

## **LOUIS JOHN CELLI JR.**

Following his 22 year career in the United States Army, Master Sergeant Celli founded the nonprofit organization the Northeast Veterans Business Resource Center, Inc. (NEVBRC), that helped veteran entrepreneurs start and grow small businesses enterprises. Mr. Celli retired from NEVBRC in 2012 to accept a position as the Legislative Director for the American Legion – the largest veteran service organization in the United States, and in 2014 was appointed by The American Legion’s National Commander to serve as Director of the Legion’s National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation (VA&R) Division.



Chartered in 1919 by congress, The American Legion is a partner, and watchdog organization of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). As director of the VA&R division in Washington, D.C., Louis is responsible for directing programs that impact more than 20 million veterans nationwide, ensuring that veterans and their family members receive the access to VA healthcare and benefits they have earned through their honorable service.

Mr. Celli leads a fulltime staff of 50 highly trained specialists in 6 different states and the District of Columbia who’s responsibilities include creating and managing programs that work within all 1,700 VA hospital and clinics, 56 VA regional offices, over 100 VA cemeteries including Arlington National Cemetery; he and his team oversees a program that manages nearly one million volunteers who work daily at VA facilities nationwide, and is responsible for accrediting more than 3,000 claims representatives who hold active powers of attorney on three quarters of a million veterans seeking disability claims assistance from VA, he oversees The American Legion’s appellate team located at the Board of Veteran Appeals.

Celli’s team also represents veterans before the Department of Defense discharge upgrade review boards as well as the Military and Physical Evaluation Boards, oversees veterans pensions, VA life insurance programs, and debt management programs for veterans who are struggling with debt due to VA overpayment. Mr. Celli testifies regularly before congress, has assisted with legislative language on several important bills that have been signed into law, manages an annual budget of over 4 million dollars, and is an active member of the Board of Directors of the Veterans Consortium Pro Bono program.

Louis is a graduate of Harvard University, a native of Boston Massachusetts, and together with his wife Elise have 6 children ranging in age from 13 to 25 years old.