



**Federal Update
for
May 25 - 29, 2015**



MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY

Memorial Day 2015

Many have heard the saying, "Poor is the Nation that has no heroes, but beggared is the Nation that has and forgets them."

On this Memorial Day, let us pause to remember those who gave the last full measure of devotion for our Nation. Let us remember the special nobility and grace of those who donned the uniforms of our country and sacrificed their lives during times of conflict. Let us remember—as we renew our commitment to honor those we have lost—that, every day, dedicated men and women put their lives on the line to protect all of us. We owe them all our deepest gratitude.

Over 70 years ago, on June 6, 1944, 175,000 American, Canadian, and British troops spearheaded the Allies' assault against the forces of tyranny threatening millions of people across Europe. Exposed to devastating fire on the beaches of Normandy, those brave souls established a beachhead, began the Allied march across Europe, and sent a message of hope across the continent. That message, writ large by the hands of heroes, signaled Freedom's triumph over evil and the preface to peace for a world too long at war.

From the opening rounds of the American Revolution, through the devastation of the Civil War, through World War I, World War II, and Korea, through Vietnam and Desert Storm, to those who have fought—and fight still today—so hard and valiantly in Afghanistan and Iraq, more than a million American Servicemembers have paid the ultimate price to secure the blessings of liberty for our Nation and our allies around the world.

As many of our National Cemetery Administration employees prepare our cemeteries, our national shrines, and work on Memorial Day activities to welcome our guests, I encourage all of us to show our support for Veterans and honor those who have passed by attending or participating in an event at a national cemetery near you. For a complete listing, please visit: [http://www.cem.va.gov/CEM/cems/2015 Memorial Day Ceremonies.asp](http://www.cem.va.gov/CEM/cems/2015_Memorial_Day_Ceremonies.asp)

At VA, we honor those lost in the way we care for those who returned home—and for their families and Survivors. Thank you for all that you do for Veterans. It is a privilege to serve with each one of you in fulfilling our sacred mission.

On this Memorial Day, may God bless our Veterans, their families, all of our VA employees and your families, and our great Nation.

Robert A. McDonald

Statement from Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald on Aurora VA Hospital

WASHINGTON, DC— Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald made the following statement regarding the apparent compromise legislation moving through Congress that would prevent a shutdown of the construction of the Denver Replacement Medical Center in Aurora, Colorado:

“I am pleased that Congress has taken action to ensure that construction at the site of the Denver Replacement Medical Center will continue. VA remains committed to doing the right thing for taxpayers and for the nearly 400,000 Colorado Veterans and families that the Aurora hospital will serve. I look forward to working with Congress in the coming weeks to determine a path forward to finishing the campus.”

VA Begins Summer of Service to Bolster Volunteer Assistance for Veterans

WASHINGTON, DC—The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today announced a new nationwide initiative designed to build upon its existing partnerships to grow the number of individuals and organizations serving Veterans in their communities. The Department is renewing its commitment to Veterans and embarking upon a “Summer of Service” that seeks the help of citizens across the country to honor that commitment.

“We have made progress over the past year addressing the challenges we face in delivering care and benefits to millions of Veterans and their families,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald. “While there is more work to do to honor our sacred commitment to Veterans, we also recognize that VA cannot do it alone. We are asking Americans everywhere to join the Summer of Service and help us give back to those who have given so much to our nation.”

In the coming weeks, VA will be working closely with Congressional partners, Veterans Service Organizations, Mayors and local communities, private sector and non-profit organizations, and VA employees to identify new and innovative ways to support VA’s commitment to care for those who “have borne the battle” and their families.

As part of VA's Summer of Service, the Department has committed to holding an open house in VA facilities the week of June 28 to spur increased local engagement and welcome members of the community interested in supporting the needs of Veterans. VA has also established the following goals to achieve by Labor Day:

- Increasing Volunteers: Committed to engaging with 100,000 volunteers to support care and benefits programs and local events.
- Increasing Community Partners: Committed to expanding current agreements to provide services and support reaching more than 15,000 Veterans and family.
- Recruiting Medical Professionals: Hiring clinicians and clinical support staff to further expand access to care and homelessness.
- Congress: Host Congressional Members and Staffs at VA facilities across the country.

The Department has an outstanding volunteer program, which will be highlighted throughout the country this summer. VA will build upon the ongoing work of its more than 350,000 employees and 76,000 volunteers around the nation. While the central focus of the campaign will be increasing volunteerism and partnerships, it will also provide individuals and communities an opportunity to support other important priorities. Despite a hiring effort that brought more than 11,000 net new employees onboard over the past year, VA still needs more health care providers, claims specialists, medical support assistants, and cemetery directors to continue to expand needed services. VA's partners can help by getting the word out this summer.

In the last year, VA has completed more than 46 million appointments, an increase of more than two million from the previous year. Nearly 3 million Veterans received care in the private sector, an increase of more than 44 percent from the previous year. The number of Veterans and Survivors receiving monthly compensation and pension benefits has increased to nearly 5 million. In an effort to improve the Veteran's customer service experience, VA has begun the most comprehensive re-organization in its history. The initiative, called MyVA, has been guided by ideas and recommendations from Veterans, employees, and stakeholders.

"There is no mission more noble than serving Veterans and their families. At VA, we constantly strive to improve the way we do our job," said McDonald. "State by state, community by community, person by person, there are a number of ways we can all come together to serve Veterans. From expanded partnerships with the private sector and non-profit organizations, to accelerating hiring, to celebrating the commitment of VA employees and volunteers – we need the help of communities everywhere to succeed."

Volunteers can help to serve Veterans by visiting <http://www.volunteer.va.gov/> to find out the needs of your local VA facility. Follow #VASummerOfService on [Vantage Point](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#), and join VA in caring for America's Veterans.

Vet Jobs Update ► Applicant's Expectations May Be Unrealistic

Veterans' post-service employment problems may have as much to do with their own unrealistic civilian job expectations as their new employers' unfamiliarity with the military, according to new research released 12 MAY. "Faced with having to start from the bottom or entry-level positions, (veterans) often became very frustrated," the report states. "In some cases, these clients are willing to risk homelessness before taking one of these lower-paying jobs." The study, conducted by Volunteers of America and the University of Southern California's School of Social Work, also found veterans' "continuation of military identity" as a major barrier to integration into civilian workplaces, creating an unspoken barrier between themselves and nonveterans with a different work ethic and habits.

Researchers paired those findings with a host of well-publicized post-military struggles — mental health issues, stigmas surrounding military service, skills translation and credentialing problems — to recommend better transition resources, especially for individuals with service injuries or less-than-honorable discharges.

"You have a lot of veterans who are doing well getting jobs, but some aren't doing so well. And some are going to go back and forth for a bit," said Anthony Hassan, director of USC's Center for Innovation and Research on Veterans and Military Families. "We need to make sure we're helping all of them."

Like similar recent studies, the new research advocates for a holistic, public/private support system for veterans, to prevent small frustrations from becoming insurmountable obstacles. But officials involved with the work also pushed for better transition services from the military, including ones that set realistic expectations and long-term career goals for troops leaving the service. The report noted that many veterans in rural areas in particular struggle to find appropriate jobs, and veterans in all areas forced to take undesirable or underpaid work find their own motivation quickly stripped away. The full study is available on the Volunteers of America website <http://www.voa.org/vets-study>. [Source: MilitaryTimes | Leo Shane | May 12, 2015 ++]

Vet Food Stamps Update ► Waiver for 60K Vet ABAWDS Ends 31 DEC

With unemployment lower than it has been in seven years, federal lawmakers are looking forward to the end of a waiver that gave single adults long-term access to food stamps even if they weren't working. When the waiver expires at the end of 2015, an estimated 1 million people — able-bodied adults without dependents, or ABAWDS — will once again be limited to three months of assistance. The rollback could mean a savings of hundreds of millions of dollars in a program that has long been a target of conservatives. But 60,000 of those people are

believed to be military veterans, many of whom struggle to find work even in a tighter job market, and that concerns veterans advocates and some members of Congress. “The idea that we would say to a veteran, ‘Thank you for your service to our country, but we don’t give a damn if you lose your SNAP benefit and can’t put food on the table’ ... is unconscionable,” said Rep. Jim McGovern, a Massachusetts Democrat and a long-time and vocal supporter of the SNAP program. “Congress likes to get up and give patriotic speeches ... but at this moment tens of thousands of veterans may lose their food [assistance] and there are a lot of members of Congress missing in action.”

The three-month limit is especially difficult for veterans, who often face more hurdles in transitioning into civilian life than non-veterans looking for employment. Veterans aren’t always aware of what’s facing them when they come out, said Jeffrey Cathey, a retired Navy captain and head of Bank of America’s Military Affairs team, which focuses on hiring veterans and supporting military personnel. The bank recently hired two veteran snipers and the transition to corporate life was more complicated than just finding them cubicles, Cathey said. “It’s a whole new world for them,” he said. “Veterans themselves often don’t realize they have skills that can be very valuable,” he said. “It’s worth it to us to take the time to help them transition.” And a lot of the veterans, especially the younger ones returning from Iraq or Afghanistan, are in particular need for help, McGovern added.

But the food stamp program has been a favorite target for some lawmakers in recent years. They point to the growing cost of the program, which now serves about 47 million Americans, as an example of federal spending run amok. Federal spending on SNAP rose from \$17 billion in 2000 to \$74 billion in 2014, according to USDA data. During negotiations over the 2014 farm bill, efforts were made to cut as much as \$40 billion out of SNAP over a 10-year period. Half of the reduction would have come from eliminating state waivers for ABAWDs. Lawmakers pushed back on the cut and got it reduced significantly, fearing it would result in the collapse of the entire farm bill and its billions of dollars in subsidies, crop insurance and conservation programs for farmers. But the focus on SNAP has not relented. House Agriculture Committee Chairman Mike Conaway has called for a two-year “full-scale review” of the program, simultaneously drawing attention to “a new group of healthy, working age recipients” who previously did not rely on SNAP.

In one of the first hearings called by Conaway’s committee in the 114th Congress, Rep. David Rouzer, a freshman Republican from North Carolina, expressed frustrations with the food stamp program. He recounted how one of his constituents was angry that he had to work for his groceries while “those who have not contributed quite as much to society ... and they’re getting everything.” The majority of food stamp recipients are employed, however. Fifty-eight percent of all households on food stamps with at least one working-age non-disabled adult were employed during the prior month, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a liberal nonprofit, and 87 percent were employed during the prior year. The percentages were higher if the households had children.

Seven years ago millions of Americans were losing their jobs and staying unemployed, while hiring had virtually frozen at the height of the last recession and Congress acted by approving legislation to extend unemployment insurance. It was the Agriculture Department that interpreted the Unemployment Compensation Act of 2008 to allow states to lift the three-month SNAP limit for unemployed ABAWDS.

According to the USDA, states could get a waiver for the restriction by showing unemployment rates of more than 6 percent. Previously, states would have to reach a much higher bar by showing unemployment rates were 20 percent higher than the national average in order to allow ABAWDs to receive SNAP. As a result 28 states and Washington, D.C., qualified to waive the employment condition for childless adults to get SNAP. Before the law was in place only five states — Arkansas, Mississippi, Missouri, Oregon and South Carolina — and D.C. qualified, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, which often advises state governments on SNAP issues. Now the reverse is expected to happen on 31 DEC when the waivers are no longer easy for states to get.

The number of states with full waivers is expected to drop to just four or five, causing about 1 million people to lose their SNAP benefits. Meanwhile, some states have started paring down their SNAP rolls in advance of the 31 DEC expiration date. Some are requiring drug testing to maintain eligibility. The coming cut to SNAP will hit veterans hard, said retired Army Col. Ben Margolius, who runs the Southern Tier Veterans Support group in upstate New York. “It ain’t much,” Margolius said, referring to the average \$127.73 received by SNAP beneficiaries on a monthly basis, “but it’s something. “We’re getting calls every day from veterans for help getting a job or getting food, some just returning from Afghanistan or Iraq.”

About 21 million veterans in America make up roughly 9 percent of the adult population, according to Labor Department data. While unemployment for veterans of all ages — estimated in 2014 to be 5.3 percent — is below the overall U.S. level, the rate shoots up to 7.2 percent for those who served on active duty after September 2011. About 25 percent of veterans who served in Iraq or Afghanistan report problems being able to feed themselves or their families, according to a 2015 study published in Public Health Nutrition. An average of 900,000 veterans use SNAP in any given month, nationwide, according to a separate study by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

Every time SNAP benefits are squeezed in the United States, Rich Synek (retired postmaster general and founder of the group Feed Our Vets) said he sees more veterans line up at the two New York food pantries he runs. It was particularly bad after SNAP benefits were cut across America on Nov. 1, 2013. Congress had boosted the benefits when it passed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, but the bill expired four years later. “If it wasn’t for SNAP, I wouldn’t make it,” said Rodney Yearby, a retired staff sergeant in New York. Yearby, who served in the Air Force for 12 years and suffered a head injury after leaving in 1996, said he gets \$165 per month in SNAP benefits. Feed our Vets helped him sign up for SNAP, find a place to live and apply for assistance from the federal Supplemental Security Income program.

It can be easy to overlook veterans, said Bank of America's Cathey. "They're not really that well known in the communities," he said. "People say 'support the vets' and 'thank the troops' and stuff like that, but the touch points aren't there like they used to be and so people don't really know." [Source: POLITICO | Bill Tomson | May 01, 2015 ++]

VA Blue Water Claims Update ► S.681 Still in Committee

U.S. Senator Gary Peters (MI) on 7 MAY announced he is cosponsoring the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2015, bipartisan legislation that would ensure Vietnam veterans who served aboard deepwater naval vessels, known as "Blue Water" veterans, are eligible to receive the disability and health care benefits they earned for diseases linked to exposure to Agent Orange. Under current law, only veterans who served on Vietnamese soil or aboard a craft in its rivers receive presumptive coverage of illnesses linked directly to Agent Orange exposure. "Agent Orange has affected the health of thousands of servicemembers who fought in the Vietnam War, and it is unacceptable that some are being denied health care and disability benefits for diseases resulting from their military service," said Senator Peters. "My office has heard from Michigan veterans affected by this issue, and I am proud to cosponsor this bipartisan, commonsense bill that will ensure Navy veterans who have fallen victim to Agent Orange-related conditions receive the long overdue care they have earned through their service."

In 1991, Congress passed a law requiring the VA to provide presumptive coverage to Vietnam veterans with illnesses that the Institute of Medicine has directly linked to Agent Orange exposure. However, in 2002 the VA determined that it would only cover Veterans who could prove that they had orders for "boots on the ground" during the Vietnam War, excluding thousands of sailors who may have been exposed to Agent Orange while serving aboard Navy ships. The Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2015 would clarify existing law so that Blue Water veterans would be fully covered by the VA if they served within the "territorial seas," or approximately 12 miles offshore of Vietnam. The bill would make it easier for VA to process Vietnam War veterans' claims for service-connected conditions and alleviate a portion of the VA's backlog by extending presumptive coverage of Agent Orange benefits to these veterans.

A May 2011 report by the Institute of Medicine established several "plausible routes" for Agent Orange exposure through the water distillation process aboard Navy ships and through the air. In 2010, a study by the Institute of Medicine cited exposure to Agent Orange resulted in an increased chance of developing serious heart problems and Parkinson's disease. A 1990 study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) showed Vietnam veterans had a rate of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma 50 percent higher than the general population. Agent Orange is linked to a range of other diseases, including several blood and respiratory cancers, type II diabetes, prostate cancer and more.

In 2005, the VA's former Director of Environmental Agents Service Dr. Mark Brown publicly acknowledged that there was no scientific basis for the exclusion of Blue Water Vietnam veterans, but the VA has continued to refuse these veterans presumptive benefits Congress initially intended. In his article in the Journal of Law and Policy, Dr. Brown wrote, "Science does not back up the VA's policy on the Navy."

Peters, a former Lt. Commander in the U.S. Navy Reserve, previously co-sponsored similar legislation in the U.S. House of Representatives, and has been a strong voice for Michigan service members and veterans in Congress. He is the 7th Senator to cosponsor S.681 which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. A similar bill H.R.969, which was referred to the House Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, currently has 218 cosponsors. [Source: Nexstar Broadcasting, Inc. | Kylie Khan | May 06, 2015 ++]

HVAC Update ► Bills Considered at Subcommittee 23 APR Hearing

The Creating Our Veterans Expedited Recovery (COVER) Act H.R.271, would establish a commission to explore possibilities for incorporating complementary and alternative medicine treatment models into VA medical facilities nationwide. In February 2014, the American Legion surveyed more than 3,000 veterans affected by traumatic brain injury (TBI) and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), asking questions about the effectiveness of treatments provided by VA and DoD. Fifty-nine percent of the respondents reported they felt no improvement, or felt even worse. The survey also found that 30 percent of respondents terminated their treatments or therapies before completing them; some reported taking up to 10 different medications.

The Legion conducted a TBI/PTSD symposium in Washington last June, which provided a forum for experts nationwide to share information about many successful treatment models that used complementary and alternative medicine. The COVER Act was one of several pending bills considered at an April 23 hearing by the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health. "The American Legion strongly supports the use of complementary and alternative medicines," Louis Celli, director of the Legion's Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Division, told the subcommittee, "and supports the funding necessary to assist veterans suffering with PTSD and TBI with ... treatments that allow our returning veterans to actively participate in their own recovery programs, without unnecessary sedation or over-medication."

Another Legion-supported House bill would expand reproductive treatments available to veterans and servicemembers by making all such services equally accessible in DoD and VA. "According to a study of veterans who served during OIF and OEF, 15 percent of women and nearly 14 percent of men reported that they had experienced infertility," Celli said. Thousands of men and women who served in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars were "returning home with physical and/or psychological wounds, resulting in a variety of fertility and reproductive health issues." The Legion's written testimony stated "there seems to be little support (at VA and

DoD), either through counseling or medical intervention, to offer a young veteran who has lost his/her ability to procreate due to lack of testosterone. Unfortunately, many veterans with TBI are also on hypertension medications, and adding sexual performance medications can represent a serious health risk. This can also create a loss of intimacy in relationships, exacerbating psychological disorders such as PTSD and depression. Ultimately, it affects the self-esteem of both veteran and spouse.” Other Legion supported legislation considered at the hearing included:

- A draft bill directing VA to submit an annual report on the Veterans Health Administration.
- H.R. 267 which would expand the definition of “homeless veteran” for purposes of VA benefits eligibility.
- H.R. 1369, to give VA the authority to enter into provider agreements for extended care services.
- H.R. 1575 which would make permanent a pilot program on counseling, in retreat setting, for women veterans newly separated from active duty.
- H.R. 1769, the Toxic Exposure Research Act, which would establish a national center at VA for research on the diagnosis and treatment of descendants of veterans exposed to toxic substances while in the military. [Source: American Legion Online Update | April 30, 2015 ++]

Following is a Summary of Veteran Related Legislation Introduced in the House and Senate since the Last Bulletin was Published

- H.R.2067: Cold War Service Medal Act of 2015. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to provide for the award of a military service medal to members of the Armed Forces who served honorably during the Cold War, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Rep Israel, Steve [NY-3] (introduced 4/28/2015)
- H.R.2114: Victims of Agent Orange Relief Act of 2015. A bill to direct the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide assistance for individuals affected by exposure to Agent Orange, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Rep Lee, Barbara [CA-13] (introduced 4/29/2015)
- H.R.2123: Enhancing Veterans' Access to Treatment Act of 2015. A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to furnish non-formulary drugs and medicines to veterans diagnosed with mental health disorders, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Rep Murphy, Tim [PA-18] (introduced 4/30/2015)
- H.R.2139: Veteran's Benefits Claims Faster Filing Act of 2015. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide notice of average times for processing claims and percentage of claims approved, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Rep O'Rourke, Beto [TX-16] (introduced 4/30/2015)

- H.R.2145: Physician Ambassadors Helping Veterans Act. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to establish the Physician Ambassadors Helping Veterans program to seek to employ physicians at the Department of Veterans Affairs on a without compensation basis in practice areas and specialties with staffing shortages and long appointment waiting times. Sponsor: Rep Culberson, John Abney [TX-7] (introduced 4/30/2015)
Related Bills: S.563
- H.R.2193: VA Employee Fairness Act of 2015. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to modify authorities relating to the collective bargaining of employees in the Veterans Health Administration. Sponsor: Rep Takano, Mark [CA-41] (introduced 4/30/2015)
- H.R.2214: Disabled Veterans' Access to Medical Exams Improvement Act. A bill to improve the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into contracts with private physicians to conduct medical disability examinations. Sponsor: Rep Abraham, Ralph Lee [LA-5] (introduced 5/1/2015)
- H.R.2218: Renovate and Enhance Veterans' Meeting Halls and Posts Act of 2015. A bill to amend the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 to set-aside community development block grant amounts in each fiscal year for grants to local chapters of veterans service organizations for rehabilitation of, and technology for, their facilities. Sponsor: Rep Collins, Chris [NY-27] (introduced 5/1/2015)
- H.R.2221: Veterans Small Business Enhancement Act of 2015. A bill to amend the Small Business Act to direct the task force of the Office of Veterans Business Development to provide access to and manage the distribution of excess or surplus property to veteran-owned small businesses. Sponsor: Rep Duckworth, Tammy [IL-8] (introduced 5/1/2015)
- H.R.2237: Establish a VA Center of Excellence on Burn Pit Health conditions. A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans to establish within the Department of Veterans Affairs a center of excellence in the prevention, diagnosis, mitigation, treatment, and rehabilitation of health conditions relating to exposure to burn pits. Sponsor: Rep Esty, Elizabeth H. [CT-5] (introduced 5/5/2015)
- H.R.2248: WWII U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps Vet Status. A bill to provide that service of the members of the organization known as the United States Cadet Nurse Corps during World War II constituted active military service for purposes of laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. Sponsor: Rep Lowey, Nita M. [NY-17] (introduced 5/12/2015)
- H.R.2256: VA Hospital Care, Medical Services, and Nursing Home Care Annual Reports. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit an annual report on the Veterans Health Administration and the furnishing of hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care by the Department of Veterans Affairs. Sponsor: Rep Benishek, Dan [MI-1] (introduced 5/12/2015)
- H.R.2264: Establish Disabled Vet Space-Available Travel Category. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to establish a space-available transportation priority for veterans of the Armed Forces who have a service-connected, permanent disability rated as total. Sponsor: Rep Bilirakis, Gus M. [FL-12] (introduced 5/12/2015)

- H.R.2275: Consolidate Various Programs in the Department of Veterans Affairs. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to establish in the Department of Veterans Affairs the Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition Administration and to improve employment services for veterans by consolidating various programs in the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Rep Miller, Jeff [FL-1] (introduced 5/12/2015)
- H.R.2282: Improve Vet Education Enrollment. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the enrollment of veterans in certain courses of education, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Rep Ryan, Tim [OH-13] (introduced 5/12/2015) Related Bills: S.1303
- H.R.2286: Establish Certain Claims for Compensation Priority. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to establish a priority for the Secretary of Veterans Affairs in processing certain claims for compensation. Sponsor: Rep Cook, Paul [CA-8] (introduced 5/13/2015)
- H.R.2291: Make Permanent VA Secretary Authority To Transport Certain Vets. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to make permanent the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to transport individuals to and from facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs in connection with rehabilitation, counseling, examination, treatment, and care, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Rep Larsen, Rick [WA-2] (introduced 5/13/2015)
- H.R.2294: Reserve Component Memorial Headstones and Markers. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to make memorial headstones and markers available for purchase on behalf of members of reserve components who performed inactive duty training or active duty for training but did not serve on active duty. Sponsor: Rep Maloney, Sean Patrick [NY-18] (introduced 5/13/2015)
- S.1117: Authorize VA Secretary to Fire Execs for Misconduct. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to expand the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to remove senior executives of the Department of Veterans Affairs for performance or misconduct to include removal of certain other employees of the Department, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Sen Johnson, Ron [WI] (introduced 4/28/2015)
- S.1286: Pro Bono Legal Assistance for Veterans Before the U.S. COVA & BOVA. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to reduce the backlog of appeals of decisions of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs by facilitating pro bono legal assistance for veterans before the United States Court of Veterans Appeals and the Board of Veterans' Appeals, to provide the Secretary with authority to address unreasonably delayed claims, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Sen Shaheen, Jeanne [NH] (introduced 5/11/2015)
- S.1290: TRICARE Health Plan Access. A bill to ensure the ability of covered beneficiaries under the TRICARE program to access care under a health plan under such program in each TRICARE program region, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Sen Rounds, Mike [SD] (introduced 5/12/2015)
- S.1303: Improve Vet Education Enrollment. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the enrollment of veterans in certain courses of education, and for other

purposes. Sponsor: Sen Brown, Sherrod [OH] (introduced 5/12/2015) Related Bills:
H.R.2282

[Source: <https://beta.congress.gov> & <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills> May 13, 2015 ++]