

STATEMENT OF  
JOSEPH GRASSI, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR  
NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE SERVICE  
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

FOR THE RECORD

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

WITH RESPECT TO

**Pending Legislation**

Washington, D.C.

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Chairman Van Orden, Ranking Member Pappas, and members of the subcommittee, on behalf of the men and women of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) and its Auxiliary, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding this pending legislation.

**H.R. 982, Warriors to Workforce Act**

The VFW supports the intent of this legislation to increase the housing allowance during the second six-month period of an apprenticeship or on-the-job training program for which a veteran is using Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) education benefits. However, we would prefer the following stipulation. The increase from 80 percent to 90 percent is a step in the right direction, but does not go far enough. In terms of this housing allowance, an increase from 80 percent to 100 percent would realistically help veterans complete these important education programs that provide direct job training while ensuring their basic housing needs are covered. Additionally, the VFW would also like to see more data reported on the successes and shortfalls of these programs to better understand the needs of the participating veterans.

**H.R. 2878, Daniel J. Harvey, Jr. and Adam Lambert Improving Servicemember Transition to Reduce Veteran Suicide Act**

The VFW supports this legislation to strengthen mental health support during the military-to-civilian transition by enhancing both the Department of Defense (DOD) Transition Assistance Program (TAP) and the VA Solid Start program. This legislation would ensure that separating service members receive standardized, evidence-informed information on mental health conditions, suicide risk factors, available treatment options, and the stressors associated with separation from military service. It would also improve VA's early post-separation outreach by reinforcing VA Solid Start's role in connecting newly separated veterans to mental health care and enrollment in the Veterans Health Administration (VHA).

The VFW has long emphasized that the transition period is a high-risk window for suicide and adverse mental health outcomes, particularly when service members experience a loss of structure, identity, and community. By making permanent improvements to TAP and Solid Start, this bill would strengthen the “warm handoff” between DOD and VA, and promote continuity of care at a critical moment. H.R. 2878 aligns with the VFW’s legislative priority to eliminate service member and veteran suicide, and is consistent with VFW Resolution No. 606 (Mental Health Disorders) that urges Congress to dedicate adequate resources and oversight to address veteran suicide and expand access to effective mental health care. The VFW believes this legislation represents a necessary and constructive step toward reducing suicide risk and improving long-term outcomes for transitioning service members and newly separated veterans.

### **H.R. 3159, Improving SCRA Benefit Utilization Act**

The VFW supports this legislation to strengthen financial readiness by improving service member awareness of, and access to, protections under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA). The proposal would integrate SCRA education into required financial literacy training and ensure service members receive timely notification of these protections when entering service, joining a reserve component, or mobilizing to active duty.

The legislation would also address implementation gaps by clarifying creditor obligations under the SCRA’s interest rate limitation, and requiring financial institutions to apply the statutory cap consistently across all eligible debts. Mandating accessible methods for service members to submit required documentation would reduce administrative barriers that can prevent timely relief.

Financial stress is a well-documented contributor to readiness challenges, family instability, and poor transition outcomes. H.R. 3159 aligns with the VFW’s legislative priority to modernize and reform VA and DOD programs that do not meet the needs of service members, veterans, and their families, and is consistent with the VFW’s long-standing advocacy for consumer protections and financial stability for those who serve.

### **H.R. 4105, Veterans Energy Transition (VET) Act of 2025**

The VFW supports this legislation to establish a Department of Labor (DOL) grant program to help transitioning service members, veterans, and military spouses obtain employment in the energy sector. This would allow eligible employers to receive reimbursement for costs associated with hiring covered individuals, including training, credentialing, recruitment, and onboarding, with priority given to involuntarily separated service members, veterans with service-connected disabilities or other barriers to employment, military spouses, and individuals living in qualified opportunity zones.

The VFW strongly supports outcome-driven transition policies that connect separating service members to sustainable careers. This legislation would promote meaningful interagency collaboration by requiring program coordination with TAP, SkillBridge, and VA Solid Start, ensuring employment pathways are integrated into the broader transition framework. The bill

would also include reporting and oversight provisions to evaluate retention and employment outcomes.

This legislation aligns with VFW Resolution No. 627 (Support Improved Military-to-Civilian Transition Assistance) and advances multiple VFW legislative priorities, including ensuring a seamless military-to-civilian transition, improving veteran employment and economic opportunity, and expanding employment opportunities for military spouses. The VFW believes this legislation would represent a targeted, accountable approach to strengthening transition outcomes while supporting workforce needs in a critical sector of the U.S. economy.

### **H.R. 5634, Veterans Flight Training Responsibility Act of 2025**

The VFW supports this legislation to set limitations on the use of the GI Bill for certain flight training. Years ago, the GI Bill essentially had no spending restrictions for this program, enabling certain flight schools to charge uncapped amounts of money. Flight training is expensive, and currently pilots are in demand across the country. However, the VFW believes there should be reasonable limitations on the amount of money spent on flight training, and that this legislation would be a fair balance for veterans who pursue flight training through the GI Bill.

### **H.R. 5436, To amend title 38, United States Code, to prohibit an educational institution from withholding a transcript from an individual who pursued a course or program of education at such institution using Post-9/11 educational assistance**

The VFW supports this legislation to prohibit withholding transcripts and to protect veterans pursuing education and employment opportunities. Withholding transcripts prevents veterans from fully utilizing their earned education benefits. When institutions block transcript access, veterans cannot transfer credits or apply for employment, creating unnecessary emotional and financial hardship. This practice undermines the intent of the GI Bill, which is to help veterans achieve meaningful careers and economic stability. Veterans should not be penalized for administrative or billing issues. GI Bill funds are federal dollars, and schools must ensure that veterans have uninterrupted access to their academic records.

### **Discussion Draft, Improving Emerging Tech Opportunities for Veterans Act**

The VFW supports this proposal to require VA to collaborate with DOL, with an emphasis on the Veterans' Employment and Training Service, industry stakeholders, educational institutions, and nonprofit organizations to identify high-demand technology careers, along with the courses veterans need to qualify for them. Veterans must be prepared for the industries of the future to ensure they can be among the leaders of tomorrow. These programs should be prominently featured in TAP and on VA's website to ensure visibility and access. Additionally, we support VA's proposed expedited approval process to fast-track these courses and eliminate unnecessary delays.

**Discussion Draft, To amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress a quarterly report on housing loans insured, guaranteed, or under laws administered by the Secretary, and for other purposes**

The VFW supports the intent of this proposal to enhance transparency within the VA home loan programs through more frequent reporting. Improved data collection can help identify emerging trends in utilization, shed light on barriers that may limit access to this important but often underutilized benefit, and support earlier interventions for veterans who may be at risk of falling behind on their mortgage obligations. However, while we recognize the value of better insight into loan performance and veteran outcomes, we have questions regarding the shift from the current annual reporting requirement to a quarterly mandate.

At this time, it is unclear why more frequent reporting is necessary, what specific deficiencies exist in the current reporting structure, or how VA would resource and sustain this increased administrative burden. Some of the proposed data elements may indeed be beneficial for policymakers, but it is not evident that they require quarterly updates to inform decisions or oversight.

The VFW appreciates efforts to strengthen and safeguard the VA home loan programs, and we stand ready to work with Congress to ensure that any new reporting obligations meaningfully advance that objective.

**Discussion Draft, Affordable Housing Guarantee Act**

The VFW supports this proposal to increase the VA loan guaranty from 25 percent to 50 percent for veterans with service-connected disabilities. This proposal would reduce financial barriers and promote homeownership. It is aligned with the VFW's legislative priorities that include expanding programs to combat veteran homelessness. Disabled veterans often face unique economic hardships, and expanding the loan guaranty strengthens their ability to maintain stable housing while honoring their service and sacrifices.

**Discussion Draft, Veteran Housing Promise Act**

The VFW supports this proposal to eliminate arbitrary funding caps and make permanent the authority for critical VA homeless initiatives, including comprehensive service programs, reintegration grants, and housing assistance. These provisions align with the VFW's call for increased availability of safe and affordable housing, inflation-adjusted grant and per diem rates, and gender-specific services for homeless veterans.

**Discussion Draft, Improving Mental Health Care and Coordination for Homeless Veterans Act**

The VFW supports this proposal to require timely assessments of physical and mental health needs, create individualized care plans, and integrate housing solutions into VA electronic health records. This proposal reflects the VFW's calls for comprehensive housing solutions, gender-specific services, and expanded access to care for veterans experiencing or at risk of

homelessness. This proposal would improve VA and VHA policies through its mandate for assessments within three days of identification; the requirement for standardized care plans and housing identification integrated into electronic health records; and the implementation of a monitoring process by the Homeless Program Office to ensure accountability. By formalizing these processes, the proposal would strengthen VA's obligation to provide holistic care and align with the VFW's commitment to eliminate homelessness among veterans.

However, the VFW asks Congress to ensure that any new rules come with adequate resources. Without more money for staff, training, and computer support, VA will have difficulty meeting these requirements. Congress should fully fund this plan to help, not overburden, the people who work in homeless services.

Ending veteran homelessness takes more than just housing. It also includes timely mental health care, organized case support, and regular follow-up.

### **Discussion Draft, Centralized Reimbursement for Upgraded Innovative Service Equipment (CRUISE) Act**

The VFW supports this proposal to overhaul the reimbursement procedures for VA's adaptive automobile program. By centralizing VA's automobile reimbursement process, enforcing federal timeliness standards, and requiring public reporting of delays, the CRUISE Act would enhance accountability and efficiency. These reforms would reduce payment backlogs, increase transparency, and ensure timely access to adaptive vehicles for severely disabled veterans. This modernization effort aligns with the VFW's commitment to VA streamlining its operations, improving coordination of care, and upholding the promise our nation made to the veterans among us who have sacrificed the most.

Chairman Van Orden and Ranking Member Pappas, this concludes my statement. Again, thank you for the opportunity to offer comments on this pending legislation.

**Information Required by Rule XI2(g)(4) of the House of Representatives**

Pursuant to Rule XI2(g)(4) of the House of Representatives, the VFW has not received any federal grants in Fiscal Year 2026, nor has it received any federal grants in the two previous Fiscal Years.

The VFW has not received payments or contracts from any foreign governments in the current year or preceding two calendar years.