

MEMORANDUM
FROM
ALLEN "GUNNER" KENT
ADJUTANT GENERAL
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

April 6, 2010

To: Department Adjutants

Enclosed are resolutions referencing National Security & Foreign Affairs, POW/MIA, and Veterans Services to be proposed by the Commander-in-Chief to the delegates attending the 111th National Convention.

These resolutions are being provided for the review of your department convention. Do not return these resolutions to national. They require no action by your department convention other than to discuss, debate and direct respective committee members and registered delegates from your department. However, the national convention committee members or registered delegates can still take the concerns of your membership to the national convention committee meetings and the convention floor for a final determination by the delegates.

Information on Preparing a Proposed Amendment to the National By-Laws and Preparing a Resolution is attached for your use. Please use this information as a guide when submitting a proposal for a by-law amendment or preparing a resolution for your department's review or submission to the national convention.

Please mail your department's approved resolutions that require action by the national convention immediately following the close of your department convention. This includes approved resolutions concerning matters of interest beyond your department and any approved proposals to the National By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Ritual.

Do not forward resolutions or by-law proposals that were rejected or disapproved by your convention delegates or that refer to state issues.

Resolutions regarding federal legislation, Department of Veterans Affairs' issues, Department of Defense policy or other matters of national significance approved by your department must be acted on by the national convention before becoming policy of the national organization.

Questions and information requirements regarding resolutions and proposals affecting the National By-Laws, Manual of Procedure or Ritual should be directed to the Administrative Operations office: Kevin Jones, Director of Administrative Operations, (816) 968-1133 (kjones@vfw.org), David Prohaska, Assistant Director, Administrative Operations, (816) 968-1114 (dprohaska@vfw.org) or Tammie Gniotczynski, (816) 968-2727 tgniotczynski@vfw.org.

Resolution No. 401

**SUPPORT THE TROOPS AND THEIR MISSION
IN THE WAR ON TERRORISM**

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States supports the Commander-in-Chief and the U.S. armed forces and intelligence agencies in their mission to identify and destroy terrorism in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere; and

WHEREAS, U.S. citizens and allies continue to be targeted for international terrorism as evidenced by the failed Christmas Day 2009 airline bombing attempt over Detroit, the discovery of al-Qaeda terrorist cells on American soil, and the capture of suspected terrorists attempting to cross U.S. borders; and

WHEREAS, it is imperative to the security of the American people that the U.S. stay on the offensive and take the fight to the enemy wherever they exist; and

WHEREAS, it is critical that the Administration and U.S. Congress provide the U.S. armed forces the resources necessary to succeed in battle, as well as to properly care for those who return home wounded, and their families; and

WHEREAS, it is imperative that U.S. intelligence agencies also be properly resourced in order to identify threats to U.S. security by organized extremist groups or lone individuals, both foreign and domestic; and

WHEREAS, it is essential that the Administration and U.S. Congress heed the expert counsel of field commanders regarding future troop buildups and reductions; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we unequivocally support the Commander-in-Chief and the brave men and women in uniform who prosecute the war on terrorism; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call upon the Administration and Congress to provide the military and intelligence agencies the necessary resources to secure victory in the war on terrorism.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The intent of this resolution is: To support and fund the troops and intelligence agencies prosecuting the U.S. war on terrorism.

Resolution No. 402

SECURE AMERICA'S BORDERS

WHEREAS, U.S. citizens continue to be targeted by international terrorists, as evidenced by the failed Christmas Day 2009 airline bombing attempt over Detroit, the discovery of al-Qaeda terrorist cells on American soil, and the capture of suspected terrorists attempting to cross U.S. borders; and

WHEREAS, homeland security is also threatened by foreign nationals intent on doing us harm who enter our country illegally, as well as those who enter legally but purposely overstay their work, education or tourist visas; and

WHEREAS, homeland security threats may also originate internally from U.S. citizens who belong to organized extremist groups or who act as lone wolves for a variety of reasons, to include religious, ideological and personal; and

WHEREAS, physical barriers are erected along less than 30 percent of our 2,000-mile border with Mexico, and are virtually nonexistent along the 5,000-mile U.S.-Canadian border; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Homeland Security "*Secure Border Initiative*" will not achieve operational control of nearly 7,000 miles of northern and southern borders until 2011; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. also needs to secure more than 16,000 miles of coastline and all airports and shipping ports of entry; and

WHEREAS, the 9/11 Report Card, published in December 2005, gave failing grades to the Department of Homeland Security in a number of areas, including airport passenger arrival screening against terrorist watch lists; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Administration and Congress to fast-track funding for the Departments of Homeland Security and Justice to expedite all initiatives to secure America's borders from all threats, foreign and domestic; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we insist the U.S. government aggressively work to identify and deport illegal aliens who commit crimes.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The intent of this resolution is:

To secure America's borders from all threats, foreign and domestic, and to identify and deport illegal aliens who commit crimes.

Resolution No. 403

HALT ROGUE NATION WMD PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, the threat of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and the transfer of weapons-grade material and technology remain very real dangers to the United States and its allies; and

WHEREAS, North Korea is a non-signatory of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, has a ballistic missile development program underway, and has a long history of hostile behavior towards the United States and the Republic of Korea; and

WHEREAS, North Korea agreed in September 2005 to give up its nuclear program in exchange for an energy package and a U.S. pledge not to attack or invade; and

WHEREAS, in May 2009, North Korea conducted another underground nuclear detonation, test fired missiles capable of carrying a nuclear warhead, stated it would no longer honor the 1953 armistice, and threatened to attack South Korea; and

WHEREAS, North Korea has broken all agreements and demonstrated it cannot be trusted; and

WHEREAS, Iranian officials have confirmed that North Korea is assisting them in the development of nuclear weapons technology; and

WHEREAS, Iran is becoming a military dictatorship through the Revolutionary Guard's rise in economic and political power, and Iranian President Ahmadinejad publically that Israel should be "Wiped off the map"; and

WHEREAS, the greatest threat to American security are weapons of mass destruction—and the technology by which to make and employ them—in the hands of North Korea and Iran, as well as terrorist organizations and other rogue nations who support them; and

WHEREAS, despite attempts to normalize relations, the Administration and Congress must remain suspicious of the actions and motives of North Korea and Iran; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon the Administration to use strong economic sanctions against North Korea and Iran to halt their development and transfer of weapons of mass destruction programs.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The intent of this resolution is: To call upon the Administration to stop the development and transfer of weapons of mass destruction by North Korea and Iran.

Resolution No. 404

INCREASE THE DEFENSE BUDGET

WHEREAS, America's number one priority is to provide for the defense of the nation and security of its citizens, and this is provided by a properly funded military establishment that can defeat all enemies, as well as safeguard vital U.S. interests around the globe; and

WHEREAS, defense spending as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) continues to be less than it was 25 years ago, or approximately 4.6% of GDP in a wartime 2010 compared to 6.2% of GDP in a peacetime 1985; and

WHEREAS, the military service chiefs have repeatedly called for the need to reconstitute and modernize the force as a result of the wear and tear on equipment after almost nine years of war; and

WHEREAS, even with temporary manpower plus-ups in the Army and Marine Corps, the drawdown of experienced personnel over previous years, coupled with repeated deployments, is wearing out active duty and reserve component forces, which negatively impacts morale, and will inevitably lead to retention and recruiting problems; and

WHEREAS, in an effort to offset the costs of weapons systems and other programs, the Department of Defense has in the past repeatedly called for raising the annual premiums of Tricare healthcare insurance for military retirees; and

WHEREAS, if the defense budget is not significantly increased, it is inevitable that the military will shrink in terms of both material and manpower, and America's security will be jeopardized; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly urge the Administration and Congress to provide adequate funding for the readiness, training, modernization, health care, and quality of life initiatives for our armed forces.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The intent of this resolution is: To urge the Administration and Congress to provide adequate funding for readiness, training, modernization, health care, and quality of life initiatives for our armed forces.

Resolution No. 405

BUILD A BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENSE SYSTEM

WHEREAS, the Russian ballistic missile threat to the United States has decreased in recent years because of changes in our strategic relationship and the declining numbers of nuclear weapons in the Russian inventory; and

WHEREAS, because of worldwide proliferation, new ballistic missile threats to the United States and our allies have emerged; and

WHEREAS, according to National Intelligence Estimates, the United States will likely face intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) threats from China, North Korea and Iran; and

WHEREAS, China has been modernizing its long-range strategic missile force since the mid-1980s, and by 2015, the number of Chinese ballistic missiles—estimates range from a low 240 to 1,300—is projected to significantly increase; and

WHEREAS, many nations, including Pakistan and India, and some not friendly to the U.S., have or are developing ballistic missiles capable of being armed with nuclear, chemical or biological warheads; and

WHEREAS, despite the growing threat of rogue nations and unstable third world countries, the United States still has no strategic missile defense system to protect this country and its citizens from nuclear, chemical or biological attack; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support the development and deployment of a ballistic missile defense system to protect our country and our deployed military forces; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call upon the Congress to fully fund a ballistic missile defense program as a high priority national security requirement.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The intent of this resolution is: To support a ballistic missile defense system and urge Congress to fully fund the program.

Resolution No. 406

SUPPORT NATO EXPANSION

WHEREAS, in the midst of the rapidly changing political situation in Europe, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has remained a stable, steady influence in the region; and

WHEREAS, since 1992, the former Warsaw Pact countries of eastern Europe have thrown off the yoke of communism and reestablished democratic governments, and since 1998, virtually every Eastern European country has been admitted to NATO; and

WHEREAS, all 28 NATO member nations have military forces in Afghanistan, and 23 NATO nations are contributing to the training effort in Iraq with troops or through financial or equipment donations.

WHEREAS, the expansion of NATO has not caused Russia and the other former Soviet Union countries to form an opposing political or military alliance; and

WHEREAS, the eastward expansion of NATO provides political and strategic benefits to the United States by bringing security and stability to the region, and serves as a catalyst for further democracy in Russia and former Soviet Union countries; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support the continued expansion of the NATO Alliance to ensure the future security of Europe, as well as U.S. strategic interests in the region.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The intent of this resolution is: To support the continued expansion of NATO to ensure the future security of Europe, as well as U.S. strategic interests in the region.

Resolution No. 407

SUPPORT THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

WHEREAS, the Republic of Korea is politically and militarily vital to the United States, and to the defense and stability of the Pacific and Asian regions; and

WHEREAS, numerous treaties are in force with the Republic of Korea concerning, economic and technical cooperation, education, maritime matters, trade and commerce, and the Mutual Defense Treaty, that was inacted on November 17, 1954; and

WHEREAS, South Korea and North Korea signed the Agreement on Reconciliation, Non-aggression, and Exchanges and Cooperation on December 13, 1991; and

WHEREAS, in late 1992, the North Korean nuclear issue halted progress of that agreement; and

WHEREAS, North Korea still maintains an extremely large and forward-deployed military force capable of launching offensive operations against South Korea on short notice; and

WHEREAS, North Korea has produced nuclear material for the development of nuclear weapons; and

WHEREAS, North Korea is developing powerful, long-range missiles that could possibly reach targets in the United States, particularly Alaska; and

WHEREAS, North Korea has escalated tensions in the region by test launching missiles, and periodically deploying armed forces along the demilitarized zone and Joint Security Area at Panmunjom; and

WHEREAS, the presence of a large contingent of U.S. ground and air forces in the Republic of Korea serves as a real deterrent to North Korean aggression; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the government of the United States to keep a substantial military presence in South Korea, and increase its military aid and assistance to the Republic of Korea by providing modern weaponry and technology to safeguard its freedom and promote security in the Pacific and Asian regions.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The intent of this resolution is: To urge the U.S. government to keep a military presence in the Republic of Korea and provide them with military aid and assistance to ensure stability in the region.

Resolution No. 408

SUPPORT THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA ON TAIWAN

WHEREAS, the Republic of China (ROC) on Taiwan is a historic and democratic ally of the United States, a valuable trading partner, and key link in the Western Pacific defense chain; and

WHEREAS, the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) continues to oppose the admission of Taiwan into the United Nations, and has continued its military buildup, including the deployment of short and medium-range missiles across the Formosa Strait from Taiwan; and

WHEREAS, the Taiwan Relations Act (PL 96-8) codifies the policy of the United States to provide Taiwan with arms of a defensive character to bolster peace and stability in the cross-strait environment; and

WHEREAS, on January 1, 1979, then-President Carter terminated diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Taiwan, and established diplomatic relations with the PRC in an attempt to help maintain peace, security and stability in the Western Pacific; and

WHEREAS, this loss of diplomatic status prevents the President of Taiwan from receiving the same respect and courtesies afforded other Heads of State who visit the U.S.; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Administration and Congress to strictly adhere to the concepts of the Taiwan Relations Act by approving the sale to the Republic of China on Taiwan such state-of-the-art military equipment, weapons and technology as may be necessary to maintain adequate defense capability; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call upon the Administration and Congress to support the admission of the Republic of China on Taiwan into the United Nations, and to afford the President of Taiwan the same respect and privileges due other visiting Heads of State.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The intent of this resolution is: To urge the Administration and the Congress to strictly adhere to the concepts of the Taiwan Relations Act; to urge the U.S. government to employ its full range of influence to contain aggressive posturing of the Peoples Republic of China; and to afford the Taiwan Head of State equal respect and privileges.

Resolution No. 409

**RE-DESIGNATE THE POSITION OF SECRETARY OF THE NAVY AS THE
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY AND MARINE CORPS**

WHEREAS, on November 10, 1775, the Continental Congress meeting in Philadelphia passed a resolution directing that two battalions of Marines be raised as landing forces for the fleet, thereby establishing the Continental Marines and signifying the birth of the United States Marine Corps; and

WHEREAS, Marines throughout our Nation's history have often been called upon to be first into battle, and they have accepted this duty without hesitation and with a sense of honor and esprit de corps that is second to none; and

WHEREAS, throughout the 234-year history of the Navy and Marine Corps, they have fought side-by-side as a cohesive team against all enemies; and

WHEREAS, the Commandant of the Marine Corps became a full member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the mid-1970s, and from 2005 to 2007, a Marine served as the 16th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and

WHEREAS, the Marine Corps is the only military service within the Department of Defense without a specific service Secretary, as the Secretary of the Navy serves as both the Secretary of the Navy and the Secretary of the Marine Corps; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support legislation to re-designate the position of the Secretary of the Navy to the Secretary of the Navy and Marine Corps.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**The intent of this resolution is: To change the position of the Secretary of the Navy to
Secretary of the Navy and Marine Corps**

Resolution No. 410

RAISE MILITARY BASE PAY TO EQUAL PRIVATE-SECTOR WAGES

WHEREAS, military pay raises are linked to the increase in private-sector wages, as measured by the Employment Cost Index (ECI); and

WHEREAS, unless specifically increased by Congress, annual military pay raises were capped in the 1990s at one-half percent below private-sector growth, which in 1999 resulted in a military pay gap of 13.5 percent below private-sector wages; and

WHEREAS, to help close the pay gap, Congress in the Fiscal Year 2000 National Defense Authorization Act directed that military pay raises for FY00 through FY06 be automatically one-half percent above private-sector wage increases; and

WHEREAS, military pay raises from FY07 forward would automatically match the increase in the ECI, unless Congress authorized a further increase; and

WHEREAS, the current FY10 military pay raise of 3.4 percent is 2.4 percent behind private-sector wages, and despite the slow economy, the pay gap is sure to widen with the Administration's proposed 1.4-percent military pay raise in FY11—the lowest since 1962; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon the Administration and Congress to provide a military base pay raise that will restore full comparability with private-sector wages; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a slow or no-growth economy is not valid rationale to underpay our valiant servicemen and women in uniform who have singularly borne the brunt of almost nine years of war.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The intent of this resolution is: To achieve full military base pay comparability with private-sector wages.

Resolution No. 411

LOWER THE RESERVE COMPONENT RETIREMENT PAY AGE

WHEREAS, current law stipulates that after completing 20 satisfactory years of honorable service, Reserve Component members must wait until age 60 to receive retirement pay; and

WHEREAS, when the current age requirement was established, this nation didn't utilize the Reserve Component forces the way it does now; and

WHEREAS, the posture of Reserve Component forces has changed from a strategic reserve to an operational force; and

WHEREAS, in peacetime and war, they have become a larger percentage of the total force and are essential partners in a wide range of military operations, from smaller-scale contingencies to major theaters of war; and

WHEREAS, it is well known that the active force cannot sustain the readiness posture to meet our national military strategy without the Guard and Reserve; and

WHEREAS, over the course of a military career, with months and years of mobilized service on active duty, a reserve member's ability to accrue a civilian retirement is severely impacted because they contribute less to their own 401k and IRA retirement plans; and

WHEREAS, the 1.1 million men and women who serve in the Reserve Components – the Army and Air National Guard, Army Reserve, Naval Reserve, Air Force Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve and Coast Guard Reserve – represent one-half of America's total military might, and are an integral and vital part of today's total force; and

WHEREAS, a truly seamless and integrated total force is one that does not make rigid distinctions among active, Guard and Reserve forces, and one that provides a retirement benefit equal to their contributions; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress and the Administration to lower the retirement pay eligibility age to 55 for all Reserve Component members.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The intent of this resolution is: To support legislation that will reduce the Reserve Component retirement pay eligibility age to 55.

Resolution No. 412

CORRECT THE FY08 NDAA RESERVE RETIREMENT PAY PROVISION

WHEREAS, since September 11, 2001, America's reliance on its Reserve Component at home and abroad is unprecedented in our Nation's history; and

WHEREAS, the Fiscal Year 2008 National Defense Authorization Act (FY08 NDAA) includes a provision that allows National Guard and Reserve members to receive retirement pay earlier than the normal age 60 by three months for every 90 days served on active duty after January 29, 2008; and

WHEREAS, more than 700,000 Reserve Component members have served on active duty since September 11, 2001 – including more than 150,000 who have served two or more tours overseas; and

WHEREAS, the overwhelming majority of these Reserve Component members are ineligible to credit their active service toward an earlier reserve retirement because it occurred prior to the NDAA's January 29, 2008, implementation date; and

WHEREAS, this inequity shamefully overlooks the dedication and sacrifice of our Reserve Component members serving at home and abroad; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress to retroactively allow National Guard and Reserve members who served on active duty in support of a contingency operation since September 11, 2001, to receive the early retirement credit as outlined in the FY08 National Defense Authorization Act.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The intent of this resolution is: To urge Congress to retroactively grant early retirement credit — as outlined in the FY08 National Defense Authorization Act — to all National Guard and Reserve members who served on active duty since September 11, 2001.

Resolution No. 413

OPPOSE TRICARE FEE INCREASES

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense (DOD) and the nation have an obligation to provide retirement benefits to military personnel who successfully accomplish a career in uniform; and

WHEREAS, DOD routinely wants to increase enrollment fees and co-payments for military retirees under age 65 who receive the health care package known as Tricare; and

WHEREAS, all military retirees earned equal health coverage by virtue of their service, and there should not be multi-tiered fee schedules for retired military beneficiaries any more than there are for different salaried employees under civilian coverage or different grades of federal employees under the Federal Employees Health Benefit Program (FEHBP); and

WHEREAS, military health coverage is expensive, yet so is the personal investment someone makes to voluntarily commit to a full military career; and

WHEREAS, the real or perceived erosion of benefits for career-minded personnel will undermine long-term retention, readiness and leadership experience; and

WHEREAS, the Defense budget should be increased to cover this health care obligation, and the authority to impose or increase enrollment fees and co-payments should be moved from DOD to the U.S. Congress; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we oppose all Tricare fee increases and urge Congress to prevent the Department of Defense from escalating or realigning co-payments or any other fees for Tricare services and benefits; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we support legislative action to move the authority to impose or increase Tricare fees to the U.S. Congress.

Submitted by the Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The intent of this resolution is: To oppose any Tricare fee increase, and to move the authority to set fees from DOD to the Congress.

Resolution No. 414

**REFORM THE
UNIFORMED SERVICES FORMER SPOUSES PROTECTION ACT**

WHEREAS, in 1981, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *McCarty vs. McCarty* that military retirement pay is not divisible as community property in the event of a divorce; and

WHEREAS, in 1982, the Congress adopted a law to circumvent the Supreme Court decision, the Uniformed Services Former Spouses Protection Act (USFSPA), allowing military retirement pay to be divided in divorce settlements; and

WHEREAS, thousands of military retirees are now under court-ordered garnishment because state courts have ruled military pay to be a property asset, causing military retirees to pay a court-ordered percentage of their retirement pay to their former spouses regardless of fault, merit or need, and regardless of whether the former spouse remarries; and

WHEREAS, military retirees are subject to a lifetime of recall to active duty and subject to the Uniformed Code of Military Justice, and that no other retirement system includes similar provisions for division of pay, and the spouses right to receive the pay requires no code of conduct or behavior; and

WHEREAS, certain inequities exist in the USFSPA, including the “windfall provision,” which grants divorce awards based upon the pay on the date of retirement, as well as a provision that requires servicemembers with more than 20 years of service to divide their expected retired pay before their actual retirement date; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress to reform the Uniformed Services Former Spouses Protection Act to include granting divorce awards based on the service member’s rank at the time of divorce, and to not require servicemembers with more than 20 years of service to divide their expected retired pay before they actually retire.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The intent of this resolution is: To urge Congress to reform the Uniformed Services Former Spouses Protection Act.

Resolution No. 415

**INTERSTATE COMPACT ON EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY
FOR MILITARY CHILDREN**

WHEREAS, the Council of State Governments, in cooperation with the Defense Department Office of Personnel and Readiness, has drafted a new interstate compact to address the educational transition issues of children of military families; and

WHEREAS, frequent relocations due to military service impact student enrollment, eligibility, placement, and graduation; and

WHEREAS, frequent moves and long deployments place a heavy burden on military families, and put military students at an educational disadvantage; and

WHEREAS, this compact would apply to the children of active duty members of the uniformed services, including members of the National Guard and Reserve on active duty orders; members or veterans of the uniformed services who are severely injured and medically discharged or retired for a period of one year after medical discharge or retirement; and members of the uniformed services who die on active duty or as a result of injuries sustained on active duty for a period of one year after death; and

WHEREAS, the compact is currently active in 27 states, who account for more than 80 percent of the total number of military children educated off base; and

WHEREAS, the adoption of this compact by every state government will address key child educational issues encountered by all military families; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon all state governments to expeditiously adopt the language of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children; and

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The intent of this resolution is: To call upon all state governments to adopt the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children.

Resolution No. 416

CHILD CUSTODY PROTECTION FOR DEPLOYED SINGLE PARENTS

WHEREAS, there is no legal safeguard that protects military single parents from being sued for permanent custody of their children while they deployed in support of contingency operations; and

WHEREAS, military single parents are required to have a family care plan in the event they are deployed, which delegates caregiver responsibilities for minor children; and

WHEREAS, such caregiver arrangements are not equivalent to legal custody, and some civilian courts have chosen to ignore the family care plan during child custody challenges; and

WHEREAS, a deployed servicemember cannot appear in court to defend their right to custody; and

WHEREAS, the range of state approaches to family law makes it impossible for the military to create a document that would be legally binding; and

WHEREAS, child custody challenges put undue mental stress on deployed servicemembers, which could negatively impact their duty performance; and

WHEREAS, the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act does not adequately protect servicemembers from child custody challenges while deployed; and

WHEREAS, due to the nature of military service, a need exists for more federal guidance so that no court at any level can permanently alter an existing child custody agreement while a military parent is deployed; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to prevent courts from permanently changing child custody arrangements while a servicemember is deployed.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The intent of this resolution is: To urge Congress to amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to prevent permanent changes to child custody arrangements while servicemembers are deployed.

Resolution No. 417

MILITARY ABSENTEE VOTING

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States has long been deeply committed to ensuring that all military personnel have the opportunity to vote in Federal elections; and

WHEREAS, a national study by The Pew Center found that military voters from 16 states and the District of Columbia are disenfranchised from exercising their right to vote due to insufficient time allotted to apply for, complete and return absentee ballots in time to be counted; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Voter Assistance Program (FVAP) needs authority to institute greater oversight and accountability measures to ensure ballot access for military overseas voters, as mandated by the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act; and

WHEREAS, agencies within the State and Federal governments have a moral obligation to provide the means necessary to enable all armed forces personnel the timely opportunity to take part in all federal elections, regardless of their location; and

WHEREAS, the voting process would be greatly improved for military absentee voters by expanding the use of the Federal Write-in Absentee ballot; by allowing election materials to be transmitted electronically; by requiring at least 45 days for ballots to be mailed to the voter and returned to the election office; and by eliminating requirements for military voters to have their completed ballots notarized or witnessed before mailing them to election offices; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we call upon State and Federal government officials to implement measures to ensure military absentee voters have at minimum a 45-day window in which to request, complete and return their absentee ballots by the Federal election due date.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The intent of this resolution is: To urge State and Federal government officials to implement measures to ensure military absentee voters have at minimum a 45-day window in which to request, complete and return their absentee ballots by the Federal election due date.

Resolution No. 418

**CONCURRENT RECEIPT OF MILITARY RETIREMENT PAY AND
VA DISABILITY COMPENSATION**

WHEREAS, in 2004, Congress passed legislation that allowed for the gradual phase-in of full concurrent receipt of military retirement pay and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability compensation for service-connected injuries or disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the passed law phases out by 2014 the VA disability offset, which means military retirees with 20 or more years of service and a 50-percent or higher VA disability rating will no longer have their military retirement pay reduced by the amount of their VA disability compensation.

WHEREAS, the passed law does not provide the same equity to those service-connected disabled military retirees with VA ratings of 40 percent or below, or Chapter 61 retirees who were medically retired with less than 20 years, regardless of VA disability rating; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States that we support legislation for the full concurrent receipt of military retirement pay and VA disability compensation without offset and regardless of the rating percentage.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The intent of this resolution is: To support legislation for the full concurrent receipt of military retirement pay and VA disability compensation without offset and regardless of the rating percentage.

Resolution No. 419

NATIONAL HONORS TO WORLD WAR I GENERATION

WHEREAS, formed in 1899, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) is the nation's largest and oldest major veterans' service organization comprised solely of war veterans; and

WHEREAS, the Great War for Civilization, as it is memorialized on the reverse of the WWI Victory Medal, was the first major overseas conflict in which the United States was engaged following the establishment of the VFW; and

WHEREAS, 4,734,991 men and women served in uniform during WWI, and more than 53,000 died and 200,000 were wounded in 18 months of combat; and

WHEREAS, their heroism has endured to this day in military lexicon through such nom de guerre titles as "Devil Dog" and unit sobriquets such as "Rock of the Marne"; and

WHEREAS, WWI veterans occupied the White House and commanded our ground, naval and air forces during World War II; and

WHEREAS, the last surviving American WWI veteran is a fellow VFW member, 109-year-old Frank Buckles from Charles Town, W.Va.; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that in recognition of a grateful nation's homage to the courage and sacrifice of all World War I veterans, we urge the Congress to endorse and the President to proclaim that the Flag of the United States be flown at half-staff from all public buildings, military installations and ships, from the time of notification of the passing of our last WWI veteran until he is laid to rest, or for one week, whichever is shorter.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The intent of this resolution is: To urge the President to proclaim the U.S. Flag to be flown at half-staff upon the death of America's last World War I veteran.

Resolution No. 420

CHANGE ARMED FORCES EXPEDITIONARY MEDAL AUTHORIZATION DATE

WHEREAS, President Kennedy established the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (AFEM) by means of Executive Order 10977, dated December 1961, for operations conducted on or after July 1, 1958; and

WHEREAS, between the hostile activity termination of World War II on March 2, 1946, and the effective date of authorization of the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal on July 1, 1958, there is no specific medal to recognize armed service personnel for expeditionary activities and deployments; and

WHEREAS, during this period, military personnel responded to various threats, contingencies and support activities around the globe, including the areas of Guam, the Philippine Islands, and the United Kingdom; and

WHEREAS, as a matter of criteria, the AFEM may be authorized for three categories of operations: U.S. military operations, U.S. military operations in direct support of the United Nations, and U.S. operations of assistance to friendly foreign nations; and

WHEREAS, many of the military operations between March 3, 1946, and July 1, 1958, meet the criteria for the award of the AFEM; and

WHEREAS, criteria is already established that the medal shall be awarded only for operations for which no other U.S. campaign medal is approved; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition the President of the United States to issue an Executive Order to change the effective date to qualify for the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal to March 3, 1946; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Joint Chiefs of Staff to review all military operations during this period and award the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal to participants of those operations that qualify.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The intent of this resolution is: To change the authorization date of the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal from July 1, 1958, to March 3, 1946, and award it to participants of military operations that qualify.

Resolution No. 421

**AMEND AWARD CRITERIA FOR
WORLD WAR II ARMY OF OCCUPATION MEDAL**

WHEREAS, the Navy Occupation Service Medal was awarded to Naval personnel for service in Trieste, Italy, from May 8, 1945 to October 25, 1954; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Army was part of the Trieste, Italy, occupation from May 8, 1945, to October 25, 1954, but not awarded the Army of Occupation Medal; and

WHEREAS, not equally recognizing all military personnel who served as part of an occupation force, regardless of branch of service, is an inequity that needs to be rectified immediately; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition the Congress of the United States, the Secretary of Defense, and the Secretary of the Army to rectify this inequity by awarding the Army of Occupation Medal to those Soldiers who served in Trieste, Italy, from May 8, 1945, to October 25, 1954.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The intent of this resolution is: To petition Congress and the Secretaries of Defense and Army to award the Army of Occupation Medal to those Soldiers who served in Trieste, Italy, from May 8, 1945, to October 25, 1954.

Resolution No. 422

AWARD A COLD WAR VICTORY MEDAL

WHEREAS, the Cold War, America's longest war, is the only war in modern history to not be recognized by a campaign, service or victory medal; and

WHEREAS, in 1998, the United States government recognized the contributions of more than 20 million U.S. servicemembers during the Cold War with a certificate of recognition, yet no medal exists to recognize those who served in hundreds of military operations to promote world peace and stability between September 2, 1945, through December 25, 1991; and

WHEREAS, excluding the Korean and Vietnam Wars, more than 380 American servicemembers were killed—to include 120 who remain listed as missing-in-action—and 500 were wounded from Cold War operations overseas; and

WHEREAS, eligibility for a veterans' benefits, in part, requires honorable service during a time of war, which renders Cold War veterans ineligible because no Cold War medal exists; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States recognizes that Cold War veterans prevented world domination of communism and nuclear war, and that the U.S. government has not properly recognized the service of those who sacrificed so much for so long; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support the creation and awarding of a Cold War Victory Medal to all eligible U.S. service personnel who served in the U.S. military during the Cold War era, from September 2, 1945, to December 25, 1991.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The intent of this resolution is: Support the creation and awarding of a Cold War Victory Medal to all eligible U.S. service personnel who served in the U.S. military during the Cold War era, from September 2, 1945, to December 25, 1991.

Resolution No. 423

AWARD PURPLE HEART TO ELIGIBLE COLD WAR SERVICEMEMBERS

WHEREAS, not all members of the military who died or were wounded-in-action were recognized during the early period of the Cold War; and

WHEREAS, President Kennedy signed Executive Order 11016, "Authorizing Award of the Purple Heart," on April 25, 1962, for members of the military, and civilians who died or were injured without a formal declaration of war; and

WHEREAS, President Reagan signed Executive Order 12464, "Award of the Purple Heart," on February 23, 1984, for members of the military who died or were injured while serving outside the territory of the United States as part of a peacekeeping force, and as a result of an international terrorist attack; and

WHEREAS, during the period after World War II to the early 1960s, other Cold War servicemembers lost their lives or were wounded-in-action and were not recognized for their service and sacrifice; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition the President to sign an Executive Order to award the Purple Heart Medal to members of the military during the period May 9, 1945, to April 25, 1962, under identical circumstances as contained in Executive Order 11016 and Executive Order 12464.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The intent of this resolution is: To award the Purple Heart Medal to military members killed or wounded-in-action during the early Cold War period of May 9, 1945, to April 25, 1962.

Resolution No. 424

EXPAND VIETNAM SERVICE MEDAL ELIGIBILITY DATES

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense recognized U.S. military personnel serving in the Republic of Vietnam from July 1, 1958, to July 3, 1965, by awarding eligible personnel the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal (AFEM); and

WHEREAS, Executive Order 11231 established the Vietnam Service Medal as recognition of service in the Republic of Vietnam or contiguous airspace or contiguous waters from July 3, 1965, to March 28, 1973; and

WHEREAS, service in the Republic of Vietnam during Operation Frequent Wind during April 29-30, 1975, was recognized by awarding eligible personnel the AFEM; and

WHEREAS, armed forces personnel who originally received the AFEM for service in the Republic of Vietnam during the two periods—July 1, 1958-July 3, 1965, or April 29-30, 1975—are now qualified to receive the Vietnam Service Medal in lieu of the Expeditionary Medal; and

WHEREAS, after the last combat troops were withdrawn on March 29, 1973, American forces still remained within the Republic of Vietnam, in Thailand, and on ships in the Gulf of Tonkin to support South Vietnamese military operations between March 29, 1973, and April 28, 1975, yet those veterans were not recognized by a campaign or service medal; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we petition the Congress to direct the Secretary of Defense to authorize the Vietnam Service Medal to those who served in the Republic of Vietnam, in Thailand, and on ships in the Gulf of Tonkin in support of military operations between March 29, 1973, and April 28, 1975, provided the servicemember meets the eligibility criteria considered as qualifying service during July 3, 1965, through March 28, 1973.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The intent of this resolution is: To expand the dates of eligibility for the Vietnam Service Medal.

Resolution No. 425

OPPOSE REPEAL OF “DON’T ASK, DON’T TELL”

WHEREAS, in 1993, Congress passed Public Law 103-160 (Section 654, U.S. Code Title 10) to prohibit homosexuals from serving in the armed forces of the United States. The Defense Department, in a compromise to implementing the law, created the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy, which bans homosexuals from serving openly in uniform; and

WHEREAS, approximately 13,000 servicemembers have been discharged under “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” since 1993—80 percent of whom by self-admission—compared to approximately 225,000 servicemembers who separate/retire annually, or approximately 3.8 million who left service voluntarily over the same 17-year period; and

WHEREAS, every servicemember who separates voluntarily or involuntarily possesses a critical yet replaceable expertise; and

WHEREAS, the VFW is fully aware that societal norms regarding homosexuality have changed since the passage of Public Law 103-160, and that recent nationwide polls reflect public support of repeal as high as 70 percent, even though less than seven-tenths of 1 percent of the general public serves in uniform; and

WHEREAS, every American should have the opportunity to serve in uniform, but the needs of the nation and military must come before the needs of the individual; and

WHEREAS, military life is fundamentally different from civilian life in that military society is characterized by its own laws, customs and traditions, to include numerous prohibitions on personal behavior that are not punishable under civil law or penalized by civilian employers; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, opposes all efforts to repeal the policy known as “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” which has proven to be an effective compromise to the outright ban on homosexuals serving in uniform; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, we support the Defense Department’s one-year review, and regardless of its final recommendation, we urge the nation’s lawmakers to weigh their decisions carefully by considering the overall national security impact repeal would have on unit cohesion and morale, and military retention and recruitment programs.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The intent of this resolution is: To keep the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy intact.

Resolution No. 426

POW/MIA FULL ACCOUNTING COMMITMENT AND AGENCY FUNDING

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States is deeply committed to achieving the fullest possible accounting of all U.S. personnel who are held captive and/or are missing and unaccounted-for from our nation's wars; and

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of the U.S. government to account for America's missing, who number more than 78,000 from World War II, 8,000 from the Korean War, 1,700 from the Vietnam War, 120 from the Cold War, and one each from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Congress has a moral obligation to appropriate the funds necessary for government agencies involved in the Full Account Mission to plan and execute programs and operations to resolve this issue and bring closure to the families of the missing; and

WHEREAS, Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) operations have been compromised in the past by budget reductions because of competing U.S. Pacific Command warfighting priorities; and

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we remain steadfast in our commitment to the goal of the fullest possible accounting of all U.S. military personnel from our nation's wars; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we remain strongly supportive of the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC), and urge the President and Congress to demonstrate their resolve to keeping this issue a high national priority by earmarking the JPAC budget as a fully-funded, dedicated line item appropriation.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The intent of this resolution is: To achieve the fullest possible accounting of all POW/MIAs from all wars, and to urge the President and Congress to fully fund JPAC with a dedicated line item appropriation.

Resolution No. 427

RENEW POW/MIA DISCUSSIONS WITH NORTH KOREA

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States has supported and continues to advocate for the accounting of U.S. military personnel previously listed as prisoner of war, missing in action, killed in action/body not recovered from the Korean War; and

WHEREAS, more than 60 percent of the 8,000 unaccounted-for American servicemen from war are in North Korea; and

WHEREAS, the Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) and the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) conducted 33 investigative and recovery operations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) from 1996 through 2005, resulting in the repatriation of more than 220 sets of remains; and

WHEREAS, in May 2005 the U.S. government temporarily suspended bilateral talks with DPRK government officials, as well as POW/MIA recovery efforts in North Korea due to safety concerns for JPAC investigation and recovery teams; and

WHEREAS, North Korea was removed from the State Sponsors of Terrorism list in 2008, which an created an opportunity for bilateral talks to resume with DPRK officials in order to restore JPAC activities in North Korea; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we encourage the renewal of bilateral talks between the U.S. government and North Korean officials for the purpose of resuming humanitarian operations to recover and account for Americans still missing and unaccounted-for from the Korean War.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The intent of this resolution is: To encourage the U.S. government to renew bilateral talks with North Korea to resume MIA recovery operations.

Resolution No. 428

CALL FOR VIETNAM POW/MIA UNILATERAL ACTION

WHEREAS, diplomatic relations between the United States Government and the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV) were established in July 1995 following assurances from Vietnamese officials that improved bilateral relations would result in expanded cooperation to achieve the fullest possible accounting of Americans captured, missing, or killed during the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, on March 20, 2002, President Bush issued Presidential Determination 2002-11, stating that Vietnam's unilateral provision of POW/MIA-related documents and records should be improved, focused initially on archival data pertaining to Americans captured, missing, or killed in areas of Laos and Cambodia under wartime Vietnamese control; and

WHEREAS, Presidential Determination 2002-11 also stipulated that the government of Vietnam must take unilateral actions aimed at locating and repatriating the remains of those who died while in Vietnamese control who have not yet been returned; and

WHEREAS, on June 25, 2008, President Bush expressed his appreciation to Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung for Vietnam's cooperation in the joint humanitarian effort to achieve the fullest possible accounting for Americans who remain missing in action, and Vietnam's willingness to carry out additional measures; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we encourage Socialist Republic of Vietnam Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung to continue in this cooperative effort by authorizing officials in his government to locate and release immediately to the United States all records relating to Americans still missing and unaccounted-for from the Vietnam conflict; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we strongly urge the Vietnamese government to urge its people to turn over the remains of Americans or information on American burial sites.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The intent of this resolution is: To request the Government of Socialist Republic of Vietnam to release all documents and possible remains pertaining to Americans lost during the Vietnam War.

Resolution No. 429

U.S.-RUSSIA JOINT COMMISSION ON POW/MIA AFFAIRS

WHEREAS, the U.S.-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIA Affairs was established in March 1992 by the direction of the Presidents of the United States and the Russian Federation to serve as a forum through which both nations can seek to determine the fate of missing and unaccounted-for servicemen; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. delegation's objectives have been to determine whether American servicemen are being held against their will on the territory of the former Soviet Union, and, if so, to secure their immediate release and repatriation; to locate and return to the U.S. the remains of any deceased American servicemen interred in the former Soviet Union; and ascertain the facts regarding American servicemen who were not repatriated and whose fates remain unresolved; and

WHEREAS, the commission is organized into four working groups, each representing a key area of investigation – World War II, Korean War, Vietnam War, and the Cold War – and meets in regular plenary sessions several times each year; and

WHEREAS, on April 30, 2005, then-Russian President Putin reduced the size of his government, a move that eliminated their Joint Commission co-chairman position, which effectively halted all progress, to include access to Russia's central military archives; and

WHEREAS, commission members include two United States Senators and two United States Representatives representing both political parties, although one House Democrat Commissioner position has been unfilled since January 2006; and

WHEREAS, diplomatic notes passed in July 2009, and the recent reopening of Russia's military archives to U.S. researchers, are signs of renewed support of the Joint Commission, although a Russian co-chairman has yet to be appointed; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly urge Russian President Medvedev to appoint a Russian co-chairman to the U.S.-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIA Affairs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call upon the leadership of the House of Representatives to appoint a qualified member to serve as Democrat Commissioner to the Joint Commission.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on NATIONAL SECURITY & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The intent of this resolution is: To request the Russian government appoint a co-chairman to the U.S.-Russia Joint Commission, and to request the leadership of the House of Representatives to appoint a member to fill a vacant position on the Democratic side of the commission.

Resolution No. 601

ADEQUATE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS BUDGET

WHEREAS, presently there are about 23 million living veterans of whom 40 percent are over 65 years of age and require increased health care including long-term care; and

WHEREAS, the laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs authorizing benefits for veterans, their dependents and survivors are classified into the following general categories: compensation for service-connected disabilities and death; pension for low income veterans and survivors; educational and training assistance; home loan guaranty's; service members life insurance; veterans life insurance; hospital and medical care services; nursing home and domiciliary care, including state veterans home construction funds; health manpower training; medical and prosthetic research and burial benefits; and

WHEREAS, the health care delivery facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs are aging physical plants in need of modernization through renovations and reconfiguration to meet the demands of advances in medicine and current fire, safety and privacy standards; and

WHEREAS, veterans who served in our armed forces have rendered honorable service to our great nation and are at a minimum deserving to receive timely and accurate processing of claims for veterans entitlements along with the best and most appropriate health care; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress of the United States authorize appropriations for the Department of Veterans Affairs which fully fund and maintain the integrity and enhancement of veteran entitlement programs and health care system.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

The intent of this resolution is: To have Congress pass a budget that fully funds and sufficiently maintains all VA entitlement programs and services.

Resolution No. 602

**CONSIDER TREATMENT FOR A PRESUMPTIVE SERVICE CONNECTED CONDITION
AS A CLAIM FOR VA COMPENSATION**

WHEREAS, many service members have suffered from diseases that are recognized to be presumptive; and

WHEREAS, veterans suffering from diseases which include many types of cancer, as well as diabetes and other chronic diseases may not be aware that they may be eligible for service connection, even if they are being treated in a VA facility; and

WHEREAS, many VA medical facilities are not currently staffed or equipped to provide appropriate counseling to veterans or their families on how to file a claim for service connected benefits; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to enact legislation requiring that treatment by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for a condition or disease recognized as presumptively service connected will be considered to be an informal claim for service connection for compensation purposes.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

The intent of this resolution is: To provide legislation that would consider treatment for a presumptive service connected condition as a claim for VA Compensation.

Resolution No. 603

**EXTENDING GULF WAR PRESUMPTIONS, REGISTRY AND HEALTH CARE TO
AFGHANISTAN THEATER VETERANS**

WHEREAS, many service members have served in Operation Enduring Freedom; and

WHEREAS, these veterans have served under circumstances similar to those serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom and the first Persian Gulf War; and

WHEREAS, Afghanistan was not considered part of the Southwest Asia theater of operations during Operation Desert Storm and the VA did not include Afghanistan; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress and the VA to include Afghanistan in the Southwest Asia theater of operations so that appropriate benefits, including eligibility for compensation based on undiagnosed illnesses, and medical care eligibility, will be provided, retroactive to the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

The intent of this resolution is: To extend Gulf War benefits to include veterans serving in Afghanistan.

Resolution No. 604

OPPOSE VA PHARMACEUTICAL CO-PAYMENT INCREASES

WHEREAS, veterans, other than those with a service-connected disability rating of 50 percent or greater, those who are receiving medications for their service-connected conditions or those whose incomes fall below the non service-connected pension threshold, must pay a co-payment for each 30-day supply of medications obtained through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); and

WHEREAS, there have been repeated proposals to raise the pharmaceutical co-payment, placing an undue hardship on many veterans; and

WHEREAS, in 2005, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, using his statutory authority, raised the pharmaceutical co-payment from \$7 to \$8 for each 30 day supply, and authority to raise it again in the future exists; and

WHEREAS, the increase in costs of the benefit would likely cause many veterans to turn away from the VA health care system and would serve to inequitably balance the federal budget through veterans programs; and

WHEREAS, pharmaceuticals are part of the VA's standard health benefits package and must be provided to all eligible veterans; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we oppose increases in the VA pharmaceutical co-payment.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

The intent of this resolution is: To oppose raising VA co-payment for medication.

Resolution No. 605

ENTITLEMENT TO NURSING HOME CARE

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States has called upon Congress to enact legislation to regulate and expand eligibility for VA health care and provide all veterans with mandated access to the full continuum of VA health care services which include nursing home care; and

WHEREAS, current VA regulations extend VA eligibility for nursing home care to those veterans who are service-connected at 70 percent or above or those seeking nursing home care for a service-connected disability; and

WHEREAS, the demand for VA nursing home care is increasing as the veteran population continues to age; and

WHEREAS, VA nursing home care units are VA hospital-based and provide an intensive and extensive level of nursing home care supported by the clinical specialties and other services within the host hospital; and

WHEREAS, VA nursing home care is considered the “safety net” for VA outpatient services such as residential care, respite care, hospital-based home care, adult day health care, homemaker/home health aid services and other extended care programs; and

WHEREAS, VA, through their own statements, recognizes the difference in eligibility for nursing home care and inpatient hospital care as inconsistent with the principles of sound medical practice, which support continuity of care for veterans; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to establish a standard VA nursing home entitlement for all veterans.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

The intent of this resolution is: To urge the Congress to establish a standard VA nursing home entitlement for all veterans.

Resolution No. 606

HEALTH CARE FOR VETERANS WITH TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY

WHEREAS, almost 20 percent of combat casualties have sustained permanent brain damage due to Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) while serving in Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom; and

WHEREAS, veterans with blast injuries, blunt trauma, motor vehicle accidents, and falls are at risk for TBI which often goes unrecognized; and

WHEREAS, even mildly injured TBI patients may have long-term mental and physical health consequences; and

WHEREAS, there has been universal recognition that veterans with severe TBI will need a lifetime of intensive services to care for their injuries and many VA medical facilities are not currently staffed or equipped to provide the necessary and appropriate screening, or quality health care services to veterans suffering from TBI; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to provide sufficient funding to the Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure that appropriate screening, diagnostic services, treatment and life-long case management services are available to every veteran suffering from TBI; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to increase research pertaining to, screening methods, diagnostic tools, and more effective treatments for traumatic brain injury patients to ensure that TBI veterans are receiving the best treatment and rehabilitation care available.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

The intent of this resolution is:

To provide sufficient funding so VA can provide appropriate screening, diagnostic services and treatment for veterans with Traumatic Brain Injuries and increase the research on screening methods, diagnostic tools, and more effective treatment modalities.

Resolution No. 607

VETERANS EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, the Veterans of Foreign Wars recognizes that it is in the best interest of veterans to have a strong and viable veterans employment and training system dedicated to the interest of our nation's veterans; and

WHEREAS, veterans of all eras, especially recently separated service members, are finding it difficult to obtain meaningful employment and careers; and

WHEREAS, while there are certain employment and educational programs in place for veterans there is a great need for improvement in the quality, purpose, and accountability of these programs; and

WHEREAS, veteran employment programs need to have a proactive, long-term career focus versus an immediate and often low wage, job focus; and

WHEREAS, all veteran employment programs should conduct impact studies to assess their effectiveness in attaining and maintaining meaningful long-term employment for veterans. Programs need increased accountability, oversight, and acceptable performance measures to prove the effectiveness of the programs; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we support viable and effective veterans employment and training systems, which have necessary funding and capability to assist veterans in seeking and maintaining meaningful employment and re-employment opportunities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that programs which are proven to be effective should have the necessary funding and personnel to fully assist veterans seeking employment and reemployment opportunities in both the public and private sectors; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that such programs must be held accountable for the effectiveness of the services provided and their funding should be adjusted to reflect their abilities in creating long-term meaningful employment for veterans.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

The intent of this resolution is: To urge Congress to support effective employment and training programs for veterans.

Resolution No. 608

HIGH QUALITY VA SERVICES FOR WOMEN VETERANS

WHEREAS, the number of women joining the armed forces of our country continues to increase every year; and

WHEREAS, women veterans comprise approximately eight percent of all users of VA health care services and women who are deployed and served in recent conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq are enrolling in VA at historic rates, and

WHEREAS, the number of enrolled women veterans is expected to increase by 30 percent in the next five years making it essential that VA is staffed and equipped to meet their specific health care needs; and

WHEREAS, many VA facilities are not currently equipped to provide gender-specific health care services to include mental health professionals trained to provide counseling and care for Military Sexual Trauma (MST) and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD); and

WHEREAS, many women veterans are unaware of their eligibility as veterans and often do not utilize VA for benefits or health care services; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge VA to increase priority given to women veterans by providing adequate mental health care services to include individuals trained to provide care for Military Sexual Trauma and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we urge VA to ensure that it has a full-time women veterans program manager at all VA medical centers and to ensure necessary and gender-specific health care services are available to women veterans at all VA facilities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Secretary of Veteran Affairs to improve outreach and expand programs for women veterans to close critical gaps by offering a full-range of services designed to meet their current and future needs.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

The intent of this resolution is: To ensure VA health care and access to mental health services for women veterans are available at all VA medical centers or nearby network facilities. To further mandate a full-time women veterans program manager position at all VA medical centers and to increase priority and outreach to women veterans.

Resolution No. 609

**EXTEND A PRESUMPTION OF SERVICE CONNECTION
TO BLAST SURVIVORS**

WHEREAS, ongoing conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) have placed tens of thousands of service members in harms way; and

WHEREAS, the nature of the conflict these men and women face is frequently guerrilla-style combat where the enemy is widely known to use improvised explosive devices, or IEDs; and

WHEREAS, much of the attention has been focused on the apparent physical wounds, there are many unseen effects of blast trauma, which could include brain injuries, long-term hearing and balance issues, chronic pain, air embolisms, and injuries mistaken for personality disorders; and

WHEREAS, some effects associated with blast injuries may not become manifest immediately allowing the service member to return to the field, only to have their ability to fulfill their duty dramatically affected by the long-term effects of the blast; and

WHEREAS many injuries are difficult to diagnose and our men and women in uniform can suffer from these disabilities for many years after the blast; and

WHEREAS, a large number of veterans have been identified as having been evaluated or treated for a condition possibly related to a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) at a VA medical center from the start of OIF/OEF; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to approve a presumption of service connection for the conditions associated with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI).

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

The intent of this resolution is: To encourage Congress to extend a presumption of service connection for TBI.

Resolution No. 610

VETERAN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

WHEREAS, several government reports indicate that nearly every federal agency is falling below their 3% contracting goal for disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, many veterans and disabled veterans lack access to capital; and

WHEREAS, the tools available to veterans to fulfill their obligation and provide the federal government with the capability and capacity to fulfill 3% of all Federal contracts has continued to fail America's veterans; and

WHEREAS, other groups have comprehensive funding and small business centers across the country and more favorable options and access to capital; and

WHEREAS, the Small Business Administration lacks the funding and staff necessary to create robust veterans programs; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars that Congress expand entrepreneurial education and networking for veterans via veterans small business centers funded through the Small Business Administration in order to reach all governmental agencies 3% goal; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress expand veterans and disabled veterans access to capital by creating and funding a direct loan program through the Small Business Administration in order to reach all governmental agencies 3% goal.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

The intent of this resolution is: To require Congress to eliminate the barriers impeding veterans from establishing and maintaining a small business by providing sufficient funding for veterans small business training, and increasing veterans access to capital, in order to raise veterans capacity and capability at a level sufficient to provide the federal government with 3% of all their contracts for goods and services.

Resolution No. 611

**REQUIRE ATTENDANCE OF DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (DOL)
TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS FOR SEPARATING AND DEMOBILIZING
SERVICEMEMBERS**

WHEREAS, the goal of the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) is to ease the adjustment of separating service members during the difficult transition from active duty into civilian life by offering job-search assistance, medical/health services, the advising of available benefits, and other related counseling; and

WHEREAS, Government Accountability Office (GAO) reports continue to emphasize the need for all eligible service members to attend TAP prior to discharge; and

WHEREAS, TAP pre-separation counseling is not always integrated into the Military Separation process for service members and not all military bases allow nationally accredited service organizations to participate in the pre-separation or TAP briefings; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that DOD expands and standardizes their existing pre-separation counseling policies to ensure counseling services are utilized by separating servicemembers and by adding additional information on the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits, to include healthcare and entitlements, federal and private sector employment opportunities, G.I. Bill and vocational rehabilitation and employment programs, and to assure that individual service members will receive appropriate transitioning services; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we request Congress require DOL to thoroughly review the TAP program for maximum effectiveness in helping servicemembers transition, while encouraging cooperation and inclusion of nationally accredited service organizations in their programs.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

The intent of this resolution is: Seek legislation to require DOD policies require TAP attendance by all military personnel who are separating or demobilizing from the military.

Resolution No. 612

VA CLAIMS BACKLOG

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has a large backlog of claims for compensation, pension, education benefits and appeals; and

WHEREAS, due to the increasing complexity of claims, the need for compliance to Court of Veterans Appeals decisions claims and the continual increase in the number of claims year to year the backlog has continued to grow; and

WHEREAS, because of substantial backlogs of claims and appeals cases, timeliness in rating cases has steadily degraded; and

WHEREAS, VBA has failed to leverage advances in information technology (IT) to create efficiencies that substantially streamline claims processing and enhance opportunities for improved quality control; and

WHEREAS, decades of staffing freezes and neglect within VA contributed to current backlogs and decreased timeliness; and

WHEREAS, Congress in recent years has provided increased funding for staffing at VA and improved oversight. Yet, the attrition of new hires and retirement of journeymen claims processors continues to challenge VA's ability to train and maintain a technically proficient workforce; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to continue to exercise its oversight capacity and provide the resources necessary to hire, train and sustain a workforce sufficient to overcome the backlog and provide quality and timely service to those claiming benefits or appealing decisions from VA; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress continue its oversight of VA IT initiatives to ensure that they are constructive, relevant and effective in streamlining claims processing and improving quality of entitlement decisions.

Submitted by Commander-in Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

The intent of this resolution is: To urge Congress to continue allocating the necessary resources for the Veterans Benefits Administration to hire sufficient employees to implement the necessary training and transitional planning that will allow VBA to substantially reduce the claims backlog. Further, to encourage Congressional oversight to speed comprehensive IT initiatives to enhance processing efficiencies and ensure improved quality in claims processing.

Resolution No. 613

IMPROVE TREATMENT FOR CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISORDER

WHEREAS, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disorder (COPD), a disease of the lungs in which the air passages become narrow and impair breathing, is the fourth largest cause of death in the United States; and

WHEREAS, veterans suffer disproportionately from COPD as compared to their peers with a rate approximately three times higher than the civilian population and it is the fourth most common diagnosis among hospitalized veterans and first among those aged 65-74; and

WHEREAS, COPD exacts a heavy price not just on the health of the veteran, but on the health care system as it is the most expensive chronic disease among veterans, accounting for over 15 percent of VA's bed occupancy and leads to about double the average hospital stay length as veterans who are not suffering from COPD; and

WHEREAS, VA's treatment options appear to be limited, restricting viable formulary options and imposing roadblocks that other federal health care systems such as Medicare or TRICARE may not impose; and

WHEREAS, VA lacks a disease management specialty clinic (which it has for certain other conditions) on COPD despite its prevalence among veterans and the large costs associated with VA's care of this condition; and

WHEREAS, without a specialty clinic, most COPD veterans that VA cares for are managed by primary care providers, who may not have the specialty knowledge to properly treat this deadly condition; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States that we urge VA to improve the health care treatment options for Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disorder to include making necessary adjustments to the formulary to ensure that pharmaceuticals that have proven effective are easily available to veterans without hassle and that VA create specialty clinics to educate, train and recruit health care professionals to deal with this disease's harmful effects.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

The intent of this resolution is: To urge VA to improve health care treatment options for Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disorder.

Resolution No. 614

**HEALTH CARE FOR VETERANS WITH
POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD)**

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has indicated that treating PTSD among returning war veterans is one of its highest priorities , and the VA operates a nationwide network of more than 190 specialized PTSD outpatient treatment programs; and

WHEREAS, the early and accurate screening, diagnosis and treatment for PTSD, depression, substance use, and other mental health disorders, yields optimal patient outcomes, and statistics have shown that these conditions, left untreated or poorly treated, can lead to increases in suicide attempts or suicides; and

WHEREAS, the total number of veterans compensated for PTSD through 2009 is 380,000, with almost a third of them (120,000) being current war veterans. VA and Defense Department studies verify that combat exposure in Afghanistan and Iraq increases a veteran's risk of being diagnosed with PTSD; and

WHEREAS, available research has significant gaps in the evaluation of treatment programs for veterans diagnosed with and/or suffering from the effects of traumatic brain injuries, PTSD, and the brain's response to internal and external influences that could result in mental depression, such as substance abuse, gender or racial abuse, and the effect of aging and loneliness; and

WHEREAS, the Institute of Medicine highlights prolonged exposure therapy, an intensive specialized counseling treatment as being one of the few treatment programs that have been proven effective by evidence based research studies; and

WHEREAS, the VA currently does not have the capacity to deliver intensive exposure therapy programs at every medical center to veterans with PTSD who need it; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we strongly urge Congress to adequately fund VA mental health treatment and research programs.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERAN SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

The intent of this resolution is: To urge Congress to adequately fund VA mental health treatment and research programs.

Resolution No. 615

PRESUMPTIVE SERVICE CONNECTION FOR TINNITUS AND HEARING LOSS

WHEREAS, veterans of the armed services who served in combat or in a position (e.g. member of a gun crew on board Navy ships) or certain occupational specialties have a high incidence rate of hearing loss or tinnitus as a direct result of acoustic trauma; and

WHEREAS, many pre-service and discharge examinations, particularly for World War II and Korean Conflict veterans, were usually accomplished with the highly inaccurate whispered-voice test; and

WHEREAS, veterans, in those cases, were not afforded a comprehensive audio logical examination upon entrance and discharge from the military services; and

WHEREAS, in recent years the second leading disability granted service connection by VA was for hearing loss or tinnitus.

WHEREAS, in 2005 the Institutes of Medicine (IOM) released a study that showed that nearly all service members are exposed to acoustic trauma at some point during their military service and that many experience hearing loss and/or tinnitus as a result, often years after service. However, "after the fact, hearing loss or tinnitus incurred as a result of military service cannot be distinguished with certainty from subsequent noise-induced hearing loss..." Given these findings, reasonable doubt must be resolved in favor of veterans who suffered acoustic trauma in service.

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, we urge the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to grant service connection on a presumptive basis for any veteran diagnosed after discharge with hearing loss or tinnitus when the evidence shows that the veteran participated in combat or worked in a position or occupational specialty likely to cause acoustic trauma.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

The intent of this resolution is: To authorize presumptive service connection for veterans with a hearing loss or tinnitus due to combat or occupational acoustic trauma.

Resolution No. 616

ENFORCEMENT OF VETERANS EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, Congress enacted laws to help veterans find suitable employment; and

WHEREAS, federal contractors receive monies from the federal government, and in many cases, make a substantial profit in the process; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Labor has failed to provide any oversight to ensure that federal contractors are abiding by the laws required of them in regards to veterans, particularly Title 38 USC 4212; and

WHEREAS, many governmental departments have done a poor job in hiring veterans, particularly disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, many veterans do not know how to appeal employment decisions when they believe their eligibility for preference was not properly considered; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to hold the Department of Labor and federal contractors responsible for abiding by the law, particularly Title 38 USC 4212; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW urges Congress to modify Title 38 USC 4212 to stipulate penalties for all federal contractors that are found to be in non-compliance of such section; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW urges Congress to modify Title 38 USC 4212 to require that any information collected through the VETS-100—a required annual filing for federal contractors receiving over \$100,000 that lists the number of veterans they employ—be made available to the public and in a user friendly format for both veterans and those who assist veterans in locating employment; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VFW urges Congress to hold regular hearings with governmental departments that have a poor record in hiring veterans, particularly disabled veterans, to highlight the issue and take necessary actions to discontinue such actions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED; that all governmental agencies clearly supply information to veterans, at the time of their application for employment, which clearly identifies the proper procedure for filing complaints should any veteran believe his or her rights have been violated under any law or regulation related to veterans' preference.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

The intent of this resolution is: To ensure current veteran employment preference laws are being followed and considered by both governmental agencies and federal contractors.

Resolution No. 617

BURIAL PLOT ALLOWANCE

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) pays certain burial benefits at the death of a veteran who dies from a service connected disability. VA pays a different burial benefit and plot allowance on behalf of a wartime veteran who dies from a non-service connected condition; and

WHEREAS, Congress has not provided an increase in burial benefits and the plot allowance since 2001, while the cost of a funeral and burial in a private cemetery has increased nearly seven times to over \$8,550, the value of the current benefit is \$2,000 for a service connected death, and \$300 burial and \$300 plot allowance for a qualifying non-service connected death; and

WHEREAS, Congress should provide the resources to meet the changing needs of burial benefits and bring burial allowances and plot allowances to the same proportionate level they were when the benefits were joined in 1973; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that Congress increase all burial benefits to what the *Independent Budget* recommends: the service connected burial benefit, non-service connected burial benefit and the plot allowance should be \$6,160, \$1,918, and \$1,150 respectively; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress should index these benefits to inflation so that the families of veterans should never again experience financial hardship in order to bury those who served in defense of America.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

The intent of this resolution is: To increase the VA Burial Plot Allowance to what is called for in the *Independent Budget*.

Resolution No. 618

MINIMUM COMPENSATION FOR HEARING LOSS

WHEREAS, veterans of the armed services who served in combat have a high incident rate of hearing loss usually associated with acoustical trauma; and

WHEREAS, it is the general principle of disability compensation that ratings not be offset by the function artificially restored by prosthesis; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs has the authority to grant service connection for disabilities associated with combat-related diseases or injuries even if medically undocumented at the time of service; and

WHEREAS, many veterans have incurred extreme hardships through undocumented acoustical trauma related to combat service or occupational duty; and

WHEREAS, hearing aids are considered a prosthetic device necessary for good quality of life; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to amend the Schedule for Rating Disabilities to provide a minimum compensable evaluation for any service connected hearing loss for which a hearing aid is medically indicated.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

The intent of this resolution is: To urge the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to amend the rating schedule to provide a minimum compensation evaluation for any hearing loss for which a hearing aid is medically indicated.

Resolution No. 619

**REPEAL THE SURVIVOR'S BENEFIT PLAN AND DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY
COMPENSATION OFFSET**

WHEREAS, under current law, the surviving spouse of a retired servicemember whose death is related to a military service connected condition is entitled to Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

WHEREAS, if the military retiree was also enrolled in the Survivors Benefit Plan (SBP), the surviving spouse's SBP benefit would be offset by the amount of DIC benefits provided by VA; and

WHEREAS, the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) included a provision that now provides a \$50 per month payment to survivors of members entitled to retired pay whose SBP is reduced by VA and the 2009 NDAA extended this payment to survivors of active duty deaths neither benefit equals the amount being offset by the DIC benefit; and

WHEREAS, SBP and DIC payments are paid to beneficiaries for different reasons: SBP is purchased by the retiree like life insurance and is intended to provide a portion of the veteran's retired pay to the surviving spouse after the veteran's death, and DIC is a special indemnity compensation benefit paid to the surviving spouse when the veteran's service connected condition caused the premature demise of the retiree; and

WHEREAS, a surviving spouse of a federal civilian retiree who is a disabled veteran and dies from military service connected causes can receive DIC benefits without losing any of their SBP benefits due to an offset; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to repeal the Survivor's Benefit Plan and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation offset.

Submitted by the Commander-in-Chief
To the Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

The intent of this resolution is: To seek legislation to repeal the SBP and DIC benefits offset.

Resolution No. 620

INCIDENT REPORTING OF SEXUAL ASSAULT AND HEALTH CARE FOR MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA (MST)

WHEREAS, allegations of sexual assault in the military have climbed steadily over the past 10 years and this escalation is due to weak prevention efforts, inadequate field reporting, and poor managerial oversight; and

WHEREAS, Department of Defense (DOD) incident numbers indicate that there were 2,947 allegations of sexual assault reported in 2008, however, an estimated 80 percent of sexual assaults go unreported each year, and approximately 8 percent of those cases reported were prosecuted; and

WHEREAS, a civilian panel that advises top Pentagon officials on matters related to women in the armed forces found that sexual assault victims fear embarrassment, lack of action by authorities, retaliation and career penalties as a result of reporting incidents, and many refuse to answer screening questions if it means their record will reflect that they were assaulted or raped; and

WHEREAS, survivors of sexual assault often cite anonymity concerns and the absence of an independent authority that does not include commanding officers with direct authority over the survivor as reasons for their decision not to report an assault; and,

WHEREAS, many survivors of sexual assault experience Military Sexual Trauma (MST) which often leads to the development or worsening of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and current treatment strategies are often inadequate because they are generally tailored to the treatment of combat-induced PTSD and thus fail to provide the appropriate treatment environment survivors require; and

WHEREAS, evidence suggests that gender-specific inpatient and outpatient care facilities, including gender-specific housing, established for the treatment of veterans suffering from MST and PTSD resulting from MST lead to higher rates of recovery as compared to co-ed treatment centers targeted at combat-induced trauma; and

WHEREAS, TRICARE will only pay for sexual assault forensic evidence kits (i.e., "rape kits") if the survivor seeks care in the military healthcare system, however, in many cases survivors choose to go off-base for post-sexual assault care to protect their anonymity and/or careers and evidence collected during these examinations is crucial to a successful prosecution of an offender; and

WHEREAS, survivors who choose not to report or who face obstacles in reporting instances of sexual assault often develop PTSD and other mental health issues at higher rates which may, at a later date, necessitate the use of more intensive health care services over extended periods of time, putting added burdens on VA; now, therefore

Resolution No. 620 - page 2 - continued

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge VA and DOD to ensure that necessary and appropriate health care services are available to all veterans who experience sexual assault and/or suffer from MST, to include access to rape kits, confidential counseling and other treatment options, and additional gender-specific facilities for the treatment of MST and PTSD resulting from MST amongst the veteran population; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that DOD should establish an independent authority with oversight capacity, outside the chain of command, to be the primary respondent and advocate for those reporting a sexual assault, better ensuring confidentiality and the protection of the rights of victims; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the current assessment and treatment process for sexual trauma be conducted in a way that will convince members of the armed forces and veterans that the process protects the confidentiality of survivors and assures that appropriate investigations and disciplinary actions will be taken against the perpetrator; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that DOD must aggressively support a zero-tolerance policy for sexual assault; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that servicemembers be provided educational programs aimed at the prevention of, response to, and the reducing of stigmas associated with sexual assault during initial training and pre-deployment.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

The intent of this resolution is: To improve and expand access to healthcare services for the treatment of MST and PTSD resulting from MST and to develop more responsive and appropriate reporting processes available to survivors of sexual assault.

Resolution No. 621

PAYMENT FOR LOSS OF QUALITY OF LIFE

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs is charged with compensating veterans for lost earnings capacity caused by the residuals of disease or injury incurred coincident with military service; and

WHEREAS, the Institutes of Medicine (June 2007), Veterans Disability Benefits Commission (October 2007), President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors (July 2007), and Economic Systems, Inc. (in a study commissioned by the Department of Veterans Affairs, September 2008), all recommended that VA devise and incorporate additional payments for loss of quality of life caused by service connected disabilities; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to enact legislation which changes the purpose of compensation to include both loss of earnings capacity and loss of quality of life. In doing so, we urge Congress to increase compensation to adequately address the impact that service connected disabilities have on veterans' quality of life.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

The intent of this resolution is: To increase the amount of VBA service disabled compensation by also taking into consideration the veteran's quality of life.

Resolution No. 622

EXEMPT CATASTROPHICALLY DISABLED VETERANS FROM PAYING ANY VA CO-PAYMENTS

WHEREAS, The *Veterans' Health Care Eligibility Reform Act of 1996* required the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to establish and operate a system of annual patient enrollment and created eight Priority Groups of which Priority Groups 7 & 8 must pay co-payments for their care; and

WHEREAS, The *Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits Act* provided authority to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to increase the medication co-payment for each 30-day or less supply of medications and concurrently established an annual adjustable cap for calendar year 2002 and beyond; and

WHEREAS, veterans who are determined by VA to be catastrophically disabled as a result of nonservice-connected causes and whose incidental incomes exceed the "means test" thresholds, are assigned to priority group 4 and still remain subject to co-payments for their medical care; and

WHEREAS, the requirement to pay co-payments causes a tremendous hardship on catastrophically disabled veterans and their families who need to use more health care services to a greater extent at a time when the veteran's ability to work is severely diminished; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to exempt category 4, catastrophically disabled veterans from paying any VA co-payments.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

The intent of this resolution is: To exempt catastrophically disabled veterans from paying any VA co-payments.

Resolution No. 623

HOMELESS VETERANS PRIORITIES

WHEREAS, the crisis of homelessness in America has intensified due to a poor economy, which has increased the number of veterans considered at risk for homelessness because of: surging home foreclosures, a growing unemployment rate, and a nationwide shortage of affordable, low-income housing; and

WHEREAS, the VFW is supportive of President Obama's commitment to end homelessness within five years; and

WHEREAS, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) estimates, at least 131,000 veterans experience homelessness on any given night while more than twice this number of veterans encounter homelessness at some point throughout the course of a year; and

WHEREAS, the number of female service members has increased within the military, correlating with the growing number of female veterans experiencing homelessness, as well as homeless veterans with dependents; and

WHEREAS, programs operating on the federal level seek to assist local and state homeless veteran agencies and programs, partially using funds granted by the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) Grant and Per Diem program and the Department of Labor (DOL) Homeless Veterans Reintegration program; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) acknowledges its obligation to maintain comprehensive assistance to veterans who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness to the best of its capabilities; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the President and Congress to establish homeless veterans as a priority by increasing the availability of affordable housing, ensuring the opportunity to earn an adequate income through increased educational and employment opportunities and training, and by expanding access to health-care services; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress should fully-fund all veteran homeless programs, to include the VA's Grant and Per Diem program, and DOL's Homeless Veterans Reintegration program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VA should periodically review the economy so as to take into account instances of inflation to adequately adjust Grant and Per Diem program rates as necessary for sufficient operation of homeless veteran assistance programs; and

Resolution 623 - page 2 - continued

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that VA programs extended to homeless veterans be equipped with the staffing and resources necessary to respond to the growing needs of a diverse veterans population, including women, dependents, the elderly, and disabled; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that preemptive measures to address homelessness are developed and utilized to prevent and minimize the risk of possible homelessness that current service members and veterans face.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Department of Veterans Affairs service connected compensation and non-service connected pension not be considered as countable income by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

The intent of this resolution is: To urge the President and Congress to establish homeless veterans as a priority and ensure that veteran homeless programs are fully funded so that they may meet and exceed their potential in assisting each sub-category of veteran that constitutes the homeless veteran population.

Resolution No. 624

PROVIDE FAMILY CAREGIVER SUPPORT

WHEREAS, advances in battlefield medicine and protective equipment are allowing many service members to survive what would have been fatal injuries in previous generations, but often at the price of severely disabling injuries such as multiple amputations, shrapnel injuries, blindness, burns or impairment of cognitive function from blast injuries; and

WHEREAS, this population of veterans require unprecedented life-long intensive medical support and that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is appropriately allowing those who are medically stable enough to receive care in appropriate residential care settings; and

WHEREAS, to improve the quality of care provided to them, many of these service members' family members are deciding to play an active role in the delivery of care for their loved ones, often choosing as to become lifelong caregivers and personal attendants to help their loved ones deal with the dramatic loss of physical, mental and emotional capabilities; and

WHEREAS, family caregivers must not only deal with the challenges of care for a loved one, but must confront disruptions to their family life, personal professional goals, and the loss of other informal support networks as they must spend the bulk of their time and energies on their loved ones; and

WHEREAS, numerous studies have shown that caregivers experience burdens that worsen their physical and psychological health and they have higher rates of stress, anxiety and depression, which help lead to lowered life expectancies and can severely reduce the quality of life of the family member as well as the veteran to whom they are providing care; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to create an effective family caregiver program that includes a training and certification program so that family caregivers are eligible to receive a family allowance for the care they are providing on behalf of VA to their loved ones; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a comprehensive caregiver program must include continuous support options for the family member including the availability of respite care, mental health counseling for the family member, as well as the availability of health care and other services to help them cope with caregiver burden thereby improving the quality of life for severely disabled veterans.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

The intent of this resolution is: To create a family caregiver support program that benefits severely disabled service members.

Resolution No. 625

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

WHEREAS, the period of eligibility for VA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) benefits is 12 years from the date of separation from the military or the date the veteran was first notified by VA of a service-connected disability rating; and

WHEREAS, many veterans do not understand their eligibility to VR&E services and the benefits of the program until later in life when they become so disabled that their disabilities create an employment barrier; and

WHEREAS, the Post 9/11 G.I. Bill was passed into law in the 110th Congress and is a drastically more favorable benefit; and

WHEREAS, VR&E lacks quality performance measures that measure rehabilitation based on the long-term effects of disability and the likelihood that a disability may require further rehabilitation; and

WHEREAS, VR&E programs offer no services to the families and children of disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, VR&E can take more than 90 days from enrollment to the start of services; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge Congress to change the eligibility delimitating date for VA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment program by eliminating the 12-year-delimitating date for eligibility to Chapter 31 benefits and allow all veterans with employment impediments or problems with independent living to qualify for VR&E services; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that VR&E's educational housing stipend needs to be increased to reflect the current state of other educational benefits; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the VA must restructure performance measures to emphasize long-term rehabilitation versus the current short-term indicators of success. Furthermore, VR&E should continually follow up with veterans considered to be rehabilitated to ensure that the rehabilitation and employment placement plans have been successful; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that VR&E ought to be expanded to include services for spouses and children; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that VA streamlines eligibility and entitlement to VR&E programs to provide more timely intervention and assistance to all disabled veterans.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief

To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

The intent of this resolution is: To urge Congress to change the delimitating date for eligibility to VA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Services, enhance the stipend, extend benefits to families and children of beneficiary, and to streamline eligibility to provide earlier assistance.

Resolution No. 626

**INCREASE THE BENEFIT LEVEL FOR THE SURVIVORS AND DEPENDENTS
EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (DEA)**

WHEREAS, the Survivors and Dependents Educational Assistance Program (DEA) provides educational support to eligible dependents (spouse or children) of a service member who died on active duty or a veteran who died or is permanently and totally disabled due to a service-connected disability; and

WHEREAS, while DEA benefits have increased by 57 percent since 2000, public 4-year college tuition has increased well over 100 percent; and

WHEREAS, the average cost of tuition, fees, room and board, and books at a 4-year college was \$19,388 for the school year 2009-10 while the DEA benefit for the same period is \$8,325; and

WHEREAS, while nothing can repay the enormity of the loss and sacrifice of military survivors, providing a quality educational benefit will provide them the opportunity to build a meaningful and productive future for themselves and their children; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, that we urge the Congress to increase DEA benefits to reflect the rising cost of education, and that the benefit should be indexed to reflect the level of tuition as reported by the Department of Education.

Submitted by Commander-in-Chief
To Committee on VETERANS SERVICE RESOLUTIONS

The intent of this resolution is: To urge Congress to increase the Survivors and Dependents Educational Assistance Program benefits.