims for increase and routine future exams received from Feb. 17, 2026, forward. "Disabled veterans should never be forced to choose between following their doctor's orders and protecting their earned benefits. This interim rule puts that stability at risk, and it must be withdrawn," said VFW National Commander Carol Whitmore. Additionally, the VFW called on VA to restore the prior evaluation standard pending full regulatory review; and engage Congress and stakeholders in a transparent process that respects judicial precedent and protects veterans' earned benefits. [Read the statement.](#)



VA Issues, Then Halts Rule Change for Rating Disabilities: The VA issued, then halted an interim final rule amending its disability rating policies to clarify that disability evaluations will consider the effects of medication and treatment when determining a veteran's level of impairment. Under [this policy](#), examiners would assess conditions based on how a veteran functions after taking prescribed medication, which could result in lower disability ratings compared to evaluations conducted without considering treatment effects. After an overwhelmingly negative response from the veteran community, VA Secretary Doug Collins announced [on social media](#) that the VA is

halting enforcement of the interim final rule, effective immediately. While the VFW still opposes the rule, it accepts Secretary Collins' efforts to alleviate concerns in the statement. The VFW encourages all Action Corps subscribers to submit comments to the Federal Register, calling on the VA to rescind this rule change. [Click here to comment.](#)



VFW Highlighted in Concurrent Receipt Article: VFW National Legislative Service Associate Director Joy Craig contributed to a feature by Task & Purpose describing how veterans and military service organizations are leading a coordinated “full-court press” urging Congress to act on [S.1032](#) / [H.R.2102](#), Major Richard Star Act. The article highlights growing pressure to pass the bill this year, or, at a minimum, hold a hearing on the long-standing concurrent receipt offset. Craig emphasized that combat-injured service members forced into medical retirement should not lose a portion of their earned retired pay because of wounds sustained in war. The message is simple: fix the injustice and honor the contract. [Read the article.](#)



VA Ends Fiduciary-Based Reporting: In a move to protect veterans' Second Amendment rights, VA stopped reporting veterans as “prohibited persons” to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) solely because they participate in VA's Fiduciary Program for benefits management assistance. This practice, which VFW had advocated against multiple times, stripped veterans of their constitutional rights without a judicial or quasi-judicial finding that they posed a danger to themselves or others, contrary to the Gun Control Act and the Second Amendment. In consultation with the FBI, VA also seeks to remove all prior fiduciary-based reports from NICS. [Read more.](#)



Digital GI Bill and Dole Act Updates: The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) Education Service held a stakeholders meeting concerning the ongoing implementation of the Digital GI Bill cloud-based platform and the Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act ([Public Law 118-210](#)). Now that VA's legacy Benefits Delivery Network system is retired, VBA reported the continuing expansion of automated technology systems for the delivery of GI Bill and Dependents' Education Assistance benefits, also known as Chapter 35. VBA claimed the new system already helped manage the recent surge in dependents' Chapter 35 claims by streamlining benefit processing. In compliance with the Dole Act, VA is developing automated and manual options to deliver the full final-term stipend for students enrolled in Post-9/11 GI Bill programs.



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

Update:
-- [World War II Army Air Forces Staff Sgt. Stephen J. Fatur](#), Pennsylvania

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