

Coalition of Veterans Organizations

**CVO**



*Leave No  
Veteran Behind*

# VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE REPORT

PREPARED BY  
LARRY E. NAZIMEK

# MARCH 2024

## VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE REPORT, MARCH, 2024

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**.

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 **28** 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 **32** co-sponsors, 12 from IL (Garcia, Quigley, Schakowsky, Underwood, Krishnamoorthi, Casten, Jackson, Kelly, Davis, Ramirez, Foster, Budzinski). Ramirez and Budzinski are on the Veterans Affairs Cmte., and Budzinski is on the Healthcare Subcommittee.

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. At least the DAV put out a legislative alert, so that anyone can input his name/address and have letters generated to his congressman/senators. That has resulted in more co-sponsors from other states. Please disseminate their letter to others who may not have received 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 **15** 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 **19** co-sponsors, **4** from IL (Schakowsky, Budzinski, **Garcia**, **Krishnamoorthi**).

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 **14** co-sponsors, 1 from IL (Durbin). H. R. 4150 is the house version. It has 4 co-sponsors (none 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 **51** 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. S. 3452: Fred Hamilton Veterans Lost Records Act. The records of many veterans were lost in the fire at the National Records Center. It would allow veterans to use additional methods to apply for benefits when the government loses or damages their records. **It has 3 co-sponsors, none from IL.**

12. Veterans and Family Advisory Council (JBVAMC monthly meetings): We have guest speakers for certain topics. At the March meeting, they included long COVID, the Mobile Medical Unit, and homelessness. The MMU goes to various area where there are concentrations of homeless many of whom are veterans.

Hines and other VA hospitals have meetings such as this, and we will report on them if someone wants to attend them.

13. VACCC: 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, but thanks primarily to Tanis Marquette, with some assistance from me, the application was submitted. Unfortunately, our application was rejected for numerous reasons. Therefore, we will no longer be a member of the VACCC, but we can still attend their meetings, although we can't vote. The next one is Tuesday, March 26, 1900, at the Lyons Township Hall, 6404 Joliet Rd., Countryside, IL 60625. If anyone is interested in attending, please tell me.

I doubt if many of the federally chartered organizations would qualify for this state charter, since the application is so onerous. Next month, out of curiosity, I will submit a FOIA inquiry to the Attorney General's Office, asking how many veteran organizations applied for their charter, how many were successful, and, if possible, the names of those organizations.

14. You may recall that Aspen Dental had a bus called the "MouthMobile," that would travel to places where they would provide free dental care to veterans. I have learned that they have retired this vehicle. We have no information as to if/when Aspen will have a Day of Service this year. The last thing on their website is for their Day in 2022. If you call the number they had for registration, the recording says that they have concluded their Day of Service for 2022.