



May 26, 2026



**VFW Testifies on Pending Legislation:** VFW National Legislative Service Director Kristina Keenan testified before the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs during a pending legislation hearing. She spotlighted H.R. 6843, Establishing the Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition Administration Act of 2025, which would create a fourth administration within VA dedicated to economic opportunity and transition programs. Keenan explained that the VFW believes this specified leadership and resources would help veterans successfully transition to civilian life and allow VA to focus on disability claims and appeals. She also stated support for H.R. 4114, Ensuring Veterans' Smooth Transition (EVEST) Act, which would automatically enroll eligible transitioning service members in VA health care within 60 days of receiving necessary information from DOD, while preserving a veteran's ability to opt out. The VFW strongly supports efforts to create a seamless transition from DOD to VA to spare veterans from navigating unnecessary bureaucracy simply to access the health care they earned through their service. [Read the testimony](#) or [watch the hearing](#).



**Federal Court Issues Major Victory in Fight Against Claim Sharks:** The U.S. District Court for the Middle District of North Carolina recently issued a major victory for veterans in Ford v. Veterans Guardian VA Claim Consulting, LLC. The court ruled that Veterans Guardian acted as an unaccredited VA claims agent by preparing and presenting VA disability claims for compensation without the accreditation required under federal law. Importantly, this was a merits ruling, not a procedural decision. This means the court established as a matter of law that Veterans

Guardian violated federal law by acting as an unaccredited agent while charging veterans for claims assistance. Veterans who paid fees to Veterans Guardian may have remedies available; however, state law damages questions remain pending before the court and will be addressed in a later order. This decision reinforces important protections for veterans and highlights the value of seeking help from VA accredited representatives and veterans service organizations that provide free claims assistance. [Read the opinion.](#)



**VFW Joins TAPS on Capitol Hill:** VFW National Legislative Service Associate Director Gabriella Kubinyi joined Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) survivors and advocates on Capitol Hill in support of TAPS' annual advocacy efforts. Participants met with congressional offices to discuss shared legislative priorities between TAPS and the VFW that impact surviving military families, including the Caring for Survivors Act of 2025 ([H.R. 2055](#) / [S. 611](#)), which would improve and expand dependency and indemnity compensation eligibility for survivors.



**President's Budget Proposes Military Pay Raise:** The U.S. government budget for fiscal year 2027 proposes tiered military pay raises ranging from 5% to 7% depending on rank. Service members ranked E-5 and below would receive a 7% pay increase, those in grades E-6 through O-3 would receive 6%, and officers ranked O-4 and above would receive 5%. The proposal reflects ongoing concerns about recruitment, retention and quality of life across the all-volunteer force, particularly for families of junior enlisted personnel facing rising living costs. Congress will now review the administration's request as lawmakers begin drafting the annual defense authorization and appropriations bills that will determine final military compensation levels for fiscal year 2027. [Read the budget.](#)



**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 Marine Corps Reserve Pfc. Helmut F. Behlert](#), California

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