



Legislative Priorities 2025

★ MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION



- ★ **Community coordination and training:** Advocate for funding and alignment of new and ongoing efforts like Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program, the Governor's and Mayor's Challenges to Prevent Suicide, and Mission Daybreak to ensure a robust public health approach.
- ★ **Access to care and workforce improvements:** Pursue policies that help place veterans into high-quality care with minimal wait times and optimal continuity between providers and health systems.
- ★ **Substance use disorder, chronic pain, and emerging treatments:** Highlight key intersections in health care and innovation that offer opportunities to deliver effective mental health care interventions.

★ BRAIN HEALTH AND TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY



- ★ **Prevention, tracking, and treatment:** Promote policies across the lifespan of military service to ensure brain health and safety among the Active duty and veteran populations.
- ★ **Research:** Commit to research that explores the course of neurological and cognitive functioning after traumatic brain injuries (TBI), and build evidence to help expand access to effective treatments and community-based supports.
- ★ **Long-term care:** Support policies to promote the utilization and success of VA's long-term care programs for younger veterans, including those who have suffered TBIs in service.

★ WOMEN VETERANS



- ★ **Gender-specific care:** Pass legislation to expand access to gender-specific services at VA and through Community Care Network providers, as well as empower women veterans in decision-making processes related to their health care.
- ★ **Financial wellness:** Promote policies to assist with employment, financial obligations, food security, housing stability, and child care.
- ★ **Cancer:** Improve screening, eligibility, care, and outreach, with specific effort on mammography, as well as surveillance services for breast, cervical, ovarian, endometrial/uterine, and other gynecological cancers.

★ ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT



- ★ **Major Richard Star Act:** In 2004, Congress passed a law allowing military retirees with at least 20 years of service who are rated at least 50% disabled to collect their full Department of Defense (DoD) retired pay and their full VA disability compensation benefits with no offset. The Major Richard Star Act would allow veterans who were retired for combat-related injuries with under 20 years of service to do the same.
- ★ **Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E):** Pass legislation that would allow VR&E to operate at its highest potential and expand access to more disabled veterans. These improvements should include veteran-friendly policies for when the program can be used, transparency about eligibility determinations, and more consistent training for VR&E counselors.
- ★ **Employment:** Create opportunities throughout the federal government to help place veterans in positions that leverage skills and experience developed in the military.

2025 Legislative Priorities ★ Continued

★ TRANSITION SUPPORT



- ★ **Promote healthy transitions:** Advance policies to support warriors while they are still in the military and at or near their transition point to prepare them for the changes they will face when trying to adjust to civilian life. Help coordinate efforts across VA, DoD, and the community to ensure that the process is seamless across all critical areas related to health care, benefits, and career readiness.

★ TOXIC EXPOSURE



- ★ **Cancer:** Promote policies that enhance the DoD's capacity to track and monitor the exposure of Service members in high-risk communities while ensuring VA is sufficiently staffed and resourced to deliver the highest standard of cancer care to every exposed veteran, including early detection through exposure-informed screenings, treatment, and coordinated care.
- ★ **Access to care:** Many military exposures are documented in the DoD's Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record (ILER) system, which helps qualify veterans for care under the PACT Act. However, some exposures are not tracked, or the information is not transmitted to VA, leaving Service members and veterans without access to necessary care. Focusing efforts on missileers, aviators, and those exposed to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) can help close these gaps in care.
- ★ **Presumptive decision-making process:** Continue to work with VA and Congress to ensure VA's presumptive decision-making process established by the PACT Act has the capacity and resources to reach timely decisions on conditions that may be exposure-related. Continue to encourage VA to consider burn pit-related conditions outside of cancers and respiratory conditions, as well as conditions that may be related to exposures not explicitly covered by the PACT Act, both known and emerging.

★ SEVERELY WOUNDED SERVICE MEMBERS AND VETERANS



- ★ **Complex case management:** While the number of Service members catastrophically injured in service has decreased in recent years, the needs of severely injured Service members and veterans — including those challenged by comorbid disabilities — have not diminished over time and will, in many cases, grow. Support policies to help these individuals navigate the health system and promote a broad community effort to address overlapping resources and nonuniform availability of federal, state, and local resources.
- ★ **Prosthetics and adaptive devices:** Ensure veterans receive timely access to prosthetics and adaptive equipment, invest in cutting-edge prosthetics and assistive technologies for amputees, and foster continuous improvements to enhance VA prosthetic care to help veterans regain functionality, reintegrate into their communities more efficiently, and ultimately improve their quality of life.
- ★ **Caregivers:** Advocate for caregivers providing assistance to those with the highest needs, including support for efforts related to the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers and planning for retirement or life after caregiving.

To learn more about priorities and specific legislation WWP is advocating for, **scan the code**, visit woundedwarriorproject.org/advocacy or advocacy@woundedwarriorproject.org.

