

Coalition of Veterans Organizations

CVO

*Leave No
Veteran Behind*

VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE REPORT

PREPARED BY
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1. In reporting legislation that has been introduced, the same bills and writeups from the previous month will be repeated, with new bills or changes in **boldface**.

2. S. 10: VA Careers Act of 2023: Legislation to bolster efforts to recruit and retain strong clinical and managerial leadership in the VA health care system and make other important improvements to attract clinicians in scarce medical specialties. It has 10 co-sponsors, none from IL.

3. S. 42: Build for Veterans Act of 2023: This infrastructure bill has 10 co-sponsors, none from IL.

4. S. 141: Elizabeth Dole Home Care Act: It expands the program for home care. It has 27 co-sponsors, none from IL. H. R. 542 (House version) has 76 co-sponsors, 4 from IL (Underwood, Budzinski, Schakowsky, Ramirez). **It passed in the House and is going to the Senate.**

5. Cong Julia Brownley introduced H. R. 2413: Dental Care for Veterans Act, the same as H. R. 96 and H.R. 914. It has **18** co-sponsors, 10 from IL (Garcia, Quigley, Schakowsky, Underwood, Krishnamoorthi, Casten, Jackson, Kelly, Davis, Ramirez).

I can email you the letters that I send (one for those who previously co-sponsored and one for those who have not) so you can use it, or if you give me the email address of a congressman's DC staffer who handles veterans issues, I can email it, but if they don't co-sponsor, you can call them 2 weeks later.

The national organizations have not been doing their part. In previous congresses, at least the DAV had put out a legislative alert, so that anyone can input his name/address and have letters generated to his congressman/senators. I have contacted them to request one of these alerts, but they weren't particularly interested. Please do the same. If there is greater demand, perhaps they will issue the alert. We have had co-sponsors who thanked us for notifying them about the bill, because they were not aware of it. Please contact the other national groups.

6. H. R. 2410: VET CARE Act of 2023: It establishes a pilot program for dental care, but it's only for those with diabetes who are 40-70 years old. It has 12 co-sponsors, none from IL. We are not supporting this bill.

7. H. R. 1767: Bill to restore GI Bill education benefits to defrauded student veterans. It was introduced by Cong. Delia Ramirez (IL) and has 17 co-sponsors, 2 from IL (Schakowsky, Budzinski).

8. S. 1954: Improving Whole Health for Veterans with Chronic Conditions Act. This bill was introduced by Sen. Bernie Sanders, whereby veterans would have to get heart or kidney disease in order to get dental care. It has 13 co-sponsors, 1 from IL (Durbin). H. R. 4150 is the house version. It has 3 co-sponsors (not from IL). We are not supporting these bills, because veterans should not have to contract health problems in order to get treatment for another.

9. S. 106: Commitment to Veteran Support and Outreach Act. It would give \$ to states for VA outreach. It has 14 co-sponsors, none from IL. H. R. 984 (House version) has **43** co-sponsors, one from IL (Underwood).

10. S. 1975: Discharge Review Board Accountability Act of 2023. It would require the GAO to conduct a study on the compliance of discharge review boards with statutory provisions and directives related to liberal consideration of certain conditions and for other purposes. This bi-partisan bill has 4 co-sponsors, none from IL.

11. Veterans and Family Advisory Council (monthly meetings): I proposed that the JBVAMC try to get the PHAZER gene testing program at our hospital. Currently, Hines has it, but all they do is draw blood and send it to an out-of-state facility. I went to Hines for a blood draw. The results list a bunch of drugs and whether they should be taken by me. Everyone is different.

Our Jan. meeting was postponed a week.

12. VACCC: The quarterly meetings must now be in person. The Dec. 26 meeting in LaGrange was, surprisingly, well attended.

In order to remain a member of the VACCC, the State now requires us to get a State Charter. The application is a bureaucratic nightmare, and we don't even know if our spending will fulfill their requirement to be spending money on helping veterans. After all, we are not a service organization. We must decide on how we will proceed.

13. I emailed the Illinois Congressional Delegation a paper that listed the bills that we are tracking. It was mostly a cut/paste job from these Veterans Affairs Committee Reports. It was well-received.