



# Veterans-*For*-Change Newsletter

*A Voice of the Veterans*

**Week Ending Sunday, May 01, 2016**

**Volume 7, Issue 18**

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## ***This-N-That***

Sen. Johnny Isakson, R-Ga. on the Veterans Affairs panel has submitted a bill to slow down the efforts of the VA Rehab and force more accountability on funding and how it's spent.

He states "almost every morning there's a story on the news about some other failure at a VA hospital" and he is correct as I also get those very same reports daily.

He said the Chicago story was "just another failure of care for our Veterans that we need to see stopped."

Again, I couldn't agree more, however, I still feel this is more hot air as this seems to happen over and over again just prior to elections which are just six months away.

My suggestion is for every Veteran, family member of a Veteran, and friends of Veterans to please get on those phones and call your reps in DC and push this hard, demand they support the bill and the efforts to force full accountability, then follow that up by going on their website and sending them an e-Mail again pushing and demand their support.

We can make this happen and not allow this to be just another hot air piece for a bid for re-election! But it will take thousands of people doing this.

Then we have Secretary McDonald who goes to ask yet again for more money to fund the VA, yet he has not stopped bonuses, not made any real effort to reform the VA, address the Wait Times, Deaths due to wait times, etc.

Just amazing how he keeps going before the committee's and asking for more money, yet all I have seen is more waste.

What I find truly amazing is that the VA continues to keep employed people who are convicted of various crimes, but as Under Secretary Shulkin says the individual was no longer working for the VA. Later during the same hearing, the employee was in fact still employed and working for the VA. The VA explained in a later press release: "As is true in private-sector employment, a Federal employee generally cannot be terminated for off-duty misconduct unless there is a clear connection between the misconduct and the individual's employment."

Seems to me double standards apply all across the board within the VA's Healthcare System!

I mean, who cares if your nurse or doctor is a convicted sex offender and the VA simply ignores that fact and allows them near patients who very well could be their next victim? Or a doctor or director who is hooked on drugs or alcohol performs surgery on you and ends up making a grievous error which ended up permanently disabling you or worse, taking your life?

And it wasn't that long ago that Congress passed a bill which included the ability for the VA to terminate like employers in the civilian sector, employees would be considered "at will" meaning they can be terminated with or without cause. But, President Obama veto'd the bill citing it wasn't "fair!"

And still we see little further action from Congress, and absolutely no action from any of the VSO's which shows me it's all on the Veteran themselves to find a way through and around the system without it killing you.

Operation Mail Call is still in need of your help!

We need cards and letters of encouragement for those who are serving on foreign soil. Many are single, have no family, or are not communicating with family and just need a little encouragement, and know that WE THE PEOPLE do care about them, appreciate them, and thank them for the job that 99.5% of Americans can't or won't do.

Operation Mail Call is designed to address that problem and a little more!

Betty Hidalgo who is the director of VFC's Operation Mail Call Program does her level best to bring a little joy to all those on foreign soil by sending them care packages which she is working all the time to fill them with a little bit of home with cards, letters, baked goods, candies, and sometimes little gag gifts, anything she can find to bring a little joy to their daily lives where they are.

A little further down in this newsletter there is a web link which will take you to the information on where you can send cards and letters which will be included in many of the boxes that go out weekly.

We'd appreciate anything you can do to help us bring a little joy to them, maybe even put a smile on their faces even if only for a few moments.

If you have not visited our website in the past few weeks, please check back again! We're adding more and more documents as quickly as we can. The new documents have a "NEW" label on them for about 10 days from upload.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and Volunteers nationwide, we wish you and your family good health!

Respectfully,

Jim Davis

Founder & CEO

[Jim.Davis@Veterans-For-Change.org](mailto:Jim.Davis@Veterans-For-Change.org)

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### ***H.R. 4782, Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2016***

On March 17, 2016, Representative Ralph Abraham (LA), Chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, introduced H.R. 4782, the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) Act of 2016. This measure would increase veterans' disability compensation, survivor benefits and clothing allowances by the same percentage as Social Security benefit increases scheduled to take effect on December 1, 2016, and would affect payments beginning January 1, 2017.

Unfortunately, H.R. 4782 contains a round-down provision which DAV adamantly opposes based on National Resolution No. 017. Specifically, the practice of rounding-down compensation increases to the nearest whole dollar is unfair. This practice, established over 20 years ago as a temporary measure, has siphoned millions of dollars annually from disabled veterans, their families and survivors and jeopardizes the ability of those relying on these benefits to maintain an adequate standard of living.

We ask you to please contact your Representative and urge them to cosponsor and support passage of this bill, and to inform them that the practice of rounding-down compensation increases is unfair to veterans their families and survivors.

Click [HERE](#) and send your message!

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### ***VA Has Been Shredding Documents***

According to an investigation by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Office of Inspector General (OIG), the Department of Veterans Affairs has been systematically shredding documents related to veterans' claims, possibly affecting benefits for veterans. Investigators with the Department of Veterans Affairs audited 10 veterans benefits offices around the country and found that staff were destroying mail related to claims, according to a report by Military.com, which cited an OIG report. Read the VA Office of Inspector General report [online](#).

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## ***Atomic Veterans Healthcare Parity Act***

Sen. Al Franken, D-Minn.; Sen. Thom Tillis, R-N.C., and Rep. Mark Takai, D-Hawaii, have introduced the Atomic Veterans Healthcare Parity Act, which provides for the treatment and service-connection presumption of certain disabilities that could be related to exposure to radioactive fallout while serving in the Marshall Islands. These veterans were exposed to radiation as clean-up workers who served at Enewetak Atoll and other areas that conducted nuclear testing. The cancer rate among these veterans far exceeds those in similar age groups. Read about H.R. 3870, the Atomic Veterans Healthcare Parity Act, at [Congress.gov](http://Congress.gov).

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## ***OPERATION MAIL CALL***



Operation Mail Call needs your help! We need cards and letters to send to our troops currently serving on foreign soil.

Doesn't have to be anything special, just words of support and thanking them for their service!

If you're a school teacher, please contact me at my e-mail address at the top, our troops love to hear from the kids too!

For more information visit: <http://veterans-for-change.org/5439-operation-mail-call-2>

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## ***Help pass the Secure Choice Saving Program Act!***

More than 7 million working Californians do not have access to retirement savings plans through their employers. That is why AARP is working to pass SB 1234, Secure Choice Savings Program Act.

Secure Choice makes it easier for small businesses to establish a basic retirement savings option for employees. Secure Choice would not be a state program it would be a public-private partnership. This would be a hassle-free way for small businesses with 5 employees or more to offer their employees a simple retirement plan. Employees would have a choice of whether to participate. Accounts would follow the employee so a person could continue to save if they change jobs.

Please join us and sign our online petition to pass Secure Choice. Together, we can help individuals build retirement savings so more people can have the freedom to live independently throughout their lives.

Sign our petition TODAY asking your State Representative to support the Secure Choice Savings Program!

Click [HERE](#)

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## ***Benefits for Camp LeJeune Veterans***

From the 1950s through the 1980s, people living or working at the U.S. Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, were potentially exposed to contaminated drinking water. You may be eligible for VA health benefits if you served on active duty (veterans) or resided (family members) at Camp Lejeune for 30 days or more between Aug. 1, 1953 and Dec. 31, 1987. Veterans who are determined to be eligible will be able to receive VA health care. In addition, care for qualifying health conditions is provided at no cost to the Veteran (including co-payments). For more information, visit the VA Camp Lejeune: Past Water Contamination [webpage](#).

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***Veterans fought for us; we continue to fight for our veterans!***

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## ***VFC Website Update***

If you've not visited our website, maybe you should visit today! Since going on-line on 10/28/12 we have been averaging between 2,100 and 3,000 visitors per day and have had **2,714,801** visitors to date.

Visit today and subscribe, it's 100% **FREE** of charge to all! Just be sure to use a valid E-Mail address so the system can send you an authentication E-Mail. Becoming a subscriber will show you all the various forum's, added libraries, and more.

We have the largest One-Stop-Shop Veterans website available that is user friendly, offers a host of information on many topics, Several forums, Frequently Asked Questions and Answers, a massive Documents Library with more than 12,900 documents, various VA and DoD forms.

## **[www.veterans-for-change.org](http://www.veterans-for-change.org)**

- Documents Library with over **140** different libraries and over **14,482+** documents (**Updated 04/29/16**)
- FAQ's (**1,662** on-line now) (**Updated 02/20/16**)
- Forums (**with Licensed Mental Health Worker Moderator**)
- Job Postings and Job Fairs (Updated **04/15/16**)
- Memorial Pages (**Updated 01/02/16** added **17**)
- News (Updated almost daily, **5,666** articles on-line)
- Polls Added **02/08/16**
- Web Links (**3,429** Active Links)(**Updated 04/07/16** added **1** New Links)

The documents library has many different categories and contains more than 55 million pages of information and forms.

There are forums for all Eras of service and one just for Women Veterans, which is locked to use by women only. Another for Men Veterans which is also locked to men only.

In the documents and forums we provide information pertaining to women and the ability speak freely in the forums to other women about the same issues and problems you face.

The Memorial Pages are open, and if you have a loved one or a buddy you've lost and would like for them to be added to our Memorial Pages, please send a photo, First and Last Name, Rank, Branch of Service, DOB and DOD, and allow us 2-3 days to install on the proper page. (Send to: [Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org](mailto:Jim.Davis@veterans-for-change.org))

You also have the ability to comment and rate all NEWS articles which would be very helpful for us so we know the types of information you'd like to see on our website.

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***Give the Vietnam Blue Water Navy Veterans their presumptive rights***

In 1977, the first claims of Agent Orange exposure came flooding into the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). But it took 14 years for Congress to actually listen, take action and give our Vietnam veterans the benefits they deserved.

The Agent Orange Act of 1991 was implemented to provide much-needed care to veterans who were exposed to the harmful chemical cocktail Agent Orange. Many of us thought the fight to get the medical attention we deserved was over, but that wasn't the case. In 2002, the VA amended its initial plan and excluded thousands of "Blue Water" Navy vets -- vets who served right off the coast -- from receiving our rightful benefits. Because we hadn't served on land, the VA tried to say we were unlikely to suffer the effects of Agent Orange poisoning.

Even though we didn't serve on Vietnamese soil, we were still exposed to Agent Orange. In fact, a 2011 study by the National Institute of Medicine found that Blue Water veterans could have been exposed in multiple ways, including via the ships' water distillation system and through the air. The National Institute of Medicine also stated, "Given the available evidence, the committee recommends that members of the Blue Water Navy should not be excluded from the set of Vietnam-era veterans with presumed herbicide exposure."

We are asking for your help in urging Congress to pass legislation (House Bill H 969 and Senate Bill S 681) that will reinstate our right as Vietnam Navy veterans to receive the benefits we deserve for being exposed to this terrible chemical.

Nearly 90,000 Blue Water vets are depending on you. We are dealing with serious health issues that range from cancer to diabetes, and from Parkinson's to heart disease. Many of these diseases have made it nearly impossible for some of us to get steady work.

Last year, the VA finally extended benefits to Air Force crew members who flew in C-123s after they had been used in Vietnam to spray the toxic cocktail. The VA came to the realization that even the slightest exposure to this chemical had serious effects on a soldier's health. So why are the Navy vets' pleas being ignored? We breathed the Agent Orange-polluted air that drifted from the coast and drank water sprinkled with the herbicide, and now our bodies are paying the cost.

We ask you to stand with us, and with Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand and Rep. Chris Gibson, and demand that the VA assume responsibility for the effects of Agent Orange on Blue Water vets. Please sign our petition asking Congress to pass House Bill H 969 and Senate Bill S 681 and give us our benefits.

Click [HERE](#) to sign the petition

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### ***Injury Treatment Expanded in California***

For years, the main mission for the team behind UCLA's Operation Mend in Los Angeles, Calif. was to heal the visible wounds of the servicemen and women coming home from the wars of Iraq and Afghanistan. Now, veterans suffering from mild traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress will also be served under Operation Mend as part of an expanded program that will include UCLA's experts in neurology, neurosurgery, psychiatry and integrative. The expanded program will focus on post-9/11 veterans and their families and is now part of a new national health system called Warrior Care Network, funded in part by the Wounded Warrior Project. For more information, visit the Operation Mend [website](#) or call UCLA Operation Mend at 310-267-2251.



## **2.1 Percent Pay Raise, Other Changes in Draft Bill**

Troops would receive a 2.1 percent [pay](#) raise in 2017 under a plan released by House lawmakers last week. The draft legislation from the House Armed Services Committee's Personnel Subcommittee was among the first to be released as part of the process to amend, or mark-up, the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act, which sets policy goals and spending targets for the year beginning Oct. 1. The White House had requested a 1.6 percent pay raise for 2017, which is higher than the 1.3 percent increase received by troops this year, but lower than the 2.1 percent raise which would match private-sector wage growth.

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## **Government Accountability Office (GAO) Reports**

Critical Infrastructure Protection: Federal Agencies Have Taken Actions to Address Electromagnetic Risks, but Opportunities Exist to Further Assess Risks and Strengthen Collaboration.

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-243>

Tongass National Forest: Forest Service's Actions Related to Its Planned Timber Program Transition.

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-456>

Vehicle Cybersecurity: DOT and Industry Have Efforts Under Way, but DOT Needs to Define Its Role in Responding to a Real-world Attack. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-350>

F-35 Joint Strike Fighter: Development of New Capabilities Requires Continued Oversight.

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-634T>

Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program: Improvements Made but Information on Performance Goals Still Needed.

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-617T>

Government Efficiency and Effectiveness: Opportunities to Reduce Fragmentation, Overlap, and Duplication and Achieve Other Financial Benefits. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-580T>

Tribal Internet Access: Increased Federal Coordination and Performance Measurement Needed.

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-504T>

Defense Health Care: DOD Is Meeting Most Mental Health Care Access Standards, but It Needs a Standard for Follow-up Appointments. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-416>

Indian Health Service: Actions Needed to Improve Oversight of Patient Wait Times.

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-333>

Information Security: Opportunities Exist for SEC to Improve Its Controls over Financial Systems and Data.

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-493>

Missile Defense: Ballistic Missile Defense System Testing Delays Affect Delivery of Capabilities.

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-339R>

Public Transit: Observations on Recent Changes to the Capital Investment Grant Program.

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-495>

Veterans Justice Outreach Program: VA Could Improve Management by Establishing Performance Measures and Fully Assessing Risks. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-393>

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## ***AF Reserve Celebrates Birthday***

Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James spoke to the importance of total force integration during the Air Force Reserve's recent 68th birthday celebration at the Pentagon. The Air Force Reserve was originally formed as a "standby" force by President Harry Truman in 1948, and now has five air reserve bases and 33 flying wings. It officially became the ninth major command — Air Force Reserve Command — in 1997.

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## ***Scholarships for Veterans***

Service members and veterans can submit an application to the Veterans of Foreign Wars' "Sport Clips Help A Hero Scholarship" program to be considered for the fall 2016 semester. The deadline for completed applications is April 30. To apply, visit Veterans of Foreign Wars Veterans Scholarships [webpage](#). Help A Hero scholarships provide service members and veterans with the financial assistance they need to reach their educational goals without incurring excessive student loan debt. Help A Hero scholarships of up to \$5,000 are awarded twice a year to qualified applicants to help cover the rising costs of tuition and fees. In just over two years, the program has provided over \$1.8 million in financial aid.

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## ***TRICARE Removes Inpatient Mental Healthcare Limits***

TRICARE has worked to eliminate potential barriers to mental health care by removing day limits for certain mental health services. Now however, inpatient mental health hospital services, regardless of length or quantity, may be covered as long as the care is considered medically or psychologically necessary and appropriate. Likewise the 60-limitation on the psychiatric partial hospitalization benefit has been removed. Also, there is now no day limit for beneficiaries under 21. You can get emergency psychiatric care without pre-authorization. However, you must get authorization within 72 hours of admission and the 72 hours starts the day after admission. For more information about mental health coverage, visit the TRICARE [website](#).

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## ***Follow Veterans-For-Change on Twitter***



<https://twitter.com/Veterans4Change>

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## ***Links to other Stories***

- 1) [\*Contamination: Kadena Air Base's dirty secret\*](#)
- 2) [\*Department of Veterans Affairs: It was just Armed Robbery, No Big Deal\*](#)
- 3) [\*Inside the Fight to Reduce the Government's Role in Veterans Health Care\*](#)
- 4) [\*Johnny Isakson unveils long-awaited VA reform bill\*](#)
- 5) [\*OIG: Veterans Benefits Management System Not Fraud Proof\*](#)
- 6) [\*Panel Votes to End Pay-Benefit Slide, Tweak Ex-Spouse Law\*](#)
- 7) [\*Scandal-Plagued VA Overhaul Slow, New Accountability Sought\*](#)
- 8) [\*Senator: Large Veterans reform bill promises 'a new VA'\*](#)
- 9) [\*VA 'Candy Man' May Keep His Job Despite No Medical License\*](#)
- 10) [\*Veterans Administration: We've Failed, Pay Us More\*](#)

You can help Veterans-For-Change by reading the articles posted, and comment at the bottom and rank the article. If you don't have an account, sign-up today, it's **FREE**. Your comments and rankings help us to better determine the type of information you'd like most to see.

Check us out today: [www.veterans-for-change.org](http://www.veterans-for-change.org)

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### ***Four Military Retirement Pay Surprises to Avoid***

Retiring from the military comes with many big changes, including understanding your new pay. After sitting through briefings and researching what to expect, you're probably well prepared. But Military.com readers tell us they still encounter some surprises after their final out date. And when it comes to money, unless it's a big inheritance or winning the lottery, a surprise is the last thing you want. [Read this article to learn about retirement pay surprises to avoid.](#)

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### ***Paycheck Chronicles: Retiree Tax Questions***

Tax time always brings a lot of questions from readers. [This Paycheck Chronicles post](#) is a compilation of tax-related questions received from retirees.

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### ***Zero Co-Pays for Rx with the TRICARE Supplement***

Doctor and hospital bills are expensive even when you're covered by TRICARE. Help minimize or even eliminate out-of-pocket expenses with the [TRICARE Insurance Supplement Plan](#).

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### ***Military-Veterans Advocacy***

From Military-Veterans Advocacy (please "Like" our Facebook Page: Military-Veterans Advocacy has completed a report on the use of water barges providing Agent Orange contaminated water from the Vietnamese mainland to ships anchored in harbors throughout the Vietnam War. This report has been forwarded to the Honorable Jeff Miller, Chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee. Please share your thoughts and send us your stories.

If your Member of Congress or Senator is not co-sponsoring the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act (HR 969/S681) print out a copy of this report and send it to them and ask for their support.

#### **WATER BARGES**

From:  
Commander John Wells USN (Ret.)

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Are you seeking employment? Been looking forever and not found the right job?

Well Veterans-For-Change is working very hard to bring you more information on Job Fairs and Job Postings available across the country.

Click on the link below, and find all the jobs available, Job Fairs coming up, locations, details, etc.

<http://veterans-for-change.org/documents-library/category/167-job-fairs-job-postings>

If you have a job position open, and are willing to hire a Veteran, please send an E-Mail to: [JIM.DAVIS@VETERANS-FOR-CHANGE.ORG](mailto:JIM.DAVIS@VETERANS-FOR-CHANGE.ORG) there is never any fee involved, this is a 100% free service in order to help thousands of Veterans nationwide to gain full time employment.

***Check often for Updates!***

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## ***Veterans Groups Sue VA for Withholding Information Demanded by Veterans Poisoned by Camp LeJeune's Toxic Water***

*VA's Controversial "Subject Matter Expert" Program Keeps Public in the Dark*

(Wash., D.C.)—Today Vietnam Veterans of America, along with The Few, The Proud, The Forgotten, filed suit under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) to compel the Department of Veterans Affairs to produce records on the Camp LeJeune Subject Matter Expert (SME) program. The VA created the SME program in 2012 to evaluate disability compensation claims. Since that time, the public has filed numerous requests for information on the SME program, but VA has largely ignored such requests.

"It is high time the federal government and all of its entities stop lying and withholding evidence on the toxic substances to which veterans and their families have been exposed. To have anonymous subject experts is not the American way, and in a democracy, this lack of transparency is not acceptable," said John Rowan, National President of Vietnam Veterans of America.

Between 1953 and 1987, nearly one million veterans, their families, and civilian employees at Camp LeJeune, a Marine training base in North Carolina, were exposed to toxic drinking water in one of the worst contaminations in U.S. history. Many have since developed illnesses like kidney, bladder, and breast cancer, and many have lost their lives as a result. Thousands of veterans have applied for disability compensation for diseases related to their exposure to toxic water aboard Camp LeJeune. The VA has denied the vast majority of these claims.

Initiated in 2012, the SME program tasks an anonymous group of clinicians with issuing medical opinions on the disability compensation claims of Camp LeJeune veterans. Since the VA created the SME program, the grant rate for these claims plummeted from approximately 25 percent to 8 percent.

From the limited information publicly available, veterans groups and medical professionals have identified concerns about the clinicians' credentials, methods, and expertise. SME program clinicians have repeatedly cited scientific reports that VA officials have admitted are outdated. In at least one case, the VA relied on a report by an SME program clinician who cut and pasted a Wikipedia entry to provide a medical opinion on a rare type of cancer.

Veterans groups submitted a FOIA request to the VA in December 2015, seeking comprehensive records on the Camp LeJeune SME program, including policies, procedures, and objectives; fiscal impact; data and statistical information; and training records. The VA has not responded to this request.

Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), ranking member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, said, "the SME program has been using incorrect and outdated information. The alarming drop in the grant rate of Camp Lejeune claims deserves real, penetrating scrutiny."

"The VA claims it created the Camp LeJeune SME program to assist veterans, but it is adversarial and unjust. Everything we know about the program indicates it should be scrapped," said retired Marine Master Sergeant Jerry Ensminger, founder of The Few, The Proud, The Forgotten, who lost his daughter at age nine to childhood leukemia linked to exposure to Camp LeJeune toxic water.

"The VA's lack of transparency is alarming. The qualifications and methodology of the SME clinicians are concerning. Given that the VA has called this program a model for toxic exposure compensation claims in the future, veterans need to understand how this program works." said Rory Minnis, a former Marine and law student intern at the Veterans Legal Services Clinic at Yale Law School.

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### ***Commissary Reforms Advance with Shopper Safeguards***

The House armed services subcommittee on military personnel unanimously has endorsed sweeping reforms to how groceries are procured, priced, promoted and sold on U.S. military bases stateside and overseas. The commissary reform package, largely shaped by Defense officials on advice from the grocery industry, has gained steam on promises to preserve most of current savings for patrons while modernizing commissary operations and lowering subsidies by more than \$500 million a year by 2021.

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<b><i>Veteran Crisis Resources</i></b>	
<a href="#">Veterans Crisis Line</a>	1-800-273-8255 and Press 1
<a href="#">Military Crisis Line</a>	1-800-273-TALK (8255)
<a href="#">National Call Center for Homeless Veterans</a>	1-877-4AID-VET (424.3838)
<a href="#">VA Caregiver Support Line</a>	1-855-260-3274

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### ***Veterans Volunteer to Serve***

Team Rubicon is an international organization of American military veterans who volunteer to serve on disaster and relief missions around the globe. The group is now partnering with the Bureau of Land Management to train firefighters to combat wildfires in Washington and beyond. They've trained a total of 500 veterans for duty over the past two years. For more information and to volunteer, visit the Team Rubicon [website](#).

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### ***Connecting Vets Together***

Allow me to introduce myself I am Brian Sinykin US Army from 9/65 to 9/68. For over 16 years I've been personally dealing with the VA on a number of different issues. From winning my own disability case before it even went to the Board of Veterans Appeals. To getting the Dental department to start doing implants instead of dentures, taking the Travel Pay department to the BVA and winning, etc..

About that same time I started helping other vets with their problems with the VA. This turned me into a veterans advocate. Six months ago myself and another Veterans advocate Guy Terrill Gamble, were talking about all the issues going on with the VA and how working on them was pissing us off. So we decided to do something about it. Guy set up a new Facebook Group called "Problems with the Veterans Administration?". There was just the two of us on the first day. We now have over 2800 members of other advocates and Vets who also are involved with solving these issues and growing at the rate of 5 to 10 new members a day. We have identified 26 issues that need to be solved. We have started with one of the most important issues of today. Stopping the VA Hospitals from getting away with denying veterans their Medical Benefits.

We are asking those veterans that have been denied a medical benefit to join our Facebook group "Problems with the Veterans Administration?" and tell us their experience/s. So we can start helping you. We also will try and help those that have had problems getting their disability.

The "Problems with the Veterans Administration?" Noticed no one on Facebook was coordinating the 100's of 1,000's of veterans and military groups that are on Facebook. We have decided to do just that. Any one who has an important post they would want to get out to all other Veterans on Facebook can message it to Ronda Tori Duncan.. We have identified 27 issues the VA needs to correct. There are others posted on your site that can be added to the list by bring them to our attention. Plus we want to have committees formed for each issue to take action on solving them. Those of you that want to part of one of these committees should let me know. That would mean we would have a pool of 100's of thousand to find experts and those who would want to help to make up these communities. We are currently connected to 350+ groups. We need more volunteers to post 15 group each day. (15 Minutes of your time) Join us and let's let congress, the VA, and the public know we are united in large numbers and we are tired of the VA killing us.

Brian Sinykin  
[mnvag@comcast.net](mailto:mnvag@comcast.net)

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### ***TRICARE Urgent Care Pilot Program***

The Department of Defense is launching an Urgent Care Pilot Program for TRICARE Prime beneficiaries. This program allows Prime enrollees two visits to a network or TRICARE authorized provider without a referral or prior authorization. The Urgent Care Pilot Program, scheduled to begin May 23, is for retirees and their family members who are enrolled in Prime within the 50 United States or the District of Columbia. TRICARE Overseas Program enrollees can receive an unlimited number of urgent care visits, but only when they are traveling stateside and seeking care. There are no point-of-service deductibles or cost shares for these two urgent care visits, but network copayments still apply. For more information, visit the TRICARE Urgent Care Pilot Program [webpage](#).

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<b><i>To Contact your Members of Congress</i></b>	
To Call your Representative:	202-225-2305
To call your Senator:	202-224-3841 or 202-224-3553
To call different members of Congress:	202-224-3121
Toll <b>FREE</b> Number:	866-272-6622

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***~ We Proudly Support Our Military Personnel & Families ~***

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### ***Retreat for Veterans***

The Big Red Barn (BRB) Retreat is a public charity dedicated to providing healing to those in need of peace. The facility is located in Blythewood, SC on 75 acres with nearly 5 miles of wooded trails, a 2-acre fishing pond, outdoor pavilion, 1,110 sq. ft. meeting room with prep area, a large sand arena with viewing area, and a big red barn with a lodge-like meeting room. The BRB Retreat is dedicated to providing non-clinical therapeutic services to active-duty and retired service members, veterans and their immediate family members who are suffering from military or combat related stress issues in a natural, relaxed setting. Services include therapeutic yoga, equine assisted psychotherapy, and healing arts workshops. For more information, visit the BRB Retreat [website](#).

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### ***Iowa Veterans Home Seeks Volunteers***

The Iowa Veterans Home (IVH) in Marshalltown, Iowa is seeking volunteers to volunteer once a month to play a game with or talk to a resident. The IVH houses some 550 veterans and spouses. Around 80 of those residents go without visitors. The IVH Volunteer Coordinator keeps a list of their names for volunteers. For more information on volunteering, visit the Iowa Veterans Home [website](#) or phone IVH at 641-753-4406.

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Complete all information, and select the appropriate box at the bottom of the form. You will then receive an automated authentication E-Mail, follow the instructions and you will then be added to the weekly distribution list.

*Our mailing list is never sold, traded or shared with anyone ever, and is held in the strictest of confidence.*

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*Veterans-For-Change Newsletter is a once weekly publication deadline for submission is 5:00 PM PST on Thursday!*



**I think there is one higher office than president and I would call that patriot.**

*~Gary Hart~*

## ***Veterans-For-Change, Inc.***

Riverside County, CA

Visit our website today  
[www.veterans-for-change.org](http://www.veterans-for-change.org)

*Serving those who served!*

***Please pass to all your Veteran friends and family!***

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