

Supporting Veterans Through Education, Employment, and Connection

Representative: Dr. Bobbie J. Kimelton

National Assignment: Veterans Employment and Education Commission

National Convention: August 28–September 3, 2026 | Louisville, Kentucky

***Editor's Note:** This story is based on the representative's submitted report and has been edited for clarity, organization, and factual completeness while preserving the author's observations.*

Why Arizona Was There

Arizona participated in the National Veterans Employment and Education Commission meeting on August 29 at the Galt House Hotel, where presentations addressed veterans' well-being, homelessness, educational benefits, and safeguards for students using those benefits.

From the Representative

The Commission opened with a presentation from the Cleveland Play House CARE program, which began using theater-based activities to help children respond to trauma and has expanded into veteran and military communities. We participated in exercises including "Winds Blow West" and Tableau, exploring how nonverbal activities can build trust, connection, and opportunities for safe conversation. Presenters discussed applications to suicide prevention and emphasized listening, resilience, patience, caring, and empathy.

National Commander Dan Wiley visited to thank the Commission and discuss its work to reduce veteran suicide. Bill Clancy, National Detachment Commander of the Sons of The American Legion, described Wisconsin's "Freezin' for a Reason" initiative to support homeless veterans, reporting that it raised \$80,000 in two nights.

A subsequent panel addressed Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits, the digital GI Bill, timely housing payments, apprenticeships, and education for high-demand careers. Discussion also examined oversight of schools, predatory practices, withdrawn approvals, and safeguards intended to protect veterans from fraudulent programs.

Conference Snapshot

- Attended the August 29 Veterans Employment and Education Commission meeting.
- Explored trauma-informed, nonverbal communication through the CARE program.
- Heard updates on veteran suicide prevention and homelessness fundraising.
- Reviewed GI Bill administration, apprenticeship opportunities, and school oversight.

Looking Ahead

The meeting highlighted practical approaches to supporting veterans: creating meaningful connections, addressing homelessness, improving access to education benefits, and maintaining accountability for the institutions serving them. These discussions provide useful information to bring back to Arizona.