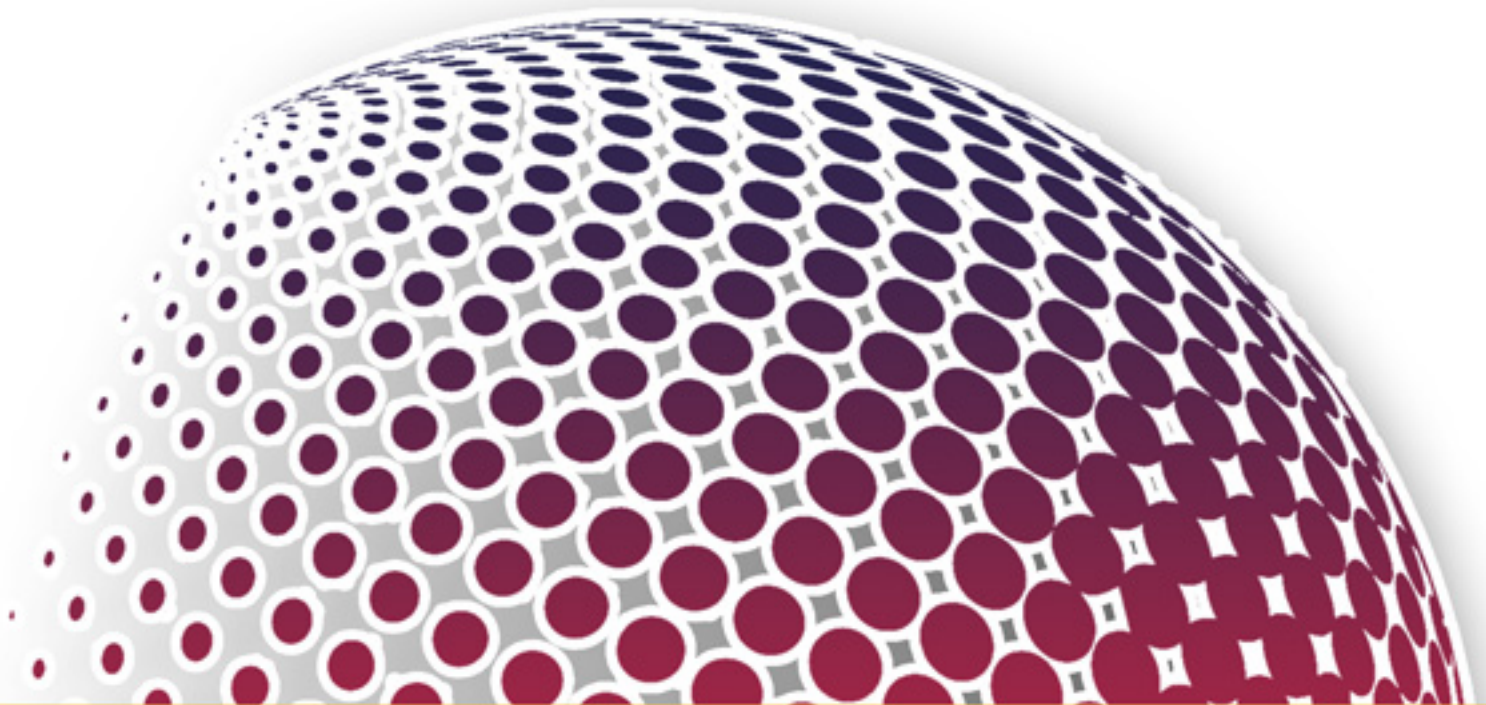


Coalition of Veterans Organizations



# VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE REPORT

## MAY 2025



PREPARED BY **LARRY E. NAZIMEK**

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by  
Larry E. Nazimek

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**. The new Congress was recently sworn in, so we don't have much to report on. Everything starts from scratch for the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress. The DAV has not been issuing many legislative alerts lately.

2. H. R. 1391: Student Veteran Benefit Restoration Act of 2025, would require the VA to restore education benefits to veterans who were enrolled in a program that was shut down. There are 10 cosponsors, all D. The bill was re-introduced by Cong. Ramirez, and IL cosponsors include Schakowsky, Budzinski, and Garcia.

3. H. R. 210: Dental Care for Veterans Act, has **52** cosponsors, all D. There are 8 from IL (Ramirez, Garcia, Casten, Quigley, Krishnamoorthi, Kelly, Budzinski, Jackson). Those from IL who have not cosponsored are all R and Davis, Schakowsky, Schneider, Foster, Underwood, and Sorensen.

4. S. 124/H. R. 472: Restore VA Accountability Act of 2025: This Act would make it easier to fire VA employees, making things easier for DOGE. S. 124 has 17 cosponsors, all R. H. R. 472 has 27 cosponsors, all R. The bill was introduced by Mike Bost (R-IL). There are no cosponsors from IL for either bill. We oppose these bills.

5. H. R. 530: ACES Act: This bill would require the VA to enter into an agreement with the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine to study and report on the prevalence and mortality of cancers among veterans who served on active duty as aircrew members and regularly flew in fixed-wing aircraft. This bipartisan act has **34** cosponsors, none from IL.

**6. H. R. 2970: National Veterans Advocate Act of 2025: It would establish the Office of the National Veterans Advocate. It was introduced by Cong. Rudy Yakym (R-IN) and has no co-sponsors.**

6. On May 10, there was a protest against the cutbacks that was organized by the National Nurses United on the SE corner Roosevelt/5th Av., near the main entrance of the Hines VAMC. Sen. Dick Durbin and Cong. Jesus Garcia were among the speakers, and it was covered by WGN-TV.

7. The VA News reported that Non-Ventilator Associated Hospital Acquired Pneumonia (NV-HAP) is one of the most common infections in hospitals and accounts for 60% of hospital acquired pneumonia cases nationwide. Hospital Acquired Pneumonia Prevention by Engaging Nurses (HAPPEN) is a program that supports the prevention of NV-HAP. It started at the Salem

VAMC and is allegedly being done at all VA hospitals. I am trying to find out exactly what is being done locally. I again brought this up at the May VFAC meeting. The head of nursing at JBVAMC has been contacted to get an answer and will probably be a guest speaker at a future meeting.

For the meeting held on May 9, I mentioned that looking for a parking spot at JBVAMC is often like Woodfield Mall on Black Friday. Instead of looking for an empty spot, we must often drive around until we find someone walking to his car. With so many veterans driving around in search of a parking spot to make it to an appointment on time, accidents have occurred.

I was told that Donald Trump's order for federal employees, who had been working from home, to work in person, has caused this greater demand for parking. (For many of those employees, there is no office space for them, so there are rooms, including conference rooms, where tables, telephones, and laptops have been brought in to accommodate them.) Various incentives are being offered to employees to take public transportation or to park elsewhere. Anyone may park in the Juvenile Detention Center Lot (1100 S. Hamilton Ave.) for \$2.

I suggested that the VA take a look at the number of handicapped parking spots to see if more, or fewer, are needed. They are looking into this and other options.

Michelle Langlois, from the hospital's suicide squad, gave an interesting presentation. Many veterans believe that the Crisis Line is only for those thinking about harming themselves, but it is also for other crises that could include financial crises. An example was that someone had called when his heater gave out and the weather was cold.

I mentioned that the government does not count an unemployed person among the unemployed if he has been out of work for over 6 months, so I was wondering if a veteran with an other than honorable discharge, who dies by suicide, is counted in the statistics of veterans who take their lives. She explained that they are counted, and that veterans with other than honorable discharges commit suicide at a far higher rate than other vets. If one of these vets is considering harming himself, the VA will provide mental health care and will see if the circumstances concerning his discharge characterization might make him eligible for other types of healthcare and VA services.

8. VACCC: The next meeting will be on June, 24, 1900, at the Amer. Leg. Post 1941, 900 S. LaGrange Rd., La Grange. They will be getting a satellite office in River Grove, thanks to Cong. Ramirez.

9. I sent an April 3 letter to VA Secy Collins regarding dental care. I requested that he reply to us and not, like his predecessor, pass the buck to VISN-12, who, in turn, passed it to JBVAMC. No reply has been received.