



GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS WEEKLY REPORTS

WEEK ENDING
FRIDAY, MAY 24, 2024

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LEGISLATIVE DIVISION WEEKLY REPORT

National Legislative Division Weekly Report

On Monday, Monday 20, 2024, Leg Div Staff:

- Joined in on the Bi-weekly EO Call to coordinate with congressional staff and fellow VSOs specifically addressing questions regarding the Elizabeth Dole Veteran's Package.
- Had a follow-up meeting with Bloomberg's Industry Group, to discuss legislation and task management solutions.

On Tuesday, May 21, 2024, Leg Div Staff:

- Had meeting with the staff of Rep. Adam Smith to advocate for the Contract Our Veterans Act.
- Dialed into a follow-up meeting with HVAC Minority to discuss their issues with the Dole Vet Package and possible solutions.
- Attended Women Veterans VSO roundtable.
- Attended the first weekly Government Affairs Deputies' meeting.

On Wednesday, May 22, 2024, Leg Div Staff:

- Attended a VSO Healthcare meeting hosted by DAV and Gantry Inc. to discuss the VA's Enhanced-Use Lease (EUL) Program.
- Met with Rep. Golden's office to discuss their veteran legislative priorities and how the Legion could support them.
- Spoke with the Senate Commerce Committee to talk about the Spectrum bill.
- Joined other Legion staff for a discussion with Philips regarding their upcoming Toxic Exposure Symposium on the Hill.

On Thursday, May 23, 2024, Leg Div Staff:

- Met with the House Appropriations Committee to discuss MilCon/VA FY 25.
- Dialed into a meeting with the House Veterans Affairs Committee to discuss the EHR Reset Act and the Dole Vet Package.
- Finalized drafts of TAL letters to House leadership regarding NDAA and MilCon/VA bills

On Friday, May 24, 2024, Leg Div Staff:

- Met with staff of the For Country Caucus to discuss legislative priorities such as the Dole Vet Package, MilCon/ VA FY 25, and the NDAA FY 25.
- Had a virtual meeting with CareSource to discuss medical eligibility legislation.

Hearings next week:

As of Friday May 24, 2024, there are no scheduled hearings.

HVAC hearings can be viewed at: [Calendar Home](#) | [House Committee on Veterans Affairs](#)

SVAC hearings can be viewed at: [Hearings - U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs](#)

National Legislative Division Weekly Report

HASC hearings can be viewed at: [Hearings – House Armed Services Committee](#)

SASC hearings can be viewed at: [Hearings – U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services](#)

Summary of the week:

This week the Legislative Division (Leg Div) staff attended several follow-up meetings with Congressional staff and partners VSOs regarding concerns on the Elizabeth Dole Act and discussed possible solutions to ensure that this important veteran legislative package gets passed as soon as possible. The Leg Div Staff continued to prepare the Legion's statements for MilCon/ VA FY 25 and NDAA FY 25. Leg Div Staff also continued to review various bills and lobby for those with Legion support, and work on outreach and grassroots efforts.

We are now able to use the Action Center to send Voter Voice emails to the White House. We used this capability for the first time with the Diane Carlson Evans campaign for a Presidential Medal of Freedom. We will report out the number of email messages delivered next week.

Julia S. Mathis, Legislative Director
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NATIONAL SECURITY DIVISION WEEKLY REPORT



**VETERANS STRENGTHENING AMERICA
NATIONAL SECURITY DIVISION'S WEEKLY REPORT**

Mario Marquez, Director
MMarquez@legion.org
May 18 – May 24, 2024

STAFF ACTIVITY

- NS Staff conducted a review of the FY25 MILCON Subcommittee Bill for the DoD
- NS Staff reviewed the bill text of FY2025 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) and drafted a letter to HASC for provisions to be retained.
- NS Staff conducted a bill review of the SHIELD Act, a bill that establishes training for servicemembers to recognize and understand information threats.
- NS Staff finalized preparations for the Commander's travel to Europe and departed for the trip.
- NS Staff began notifying military branches of their 2024 Spirit of Service Award winners.
- NS Staff virtually attended a House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing entitled, "FY25 Budget Request for Near Eastern Affairs" which can be viewed [here](#).
- NS Staff began discussions with two installations that are being considered for future BASE program visits.
- NS Staff held a meeting with a representative from the Niskanen Center to discuss immigration issues and how they relate to national security
- NS Staff attended a Government Affairs Weekly Leadership meeting

POW/MIA

May 23, 2024

- Airman Accounted for from WWII (Davies, G.)
- Soldier Accounted for from WWII (Vance, M.)

DPAA has identified/repatriated [70](#) service members this year.

PROGRAMS (The American Legion Military Surplus Equipment)

- Processed request: Ammo – 0; Rifles – 31; Clips – 0; Static Displays – 0
- Participants: Posts – 3; Departments – 3

The American Legion JROTC/ROTC Program

- Military Excellence – 2
- Scholastic Excellence – 4
- Departments – 1

TIP OF THE WEEK

On Monday May 27th the national security division staff will participate in Memorial Day Observance at Arlington National Cemetery. The event, hosted by the Department of Defense, will consist of a parade of colors, a wreath laying by a senior government official, followed by remarks, and finally a wreath laying by VSOs to include the American Legion. The event begins at 11 a.m. ET, is open to the public, and will stream [live](#) as well.



VETERANS AFFAIRS AND REHABILITATION WEEKLY REPORT

VETERANS AFFAIRS AND REHABILITATION

WEEKLY UPDATE

Week Ending — 5/24/2024

Division Operations

Meetings:

- May 23: Executive Director, Legislative Director, and Acting VA&R Division Director met with the representative of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs (HVAC) to discuss the Electronic Health Record RESET Act.

Health Policy Team Operations

Meetings:

- May 21: Health Policy Team (HPT) virtually attended the In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) Working Group meeting to discuss the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) IVF policy, pending legislation, and organizational updates.
- May 21: HPT virtually attended the Women Veteran Service Organization (VSO) Working Group meeting to review Deborah Sampson Act reports and legislative updates.
- May 21: HPT virtually attended the Toxic Exposure in the American Military Coalition monthly meeting regarding current and upcoming status of VA implementation of PACT ACT, Electronic Health Record Modernization, and relevant legislation.
- May 23: HPT virtually attended TEAM Coalition monthly meeting regarding current and upcoming status of VA implementation of PACT ACT, EHRM, and relevant legislation

Legislative Bill Reviews

- Letter of Support (LoS) - The Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act.

Benefits Team Operations

Meetings

- May 16: Hosted 2024 2nd Quarter Nationwide American Legion Service Officer meeting, featuring guest speaker VBA Undersecretary of Benefits Joshua Jacobs.
- May 20: Participated in inhouse service officer training devised by B&M LLC.
- May 20-22: Conducted a Regional Office Action Review (ROAR) site visit at Albuquerque VA Regional Office.

Legislative Bill Reviews

- Letter of Support (LoS) - The Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act.

Claims & Appeals Team Operations

Meetings

- May 16: Hosted 2024 2nd Quarter Nationwide American Legion Service Officer meeting, featuring as guest speaker the VBA Undersecretary for Benefits.
- May 20: Participated in inhouse service officer training devised by Bergmann & Moore.
- May 20-22: Conducted a Regional Office Action Review (ROAR) site visit at Albuquerque VA Regional Office.

Accreditations

- Applications received from TAL Departments 10
- Certifications submitted by TAL Washington Office 10
- Certifications approved by VA's Office of General Counsel 4

The American Legion Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA) Unit

- AMA appeals pending (125+ days) 2
- Informal Hearing Presentations (IHPs) prepared 211
- Memos generated 4
- Phone inquiries 201
- Internal quality reviews 11
- Individual training 3 hours
- Team training 13 hours
- Hearings 1
- Board dispositions 97
 - Appeals granted 25 (25.8%)
 - Remanded 50 (51.5%)
 - Denied 19 (19.6%)
 - Other 3 (3.1%)
- Retroactive awards won for veterans \$387,812

Senior Veterans Disability Claims Specialist

- Compensation & Pension Claims 17
- Other Issues 0
- Contacts 17

Pension & Debt Management

- New Claims	21
- Supporting Submissions	2
- Sensitive Claims	4
- Rating Reviews/Audits	80
- Contacts	160
- Debt Notices Received	275
- Insurance Questions	1
- Waivers Granted	8
- Pension Notification Letters Processed	83
- Debt waiver granted	\$326.239

Tiffany Ellett

Director

Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division

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End of VA&R weekly update – 5/24/2024



VETERANS EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION WEEKLY REPORT

The Weekly Report

National Veterans Employment & Education Commission



Our Latest Announcement!



Division Staff attended the Task Force Movement Illinois event in Chicago. Speakers for the event included representatives from the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, the U.S. Department of Labor, the Department of Transportation, the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs, and the City Colleges of Chicago. The meeting focused on the Task Force Movement program model for trucking, and how this model can be applied to other areas of employment, including cyber, healthcare, and aviation. During the event, Staff was given the opportunity to report on current policy initiatives of the VE&E Division, and how these initiatives coincide with those of the State of Illinois.

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Economy

Recession is still a real threat, Jamie Dimon and David Solomon warn

Jamie Dimon and David Solomon are still wary of stubborn inflation and a potential recession.

By Theron Mohamed

May 23, 2024, Business Insider

Persistent inflation and a full-blown recession are still firmly on the table, two Wall Street titans have warned. Jamie Dimon told CNBC on Thursday that sticky inflation is more likely than many people think. The JPMorgan CEO pointed to the tidal wave of fiscal and monetary stimulus since the pandemic, suggesting it may still be fueling liquidity and driving up asset prices. Dimon said interest rates, which the Federal Reserve has hiked from virtually zero to more than 5% since early 2022, could rise further — and the world was "not really" prepared for that.

Asked if a "hard landing" or recession were still possible, he replied: "Of course. How could anyone who reads history say there's no chance?"

Inflation has cooled from a 40-year high of over 9% in mid-2022 to below 4% in recent months, but remains well above the Fed's 2% target. The US economy grew at an annualized 1.6% in the first quarter, but that was down from 3.4% during the previous three months.

Dimon said the "worst outcome" would be stagflation — a painful combination of elevated inflation, higher rates, and a recession that would hit consumers and pull down corporate profits.

To read more see: [Recession Is Still a Real Threat, Jamie Dimon and David Solomon Warn \(businessinsider.com\)](https://www.businessinsider.com/recession-is-still-a-real-threat-jamie-dimon-and-david-solomon-warn)

2023 Award Winners

The list of Award winners for the upcoming National Convention in New Orleans.

National Convention Award Winners:

1. Department of TX (**Small-HumCap**)
2. Department of TX (**Medium-Wolverine**)
3. Department of Nebraska (**Large-Werner Enterprise**)
4. Department of GA (**LVER-John Willard**)
5. Department of IN (**DVOP-Adam Colone**)
6. Department of GA (**Disabled Persons Enhancement-Bobby Dodd Institute**)
7. Department of TX (**Employment Service Local Office Award- Workforce Solutions of Central TX**)

Department Award Winners:

- Department of AK (**Medium- AC Lakeside**)
- Department of GA (**Small-United Military Care Inc.**)
- Department of GA (**Large-The Home Depot**)
- Department of IN (**LVER-Sam Rogowski**)
- Department of IN (**DVOP-Adam Colone, Disabled Veterans Outreach Program**)
- Department of IN (**Large-Modern Forge Indiana LLC**)
- Department of KS (**Small- Prairieland Partners**)
- Department of MN (**Small-Crosby Ironton Transportation Inc.**)
- Department of NC (**LVER-Jennifer Carter**)
- Department of NC (**DVOP-Micheal Ragsdale**)

- Department of NC (**Small-Service Management Systems Inc.**)
- Department of NC (**Medium-Marine Chevrolet**)
- Department of NC (**Outstanding Employer Disabled Veterans- Servant Center Inc.**)
- Department of NY (**Small-Evans Mills Volunteer Ambulance Squad**)
- Department of NY (**Medium-Caskinette Lotin K. Motor Company**)
- Department of NY (**Olders Workers Award-Caskinette Lotin K. Motor Company**)
- Department of OK (**Small- Big Boys Guns, Ammo and Range**)
- Department of OK (**Award to Enhance the Lives of Disabled Persons- Home Away from Home**)
- Department of PA (**Small- JR Kays Trucking Incorporated**)
- Department of PA (**Medium- R & J Transportation**)
- Department of PA (**Large- J.B Hunt**)
- Department of TN (**Small- Midway Pizza LLC**)
- Department of TN (**Large- TeamHealth**)
- Department of TX (**DVOP- Veronica Rodriguez**)
- Department of TX (**LVER- Joshua Pinson**)
- Department of TX (**Large- Republic Service Technical Institute**)
- Department of WI (**Large- MCC-Inc**)
- Department of WI (**LVER- Erin Rice**)
- Department of WI (**DVOP- Nancy Brown**)
- Department of WY (**Large- Mesa Energy Solutions**)

Education

- Staff will host an event in June to honor 80 years of the GI Bill. “The American Legion etched a permanent place in history in 1944. That year, Legionnaires ushered into law the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act – better known as the GI Bill. Since then, millions of veterans have received free or discounted higher education benefits. So effective was the GI Bill, it is often credited for spurring more than 50 years of economic prosperity across the nation.”

To read more about The American Legion’s role in enacting the GI Bill, visit [The American Legion and the GI Bill: Together from the beginning | The American Legion](#)

- Division Staff is preparing to testify at a House of Representatives, Veteran Affairs Committee hearing in June. The hearing will focus on several bills pertaining to education, the VA Home Loan Program, homelessness, and transition assistance.
- Division Staff met with Soulcial Kitchen to discuss the power of community, education, mentorship, and community support. Soulcial Kitchen is a hospitality innovation hub that offers individuals passionate about all things food an opportunity to be part of a campus team committed to delivering great food, exceptional service, and making positive memories. It is also the home of America’s first Food Truck Apprentice Program, a comprehensive training and support program for those seeking to enter the mobile food industry.

Employment & Transition

- Division Staff participated in the 81st RD Yellow Ribbon Event from May 17-19, 2024, at the Omni Orlando in Championsgate, FL. We were joined by the Department of Florida Assistant Adjutant Mike Manley, George Wallace, and Brent Peacock from the Small Business Administration (SBA).
- On Sunday, May 19, 2024, Division Staff conducted a workshop where The American Legion showcased the array of programs and services available for service members and their families. Additionally, the SBA provided a session on "How to Become a Business Owner 101," attended by 50 service members and their families. This was a highly engaging and informative class, and we look forward to continuing these workshops with other Region Division (RD) Yellow Ribbon Programs.

During the event, we asked the service members how we could better serve them. One key suggestion was to make the local Posts more family friendly. We are eager to explore ways to implement this feedback and enhance our support for service members and their families.



Small Business

- Division Staff continues to work with the Legislative Division on the Grassroots campaign for H.R. 7401 – Contact our Vets Act of 2024. As it stands, over 7,000 Legion members have sent messages to their Congressional Representatives in support of this once-in-a-generation bill. If you would like to show your support, please access the link below:

[Action Center \(votervoicenet.com\)](https://www.votervoicenet.com)

Homelessness & Housing

- Division staff continues to address the pressing issue of homelessness among veterans, which has seen a notable increase in calls and emails for assistance with housing in recent weeks. Witnessing this growing problem within our veteran community is disheartening, but the division remains steadfast in our efforts to provide support. We are actively working on all fronts to ensure we have the necessary resources to better serve our service members and their families. Alongside connecting them with their local Posts, we are reaching out to external resources to bolster our assistance efforts. Together, we will strive to make a meaningful impact on the lives of our veterans.
- Division Staff will attend the 2024 National Coalition for Homeless Veterans (NCHV) Annual Conference, scheduled from May 29-31, 2024, at The Washington Hilton in Washington DC. This conference presents a valuable opportunity for us to gain insights

and resources to help in our mission to end homelessness among our veterans. We look forward to participating in this conference and contributing to the collective effort to address veteran homelessness.

Upcoming Events

National Coalition for Homeless Veterans Event:

1. **NCHV Annual Conference:** May 29-31, 2024, D.C

Veterans Education Events:

2. **G.I. Bill 80th Anniversary:** June 20, 2024, D.C.

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