



UNITED STATES SENATE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

JOHNNY ISAKSON | CHAIRMAN

Senate Accomplishments for Veterans in the 115th Congress

This Congress, the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs has:

- ✓ **Held 30 hearings**, including **six oversight hearings** on the State of the VA, the *VA MISSION Act* implementation, Veterans Choice Program, the Veterans Health Administration's inclusion on the U.S. Government Accountability Office's (GAO) "High Risk List," and veteran suicide prevention.
- ✓ **Held 11 joint hearings** with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to hear from veterans service organizations.
- ✓ Considered **56 pieces of legislation**.
- ✓ **Sent 17 of President Trump's nominees** for various positions at the VA, the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims and the Department of Labor to the full Senate. The Senate has confirmed 14 of those nominees.

In the Senate, we have:

- ✓ **Passed 23 pieces of major veterans legislation, which have all been signed into law or await the president's signature:**
 1. **The *Veterans Choice Program Improvement Act* (S.544)**, to extend the Veterans Choice Program and ensure veterans have access to timely care in their own communities, signed into law on April 19, 2017 (Public Law 115-26).
 2. **The *Veterans Affairs Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act* (S.1094)**, to improve accountability at the VA and protect the rights of whistleblowers, signed into law on June 23, 2017 (Public Law 115-41).
 3. **The *VA Choice and Quality Employment Act of 2017* (S.114)**, to authorize and appropriate funding for the VA to continue the Veterans Choice Program and strengthen VA care, signed into law on August 12, 2017 (Public Law 115-46).
 4. **The *Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017* (H.R.3218)**, to improve veterans' education benefits and enhance the post-9/11 G.I. Bill, signed into law August 16, 2017 (Public Law 115-48).

5. **The Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017** (H.R.2288), to modernize the woefully outdated benefits claims appeals process at the VA, signed into law on August 23, 2017 (Public Law 115-55).
6. **The Department of Veterans Affairs Expiring Authorities Act of 2017** (H.R.3819), to ensure veterans continue to have access to critical programs at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), signed into law September 29, 2017 (Public Law 115-62).
7. **The Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2017** (H.R.1329), to increase veterans' disability benefits based on rising costs of living, signed into law November 2, 2017 (Public Law 115-75).
8. **The VA Prescription Data Accountability Act** (H.R.1545), to allow the VA to securely share data with state prescription drug monitoring programs for patients who are prescribed opioids by VA providers, including both veterans and their dependents, signed into law November 21, 2017 (Public Law 115-86).
9. **The Veterans Apprenticeship and Labor Opportunity Reform (VALOR) Act** (H.R.3949), to streamline the certification process for non-federal apprenticeship training programs for veterans, signed into law November 21, 2017 (Public Law 115-89).
10. **The Enhancing Veteran Care Act** (S.1266), to allow the VA to contract with outside organizations for investigations into VA medical centers, signed into law December 20, 2017 (Public Law 115-95).
11. **The Quicker Veterans Benefits Delivery Act of 2017** (H.R.1725), to require the VA to evaluate an initiative to reduce the need for in-person disability examinations, signed into law March 9, 2018 (Public Law 115-130).
12. **The Veterans Care Financial Protection Act of 2017** (H.R.3122), to require the VA to include a warning on its website to veterans relating to dishonest, predatory, or otherwise unlawful practices targeting individuals who are eligible for increased pension on the basis of need for regular aid and attendance, signed into law March 9, 2018 (Public Law 115-131).
13. **H.R.3656**, to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide VA memorial headstones and markers for veterans whose remains are unavailable, signed into law March 16, 2018 (Public Law 115-136).
14. **The State Veterans Home Adult Day Health Care Improvement Act of 2017** (S.324), to direct the VA to enter into an agreement with each state home to pay for medical supervision model adult day health care for a veteran for whom the home is not receiving VA nursing home care payments, signed into law March 27, 2018 (Public Law 115-159).

15. **H.R.3562**, to improve the provision of in-home adaptations for veterans with service-connected disabilities in VA's vocational rehabilitation and employment program, signed into law June 1, 2018 (Public Law 115-177).
16. **The *John S. McCain III, Daniel K. Akaka and Samuel R. Johnson VA Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks (MISSION) Act*** (S.2372), to strengthen healthcare services at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) while streamlining the department's community care programs to ensure veterans receive efficient, timely and quality care, whether inside the VA system or from providers in their communities, signed into law June 6, 2018 (Public Law 115-182).
17. **The *Veterans Cemetery Benefit Correction Act*** (H.R.4910), to require the U.S. Department of the Interior to provide grave liners for veterans buried in cemeteries under the control of the National Park Service, signed into law June 15, 2018 (Public Law 115-184).
18. **The *VA Senior Executive Accountability (SEA) Act*** (H.R.2772), to prohibit an individual employed in a senior executive position at the VA from being reassigned to another such position unless such reassignment is approved by the VA secretary, signed into law June 21, 2018 (Public Law 115-188).
19. **The *Veterans Providing Healthcare Transition Improvement Act*** (S.899), to provide leave for medical treatment for certain new federal employees who are veterans with service-connected disabilities, signed into law September 7, 2018 (Public Law 115-238).
20. **The *Veterans Treatment Court Improvement Act of 2018*** (H.R.2147), to require VA to hire additional Veterans Justice Outreach Specialists to serve as part of a justice team in a veterans treatment court or other veteran-focused court, signed into law September 17, 2018 (Public Law 115-240)
21. **The *Department of Veterans Affairs Expiring Authorities Act of 2018*** (S.3479), to ensure veterans continue to have access to critical programs at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), signed into law September 29, 2018 (Public Law 115-251).
22. **The *Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2018*** (H.R.4958), to increase veterans' disability benefits based on rising costs of living, signed into law October 10, 2018 (Public Law 115-258).
23. **The *Veterans Benefits and Transition Act of 2018***, (S.2248), to improve veterans' education and burial benefits, prevent veteran homelessness, and improve the transition process for veterans and their families, among other provisions, not yet signed into law.

✓ **Confirmed 14 nominees:**

- The Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs has **approved 17** of President Trump's nominees to serve in various roles at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the U.S. Court of Veterans Appeals and the U.S. Department of Labor.
- The Senate has confirmed **14 of those nominees:**
 1. David J. Shulkin, Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary, confirmed 100-0, February 13, 2017.
 2. Thomas G. Bowman, Department of Veterans Affairs Deputy Secretary, confirmed by unanimous consent, August 3, 2017.
 3. Brooks D. Tucker, Department of Veterans Affairs Assistant Secretary for Congressional and Legislative Affairs, confirmed by unanimous consent, August 3, 2017.
 4. James M. Byrne, Department of Veterans Affairs General Counsel, confirmed by unanimous consent, August 3, 2017.
 5. Judge Michael P. Allen, Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, confirmed by unanimous consent, August 3, 2017.
 6. Judge Amanda L. Meredith, Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, confirmed by unanimous consent, August 3, 2017.
 7. Judge Joseph L. Toth, Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, confirmed by unanimous consent, August 3, 2017.
 8. Melissa Sue Glynn, Department of Veterans Affairs Assistant Secretary for Enterprise Integration, confirmed by unanimous consent, November 8, 2017.
 9. Cheryl L. Mason, Chairman of the Board of Veterans' Appeals, confirmed by unanimous consent, November 8, 2017.
 10. Randy Reeves, Department of Veterans Affairs Undersecretary for Memorial Affairs, confirmed by unanimous consent, November 8, 2017.
 11. Jon J. Rychalski, Department of Veterans Affairs Chief Financial Officer, confirmed by unanimous consent, Dec. 21, 2017.
 12. Paul Lawrence, Department of Veterans Affairs Undersecretary for Benefits, confirmed by voice vote, April 26, 2018.
 13. Joseph Falvey, Jr., Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, confirmed by voice vote, April 26, 2018.
 14. Robert Wilkie, Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary, confirmed 86-9, July 23, 2018.