Paralyzed Veterans of America

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Washington Update

Check out the PVAction Force page to view legislative campaigns and a list of key legislation.

Controversial Veterans Package Stalls

The Take Care of America's Veterans Act (H.R. 9237), which consolidated 62 separate veterans-related bills into a single piece of legislation, was scheduled for floor consideration on July 16. As a reminder, this legislation includes PVA priorities that would increase Special Monthly Compensation for the most severely disabled veterans, improve survivor benefits, and codify VA's Bowel and Bladder program. It also includes a version of the Major Richard Star Act, which would fix an injustice preventing combat-injured veterans from receiving their full military benefits. However, the bill's pay-for would codify a proposed change to VA's rating schedule for tinnitus and sleep apnea. The proposed pay-for is very controversial and has divided the veterans community.

Before the bill could be considered, the House held a vote on a motion to send the bill back to the VA Committee and change the way the bill's provisions are paid for. The motion was narrowly defeated by a vote of 211-210. House leaders ultimately stopped any further consideration of H.R. 9237.

Further efforts to advance the measure are not expected to resume until fall. Lawmakers could use the delay to iron out controversial elements that contributed to the close vote. As a reminder, while PVA strongly supports many of the provisions in H.R. 9237, we have historically not supported reducing earned benefits for current or future veterans to pay for improvements to benefits for other veterans. We are particularly concerned about using VA funding to pay for a Department of Defense obligation (concurrent receipt). You can read our full statement on the bill here.

HVAC Subcommittee Holds Legislative Hearing

On June 30, the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs (HVAC), Subcommittee on Health held a legislative hearing to consider a broad package of bills aimed at improving veterans' health care access, accountability, and system oversight. The legislation considered addressed a wide range of issues, including reducing delays in veteran burials, expanding access to innovative spinal cord injuries and disorders technologies through the Veterans STAND Act (H.R. 6835/S. 3988), studying the effects of neurological injuries from blast exposure and G-force stress, improving access to care for veterans living in medical deserts, strengthening oversight of the Foreign Medical Program and Medicare coordination, establishing a national task force on caregiving youth, codifying the Coaching into Care program, increasing transparency in VA staffing, improving personnel accountability, and requiring greater public access to Veterans Health Administration policies. PVA submitted a statement for the record on the bills under discussion.

You can read that statement here. You can watch the hearing here.

House Committee Holds Hearing on VA's IT Systems, Post-PACT Act

On July 13, the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Subcommittee on Technology Modernization held an oversight hearing to examine the VA's implementation of the PACT Act to ensure the department's existing disability claims systems can quickly and efficiently process compensation and pension claims for current and future veterans. During the hearing, PVA Associate Legislative Director Jeremy Villanueva highlighted some of the areas where the VA has fallen short in their efforts to improve the claims process using the latest technology. He pointed out that some of the modernization and consolidation efforts have not led to the drastic improvements promised and that it could be argued some changes have even set the claims process back.

Mr. Villanueva noted that two processes that the VA lacks are stopping payments in the case of a veteran reentering the military or removing a dependent off their award, which often cause significant overpayments that veterans have to pay back. In addition, he highlighted an April 2026 VA Office of the Inspector General report that identified significant issues with VA's Dependency and Indemnity Compensation's automation efforts. It noted that nearly 99 percent of the claims that went through the new process contained errors resulting in over $2.7 million erroneously awarded. The members of the subcommittee thanked PVA for our participation in the hearing and expressed a desire to work with us on legislation to address these concerns. You can read PVA's statement here and watch a recording of the hearing here.

PVA Appointed to DOT ACAA Advisory Committee

On June 3, U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Secretary Sean Duffy appointed Chief Policy Officer Heather Ansley to the Air Carrier Access Act Advisory Committee (ACAA Advisory Committee or Committee) as a representative for national veterans' organizations representing disabled veterans and Co-Chair of the Committee. The Secretary established the Committee pursuant to the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018 to advise on issues related to the air travel needs of passengers with disabilities. The FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024 subsequently extended the statutory authorization for the Committee to September 30, 2028. PVA wrote the original legislation authorizing the Committee and advocated for its passage. To learn more about the committee, please click here.

VA Expands Emergency Community Care Notification Options

Beginning August 10, veterans will have an additional option for alerting VA that they've received emergency care at a non-VA hospital. Under current law, veterans or providers must notify VA within 72 hours of emergency treatment for the care to be considered for authorization under the Veterans Community Care Program (VCCP). Previously, this notification was required to be made to the appropriate official at the nearest VA medical facility, often via telephone. The new rule allows for notification through VA's centralized Emergency Care Reporting process, providing a single, nationwide system for reporting emergency care.

Veterans and providers may still notify the nearest VA medical facility, if they choose. This rule does not change veterans' eligibility for emergency care, the requirement to notify VA within 72 hours, or the standards VA uses to determine whether emergency treatment qualifies for payment. Instead, it modernizes the notification process by reducing confusion about where notifications should be sent. The link for the new system will appear here on August 10.

ED Finalizes New Accountability Framework

Earlier this year, we shared with you that PVA participated in the Accountability in Higher Education and Access through Demand-driven Workforce Pell (AHEAD) Negotiated Rule Making at the Department of Education (ED). The AHEAD committee was focused on a

new accountability framework drafted to replace the Gainful Employment (GE) rule. The GE rule was a debt-to-earnings metric that tracked the amount of student loans someone took out compared to their annual salary for career and for-profit specific training programs.

The new accountability framework is called the Student Tuition and Transparency System (STATS) and was drafted to prevent predatory or expensive programs that lead to low-paying jobs from retaining eligibility for federal funding. Ultimately, if a program fails to prove that their graduates earn more than someone with a high school diploma for two years, they should lose eligibility to Title IV funds (i.e. direct loans). If a program fails a third year, then they lose eligibility to Pell Grants which are funds targeted to low-income students and they do not need to be repaid. Also, the new change applies to undergraduate and graduate programs, which is a departure from the previous GE rule. Click here to learn more.

DOE Announces Fifth Extension of Effective Date of Direct Final Rule

On June 29, the Department of Energy (DOE) announced that they were once again extending the effective date of the direct final rule Rescinding Regulations Related to Nondiscrimination in Federally Assisted Programs or Activities (General Provisions). The final rule was published on May 16,2025. In that rule, DOE announced that if significant adverse comments were received by June 16, 2025, the rule would be withdrawn. On July 14, 2025, DOE delayed the effective date due to the receipt of significant adverse comments. On September 11, 2025, DOE announced it was further extending the date to continue to consider comments submitted in response to the direct final rule. The rule was delayed again in December 2025 and March 2026. The effective date of the direct final rule has now been delayed until December 28, 2026. PVA submitted comments expressing our concern about the proposed rule and urged DOE to withdraw it. PVA will continue to monitor this rule.

DOJ Publishes Memo Arguing Against Olmstead's Integration Mandate

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Office of the Legal Counsel, issued a memorandum indicating that in the Supreme Court case, *Olmstead v. L.C.*, the Court did not actually determine that either Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) required states to treat individuals with mental health disabilities in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs.

Olmstead was a Supreme Court case that discussed the unnecessary institutionalization of people with disabilities. After the Olmstead case, courts have routinely held that state entities are required to provide community-based services when appropriate. However, in the new memo, DOJ now indicates that Olmstead was misinterpreted, and the ADA and Section 504 do not require states to refrain from unnecessary institutionalization of people with serious mental health conditions.

The DOJ maintains that in prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability, neither Section 504 nor the ADA imposed an integration mandate on states in their treatment of people with serious mental health conditions. DOJ also found that neither statute authorizes the responsible agencies to impose such a mandate onto the states. Under the DOJ's memo, states would no longer be required to seek all possible alternatives to assist those with mental health disabilities living in the community rather than in an institution. Memos are not binding on the courts, and, at this time, it is unclear how this memo will be used in the courts. It is also uncertain how this memo will impact people with physical disabilities.

21st Century Road to Housing Act Becomes Law

Over the past few months, we have shared updates to the 21st Century Road to Housing Act, which contains nearly 60 provisions intended to improve the housing market and availability across the country. After being passed in the House and the Senate, the bill made its way to the President's desk. The House transmitted the

bill to the White House in late June, which triggered a 10-day countdown where it could have been signed into law or vetoed by the president. He chose to do neither, and because Congress remained in session, the bill became law July 11 without his signature.

The 21st Century Road to Housing Act aims to reduce red tape for community lenders; make it easier to build manufactured homes to increase the housing supply; and for the first time in American history, the bill created restrictions around Wall Street and private equity investors from owning single family homes. A key provision within the bill codifies that VA disability compensation cannot be considered earned income for a veteran who needs local housing assistance. This means many at risk veterans or veterans experiencing homelessness may finally be able to receive local housing assistance.

News of Note

HUD Secretary Announces Transformation of Fair Housing Office in Internal Email

On July 3, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Assistant Secretary sent an internal email to employees noting plans to reshape HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO). This office enforces federal laws and establishes policies to ensure that all Americans have equal access to housing of their choice. FHEO investigates complaints of discrimination against homebuyers and renters and provides assistance to states and localities. The email did not detail any specific details about plans concerning policy or operational changes. The Secretary also mentioned a return to FHEO's "original goals" regarding HUD's Fair Housing Initiatives Program. This program provides money to local nonprofits who help promote and enforce civil rights laws in housing. PVA will continue to monitor this matter for effects on people with disabilities and provide relevant updates on changes to FHEO.

Surveys and Committee Activities

FINAL REMINDER: HERL Conducting Online Survey About Accessible Vehicles

The Human Engineering Research Laboratories (HERL), a collaboration between the University of Pittsburgh and the VA, is conducting an online survey to learn what vehicle features would make driving and travel easier for people who use wheelchairs or other mobility devices. By sharing your experiences and preferences, you'll help researchers understand what accessibility features matter most and provide feedback that could guide future vehicle designs. The survey will take less than 15 minutes to complete. To participate, please click here.

Veterans' Committee Activities

Please visit the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee webpages for information on previous and upcoming hearings and markups.