



April 25, 2025

WEEKLY GRASSROOTS NEWSLETTER

This week, we are asking Legionnaires to contact Congress to request support for the *GI Bill Parity Act*! Currently, National Guard and Reserve servicemembers only earn credit toward their Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits when they mobilize and deploy for federal missions. National Guard and Reserve servicemembers activated under state orders do not accrue eligibility for Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits. This legislation aims to count every day spent on weekend drills, annual training, attending military school, participating in an exercise, or responding to a disaster toward GI Bill eligibility. *The American Legion supports this legislation, and we appreciate all the emails you have sent so far. Go to the [Action Center](#) to quickly email a letter of support to your members of Congress.*

Have you had a recent meeting or phone call with your member of Congress? Report your contact today! Click [here](#) to register your Congressional contact and demonstrate the power of The American Legion advocacy in action.

If you would like to receive the newsletter in PDF format, please email jfunari@legion.org with your request.

NEW BILL AIMS TO PROTECT U.S. COAST GUARD VETERANS' BENEFITS

This article's original publication can be found [here](#).

North Carolina representative Don Davis introduced a bill Wednesday to protect U.S. Coast Guard veterans' benefits.

The Coast Guard Combat-Injured Tax Fairness Act, House Bill 2973, will guarantee that veterans receive their full benefits.

"It is essential that we prioritize the well-being of our U.S. Coast Guard combat-injured veterans, closing this loophole and ensuring they receive full benefits," said Davis. "We must not stop advocating passionately for our U.S. Coast Guard veterans, who have devoted their lives to serving our country. Together, we must work to ensure no veteran is left behind."

Without this bill, veterans won't receive the same tax refund on disability severance payments. Many veterans who received disability severance payments had taxes wrongly taken out of those payouts.

In 2016, Congress passed the Combat-Injured Veterans Tax Fairness Act to fix that issue. The law required the Department of Defense to track down any disability severance payments going back to January 17, 1991, and make sure those who were taxed unfairly could get their money back.

Former Coast Guard members were left out of that fix due to a loophole. This new bill allows ex-U.S. Coast Guard servicemembers to be eligible for the same tax benefit. The bill has been referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure for consideration.

THOUSANDS OF MILITARY FAMILIES USE CHILD CARE APP DEvised BY AIRMAN

The article's original publication can be found [here](#).

A new app is helping to fill a gap in short-term child care needs for some military families.

Kinderspot allows parents to sublet their child care spaces at Air Force child development centers when they're away for vacation or other reasons, connecting them to other eligible Department of Defense families who need the child care.

The app, which was the brainchild of Air Force Maj. Jacques Vasta, was launched Air Force-wide in July, following testing at a number of bases. To date, 12,361 military families are using the platform, and 12,558 child care spot rentals have been facilitated, according to Air Force officials. Nearly 22,500 weeks of child care availability have been offered.

Generally, parents are required to pay for the weeks their children are away from military child care, such as when the family is on leave or when the service member is

away on temporary duty. The app allows them to save those funds. When parents successfully sublet a child's vacant spot, they receive a credit to their account. For example, a family planning to take a vacation this summer might be able to offer their spot on the app, and it could be picked up by another military family who needs short-term child care as they make a permanent change of station move to or from the installation.

"Kinderspot has been a major win when it comes to supporting our members and their families with child care in the Air Force," said Lt. Col. Tyler Hough, branch chief of the Air Force Business and Enterprise Systems Product Innovation, or BESPIN, in the announcement.

The rental fees are paid directly to the center at the renter's rate. That rate is based on the family income of the renters, not the total family income of the family who has the permanent child care space.

The child subletting the spot must be in the same age group as the child with the permanent spot. Families without a child currently enrolled at a child development center must complete paperwork to become a verified renter at their center before booking available weeks through the app.

The Kinderspot app is available for download on Apple and Android devices. The Air Force child care centers validate all users of the app to make sure they are eligible to either offer a spot or rent a spot.

None of the other service branches are currently considering adopting the app, officials told Military Times.

The Navy allows families with children enrolled full-time in child care to take 10 vacation days each year per child without having to pay for those days, said Destiny Sibert, a spokeswoman for Commander, Navy Installations Command. Their child care center may use that open space to accommodate hourly care during the child's absence. In addition, the Navy child and youth program will hold a space for a military member who is temporarily detailed to another location at no cost if child care isn't needed during that time, she said.

The Defense Department and service branches have been taking various steps and implementing programs to alleviate the shortage of child care for military parents.

LEGIONNAIRE OF THE WEEK

To recognize the weekly accomplishments of our Legionnaires, we will spotlight an individual every week. These individuals demonstrate exceptional grassroots activism by

meeting with/contacting their Congressional Representative/Senator to advocate for veterans. Efforts like these truly make a difference and give veterans a voice in Congress.

Joseph Drake, New Mexico

Joseph, for your steadfast advocacy of Legion priorities, we are honored to name you Legionnaire of the Week!

Joseph attended a meeting at the Allingham-Golding American Legion Post 18 (Silver City, NM) with 17 veterans from local organizations. Representative Gabe Vasquez was in attendance, and discussed issues such as the Veterans Access Act, the Major Richard Star Act, and the VA Education Assistance Act.

Representative Vasquez attended presented a “Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition” to the local Marine Corps League (Gaffney-Oglesby Detachment 1328 Honor Guard), of which all the American Legion Honor Guard members at Post 18 are members.

Thank you, Joseph, for your report and the time you have dedicated to the Legion’s legislative priorities.

If you have made a Grassroots effort and would like to be considered for next week’s “Legionnaire of the Week,” please fill out the Congressional Contact Report Form [here](#). You can also email us at grassroots@legion.org with the details.

GRASSROOTS INFORMATION

Interested in what the Legion is advocating for in Congress on ***The Veteran’s Role in Supporting the Military?*** Check out our [information papers](#) in the [Legislative Toolkit](#). This is a great starting point for a conversation with your elected officials!

As part of our ongoing Grassroots efforts, LegDiv staff is available to provide **Grassroots Training** tailored to the hosting Department's needs. If you are interested in hosting a Grassroots training event, please contact grassroots@legion.org or ejohnson@legion.org.

You can find relevant legislation and the Legion's stance on them in the [key legislation section of VoterVoice](#).

Register for Action Alerts today at
<https://www.votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/Register>



UPCOMING CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS

As of 4/25, the following hearings are scheduled:

- Tuesday, April 29, 10:00 am: House Veterans Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations Oversight Hearing – *“Answering the Call: Examining VA’s Mental Health Policies”*
- Tuesday, April 29, 10:30 am: Senate Veterans Affairs Committee -- *“Bridging the Gap: Enhancing Outreach to Support Veterans’ Mental Health”*
- Tuesday, April 29, 2:15 pm: House Veterans Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Health Oversight Hearing -- *“Dignity Denied: The Case for Reform at State Veterans Homes”*

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](#)

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](#)

[View The American Legion Legislative Handbook Here](#)