

Coalition of Veterans Organizations

CVO



*Leave No
Veteran Behind*

VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE REPORT

PREPARED BY
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www.coalitionofvets.org

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1. H. R. 914 has 51 co-sponsors, of which 3 are Republicans, including Jefferson Van Drew and Paul Gosar, who were dentists in their prior lives. There are 3 more Republican dentists in congress, so Mark Weiman is contacting them. 11 co-sponsors are from IL, while CA, with the second highest, has 5. The IL congressmen we still need are Foster, Schneider, and all 5 Republicans.

Our efforts to get interns or volunteers to work on getting co-sponsors have been unsuccessful.

If anyone has any ideas, please speak up.

2. Sen. Bernie Sanders introduced S. 3017, Veterans Dental Care Eligibility Expansion and Enhancement Act, on 10-20-21. It only has 7 co-sponsors, 5 of which are the original ones. Please work on this bill, too. Our responses from our two senators has been a disappointment.

3. We did a lot better getting co-sponsors on H. R. 96 (dental bill in 116th Congress) then H. R. 914, which is surprising, because we were counting on those who co-sponsored the previous bill to do the same here. If every member of every one of our organizations, plus every one of our individual members, were to take even 5 congressmen/senators to work on, we would be doing a lot better. If any member or organization is willing to work on this, please contact me, so that we can coordinate who you will work on. I can provide the type of letters that I use, so you can either use them or write your own. It's a matter of calling their DC office, asking for the email address of the staffer who handles veterans issues, emailing that person, and, if no response, following up in 2 weeks. Simply writing a single letter is not enough, based on our experience. Without a lot more co-sponsors, these bills will die in committee.

4. S. 1779/H. R. 3452: Veterans Preventive Health Coverage Fairness Act. The Senate bill was introduced by Duckworth and co-sponsored by Durbin and 4 others. The House version was introduced by Underwood and has 24 co-sponsors, including, from IL, Garcia and Newman. This bill eliminates veterans' co-payments for medication, hospital care, and medical services related to preventive health services provided by the VA.

5. H. R. 617, No Coronavirus Co-pays for Veterans Act, was introduced by Underwood, with only 3 co-sponsors, none from IL. S. 399, introduced by Duckworth, with only 1 co-sponsor, is the senate version of the same bill. Civilian insurance policies do not charge for these treatments, so it is not fair that Veterans should be charged for it.

6. H. R. 845, VA Billing Accountability Act, protects vets from VA billing errors or charges posted over 180 days from the treatment. There are 20 co-sponsors, all Republican, with Rodney Davis as the only one from IL.

7. H. R. 5721, VA Infrastructure Powers Exceptional Research Act of 2021, has 5 co-sponsors, with Mike Bost the only one from IL.

8. Sen. Bernie Sanders introduced S. 3020, Veterans State Eligibility Standardization Act, which eliminates the differences in copay thresholds from county to county. It has no co-sponsors.

9. Vaccinations given at VA or other federal facilities do not get reported to the IDPH, so if you use the Vax Verify system, you won't see them. The VA and IDVA are working on getting this corrected. Our efforts on this project were a perfect example of the benefit of networking with others, esp. Karen Hernandez, the Exec. Dir. of Chicago Vets.

10. Chicago City Vehicle Stickers are free for vets, but vets, unlike non-vets who must pay for theirs, must renew in person. Ald. Gilbert Villegas, head of the City Council's Veterans Caucus, was notified, and his office is working on getting this changed. The City's rationale for making vets renew in person was to prevent fraud. Be advised that the new legislative map is in effect, and Villegas is running for the 3rd Cong. District.

11. The American Dental Assn.'s newsletter mentioned that the Oregon General Assembly is considering a bill that would extend medicaid dental benefits to vets whose income is 139-400% of the poverty level. I brought this to the attention of State Rep. Stephanie Kifowit, and she replied that she is working on something similar with the IL State Dental Soc.

12. Cong. Raja Krishnamoorthi had a Schaumburg Post Office named for Iraq/Afghanistan Vets. For the naming ceremony, we were among the vet groups who were invited to submit a comment. We should consider this as an honor.

13. Please do not forward internal communications outside of CVO, esp. if it involves public officials. It takes a long time to establish a good relationship, but only one careless foul-up to destroy it.