



Michigan Department VFW Auxiliary Legislative Bulletin – December 2024/January 2025

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National Theme: *From Our Roots to Our Branches Extending Service to Our Veterans*
Department Theme: *Aspire to Inspire*

Program Goals

Be an Advocate - Be Informed - Be Engaged

Do you believe it is the holiday season & so very close to a New Year? Neither can !!!

As I am writing this bulletin, we do not have the results of one of the most consequential general elections in our country's history. Regardless of the eventual outcome, we will have many new faces in Congress and it is our mission and duty to educate them on our VFW Priority Goals and the approximately 150 VFW supported bills currently pending. We are still pushing for The Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act as well as the Major Richard Star Act. Back on the forefront is **S.2888 / H.R.3933, *TAP Promotion Act***. The House and Senate Committees on Armed Services are negotiating their versions of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2025. This provision would require that accredited claims representatives such as service officers from VSOs such as the VFW and others, along with state and county service officers, are present in Transition Assistance Program (TAP) classes to support transitioning service members with filing pre-discharge claims. This would facilitate a warm hand-off from the Department of Defense to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for the benefits that veterans have earned and deserve. Ensuring veterans receive their VA benefits and health care as soon as they leave the military facilitates a smooth transition and can also reduce the risk of homelessness, food insecurity, and suicide.

Due to the VFW's advocacy efforts, VA started incorporating accredited service officers into its TAP classes in early 2024. This is a great first step, but passing the TAP Promotion Act would establish this as a permanent program. Fortunately, since this is a current VA practice, codifying it into law would require no additional funding from taxpayers. So, get those letters and emails out to your U.S. Senators and Congressmen ASAP!

You can go to this link to actually see the VFW supported bills and where they currently sit in the process. You can visit <https://votervoice.net/VFW/bills>. This link is on the VFW website under the Advocacy tab.



Keep up the good work on promoting our **VFW Priority Goals**, responding to the **Action Alerts** and signing up members for the **VFW Action Corps Weekly**. Visit www.vfw.org/advocacy/grassroots to read and sign up. Please let me know if you need any assistance in the sign-up process. And don't forget to report the number of members who are actually signed up for the Action Corps Weekly. Based on your reporting, you are all doing an exceptional job!

I wanted to share some background on the **VFW National Legislative Service**. They establish the VFW's legislative priorities and advocates on veterans' behalf. By testifying at congressional committee hearings and interacting with congressional members, the VFW has played an instrumental role in nearly every piece of veterans' legislation passed since the beginning of the 20th century. Everything we do on Capitol Hill is with the VFW's Priority Goals and veterans' well-being in mind. With the strength of the more than 1.4 million members of the VFW and its Auxiliary, our voice on Capitol Hill cannot be ignored! Among the VFW's most recent and important legislative victories was expanding college education benefits for military service members with the signing of the Forever GI Bill and ensuring America's service members and veterans receive the care they deserve - whenever and wherever they need it - by passing the VA MISSION Act.

In closing, please review and keep in mind your Achievement Goals when reporting. Keep in mind the National and Department Awards for collaborating with the VFW Post connecting members with local lawmakers. The entry form is in Malta/Member Resources and due to me by March 31. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions. Thank you for your continued efforts on behalf of our Veterans and their families.

Have a Happy Holiday Season, Merry Christmas and hoping we all have a Happy, Healthy & Prosperous New Year!!



Respectfully Submitted,

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