

# Legislative Update

West Workshop – Reno, NV  
November 16, 2024

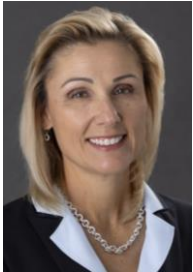
Maj. Gen. April Vogel, USAF (Ret)  
Vice President, Government Relations



# Agenda

- Meet the Headquarters Team
- Why Advocacy?
- MOAA Legislative Highlights
- 119<sup>th</sup> Congress – Goals and Road Ahead
- National and Council/Chapter Collaboration
- NY Council

# Meet the Headquarters Team



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# Why Advocacy?

- Given the fierce competition for limited funding, strong advocacy on the Hill is essential to ensure that earned servicemember benefits are not compromised in the name of cost savings
- Most servicemembers and their families are not in positions to represent their own interests.
- National-State legislative efforts/building critical mass through advocacy.

# MOAA Legislative Highlights

- Maintained pay raise comparability.
- Defeated “COLA Minus 1 Percent.”
- Blocked 5 consecutive TFL enrollment fee proposals.
- Halted medical billet cuts.
- Secured comprehensive privatized military housing reform.
- Repealed the SBP-DIC Offset (‘Widows Tax’).
- Secured major GI Bill upgrades to include transferability and improving benefits for those on Title 32 orders.
- Established comprehensive toxic exposure reform.
- Provided wounded warrior protections and caregiver enhancements.

# 119<sup>th</sup> Congress – The Road Ahead

## Congressional Schedule in Regular Order:

119 <sup>th</sup> Congress																							
Session 1 – 2025												Session 2 – 2026											
J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
<i>50% of Bill Introduction</i>																	<i>50% of Bill Enactment</i>						

- Appropriations/Budget
- NDAA
- Challenges Ahead

# Why Advocacy?

- Given the fierce competition for limited funding, strong advocacy on the Hill is essential to ensure that earned servicemember benefits are not compromised in the name of cost savings.
- Each of us must be engaged – active duty, retired, veterans & military spouses – to encourage future generations to serve and to champion the needs of the uniformed services and veteran communities.
- Continue to educate & inform elected officials:
  - 98 veterans serving today in Congress – 18%
  - 129 in 2007 – 24%
  - 389 in 1969 – 73%

# Enduring Priorities and Redline Issues

## Enduring Priorities:

- Issues that we will always advocate for, until passed, even if they are not among our day-to-day priorities, such as concurrent receipt for combat wounded (Richard Star Act), Arlington National Cemetery access, or COLA.

## Redline Issues:

- Issues that we continually monitor and will immediately mobilize the entire association, our membership, the MSO/VSO community, and our allies to protect, such as:
  - Decrements to scheduled pay increases as defined by law.
  - Any new TRICARE or TRICARE Pharmacy Program fee.
  - TRICARE cost sharing increases that exceed military retired pay COLA or TRICARE Pharmacy Program cost sharing that exceeds common industry practice.
  - Unequal decrements of compensation and benefits based on rank, age, family composition, retirement status, or disability benefits.



# 119<sup>th</sup> Congress – Tier 1 Priorities

- Currently Serving:
  - Unaccompanied Housing Improvements
- Retirees/Veterans:
  - Ending the Wait Report Priorities
- Family/Survivors:
  - Military Spouse Hiring Act
- DoD Health Care:
  - MHS Stability Through Accountability
- VA Health Care:
  - Caregiving Support Improvements

# Currently Serving: Unaccompanied Housing Improvements

- Unaccompanied housing (UH) problems have been highlighted by news media, the HASC Quality of Life Report, Senior Military Leaders, and GAO reports.
- Problems:
  - Poor Conditions
  - Underfunding
  - Transparency about
  - Service waivers
- The Ask: MOAA seeks to improve funding and condition transparency for unaccompanied housing by requiring an annual, publicly available report, which will highlight areas that need the most attention from DoD and Congress.

# Retirees/Veterans: Ending the Wait Report Priorities

- While the PACT Act made major improvements to how toxic exposures are treated by VA, additional actions are required. MOAA, in partnership with DAV, released a report detailing a way forward. The Ending the Wait Report found
  - Since World War I, the VA has acknowledged 30 toxic exposures. However, only 16 resulted in the establishment of a presumptive.
  - The average time between the first-year veterans were exposed to an acknowledgment from VA is 31.4 years.
  - For the subset of 16 exposures that have presumptives, the time from acknowledgment to the establishment of a presumptive, as marked by a concession of exposure, is 2.4 years on average.
  - We found it takes an average of 34.1 years after the first incidence of military toxic exposure to the establishment of a presumptive.
- The Ask: MOAA seeks to advocate for passage of legislation that would shorten the amount of time veterans need to wait before their toxic exposures are acknowledged and conceded by VA.

# Family/Survivors: Military Spouse Hiring Act

- 20%+ unemployment rate for over a decade
- Work Opportunity Tax Credit expires Dec. 31, 2025
- TCJA expiration in 2025, leads to increased interest in tax policy
- Strong bipartisan, bicameral interest in the MSHA
- The Ask: Incentivize the hiring of military spouses by adding a target group under the existing Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program

# DoD Health Care: MHS Stability Through Accountability

- Timely access to MTF care has been a long-standing [problem](#)
- MHS is [destabilized](#) – #1 concern for DoD and Congress – compounding beneficiary access problems
- Not all factors are under DoD's control, but some access problems are fixable
- MTF leadership and DHA can't address problems they don't know about
- The Ask: Digital Access Assistance Platform

# VA Health Care: Caregiving Support Improvements

- The Elizabeth Dole Home Care Act (S. 141/H.R. 542)
  - Failed in the 118th Congress
  - Prioritizes expansion of VA long-term/home and community-based care, and caregiver support services
  - Expansion of caregiving services a MOAA priority in recent years
  - Bipartisan, bicameral support in Congress, VA support, and high degree of stakeholder support
  - Low cost, \$200M over 10 years
- The Ask: Reintroduction of the Elizabeth Dole Home Care Act
  - Passage of any caregiving legislation in the 119th Congress

# National and Council/Chapter Collaboration

## Discussion Questions:

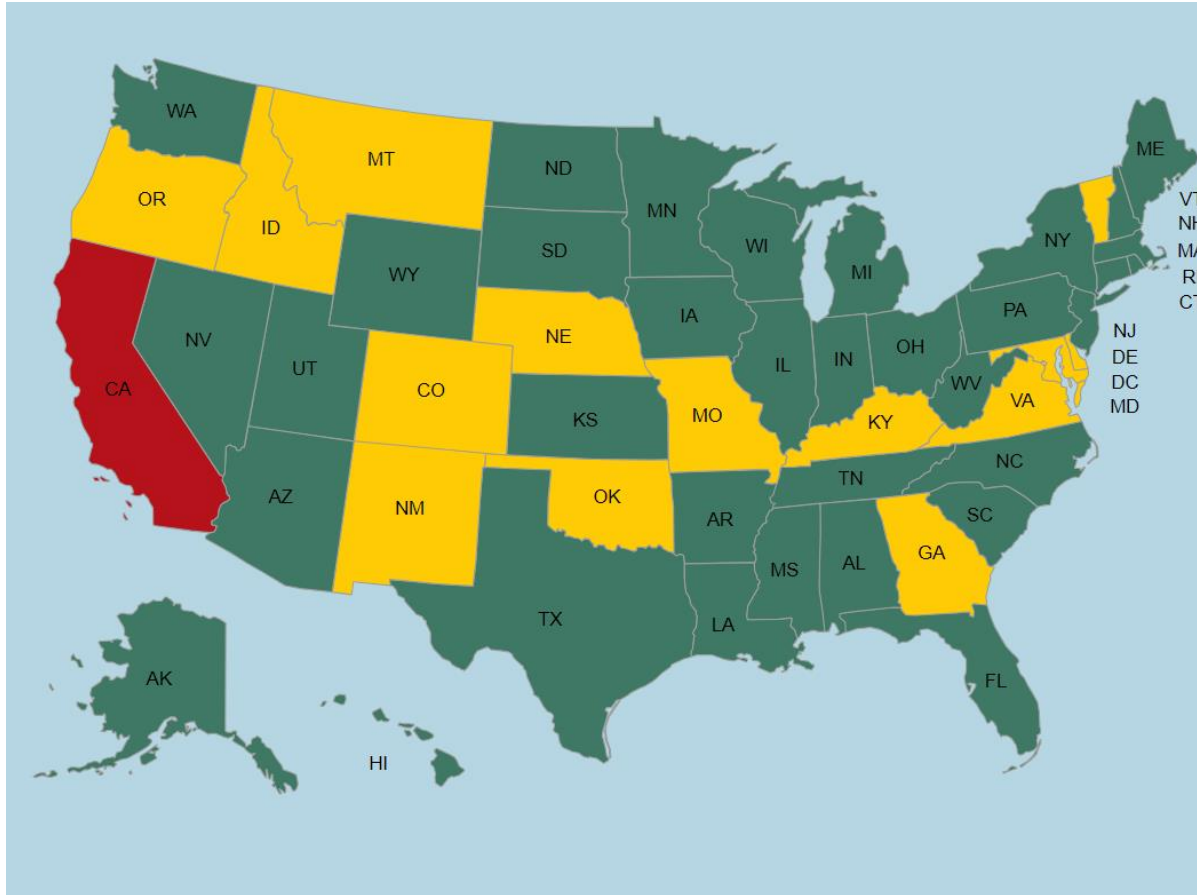
- What does your council/chapter do well?
- Where can you improve?




## Council & Chapter Resources:

- State Report Card
- State Legislative Forum
- Legislative Leaders Page
- Legislative Action Center
- Military Officer Magazine
- The MOAA Newsletter
- Social Media
- Capitol Hill Toll-Free Hotline



# State Report Card



-  Both military retired pay (MRP) and Survivor Benefit Plan payments (SBP) are fully exempt from state taxation.
-  MRP and/or SBP receive partial exemption from state taxation.
-  Neither MRP nor SBP is exempt from state taxation

Updated May 17, 2024

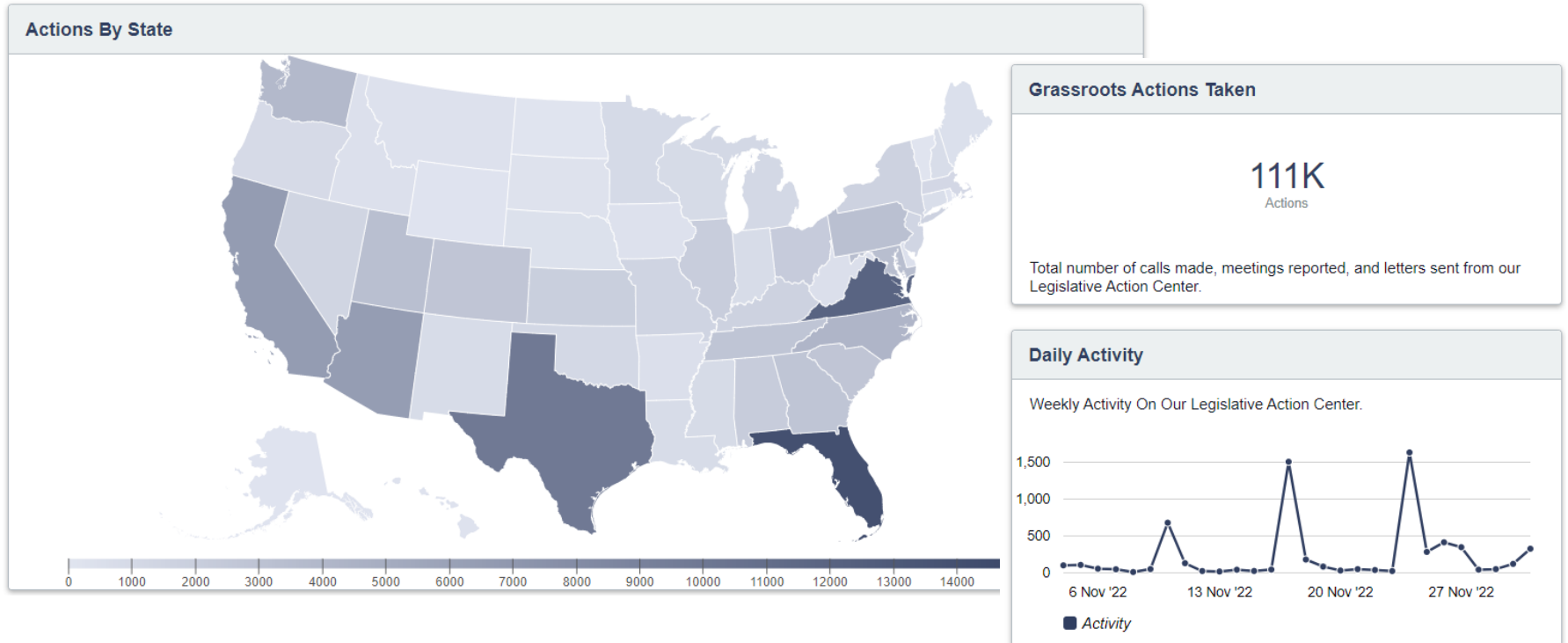




# State Legislative Forum

- Online Forum for council and chapter legislative leaders to share their experiences on issues at the state level.
- Points of Contact:
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  - Lt. Col Shelly Kalkowski, USAF (Ret)
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# Legislative Leaders Page



This site is an enduring resource for Council and Chapter Leadership to provide necessary tools for your federal advocacy efforts. Scan the QR code below to access the webpage:



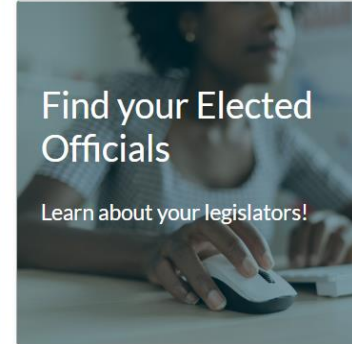
# MOAA's Legislative Action Center



[Action Center Tutorial](#)

[Return to MOAA.org](#)

Hello, Allison! ▾



## Active Legislative Campaigns

### Help Support Military Family Access to Mental Health Care

Help MOAA build support for H.R. 4824, the Stop Copay Overpay Act, which would reduce TRICARE copays for mental health visits and address the financial barrier to accessing mental health services.

Write

Scan the QR code below to access the Legislative Action Center:



# Legislative Action Center Data Overview – Nevada

This document details registrants and activity on MOAA's Legislative Action Center from January 1 - September 30, 2024 for Nevada. State activity reflects the self-reported details provided by registrants through the Legislative Action Center's registration form.

Total Registered Advocates: 291 (58/20% from Chapter or Council Members)  
Total Actions Taken: 1459 (143/10% from Chapter or Council Members)

Our Legislative Action Center permits advocates to indicate membership to more than one affiliated council and chapter. As a result, values in the table below may not total 100%.

Chapter Name	Number of Registrants	Number of Actions Taken
NV02 - Sierra Nevada Chapter of MOAA	22	44
NV03 - Southern Nevada Chapter	32	99
NV05 - Lake Tahoe Chapter	Less than 10	Less than 10



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Military Officers Association of America