



Washington Update

Check out the [PVAAction Force](#) page to view legislative campaigns and a list of key legislation.

PVA HOLDS ANNUAL ADVOCACY/LEGISLATION SEMINAR

On June 10-12, PVA held the 2025 Advocacy Legislation Seminar in Washington, DC. Over 150 PVA members and chapter leaders and staff participated in the event. Attendees visited the offices of over 300 members of Congress. PVA's priorities included preserving VA's spinal cord injuries and disorders (SCI/D) system of care, increasing disability access in VA, and improving access to housing and vehicle modifications. We also announced that our petition to oppose dismantling the SCI/D system of care now has nearly 3,500 signatures. We encourage all members to continue engaging with their members of Congress through [PVAAction Force](#).

HOUSE COMMITTEE HEARING EXAMINES VETERANS LEGISLATION

On June 12, the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Health met to examine a dozen bills impacting the availability of health care for veterans. In a statement for the record, PVA strongly endorsed the CHAMPVA Children's Care Protection Act (H.R. 1404), which would allow dependent children to retain VA health coverage until age 26. For most Americans with health insurance, their adult children can remain on their plan until this age with no separate premium, as mandated in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA). That is not the case with the Civilian Health

and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA). Coverage for children under CHAMPVA currently expires when they turn 18, unless they are full-time students. In this case, they continue to receive coverage until they turn 23, stop attending school full-time, or get married. CHAMPVA and the military's TRICARE programs were not affected by the ACA, so they required separate congressional action to extend these benefits to children up to age 26. Congress addressed this discrepancy for TRICARE in 2011, but they have yet to act on similar legislation that would make the change for CHAMPVA.

The VA testified in opposition to this bill. While we agree that CHAMPVA was not directly affected by the ACA, we disagree with VA's assertion that CHAMPVA is not health insurance. For example, certain types of care and services require preauthorization. This approval is extremely important, and the failure to obtain it may result in denial of the claim. We also pointed out that the Congressional Research Service (CRS), which advises Congress on programs like this, seems to view it the same way. In an October 2024 report to Congress on VA healthcare programs for dependents and survivors, CRS said, "CHAMPVA is primarily a health insurance program where certain eligible dependents and survivors of veterans receive care from private sector healthcare providers..." The bottom line is that the government shouldn't deem veterans' dependents and survivors less



worthy than civilians for support, and we urge Congress to correct this inequity as soon as possible.

The subcommittee also reviewed and discussed the Veteran Caregiver Reeducation, Reemployment, and Retirement (3R) Act (H.R. 2148), which would provide greater support for the family caregivers of veterans. It would ensure family caregivers enrolled in CHAMPVA remain enrolled for up to 180 days following their dismissal from the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers, unless they have been dismissed for fraud, abuse, or mistreatment. Other provisions in the bill would offer bereavement counseling, job training assistance, and help with professional relicensing costs to help caregivers ease into the workforce or into retirement once their time as a caregiver has concluded. Caregivers are often the most important component of rehabilitation and maintenance for veterans with catastrophic disabilities, and their welfare directly affects the quality-of-care veterans receive.

Finally, PVA also testified in support of H.R. 2605, the Service Dogs Assisting Veterans Act, which requires the VA to establish a competitive grant program to fund nonprofit organizations that provide service dogs to veterans with a variety of disabilities, such as mobility or vision impairments or PTSD. Service dogs provide invaluable assistance to disabled veterans with the greatest support needs, allowing them to live more independent lives in their communities. This bill would require nonprofit organizations seeking a grant to submit an application to the VA Secretary that includes a description of the training that will be provided by the organization to eligible veterans; the training of dogs that will serve as service dogs; the aftercare services that the organization will provide for the service dog and eligible veteran; the plan for publicizing the availability of service dogs through a marketing campaign; and the commitment of the organization to have humane standards for animals. Passage of this legislation will increase veterans' access to service dogs and their independence.

You can watch a recording of the hearing and read PVA's statement [here](#).

HOUSE PASSES LEGISLATION SUPPORTING EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The first week of June, the House of Representatives passed several pieces of legislation, most of which related to the Small Business Administration (SBA). One of these bills, H.R. 1634, the Think DIFFERENTLY About Disability Employment Act, would establish a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the SBA and the National Council on Disability. The MOU seeks to provide assistance for people with disabilities who are interested in becoming entrepreneurs or who want to be self-employed. It would also help small businesses with hiring individuals with disabilities and increase accessibility for the workplace. Additionally, it increases outreach and education to help more people with disabilities access information about how to become business owners. H.R. 1621, the Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Report Act of 2025, also passed the House. This bill would require the SBA to submit a report to Congress highlighting challenges faced by entrepreneurs with disabilities. These bills will now move to the Senate for further consideration.

ASSIST ACT INTRODUCED IN THE SENATE

On May 13, Sen. Tommy Tuberville (R-AL) introduced the Automotive Support Services to Improve Safe Transportation (ASSIST) Act (S. 1726) in the Senate. In 2023, Congress passed legislation that was intended to codify the adaptations VA could provide to disabled veterans to modify their vehicles as part of the department's medical benefits package. VA has determined that the examples of what modifications were allowed inadvertently restricted the program to the items listed which was not Congress's intent. The ASSIST Act clarifies the language regarding the types of adaptive equipment that can be provided to disabled veterans under the medical benefits package.

On May 19, H.R. 1364, the House of Representative's version of the ASSIST Act passed unanimously. To send a message to your Senators about this legislation, please click [here](#).

EO LEGISLATIVE HEARING

On June 11, the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity (EO) conducted a legislative hearing to consider 13 pending pieces of legislation. PVA submitted a statement for the record to present our views on the pending legislation, which included H.R. 2034, the Edith Nourse Rogers STEM Scholarship Opportunity Act; H.R. 2720, the Gold Star Family Education Parity Act; and H.R. 1965, the Veterans Education Assistance Adjustment Act. To read PVA's statement, click [here](#). To view the hearing, click [here](#).

HOUSE APPROPRIATORS PASS MILCON/VA FUNDING BILL

The House Appropriations Committee recently approved its version of the Fiscal Year 2026 Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations (MILCON/VA) Act by a vote of 36 to 27. This important funding measure provides \$152.091 billion in discretionary funding for the VA, which is roughly \$5 billion more than current levels. In addition, the bill provides \$300 billion for mandatory programs, for a total of \$453 billion in overall funding for the VA. These amounts are consistent with the Administration's preliminary budget request.

Several amendments were accepted to the bill prior to the final vote. These include provisions that would ensure full funding of the Toxic Exposures Fund, and that VA provides an equitable standard of care through the PACT Act. Others reiterate support for staffing and operations of the Veterans Crisis Line and other VA suicide prevention programs. The full House is expected to consider the measure soon.

The Senate began working on its own version of the bill but is much further behind in the appropriations process. Once the two chambers approve their respective versions, a conference committee consisting of members from both chambers will resolve differences between the two measures and come up with a single bill both chambers can agree upon.

NEWS OF NOTE

Veteran Usability Recruiting Opportunity

PVA recently participated in a briefing by VA's Section 508 Compliance Office, which ensures systems and information technology platforms are compliant with federal laws related to digital accessibility. According to the office, their efforts have increased website compliance from 26 percent in 2022 to 98 percent today.

The VA would like to hear from veterans about the accessibility barriers they encounter. Participating in user experience research studies provides them with a direct link to veterans about how they engage with VA platforms, apps, and other VA systems. If you would like to participate in the user experience studies, visit <https://veteranusability.us/>. After registering, you'll be asked to fill out a Participant Recruiting Screener Questionnaire which will determine your eligibility for specific studies. The VA will send studies that align with the responses given in the Screener Questionnaire to further determine your eligibility for participation in each study.

SURVEY & COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

REMINDER: Seeking Potential Class Members in Lawsuit Against Car Rental Company

Disability Rights Advocates (DRA) filed a class action lawsuit against Hertz for failing to provide hand controls in most of the types of vehicles they offer for rent. DRA is seeking policy changes on behalf of a proposed class of people with mobility disabilities. If you have ever tried to rent a vehicle with hand controls from Hertz but could not get the type of vehicle you wanted, DRA wants to hear from you! DRA has put together a simple survey to collect potential class members' contact information. DRA will contact everyone who fills out the form. You can access the survey [here](#). You can learn more about this lawsuit on [DRA's Ho v. The Hertz Corporation webpage](#).



Veterans' Committee Activities

Please visit the [House](#) and [Senate](#) Veterans' Affairs Committee webpages for information on previous and upcoming hearings and markups.

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