

Coalition of Veterans Organizations

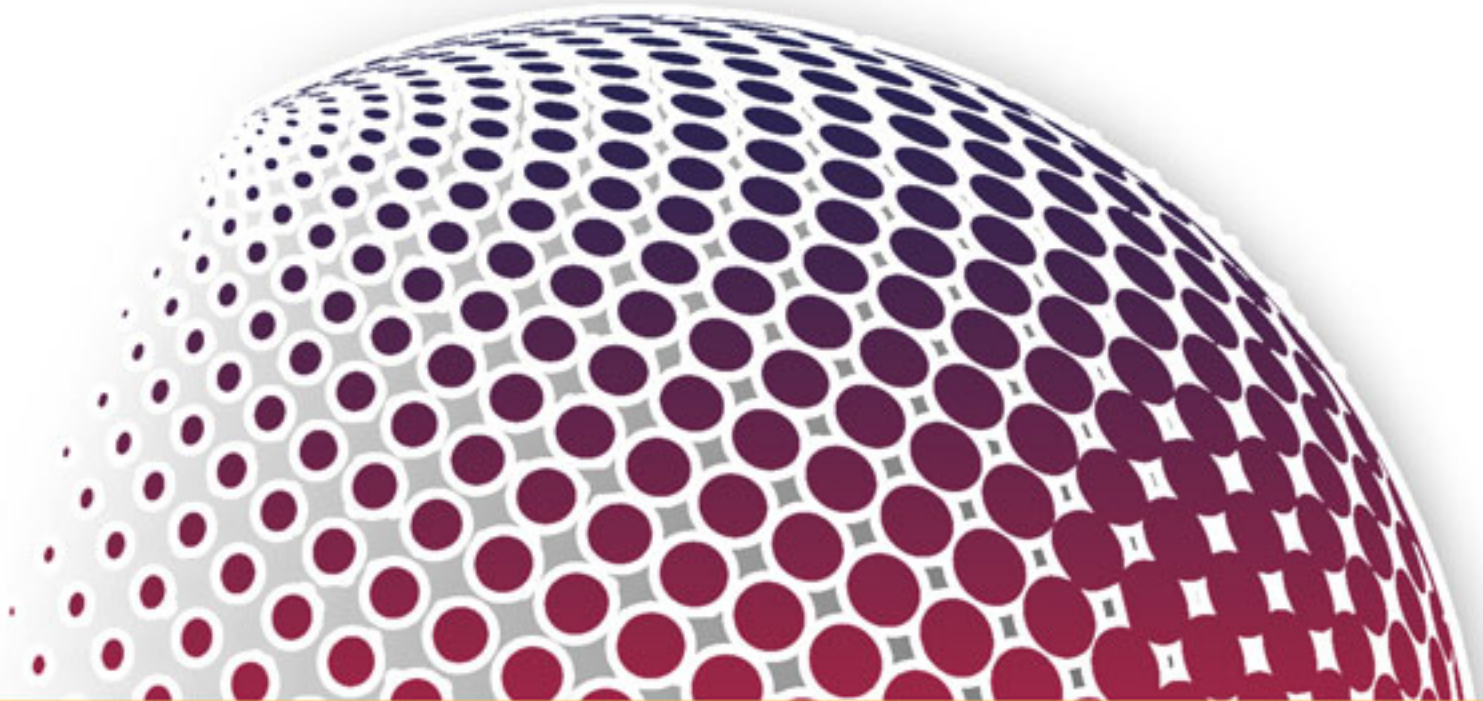
CVO



*Leave No
Veteran Behind*

**VETERANS AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE REPORT**

AUGUST 2025



PREPARED BY **LARRY E. NAZIMEK**

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by
Larry E. Nazimek

1. Veterans have been fighting the proposed reduction of some VA staffing, a third of whom are veterans. VA Secy. Collins said that they are continuing to monitor the level of care for veterans, and that there would be no RIF, as attrition and the hiring freeze would be sufficient.

2. 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**.

3. 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.

4. H. R. 210: Dental Care for Veterans Act, has **55** 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.

5. 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 **30** 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.

6. 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.

7. 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 1 cosponsor, not from IL.

8. H. R. 3132: CHOICE (Certified Help Options in Claims Expertise for Veterans) for Veterans Act: This bill would allow attorneys and agents to charge ill and injured veterans fees of up to \$12,500 or the amount equal to five times the monthly benefits increase, whichever is less, and if the claim results are favorable.

Currently, veterans can choose accredited veterans service organizations, agents and attorneys who provide free claims assistance. These experts ensure veterans receive knowledgeable representation without sacrificing any of their earned benefits. H.R. 3132 weakens accreditation

requirements, letting individuals assist veterans before meeting full qualification standards. It has 17 co-sponsors, all Republicans, with Mike Bost as the only one from IL. We oppose this legislation.

9. S. 1068: Putting Veterans First Act: The bill would reinstate with backpay all veterans, military spouses, survivors, veteran caregivers and members of the Guard and Reserves—and all VA employees thus far—“illegally fired, demoted or suspended as part of the Trump administration’s mass terminations. It would further protect veterans in the civil service from being included in future mass terminations. It has 21 cosponsors, 20 D and 1 I (Bernie Sanders), with Tammy Duckworth the only one from IL.

10. S. 914/H. R. 1637: Protect Veterans Jobs Act: It would reinstate Veterans who were fired from their jobs as part of Donald Trump and Elon Musk’s indiscriminate purge of federal employees. It was introduced by Tammy Duckworth. It has 10 cosponsors (almost all of whom were initial cosponsors), all D, including Dick Durbin. H. R. 1637 has 94 cosponsors, all D, 6 from IL 6 (Schakowsky, Sorensen, Schneider, Budzinski, Ramirez, Quigley).

11. S. 2145/H. R.: Guard Veterans Health Care Act. It would permit the recovery from the VA of costs from Medicare Advantage and Medicare Rx drug plans and to modify the authority for recovery by the U. S. of reasonable charges for certain care or services furnished to veterans for non-service-connected disabilities, and for other purposes. It has 2 co-sponsors, none from IL. H. R. 4077 has 5 cosponsors, none from IL. These bills are bipartisan, unlike so many others that we are following. These are very new bills, so it will take some time before they have more cosponsors.

12. H. R. 1039: Clear Communication for Veterans Claims Act: This bill requires the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to seek to enter into an agreement with a federally funded research and development center to assess notices that the VA sends to claimants applying for or submitting claims for VA benefits. The VA must report on the findings of the assessment and implement recommendations in the assessment. The bill also extends certain loan fee rates through June 23, 2034, under the VA's home loan program. This bipartisan bill has 9 cosponsors, 2 from IL (Bost, Budzinski). It passed the House and is at the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs.

13. The next VACCC meeting will be at 1900 on Sept. 23, at the Lyons Twp., 6404 Joliet Rd., Countryside, IL. If anyone plans on attending, please let me know.

13. On June 18, I sent a letter to Collins, asking that the VA eliminate copays, which would eliminate means testing. I suggested that they take a close look at the amount of money that is spent on the administration of copays/means testing/billing/etc. There are times when organizations hire professional fund raisers, but what they raise amounts to raising money to pay the ones who raise the money. If it can be shown that the VA makes very little profit on these

copays, it would strengthen our position that they should be eliminated. Of course, Collins did not reply. If you want a point paper on VA copays, just ask.

Elimination of copays/means testing has been a primary issue for CVO for many years. No legislation has been introduced to end it, so now is the time to ask congressmen to introduce legislation to eliminate it.

14. There is nothing new to report on efforts to get Cook County to provide dental care for veterans. The County Care program provides dental care to participants, although we understand that they are short of dentists. They are now working on getting the dental clinic at their Belmont Cragin Health Center (5501 W. Fullerton Ave., Chicago) staffed. They are even trying to get outside dentists to work there part time.

15. On Aug. 15, I attended the second meeting of Cong. Ramirez's Veterans Working Group. She wanted to know about the effect of cutbacks on our care. At this meeting, I asked that legislation be introduced to eliminate copays/means testing.

On Aug. 21, 0930-1030, she will conduct a Congressional Oversight Forum on staffing and services within Veterans' Affairs facilities in Illinois and the impact the Trump Administration's actions are having on veterans programs and care locally. A press conference will immediately follow at 12:30 pm. Veterans in the Third Congressional District are invited to stand with the Congresswoman after attending the Oversight Forum. She requires that those attending RSVP.