

**NATIONAL CONVENTION PROCEEDINGS
OF THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS**

COMMUNICATION

from

**THE NATIONAL ADJUTANT,
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,
DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS**

transmitting

2021 NATIONAL CONVENTION REPORTS AND PROCEEDINGS OF
THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS, HELD IN TAMPA,
FLORIDA, JULY 31–AUGUST 3, 2021, PURSUANT TO
44 U.S.C. 1332; 36 U.S.C. 50308; AND 36 U.S.C. 10101



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LETTER OF SUBMITTAL

February 18, 2022

Hon. Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Washington, DC

Dear Ms. Speaker:

As business manager of DAV (Disabled American Veterans), and as secretary of its national convention, I hereby certify as to the authenticity of the reports and proceedings of our national convention, held in Tampa, Florida, July 31-August 3, 2021, and submit them to you through the office of this organization located in Washington, D.C., to be printed as a House document as originally authorized by 44 U.S.C. 1332 and in fulfillment of 36 U.S.C. 50308.

The national convention proceedings include an independent audit report of all receipts and expenditures as of December 31, 2020, as described in 36 U.S.C. 10101.

Sincerely,



J. Marc Burgess
National Adjutant
Chief Executive Officer

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**NATIONAL OFFICERS 2021–2022
DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS**

National Commander

Andrew Marshall, 750 Tomoka Drive, Palm Harbor, FL 34683

Senior Vice Commander

Joseph Parsetich, 1801 1st Street South, Great Falls, MT 59405

1st Jr. Vice Commander

Nancy G. Espinosa, 1369 Country Park Drive, Kaysville, UT 84037

2nd Jr. Vice Commander

Daniel Contreras, 13733 E. Rosecrans Avenue,
Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670

3rd Jr. Vice Commander

Coleman Nee, 18 Zamora Street, Boston, MA 02130

4th Jr. Vice Commander

John Donovan, 135 N. Woodland Dr, Conway, AR 72032

National Judge Advocate

Michael E. Dobmeier, 404 25th Avenue South,
Grand Forks, ND 58201

National Chaplain

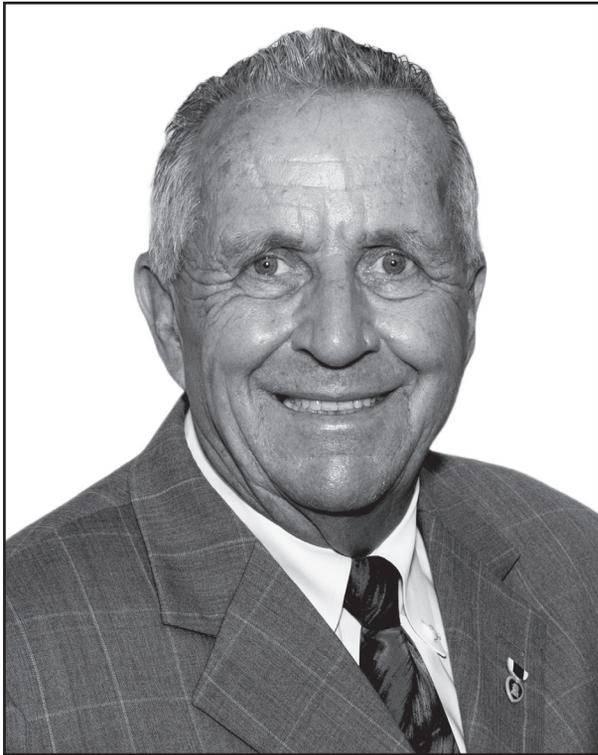
Debra Varner, 404 Lorain Street, Birmingham, AL 35224

Past National Commander

Stephen Whitehead, 16095 Excel Way, Rosemount, MN 55068

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2021–2022

First District	James Follis, Malden, Massachusetts
Second District	Thomas Ingram, Brooklyn, New York
Third District	Robert Guldner, Alexandria, New Hampshire
Fourth District	Ronald Werlich, East Hartford, Connecticut
Fifth District	Philip Arnold, Lebanon, Pennsylvania
Sixth District	Michael Dawson, Ronceverte, West Virginia
Seventh District	Frank Chicollo, Oldsmar, Florida
Eighth District	William Baker, Enterprise, Alabama
Ninth District	Gregory Keesee, Goldsboro, North Carolina
Tenth District	James R. Dempsey, Dexter, Michigan
Eleventh District	Michael Stith, Akron, Ohio
Twelfth District	Eric Huckaby, Pawnee, Illinois
Thirteenth District	George Hall, Harold, Kentucky
Fourteenth District	Robert Hill, Brookings, South Dakota
Fifteenth District	Karin Hansen, Saint George, Kansas
Sixteenth District	Clyde Maddox, Riverside, California
Seventeenth District	Floyd Watson, Cheyenne, Wyoming
Eighteenth District	Glenn Hohman, Sierra Vista, Arizona
Nineteenth District	JoAnn Gavin, Silverdale, Washington
Twentieth District	Charles Edwards, Austin, Texas
Twenty-first District	Danny Oliver, Coweta, Oklahoma



Andy Marshall
National Commander
2021–2022
Disabled American Veterans



Stephen Whitehead
National Commander
2019–2021
Disabled American Veterans

**NATIONAL OFFICERS 2019–2021
DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS**

National Commander

Stephen Whitehead, 16095 Excel Way, Rosemount, MN 55068

Senior Vice Commander

Donald Day, 3112 Farragut Road, Brooklyn, NY 11210

1st Jr. Vice Commander

Andrew Marshall, 750 Tomoka Drive, Palm Harbor, FL 34683

2nd Jr. Vice Commander

Joseph Parsetich, 1801 1st Street South, Great Falls, MT 59405

3rd Jr. Vice Commander

Nancy G. Espinosa, 1369 Country Park Drive, Kaysville, UT 84037

4th Jr. Vice Commander

Daniel Contreras, 13733 E. Rosecrans Avenue,
Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670

National Judge Advocate

Michael E. Dobmeier, 404 25th Avenue South,
Grand Forks, ND 58201

National Chaplain

Michael Dover, 13222 Warm Springs Road, Ellerslie, GA 31807

Past National Commander

Dennis R. Nixon, 2521 Meandering Way, China Spring, TX 76633

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2019–2021

First District	Helen Bennett, Marshfield, Massachusetts
Second District	Keith A. Robinson, Rochester, New York
Third District	Ernest S. Boisvert, Woonsocket, Rhode Island
Fourth District	Benjamin G. Flynn, Hartly, Delaware
Fifth District	Michael T. Iacavazzi, Scranton, Pennsylvania
Sixth District	Robert D. Cox, Roanoke, Virginia
Seventh District	Jack L. Johnson, The Villages, Florida
Eighth District	Jerry L. Bratton, Oxford, Mississippi
Ninth District	Thomas Walls, Blythewood, South Carolina
Tenth District	James R. Dempsey, Dexter, Michigan
Eleventh District	Will Davis, Columbus, Ohio
Twelfth District	Kevin J. Walkowski, Wind Lake, Wisconsin
Thirteenth District	Terry W. Sanders, Bedford, Indiana
Fourteenth District	Warren Tobin, Jamestown, North Dakota
Fifteenth District	David R. Thornburg Jr., Waukegan, Iowa
Sixteenth District	Kirk H. Johnson, Marina, California
Seventeenth District	Timothy J. Talley, Bovina, Texas
Eighteenth District	Julian V. Crawford, Honolulu, Hawaii
Nineteenth District	Saranna Rae Hack, North Pole, Alaska
Twentieth District	Thomas Parker, Lorena, Texas
Twenty-first District	John F. Donovan, Conway, Arkansas

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDERS

1921–22:	Robert S. Marx, Cincinnati, Ohio (deceased 1960)
1922–23:	C. Hamilton Cook, Buffalo, New York (deceased 1935)
1923–24:	James A. McFarland, Dalton, Georgia (deceased 1942)
1924–25:	Frank J. Irwin, New York, New York (deceased 1942)
1925–26:	John W. Mahan, Bozeman, Montana (deceased 1947)
1926–27:	John V. Clinnin, Chicago, Illinois (deceased 1955)
1927–28:	William E. Tate, Atlanta, Georgia (deceased 1949)
1928–29:	Millard W. Rice, Minneapolis, Minnesota (deceased 1980)
1929–30:	William J. Murphy, Santa Ana, California (deceased 1931)
1930–31:	H. H. Weimer, Chicago, Illinois (deceased 1955)
1931–32:	E. Claude Babcock, Washington, D.C. (deceased 1958)
1932–33:	William Conley, Los Angeles, California (deceased 1941)
1933–34:	Joe W. McQueen, Kansas City, Missouri (deceased 1969)
1934–35:	Volney P. Mooney Jr., Los Angeles, California (deceased 1945)
1935–36:	Marvin A. Harlan, El Paso, Texas (deceased 1970)
1936–37:	M. Froome Barbour, Cincinnati, Ohio (deceased 1985)
1937–38:	Maple T. Harl, Denver, Colorado (deceased 1957)
1938–39:	Owen Galvin, Minneapolis, Minnesota (deceased 1956)
1939–40:	Lewis J. Murphy, South Bend, Indiana (deceased 1966)
1940–41:	Vincent E. Schoeck, Detroit, Michigan (deceased 1966)
Aug. 16, 1941–	
Aug. 15, 1943:	Lawrence R. Melton, Dallas, Texas (deceased 1978)
Aug. 15, 1943–	
Sept. 20, 1943:	William J. Dodd, Jersey City, New Jersey (deceased 1957)
1943–44:	James L. Monnahan, Minneapolis, Minnesota (deceased 1980)
1944–45:	Milton D. Cohn, Buffalo, New York (deceased 1968)
1945–46:	Dow V. Walker, Newport, Oregon (deceased 1957)
1946–47:	Lloyd F. Oleson, Ventura, California (deceased 1982)
1947–48:	John L. Golob, Hibbing, Minnesota (deceased 1976)
1948–49:	Jonathon M. Wainwright, San Antonio, Texas (deceased 1953)
1949–50:	David M. Brown, Akron, Ohio (deceased 1982)
1950–51:	Boniface R. Maile, Grosse Pointe, Michigan (deceased 2002)
1951–52:	Ewing W. Mays, Little Rock, Arkansas (deceased 1994)
1952–53:	Floyd L. Ming, Bakersfield, California (deceased 1975)
1953–54:	Howard W. Watts, Indianapolis, Indiana (deceased 1977)
1954–55:	Alfred L. English, Shelbyville, Tennessee (deceased 1987)
1955–56:	Melvin J. Maas, Chevy Chase, Maryland (deceased 1964)
1956–57:	Joseph F. Burke, Bayonne, New Jersey (deceased 1970)
1957–58:	Paul E. Frederick Jr., Cincinnati, Ohio (deceased 2015)
1958–59:	David B. Williams, Boston, Massachusetts (deceased 1994)
1959–60:	Bill H. Fribley, Crestline, Kansas (deceased 1994)
1960–61:	William O. Cooper, Dallas, Texas (deceased 1990)
1961–62:	Francis R. Buono, Whitestone, New York (deceased 1977)
1962–63:	Peter L. Dye, Denver, Colorado (deceased 2013)
1963–64:	Douglas H. McGarrity, Allen Park, Michigan (deceased 1986)
1964–65:	William G. Dwyer, San Diego, California (deceased 1982)
1965–66:	Claude L. Callegary, Baltimore, Maryland (deceased 2014)
1966–67:	John W. Unger Sr., Danville, Illinois (deceased 1970)
1967–68:	Francis J. Beaton, Fargo, North Dakota (deceased 1969)
1968–69:	Wayne L. Sheirbon, Seattle, Washington (deceased 1999)
1969–70:	Raymond P. Neal, Daly City, California (deceased 1980)
1970–71:	Cecil W. Stevenson, Jonesboro, Arkansas (deceased 2013)
1971–72:	Edward T. Conroy, Bowie, Maryland (deceased 1982)
1972–73:	Jack O. Hicks, Larue, Ohio (deceased 2021)
1973–74:	John T. Soave, Detroit, Michigan (deceased 1984)
1974–75:	Walter T. Greaney, Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts (deceased 1994)

1975–76: Lyle C. Pearson, North Mankato, Minnesota (deceased 2013)
 1976–77: Frank J. Randazzo, East Meadow, New York (deceased 2010)
 1977–78: Oliver E. Meadows, Godley, Texas (deceased 2005)
 1978–79: Billy O. Hightower, Grand Junction, Colorado (deceased 2015)
 1979–80: Paul L. Thompson, Baltimore, Maryland (deceased 1993)
 1980–81: Stan Pealer, Holts Summit, Missouri (deceased 2018)
 1981–82: Sherman E. Roodzant, Santa Ana, California
 1982–83: Edward G. Galian, New York, New York (deceased 2002)
 1983–84: Dennis A. Joyner, Apollo, Pennsylvania
 1984–85: Chad Colley, Barling, Arkansas (deceased 2021)
 1985–86: Albert H. Linden Jr., Camp Springs, Maryland
 1986–87: Kenneth G. Musselmann, Huntington Beach, California (deceased 2009)
 1987–88: Gene A. Murphy, Sioux Falls, South Dakota
 1988–89: Billy E. Kirby, Clifton, Texas
 1989–90: Vernon V. Cardosi, Saugus, Massachusetts
 1990–91: Joseph E. Andry, Westerville, Ohio (deceased 2010)
 1991–92: Cleveland Jordan, Washington, D.C. (deceased 2019)
 1992–93: Joseph C. Zengerle, Washington, D.C.
 1993–94: Richard E. Marbes, Green Bay, Wisconsin
 1994–95: Donald A. Sioss, Miller Place, New York
 1995–96: Thomas A. McMasters, III, Sterling Hts., Michigan (deceased 2008)
 1996–97: Gregory C. Reed, Indianapolis, Indiana
 1997–98: Harry R. McDonald Jr., Crestview, Florida (deceased 2008)
 1998–99: Andrew A. Kistler, Franklin, Pennsylvania (deceased 2018)
 1999–00: Michael E. Dobmeier, Grand Forks, North Dakota
 2000–01: Armando C. Albarran, San Antonio, Texas
 2001–02: George H. Steese Jr., Fresno, California
 2002–03: Edward R. Heath Sr., Mechanic Falls, Maine (deceased 2005)
 2003–04: Alan W. Bowers, Royalston, Massachusetts
 2004–05: James E. Sursely, Apopka, Florida (deceased 2021)
 2005–06: Paul W. Jackson, Colorado Springs, Colorado
 2006–07: Bradley S. Barton, Tualatin, Oregon
 2007–08: Robert T. Reynolds, Alexandria, Virginia
 2008–09: Raymond E. Dempsey, Des Plaines, Illinois
 2009–10: Roberto Barrera, Del Rio, Texas
 2010–11: Wallace E. Tyson, Fayetteville, North Carolina
 2011–12: Donald L. Samuels, Gallatin, Tennessee
 2012–13: Larry A. Polzin, Sylmar, California (deceased 2020)
 2013–14: Joseph W. Johnston, Williamsburg, Ohio
 2014–15: Ron F. Hope, Clemmons, North Carolina
 2015–16: Moses A. McIntosh Jr., Hephzibah, Georgia
 2016–17: David W. Riley, Semmes, Alabama
 2017–18: Delphine Metcalf-Foster, Vallejo, California
 2018–19: Dennis R. Nixon, China Spring, Texas
 2019–21: Stephen Whitehead, Rosemount, Minnesota

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE 99th NATIONAL CONVENTION
OF THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS HELD AT**

Tampa, Florida

July 31, 2021

Joint Opening Session

- - -

The Joint Opening Session of the Disabled American Veterans 99th National Convention and the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary 98th National Convention convened in the Tampa Bay Ballroom of the J.W. Marriott Tampa, Tampa, Florida, on Saturday, July 31, 2021, and was called to order at 8:32 o'clock, a.m., by National Commander Stephen "Butch" Whitehead.

COMMANDER STEPHEN "BUTCH" WHITEHEAD: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.
(Response of "Good morning.")

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Welcome to Tampa and welcome back DAV. (Applause) I now call to order the 99th National Convention of DAV and DAV Auxiliary. National Adjutant Marc Burgess, will read the Call to Convention.

ADJUTANT J. MARC BURGESS: The Constitution and Bylaws of DAV, Disabled American Veterans, state that the supreme legislative powers of this organization shall be vested in an annual National Convention, composed of the national officers, and representatives of the state departments and chapters.

In accordance with these directives, I, Marc Burgess, National Adjutant and Secretary for this event, declare the 99th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans to be convened in Tampa, Florida, at 8:30 a.m., Saturday, July 31, 2021. (Applause)

Consideration and disposition of business brought before this Convention shall be conducted in accordance with the National Constitution and Bylaws now in force.

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: I would like to ask everyone in attendance to please silence your cell phones and other mobile devices. (Three gavel raps) Please rise. I will now ask the MacDill Air Force Base Honor Guard from nearby Tampa to deliver the national standard. Present Colors.

(Whereupon, the Colors were presented by the MacDill Air Force Base Honor Guard.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Ladies and gentlemen, please stand while we honor America with our national anthem.

(Whereupon, the National Anthem was played.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Now, please join me in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

(Whereupon, the Pledge of Allegiance was recited, after which the members of the MacDill Air Force Base Honor Guard withdrew.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Two. Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in thanking the MacDill Air Force Base Honor Guard for their wonderful participation in getting our 99th National Convention started the right way. (Applause)

I'd like to call on Auxiliary National Chaplain Aura-Lee Nicodemus to lead us in prayer.

(Whereupon, the Chaplain advanced to the podium.)

AUXILIARY CHAPLAIN AURA-LEE NICODEMUS: Please join me in prayer. Dear Heavenly Father, we are so thankful to be together again here in Tampa. We give thanks for the men and women of the DAV and Auxiliary and their lifetime of selfless service over the past century to disabled veterans and their families.

We give thanks for the blessing to be here and the sacrifice of the men and women here and across our nation that allows us to meet together. We pray for our troops in harm's way. We pray for the leaders of our nation and of the DAV and Auxiliary.

And we ask that you will guide us over the next week as we make the decisions that will lead our organization for the next century. We ask your blessing upon each and every one. We ask you to give peace and comfort to those who are grieving.

We pray for our families at home. And we ask that you will bless each and every member here. Keep them safe and put your arms of protection around them. Guard each of our words and actions. We know that many of us have not been able to be with other people over the last two years. Help us to be kind, thoughtful and generous of spirit. In your name. Amen.

(Response of "Amen," followed by one rap of the gavel as the Chaplain withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Welcome to the 99th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans. I am proud to introduce our 2021 National Convention Chairperson.

DAV played a pivotal role in the implementation of the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial, which opened nearly seven years ago, and since has become a profoundly important monument in Washington, D.C.

We are proud to be joined today by a well-known DAV leader who helped lead the charge to establish this memorial. He has been an endless presence and determined advocate for its use.

Dennis Joyner is a combat-disabled veteran of the Vietnam War. As a soldier in the U.S. Army he became a triple amputee after a land mine exploded while he was on patrol in Vietnam's Mekong Delta in 1969.

A life member of DAV since 1970, Joyner served as a national commander from 1983 to 1984.

In 1983, President Regan named him the Handicapped American of the Year and that same year he was honored as DAV's National Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year.

He was appointed Board president for the Disabled Veterans' Life Memorial Foundation in 2015.

Ladies and gentlemen, your 2021 convention chair, Dennis Joyner. (Standing Ovation)

(Whereupon, the Convention Chairman advanced to the podium.)

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER AND CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

DENNIS JOYNER: Thank you, Commander. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Good morning, DAV and Auxiliary.

(Response of "Good morning.")

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER AND CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN JOYNER: Welcome to Tampa. All right. It's been a long two years since we've been able to hold a national convention. And it is such an honor to be here to welcome you back and to help support the important business that we will accomplish this week.

The pandemic and the suffering we faced since our world changed has affected all of us, in ways great and small. It will cast a shadow on generations of Americans who will remember the time that we were forced to disconnect from the routines and relationships that brought us the most comfort. We have, all of us, lost something.

As disabled veterans, caregivers and advocates, dealing with a setback is not a new concept. The shared experience of enduring life-changing losses is, in a way, the tie that binds us together.

But to those of us who have sacrificed a great deal already, the cost of the pandemic has been the hole it has left in our hearts.

I want to tell you about a couple of guys who made DAV a particularly special community to me. Just over a half-century ago three young soldiers were called to war. I was one of them. The other two were Chad Colley and Jim Sursely.

Jim was an athlete and, to be honest, a bit of a hellion from Rochester, Minnesota. (Laughter) He saw a billboard in his hometown that said "Uncle Sam needs you." Three months later he was in the Army.

Bootcamp hadn't challenged him physically and track vehicle training was a breeze. His biggest problem in the Army was that he wasn't what you would call a good garrison soldier, so he volunteered to go to Vietnam. He arrived in March 1968, a month after the Tet Offensive as casualties were peaking.

When he arrived in-country, he found out his job in the military had changed. "Son," his first sergeant told him, "We don't actually have a motor pool. But we are going to get you a tool box. You'll be a machine gunner in the third platoon."

Chad took a different route. He joined the Army after running track and playing football in college. He was a very special leader. As a young officer with the 101st Airborne Division he arrived in Vietnam in 1967 and found himself promoted from platoon to company commander in just six months. He was a rising star who would, many would have guessed, become a general one day.

And my route from Vietnam was completely different. I had tried college, but I took a break just before I graduated. I got married and at just 19 years old, had a son. But just as my new family had started, I received a very nice letter from the local draft board. (Laughter)

They must have thought very highly of me (Laughter) because they placed me in a very special category they called "1-A." (Laughter) It was then that I found out that a student deferment was something you only get one time. I had already played that card.

Goodbye hair; hello Army. I started basic training in December of 1968, finished infantry training, and was shipped off to Vietnam by the end of May. You might guess from looking at me that didn't turn out so

great. On patrol in the Mekong Delta, I lost three limbs as a result of a land mine explosion. A part of my war was over but, as many of you know, a new fight had begun.

Going back to Jim, Army life away from the barracks suited him. After seeing fierce combat against the Viet Cong and the NVA, he was promoted twice in just ten months.

With just weeks left before the end of his tour, he was setting up a claymore mine for a night operation when he triggered a land mine. The blast traumatically amputated three of his limbs. The force and flame of the explosion were so intense that they cauterized his wounds. He didn't even need a tourniquet. His proximity to the blast probably saved his life.

It took 30 days for Jim to regain enough consciousness to even realize what he lost. When his mother was able to make it to Fitzsimons Hospital in Colorado, she walked right past him. She couldn't even recognize him after all he'd endured.

Meanwhile, Chad was leading his company in July of that same year when he stepped on a land mine in a Vietnamese village. As was the case for Jim and I, the blast ultimately took his legs and arm. He had earned the Silver and Bronze Stars for heroism in combat.

In 2014, Chad reflected on his injuries with gratitude.

(Whereupon, a video of Chad Colley was viewed.)

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER AND CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN JOYNER: Wow.

We three made our way back to the states to face surgeries and uncertainty. It was a different time.

There was no Americans with Disabilities Act. The world was a much less accommodating place.

In 1976, I met Donna who would go on to become my wife of the last 40 years. I felt whole again for the first time since the war. We, each of us, tried to move on.

I met Chad in 1980, when we both served as national line officers for DAV. Because we had similar disabilities, we became known as "bookends." (Laughter)

Chad was a pioneering athlete in winter sports. After serving as national commander, he represented the U.S. in the 1992 Paralympics in France and won two gold medals.

He was DAV's longtime National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic chair. He and his wife, Betty Ann, held workshops with recently injured veteran couples to share their experiences and offer advice on relationships and living.

Chad excelled in real estate and remained a lifelong advocate for disabled veterans. And while he was able to convince me to try out one of his experimental sit-skis in Austria in the eighties, one thing he never could convince me to do was fly with him in his private plane. (Laughter)

I met Jim in 1991 at an Orlando Magic basketball game. He was in the handicapped area across the court. I thought, "This guy has to be a veteran." After the game I introduced myself and I asked, "Did you lose your limbs in 'Nam?" He told me, instead, he had been involved in a tragic tricycle accident when he was two. (Laughter) That was the start of a lifelong friendship.

We hunted together and developed so many different ways to joke about our disabilities that people really weren't sure how to take us.

Jim didn't use a power chair. So, if we were going to lunch at an event like this, he'd grab onto the back of my chair seat and we'd get around. If someone saw him, he'd say, "Shhh, he doesn't know I'm back here." (Laughter)

Jim had returned to the states and tried to make a go of life in Minnesota. But the winters and the lack of accessibility brought him down here to Florida. Like Chad, he went into real estate.

He married his lovely wife Jeannie. He had four children, 12 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. He was a complete success and a leader in every sense.

Until the pandemic, we were three. Three soldiers. Three triple amputees injured in the same war, in the same year. Three with many of the same challenges and a shared desire to make life better for our fellow veterans and their families. Three past disabled veterans of the year and former national commanders.

We were a community within the DAV community. We were never alone because, even though we lived apart, we knew we had each other.

Then came the pandemic. Though COVID-19 didn't take Chad's life, it took him away from us for the time that he had left. After 53 years of marriage, Betty Ann, his children and grandchildren bid him farewell at the end of January.

Jim had just completed the "Grand Slam" of turkey hunting. He was staying with his son Dax in Montana when he fell ill. And while the Viet Cong couldn't stop him, this terrible, insidious, microscopic virus took everything he had.

These are not the only people that we lost since the last time we were here. They're not even the only past national commanders. Larry Polzin, another Vietnam-era veteran, passed. And Craig Johniken,

Donna Tanner, Lucille McCarthy, Mary Beth Schultz, and Maureen Peterson, all past auxiliary national commanders, are no longer with us.

And all of us here can think of a loved one we lost too soon. Or the separation that made a difficult time worse. And yet, here we are. While this pandemic has taken much away, we have a lot left. And that is what we're here to celebrate.

Just before the pandemic, I reconnected with someone I hadn't seen since I was in Vietnam. Ladies and gentlemen, I'd like to introduce you to my friend, Doc Hayes.

(Whereupon, the video Outboard: Reunion was viewed, followed by a round of applause.)

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER AND CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN JOYNER: Reconnecting with Doc before this national tragedy struck reminds me of the mercy of our creator. Doc is a life member of the DAV and he's joined us today. Doc.

(Whereupon, Doc Hayes advanced to join Mr. Joyner on stage for a hug, then withdrew, and was recognized with a standing ovation.)

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER AND CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN JOYNER: Without this man I wouldn't be here today. Thank you, brother. Love you. While we can never fully replace what is taken from us, our DAV gives us a common calling, a shared mission.

We honor our fallen by participating in our community. We remember their contributions by serving the cause that inspired them to greatness.

If Jim and Chad were with us here today, they'd really be proud to see us gathered and getting back to important work that calls us here. And they'd want us to get as much done, and have as much fun as possible, with our time together.

This is, after all, an amazing place to spend some time. Just out in front of the hotel is the blue gazebo. You can hop on the TECO streetcar. The line runs east to Ybor City and all the way north to Franklin Street in downtown Tampa. It's free of charge and accessible to all of us.

The Tampa Riverwalk is less than a five-minute car ride from right here and it stretches just over two-and-a-half miles along the Hillsborough River and Garrison Channel. It connects downtown Tampa's favorite attractions like gems on a string.

Once there you can enjoy the Florida Aquarium. There you can even touch the stingrays, if you don't mind losing some limbs. (Laughter) I think I'll pass. (Laughter)

From the Tampa Bay History Center to Sparkman Wharf on the Riverwalk, there's plenty to do. So please, enjoy yourself and make the most of this time. Take advantage of every opportunity we'll have to chart the course of our great charity and with your fellow veterans and family members.

Let me know if there is anything that we can do to make your stay here more worthwhile. God bless you and thank you all for your time. (Standing Ovation)

(Whereupon, the Convention Chairman withdrew from the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Thank you, Dennis. It is an honor to have you here with us today.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And now your DAV Auxiliary staff and national officers: DAV National Auxiliary Adjutant Pat Kemper of Kentucky; (Applause) National Chaplain, Aura-Lee Nicodemus of New Hampshire; (Applause)

Judge Advocate Paula Raymond of Illinois; (Applause) Fourth Junior Vice-Commander Linda Gerke of Missouri; (Applause) Third Junior Vice-Commander AnnMarie Hurley of Massachusetts; (Applause) Second Junior Vice-Commander Julie Weissman-Steinbaugh of Nevada; (Applause)

First Junior Vice-Commander Darlene Spence of Texas; (Applause) Senior Vice-Commander Lynn Helms Prosser of South Carolina; (Applause) and Auxiliary National Commander Diane Franz from right here in Florida; (Applause) and Auxiliary Past National Commander Ellen Timmerman of New Mexico. (Applause)

And now your DAV national officers: your Past National Commander and Chairperson of the Board of Directors, from China Spring, Texas, Dennis Nixon; (Applause) the pride of Grand Forks, North Dakota, our National Judge Advocate, Mike Dobmeier; (Applause) your Third Junior Vice-Commander from California, Dan Contreras; (Applause) your Second Junior Vice-Commander from Kaysville, Utah, Nancy Espinosa; (Applause) your First Junior Vice-Commander from Great Falls, Montana, Joseph Parsetich; (Applause) and, finally, welcome to the stage your Senior Vice-Commander from Palm Harbor, Florida, Andy Marshall. (Applause)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER ANDREW MARSHALL: good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER MARSHALL: It is my great honor to formally introduce a friend and great leader. Commander Whitehead was born in Trimont, Minnesota, and now resides in Rosemont, Minnesota with his wife, Kim. He is a life member of Chapter 10 in Mankato, Minnesota.

Butch is a proud United States Army National Guard sergeant major who enlisted in 1991 at the age of 17. He was injured during a mortar attack while deployed in Scania, Iraq, on February 22, 2007.

Butch joined DAV and was appointed adjutant of the Department of Minnesota in 2012. Butch has served in various leadership capacities at the chapter level, as well as on various committees within the state.

He has been a leader from the get-go, working to ensure veterans have access to programs and services that benefit their physical and mental well-being. He is chiefly concerned with the welfare of those who have served with him.

Fellow veterans, families and friends, I can say without any doubt that Stephen "Butch" Whitehead has been a fighter for this country, for the way of life we hold sacred, and for veterans and their families for the past two years.

So much so that recently during the Great Western Open in Minnesota he took home the first ever "Tom Lyons Make a Difference Award." (Applause)

Commander Whitehead lives up to the award's criteria of service before self to assist service members, veterans, military families, caregivers, and survivors.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is my great pleasure that I introduce your national commander, Stephen "Butch" Whitehead. (Standing Ovation)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Hello, everyone, and welcome to Tampa.

I don't know about all of you, but I'm extremely excited to physically be in your presence and get this 99th National Convention underway. If you are too, let me hear it. (Applause)

Adjutant Burgess, Executive Director Jesinoski, Executive Director Reese, fellow veterans, families, friends and honored guests, thank you so much for giving up some of your time to be here and for that great welcome.

During my tenure as your national commander, DAV commemorated a century of dedicated service to America's veterans, their families, and survivors.

While it certainly looked and felt different than we had planned, it gave us an important opportunity to reflect on the organization's history and the lessons we have learned in the face of adversity.

As all of you know, DAV was formed in 1920, in the wake of World War I, and as the influenza pandemic of 1918 drew to its end.

We can find many parallels between the time of our establishment and our centennial anniversary—a viral outbreak sweeping the globe, overburdened health care systems, economic downturn, and, underlying it all, a pressing need to address critical issues impacting our nation's wartime disabled veterans.

I am more than proud to say that despite the significant challenges of this past year, thanks to the dedication and adaptability of DAV's members, volunteers, and staff all across this nation, DAV's mission did not change and our commitment did not falter.

DAV's mission is rooted in service. And when veterans needed us most, as many lost their jobs, fell ill, or became isolated in their homes, DAV members, volunteers and staff quickly pivoted to provide the resources necessary to help those in need. (Applause)

When times got tough, DAV's services simply cannot afford to stop or even slow down. They are too important to the veterans and the families we serve. All of you in this room played a huge part in our organization's success over the last two years.

Though our offices across the nation were closed to foot traffic to help limit the spread of the virus, DAV rapidly stood up and staffed a new toll-free hotline for veterans to reach our experts for help with claims and benefits.

And despite the pandemic, in 2020, our services resulted in veterans and their families obtaining more than \$23 billion in earned benefits. (Applause)

DAV also established the COVID-19 Unemployment Relief Fund in April to provide financial aid to service-connected disabled veterans who lost employment or income in the wake of the virus outbreak.

Individuals like Air Force veteran Amber Frymark watched as income from her veteran-owned business slowed during the pandemic. Meanwhile, business insurance, storage fees and administrative costs were still due. The DAV relief fund enabled Amber to pay some of her disabled veteran small business bills, and lift some of the overwhelming pressure off of her shoulders.

Sadly, many ill and injured veterans, like Amber, found themselves out of work or at risk of losing their disabled veteran-owned small businesses. The bottom line was that veterans and their families were losing income and DAV had to find a way to help them put food on the table and pay their bills. Urgent needs warranted immediate action.

Veterans receiving assistance through the DAV COVID-19 Relief Fund also were exposed to the wide umbrella of other services and programs DAV offers, which only strengthened their position.

Veterans like Dawnelle Boles, a disabled Navy veteran and single mother who lost her income during the economic downturn created by the virus in 2020. While the relief fund allowed her to quickly get food on the table for her family, it also introduced her to a DAV national service officer.

In addition to assisting Boles with her claim, the NSO reached out to the DAV Department of Indiana which graciously honored a request for additional relief, providing her with a gift card for groceries and gas. Then, the DAV Chapter 27 in Lafayette, Indiana, chipped in and provided her with an additional gift card for groceries and essential items.

This is what makes our organization special and so unique. Nobody is satisfied with just meeting the need. DAV members go above and beyond and find creative ways to maximize our services and programs. (Applause)

It doesn't end there. As we watched unemployment numbers soar last year and hundreds of thousands of veterans were without work, DAV transformed all of our in-person career fairs to virtual events.

Our organization's ability to be flexible and adjust on a moment's notice proved vital to thousands of veterans and their spouses looking for employment during such an unpredictable time.

Thousands of veterans received job offers as a result of these events. The impact it had on their lives during an incredibly stressful time is simply immeasurable.

These virtual hiring events also provided opportunities for spouses like Collette Stein who landed a job in television and was able to relocate and reunite with her family.

Although the full and lasting impact of this pandemic is not yet clear, we do know there are many issues our nation must stand ready to address. Health care is chief among them.

The Department of Veterans Affairs has reported more than 272,000 coronavirus cases among veterans, with more than 12,679 veteran deaths. Over the course of this pandemic the VA had to make drastic changes in how it delivered health care, significantly increasing telehealth services and adapting to the ever-changing landscape.

While the VA has worked hard to keep veterans connected with their mental health providers, we are concerned that many have faced dark times and been isolated from friends and families, perhaps without access to the outlets, support systems, and resources they had relied on in the past.

We will all need to work together to ensure we don't lose ground in the battle against veteran suicide.

We must also explore what the future of the VA health care will look like after such significant changes have been implemented; and we must discuss how the VA will address delays on critical projects, initiatives, programs, and services.

While we have many challenges ahead of us, we know that when we work together, despite internal and external obstacles, we can make progress, such as the expanded access to benefits and health care to Vietnam veterans suffering from the impacts of Agent Orange.

Last year, more than 30,000 Vietnam veterans gained access to VA health care and received almost \$800 million in retroactive benefit payments due to the enactment and implementation of the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act. (Applause)

In addition, this past December, Congress approved legislation to expand the list of presumptive Agent Orange diseases, extending health care and benefits to thousands more deserving Vietnam veterans. (Applause)

But we must not allow other generations of veterans to endure similar unnecessary delays accessing health care and benefits. This includes those exposed to burn pits in the Middle East, hazardous chemical agents at the K2 base in Uzbekistan, or contaminated water at bases here in the U.S.

DAV is proud to be the charity that first brought the issue of burn pits to light. We have also led the way in Congress a couple of years ago by developing legislation to create a concession of exposure to burn pits in order to help veterans more easily prove claims for benefits.

And this year, we have been working successfully with the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees as they both move forward with comprehensive burn pits and toxic exposure legislation.

While there is still a number of political hurdles left to clear, we have never been closer to having Congress approve toxic exposure legislation that would provide affected veterans' health care eligibility, create a concession of exposure, establish presumptions of service connection for veterans exposure to burn pits, and enact a new framework for future presumptions so that veterans never again have to wait decades to receive the health care and benefits they have earned and deserve. (Applause)

Another important issue that requires urgent action is the expansion of VA's Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers. As you know, the VA MISSION Act mandated the

expansion of caregiver assistance to all generations of veterans in two phases; however, the first phase was delayed by a full year due to the VA's failure to certify a new caregiver IT system on time.

While certain veterans of the World War II, Korean War and Vietnam War eras finally became eligible last October, the delay has also setback the second phase of the expansion to October of next year.

We ask Congress to hold VA accountable to fully and faithfully implement the expansion of the caregivers program without further delays by passing legislation that would authorize VA to begin Phase 2 of the expansion as soon as possible, and well before next October. (Applause)

This past 18 months has challenged us as a nation in ways none of us could have even imagined.

But like President Abraham Lincoln, I have faith in America's resilience in such arduous times. He said, "If given the truth, people can be depended upon to meet any national crisis—the great point is to bring them the real facts." (Applause)

Undoubtedly, we will be experiencing the impacts of this pandemic for years to come and must stand prepared to address the long-term ramifications for America's veterans by confronting these new realities.

But together, moving forward with candor and transparency, we can work to overcome the challenges and setbacks this past year has laid at our nation's doorstep.

I can't thank my amazing wife, Kim, nearly enough. She has been beside me each and every step of the way over the last two years. And I could have not done it without her. (Applause)

In keeping with tradition, I hope you will allow me to honor you with my final salute for all you do in maintaining our mission of providing a lifetime of support for our veterans, their families and survivors.

May God bless all the young men and women currently in harm's way, his mercy shine upon those changed in military service, and may God bless the USA.

(Whereupon, the Commander saluted the membership, after which he withdrew from and the Senior Vice-Commander returned to the podium, amid a standing ovation.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER MARSHALL: Commander, under your leadership, this has been an incredible two years for DAV. Thank you. You set an inspiring example for us all. I move to accept the national commander's report. May I have a second?

MR. TREND DILKS: Trent Dilks, Department of Minnesota, Chapter 12, second.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER MARSHALL: All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered. That's a great report, Commander.

(Whereupon, the Senior Vice-Commander withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Thank you, Andy. And now let me introduce the governing body of this fine organization, your DAV National Executive Committee. Ladies and gentlemen, please stand and be recognized.

(Whereupon, the members of the DAV National Executive Committee stood and were recognized with a round of applause.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: And I ask that the Auxiliary National Executive Committee stand and be recognized, as well.

(Whereupon, the members of the DAV Auxiliary National Executive Committee stood and were recognized with a round of applause.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: It is my honor to introduce this message from the 46th President of the United States, President Joe Biden.

Since taking office in January 2021, President Biden has focused on his immediate priorities: taking control of the COVID-19 pandemic; providing economic relief; tackling climate change; advancing racial equity and civil rights, as well as taking immediate actions to reform the nation's immigration system and restore America's standing in the world.

As a parent of a service member who deployed to Iraq, the president and his wife, Dr. Jill Biden, have said that they acknowledge that it's not just the military members who sign up to serve; their families do, too.

They are dedicated to fulfilling America's commitment to military families, caregivers and survivors. As vice-president and supporting the White House's Joint Forces initiative, respectively, the president and first lady visited the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic in 2011.

Since taking office, President Biden has pledged to expand benefits to ensure that victims of burn pits or exposure to military-related pollutants have access to health care and compensation.

He has also prioritized expanding the VA's telehealth opportunities to improve access to health care for veterans, and to end veterans' homelessness, giving them the attention and priority they demand.

The Bidens have long been adamant that, as a nation, our one truly sacred obligation is to properly prepare and equip our troops when we send them to war, and to take care of them and their families—during the deployments and when they return home.

Ladies and gentlemen, a message from our president.

(Whereupon, a video address from President Biden was viewed, followed by a round of applause.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Thank you, Mr. President.

The Honorable Denis McDonough's nomination to lead the Department of Veterans Affairs was confirmed by the United States Senate on February 8th, 2021. The next day he was officially sworn in as the eleventh Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

Before his current role at the VA, Secretary McDonough served under President Obama's Administration as the White House Chief-of-Staff from February 2013 to January 2017.

Prior to his role as Chief-of-Staff, Mr. McDonough was Principal Deputy National Security Advisor from October 2010 to January 2013. He also served as the Chief-of-Staff of the National Security Staff and as the Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategic Communications.

Following his White House tenure, Secretary McDonough was Professor of the Practice of Public Policy at the Keough School of Global Affairs at the University of Notre Dame, Senior Advisor and Senior Principal at the Markle Foundation, and on the board of directors of the Tent Partnership for Refugees, and the SAFE Project, a national nonprofit working to end the nation's catastrophic addition epidemic.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am proud to introduce my fellow Minnesotan and the eleventh Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Honorable Denis McDonough.

(Whereupon, Secretary McDonough advanced to the podium amid a standing ovation.)

THE HONORABLE DENIS McDONOUGH: Good morning. It's an honor to be here with you this morning. Thank you, Butch, for that kind introduction and your steadfast leadership of DAV.

Let me just say thanks for one other thing. A bunch of people out here might have thought I have an accent when I give this talk but, you know, I want to thank you for warming them up. (Laughter) I love hearing that good Minnesota accent.

When I look around this room I see so many people deserving our gratitude: Diane Franz, your Auxiliary National Commander; Marc Burgess, your National Adjutant; Pat Kemper, your Auxiliary National Adjutant; Barry Jesinoski, Executive Director of DAV's National Headquarters in Kentucky; Randy Reese, Executive Director of DAV's Washington, D.C., headquarters; and, of course, all of you who have joined us today in-person and online for the 99th annual convention of the Disabled American Veterans.

Ninety-nine years is an incredible accomplishment. And after this past year there is so much for us to discuss. But I want to begin by saying, as the president did, thank you to all of you for your service to the nation, for your devotion to veterans throughout the years, for executing on your mission of empowering veterans to lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity.

Now, you know I'm not a veteran. But I've had the unique privilege of spending much of my life surrounded by and working with veterans, giving me a longstanding appreciation of the life-and-death importance of your work.

Growing up I learned about the honor that comes with military service from my Grandpa McDonough, a proud Marine. (Cheer)

On my frequent trips to Afghanistan and Iraq, while I was in the White House, I saw the excellence of our Armed Forces and the grueling nature of long deployments.

On my many visits to Walter Reed I admired the strength and resilience of our wounded warriors.

And at Dover, where our fallen heroes come home one final time, I've borne witness to the unimaginable grief of military families as they say their final goodbyes.

And in my first several months at VA it's been the honor of my life to try to serve all of you as well as you have served us.

Your know, President Biden often says, as he just did, that our most sacred obligation is to prepare and equip the troops we send into harm's way and to care for them and their families when they return home. That's the promise that we, as a nation, make to anyone who signs up for military service.

If you take care of us, we'll take care of you. If you fight for us, we will fight for you. If you have our backs, we will have your backs when you transition out of the service.

The thing is, our nation, as a whole, makes that promise; but we—VA and DAV, all of us—are among those most responsible for keeping that promise. (Applause) It's a difficult job but it's one that you do exceedingly well.

So from the bottom of my heart, thank you for all you do. There is no more noble mission than partnering with you and serving our veterans, families, caregivers and survivors.

But when I look around the room, even on this day of celebration, there is a gnawing feeling of grief. Because this year, perhaps more than any other, it's impossible not to notice the absence of those no longer with us.

We remember people like Jim Sursely and Chad Colley, both former National Commanders of DAV, just talked about this backstage with Dennis, who were wounded in Vietnam and dedicated the rest of their lives to helping other disabled veterans like themselves.

And, of course, we remember the DAV members, VA employees, and veterans we've lost throughout the course of this devastating pandemic.

When I think about the more than 610,000 people this country has lost to COVID, I remember that they are your people, our people, the veterans we serve, the friends we want to call, the family members, even, missing from our dinner table, from supper tables.

We remember all those we lost and our hearts go out to all that they've left behind.

But it's also important to remember that there are so many veterans out there right now, enjoying their summers with their families, or perhaps even sitting right here in this room, whose lives have been saved or bettered because of the work that we've all done together.

William Eserkalin is just one example. William is a DAV member, an Army vet in Milwaukee, who has a condition that prevents blood from pumping properly to his brain, meaning that he gets dizzy, can't drive, but he often needs to get to the VA.

He had safe transportation to VA for a while, but then the service he had been using ended, meaning he had no way to get to his appointments during the pandemic. That's when he found out about DAV and began getting rides from your volunteer drivers.

"Without DAV," he said, "I would have been left out in the cold." The drivers are "good people who are doing it because they want to help, not because it's a job." "The VA," he said, "is like my second home." And DAV helped get him there.

That's the power of our partnership, which has been on display throughout this pandemic, as Butch just talked through. Our VA employees have shown unwavering strength and determination. When PPE was running low, they invented reusable, 3D-printed PPE and got it straight to the front lines – to guys like Joe.

When it wasn't safe for vets to come to the hospital, they cared for our vets online, ramping up telehealth appointments from 2,500 per day last March to 45,000 per day a year later.

And when the vaccine became available, they sprang into action and vaccinated more than 3.6 million people.

Now, the same is true for all of you here at DAV. You quickly stood up a national phone system when the pandemic hit, helping vets and their families file nearly 140,000 benefits claims in the last year.

And even as your own families struggled with the economic hardship of the pandemic, you invested your hard-earned dollars in an unemployment relief fund that helped veterans feed their families, pay their bills, and stay above water when they feared they might be drowning.

And your team of volunteer drivers logged almost 10 million hours – 10 million hours – providing 243,000 rides to VA health care facilities at a time when that access could have easily spelled the difference between life and death.

All of that work translates into the one statistic that matters most: lives saved and improved by the work we do together.

In the time when disabled veterans like William needed us most, DAV and VA rose to the occasion; and we did it together.

Now, as we all know, our work on the pandemic is far from over. We've already lost thousands of veterans to this deadly disease and now the Delta variant is causing an exponential increase in infections, hospitalizations, and deaths once again.

That's why everyone needs to be vaccinated. I can't say it enough. Ninety-nine percent of those dying from COVID right now are unvaccinated. So let me put it a different way: almost every death from this day forward is entirely preventable. But don't take my word for it. Listen to the doctors.

A doctor in Alabama told a harrowing story the other day, saying that the unvaccinated COVID patients are begging her right before they are put on a ventilator for the vaccine. But at that point all she can do is hold their hands and tell them, "I'm sorry, but it's too late."

And hours later, when she calls time of death for those patients, she has to tell their families that the best way to honor their deceased loved ones is to get the vaccine. Because if they don't, that tragic story will repeat itself.

I don't want that to be you or your families or the vets we know and love. That's why we took the extraordinary step this week of mandating vaccines for VA employees who directly care for you, for our vets. And that's why I'm asking you right now to please get vaccinated if you haven't already.

More than half the nation's vets have done so. And thanks to the SAVE LIVES Act, all veterans, their spouses, their caregivers, can be vaccinated safely, easily, free of charge.

The vaccine will save your life, protect your families, and keep our fellow veterans safe. And, fortunately, you can get vaccinated right now on the fourth floor of the Marriott Hotel across the street (Laughter) which is connected to this hotel (Applause)—it's connected to this hotel right here on the third floor by a skyway. We know something about those.

When you have a few minutes today, please head over there and get the shot. That's the only way we can end this pandemic and finally return to normal life. (Applause)

But while we want our lives to return to normal, we must also recognize that some things shouldn't go back to the way they were. At VA, for example, we shouldn't go back to the old way of doing things because the work we've done to respond to the pandemic has forged us into a stronger, better department for our nation's veterans.

Telehealth and tele-appeals are allowing us to meet vets where they want, when they want, in unprecedented ways.

Outpatient trust scores among vets rose to 90 percent this year—which, in my mind, should be the floor, not the ceiling.

And our team rated its one millionth disability claim faster this year than almost ever before, frankly, faster this year than (Applause)—I think I can clap for that—faster than any year in the history of the VA but one. That's the result of our goal to make sure that vets get their benefits on time, every time, on time, every time.

And our cemeteries not only stayed open during the pandemic but expanded to six new locations.

Bottom line? We are now providing more care and more benefits to more veterans than ever before. (Applauses)

So as we look to the future, we're not trying to build a VA that goes back to the old normal. With your help we're going to continue to do better for our vets. We're going to continue to be better for our vets. And we're going to do that by driving toward the four fundamental principles of our vision for the future of VA: Advocacy, Access, Outcomes, and Excellence.

First advocacy. We're working to make sure that VA is the nation's premier advocate for veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors.

Veterans have earned the care and services we provide. We exist to best serve them, not to do what is easy for VA.

And when it comes to advocacy, it starts at the top. Our shared mission could not be a higher priority for this president and this administration, as you saw a few minutes ago, and it could not be closer to the president's heart. When he nominated me to lead VA, he told me to "fight like hell" for our vets. That's exactly what we're doing.

And this administration is doing the same, delivering for our vets with the SAVE LIVES Act, as I mentioned earlier; with the American Rescue Plan, which has allocated 17 billion dollars for us to help care for vets during the pandemic; and with the proposed American Jobs Plan which will provide 18 billion dollars to modernize VA facilities, create jobs for vets, and expand opportunities for small veteran-owned businesses.

But, as we all know, advocacy at the White House level doesn't mean anything if we don't utilize the benefits that—if vets can't utilize the benefits that they've earned, which is where you come in.

For many veterans, and certainly for some of the most deserving veterans, you are their first impression of the VA, the front door to the benefits that they have earned. You're sitting across the table from them or their surviving spouses or their dependents, every single day.

All of which is to say, DAV is one of VA's most important partners. And I'm committed to working with you every day to improve access for veterans. (Applause)

So on access, second, we'll move heaven and earth to get veterans timely access to their VA resources. That's world-class health care. That's earned benefits. And it's a dignified final resting place that's a lasting tribute to their selfless service to this country.

And a major part of that equation is making sure that veterans have the best possible experience wherever they access VA benefits and services: at home, in the community, or at VA.

That's why we're meeting vets where they are by expanding telehealth and tele-appeals, and by supporting our caregivers.

Let me say this very, very clearly: caregivers are not an afterthought for us; they're a top priority. (Applause) That's why I've appointed Meg Kabat to be the first ever senior advisor for caregivers. And we look forward to expanding the program of comprehensive assistance to cover all caregivers as soon as possible. (Applause)

For vets who are getting care in the community, we are building a network that has the right providers, in the right locations, to meet the needs of our veterans, no matter where they live.

And, of course, we are dedicated to improving the experience for vets who get direct care from VA. That means finding the right balance between community care and direct care—putting the direct care system on a sustainable path to ensure that future generations of veterans enjoy the same great VA health care that past generations have enjoyed.

And it means rebuilding, repairing, realigning and modernizing VA's health care infrastructure to meet your needs because that infrastructure is critical for the health of our nation's vets and the health of our nation.

VA is the backstop and innovator at the heart of the entire U.S. health care system, training American physicians, researching tomorrow's challenges, and innovating today to overcome them. And that is never going to change. And it sure won't change on my watch.

Next, I want to talk about veterans' outcomes. Outcomes drive everything we do because vets, not us, are the ultimate judges of our success.

One major focus here is toxic exposure. We are not waiting for Congress to act on this. We are going ahead and acting ourselves. (Applause) We've already announced three major updates:

First, we are creating a new, comprehensive decision-making model for determining presumptive conditions, a model that will leverage all available science, better utilize claims data, and be guided by one core principle: getting vets the benefits they deserve.

Second, veterans suffering from bladder cancer, hyperthyroidism, and Parkinsonism due to Agent Orange can now be paid the benefits they're owed. (Applause)

And, third, we are very close to being able to pay disability benefits to veterans who suffer from respiratory conditions, which may include asthma, sinusitis, and rhinitis, as a result of their service in Southwest Asia, Afghanistan and Uzbekistan. (Applause)

We are moving on this with the utmost urgency, and we expect to have news on this any day. Veterans have waited for these benefits for far too long. And they should not have to wait any longer. (Applause)

As Butch underscored, another fundamental priority is preventing veteran suicide. Mental health services are critical for suicide prevention so keeping them going during the pandemic has been one of our primary focuses. Fortunately, vets have adapted seamlessly to tele-mental health sessions, attending 4.4 million sessions already this year, more than doubling their total from all of 2020.

Next year's budget will also focus on suicide prevention, investing more than half-a-billion dollars in outreach programs that address the risks of suicide.

And we're going all-in on helping rural vets in need of mental health services. (Applause) That means building three new programs in rural locations to help severely mentally-ill vets and creating a new training program designed to attract top-shelf clinicians to rural areas, keep them in rural areas, and care for the vets who live in rural areas.

This is an all-hands-on-deck situation. One veteran who commits suicide is one too many, so we will be partnering with you, with DOD, with public health experts and others to get vets the help they need before their warning signs turn into tragedies.

Lastly on outcomes, we are laser-focused on ending veterans' homelessness.

You know, a few weeks ago, at a homeless vets' vaccination event right outside VA headquarters a veteran came to get his shot. And he wasn't wearing any shoes. So we got him vaccinated and our canteen staff got him a new pair of shoes.

On the one hand, that story is heartwarming, a job well done. On the other, it's heartbreaking because that man served our country. He should have shoes on his feet. He should have a roof over his head. In fact, there should be no such thing as a homeless veteran. Not here. (Applause) Not here. Not in the greatest country on the planet in the history of the world.

So I assure you, through HUD-VASH, SSVF, the Emergency Rental Assistance Program, and the additional programs we launched this week to help vets through the end of the eviction and foreclosure moratoria, we are going to do whatever it takes to get vets into homes and to keep them there. (Applause)

Finally, excellence. We're seeking excellence in all we do for veterans by leveraging the strength and diversity that defines the veteran population, our VA workforce, and this amazing country.

Our diversity is a strength, never a weakness. Every person entering a VA facility must feel safe, free of harassment and discrimination. And we will welcome all veterans. (Applause)

One of my first actions as VA Secretary was ordering a top-down review of all of our policies, with the help of DAV and other organizations, to determine how we can make VA a more welcoming place.

Let me just say a word here, just a side note. Joy Ilem on the DAV team is a quiet giant in helping reform our policies. (Applause) That work has already made an impact.

For LGBTQ+ vets we're taking the initial steps toward expanding VA's care to include gender confirmation surgery.

For women vets we're acting to ensure that all of our facilities are safe, respectful and welcoming. And we're caring for more women vets than ever before, (Applause) offering primary care, gynecological care, fertility care, mental health care, and more.

And for survivors of military sexual trauma, we are working tirelessly, tirelessly, to provide the services they need, taking steps like centralizing MST-related claims in offices where employees are especially well-trained to help survivors. (Applause) I do that.

Now, there's so much more I could say here but it all boils down to this: for too long too many veterans who fought around the world to protect our rights and freedoms have had to fight brutal battles here at home for their own rights and freedoms.

Tragically, many of those fights continue to today. But at VA those fights are over. In this administration nobody is going to have to fight to get quality care, benefits, and services they have earned, no matter who they are or who they love. (Applause)

So that's where VA is headed: continuing to deliver more care and more benefits and more services to more veterans than ever before with Advocacy, Access, Outcomes, and Excellence as our guiding principles.

But make no mistake, we can't do it without you.

Since VA began we have needed your help, your leadership to serve our vets. And that's just as true now, if not more true now, than ever before.

The experiences, perspectives of DAV's 4,000 service officers, 26,000 volunteers, and 1.1 million veterans and survivors are a massively powerful resource.

When I think of just how powerful, a couple of stories come to mind. The first is something I remember from my time in the White House. And it's about one of my least favorite things in the world, budget fights.

For years, the benefits and health care that vets earned through their service were tied to annual government appropriations and, therefore, contingent upon the annual budget fights and government shutdowns that often hold Washington and, importantly, the country, hostage.

Well, you all made clear to Congress what was plain to everybody else: that arrangement was unacceptable.

In 2009, you developed a proposal and you won the fight to provide VA health care with advance appropriations, thus making sure that our nation's vets get what they deserve every year, no matter what is happening in Washington. (Applause)

The second story is that of Jason Barbieri. Both of Jason's grandparents were World War II combat vets. His father was an Air Force Reservist, so when Jason turned 19 in 1994 he jumped at the opportunity to enlist in the Marines.

But while he was deployed he suffered back injuries and developed Post Traumatic Stress. And when he transitioned out of the service, he struggled mightily with things like hypervigilance, homelessness, and food insecurity. In his own words, he was "lost."

Then the great people at DAV helped him with his claims process, helped him get counseling, helped him get a job, helped him find a home. With your help, Jason rebuilt his life.

"They were the ones on the other side of the phone when I didn't think I could make it," he said. They—you—"answered the phone" and they—you—"helped me find myself. They never gave up on me. Even when I gave up on myself they never gave up on me."

That's who you want to be. That's who I want to be. I want to be the guy on the other side of the phone who Jason says, "You never gave up on me."

These two stories capture the incredible impact of your work, the incredible ethos of who you are at the national level and at the individual level, in Congress and in communities, for every veteran and for each veteran.

When I said earlier that our nation makes a promise to those who sign up to serve our country, and you are the ones who help keep that promise, that's what I mean.

Whether veterans need help for wounds visible or invisible, for benefits or health care or services, for rides to the hospital or rides down the mountains at Snowmass, you've been there since 1920 answering the call to serve, answering the phone and being the guy who says, being the person who the vet says, "They did not forget me." And I know you will be there again, right there again, when that next call comes. (Applause)

So thank you for your magnificent work, for your partnership, for putting up with me, and for all the work we are going to do together.

God bless you. God bless our nation's troops, our veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors. And may we always give you our very best. Thank you all very much. (Standing Ovation)

(Whereupon, Secretary McDonough withdrew from and Commander Whitehead returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Thank you so much, Secretary McDonough, for giving DAV and our outstanding members some of your time here today. We look forward to our continued work with you and the department to improve the lives of veterans and their families.

It now gives me great pleasure to introduce my leadership partner and a friend to all our nation's veterans and their family members, DAV Auxiliary National Commander Diane Franz. (Standing Ovation)

Diane joined the DAV Auxiliary as a senior life member in 1995. Her membership began as a junior member in Erie, Pennsylvania, through her father who was 100 percent disabled. Both Diane's parents were very active in DAV and the Auxiliary. Each held offices, both elected and appointed.

She is a life member with Unit 16 right here in Florida. She has been an active member serving as unit adjutant, treasurer, chaplain, senior vice, commander, S-E-C, alternate S-E-C, and chairman of Membership, Ways and Means, VAVS, and Legislative.

She has been elected to all chairs on the Auxiliary State Line, District 7 Alternate NEC and NEC, and is presently the DAV Auxiliary state department adjutant and advisor to the state commander.

Diane's historic two-year tenure atop the Auxiliary has encompassed her passion for DAV and Auxiliary's growth, all while emphasizing the importance of unity within the organization and our communities.

When not hard at work helping veterans and their families, she enjoys going to all the parks in Orlando with her son Mark, his wife Sharon and their two grandsons, Owen and Wyatt.

Friends, please welcome DAV Auxiliary National Commander Diane Franz.

(Whereupon, the DAV Auxiliary Commander advanced to the podium amid a standing ovation.)

AUXILIARY NATIONAL COMMANDER DIANE FRANZ: Thank you, Commander Whitehead. I am grateful to have the opportunity to speak to all of you here today about critically important issues. The significance of these topics is not limited to myself, rather, they are essential to all veteran families.

I want to thank all of my fellow members in Unit 16 and our counterparts in DAV Chapter 16 right here in Florida. Thank you. (Applause) All of you have been a helping hand and guiding light through the uncertainty of the last two years. Again, I thank you.

Before I go any further, our beloved DAV and DAV Auxiliary lost a lot since we were last together. That included five past commanders. Among those giving souls, Auxiliary Past National Commander Craig "Hub" Johniken was a very close personal friend to me and many gathered here today.

Hub became the first male Auxiliary National Commander upon his election at the 2017 National Convention in New Orleans. He had many, many friends all across the U.S., including Puerto Rico, which was one of his favorite places. He loved the people and the beautiful scenery there.

I would like to hold a moment of silence in honor of Craig and for all of our fallen.

(Whereupon, a moment of silence was observed.)

AUXILIARY NATIONAL COMMANDER FRANZ: Thank you. To Craig's loving wife, Teresa, we are here to love and support you.

Each and every one of us in this room shares a common responsibility, to stay informed and aware of all facets of the organization and veteran-related issues so we can serve veterans and their families.

I believe there are two major areas where we must continue to grow. The first is membership. We must continue to grow in our numbers or risk facing long-term setbacks.

Membership is the driving force behind our organization and, without new members, we risk losing out on new ideas from new perspectives that could help our Auxiliary move forward.

The need for growth in membership cannot be more evident than in our volunteering programs. Throughout the country we have seen a large number of volunteer drivers and VA volunteers drop off recently.

Of course, we have been going through an unprecedented time. However, this has meant a loss in a large fraction of our volunteers who are older or unable to fulfill their duties because of the risks that they

face leaving their homes. This is why as we continue to grow we must put a focus on gaining younger members and volunteers.

The Auxiliary is in an incredible position to expand our ranks of incredible volunteers and support for our nation's heroes. We are the family members of these brave men and women, many of whom are now grandparents, parents, aunts and uncles. We must encourage a new generation of veteran family members to give back.

For our Auxiliary juniors, or those under 21 who are looking to contribute, there are scholarship opportunities. Hundreds of future leaders have used the Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship to achieve their goals.

DAV Auxiliary also offers a scholarship as part of our Education Program. I encourage all who are looking to get involved to please think about joining the DAV Auxiliary and giving your spare time to our veterans.

Secondly, while we continue to focus on growth as an organization, we must also continue to work with our elected leaders to make sure promises made to our veterans, their families and survivors are kept. We must focus on meaningful legislation.

I would like to see more bills passed to help our most vulnerable veterans, caregivers, and dependents. As we begin to recover from the pandemic that has ravaged so many aspects of normalcy, we cannot forget about the ever-growing number of homeless and at-risk veterans.

DAV's Homeless Veterans Initiative, supported by DAV's Charitable Service Trust and Columbia Trust, promotes the development of supportive housing and necessary services to assist homeless veterans in becoming productive, self-sufficient members of society.

This initiative is meant to collaborate with local, state, and federal governments and should become a priority for lawmakers as we begin to recover.

We have done incredible work when it comes to helping caregivers. Within the last year, veterans and their caregivers in Phase 1 became eligible for the Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers Program. And many of you have applied and are now receiving those long-overdue benefits and services.

As most of us know, some from experience, this program provides training for caregivers, along with a modest stipend and respite care. And while there have been unfortunate delays, soon help will finally be available to all generations of caregivers who save taxpayers while improving the quality of life for the most disabled and deserving veterans in our community. (Applause)

Efforts like this remind us of the reason we were called to service through DAV and the Auxiliary.

Before I conclude, I have a very important and special presentation to make. (Applause)

The DAV Auxiliary Outstanding Member of the Year Award recognizes the contributions and dedication of our top Auxiliary member. Their efforts further our shared goals and show service and dedication that are truly above and beyond the ordinary.

This year's recipient is Bonita Mitchell, a member of Unit 2 in Kansas City, Missouri. (Applause) Bonita has been a dedicated member of the Auxiliary for nearly 40 years and currently serves as the Department of Missouri's Judge Advocate.

Throughout her membership she has served as the national fourth junior vice-commander, national chaplain, department commander, and on the national finance and executive committees.

Bonita never stops giving. She is always quick to mentor a new member or assist with wheelchair bowling. She has volunteered for 30 years at the Kansas City VA Medical Center and is constantly at the forefront of whatever a DAV chapter or unit needs.

She can always be counted on to lend her organizational skills and experience to ensure all and every program or fundraisers go according to plan.

Bonita has been an absolute powerhouse. She is always ready to answer any question and encourage those around her. At 83-years-young she is still an active and well-respected member at all levels of the Auxiliary.

Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome this year's Outstanding Auxiliary Member of the Year, Bonita Mitchell. (Standing Ovation)

(Whereupon, Ms. Mitchell was presented with her award, at which time an official photograph was taken.)

MS. BONITA MITCHELL: National Commanders Whitehead and Franz, National DAV Auxiliary and DAV officers, National Adjutants Burgess and Kemper, I became an Auxiliary member through my husband, Staff Sergeant LeRoy Mitchell, a 100-percent disabled veteran from the Korean War.

It was early in the 1980s that we heard of the DAV and Auxiliary. And we joined the Auxiliary at that time. We wish we had heard of this organization back in the 1950s.

I want to thank my Auxiliary, Earnestine Schuman-Hink, Number 2, of Kansas City, Missouri, for putting my name in for this award. I really was shocked and surprised when I heard it, that I had won.

I want to thank the Committee, also, for selecting me. I feel very privileged and honored to receive this award. God bless all of you. Keep up the good work for our veterans. God bless America. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Ms. Mitchell withdrew from the stage and Commander Franz returned to the podium.)

AUXILIARY NATIONAL COMMANDER FRANZ: I was just informed that we had her age wrong. She's 89 years old. (Applause) She just turned 89. Thank you, Bonita. And thank you, Commander Whitehead, for your friendship and partnership. It's been an honor to serve alongside you. And God bless you and your family and Kim. Can't forget her. (Applause)

I also want to thank my family, Mark, Sharon, Owen and Wyatt, for understanding my often chaotic schedule over the past two years. And I want to thank everybody here for the support that they have given. It's been tremendous. It's been rewarding and I will cherish it for always.

God bless us. God bless America. Keep our veterans and our present-serving military safe.

And this concludes my report. Thank you. (Standing Ovation)

(Whereupon, the DAV Auxiliary Commander withdrew from and Commander Whitehead returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Thank you, Diane. And that was a wonderful report.

DAV's commitment to fulfilling our promises to the men and women who have served is clear through the work of the national Transportation Network. Throughout the country our hospital service coordinators and volunteers organize and facilitate critical transportation, making it possible for ill and injured veterans to receive the care they need and earned at the VA medical facilities.

Since 1987 DAV headquarters, chapters, departments, the National Service Foundation and Columbia Trust have purchased 3,558 vehicles at the cost of nearly \$83 million. (Applause) This is a major investment in helping our brothers and sisters get access to the care that they need.

Despite the obstacles and challenges of 2020, DAV volunteer drivers spent more 675,000 hours logging over 9.6 million miles providing no-cost rides for veterans to VA medical facilities. (Applause)

Throughout our history DAV has received unparalleled support from numerous sources, but there has been only one partner who has faithfully been with us since the beginning. That partner is Ford. (Applause)

While she couldn't be here in person, we have a special message from dear friend of our cause. Mary Culler is president of Ford Fund, a role she assumed January 1st, 2020, overseeing the company's philanthropic investments through signature programs and employee volunteer outreach in more than 50 countries.

Let's take a look.

(Whereupon, a video address from Mary Culler of Ford Fund was viewed.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Thank you, Mary, and to Ford for your support of DAV. I'd like to inform our membership that Ford is offering all DAV members a \$1,000 Private Offer to be used in addition to their X-Plan Pricing on all new Ford and Lincoln vehicle sales through September 30th, 2021.

This is a great opportunity and I'm glad that Ford was able to continue offering this program for our members. In fact, since 2001, DAV members and their families have purchased more than 30,000 vehicles from Ford through the Ford X-Plan Partner Recognition Program. To learn more about this program, please stop by the Ford booth.

At the booth be sure to say hello to the Ford team and participate in their survey for an opportunity to win prizes, including a die-cast Ford vehicle signed by Bill Ford, collective challenge coins, gift cards, and more. For those attending virtually, you can still participate by texting the word DAV to 46786. (Applause)

It is important that future generations understand the service and sacrifices veterans have made to our nation. Serving those who put their country above themselves is a passion for some outstanding young people. DAV is proud to incentivize and recognize tomorrow's leaders who have made a commitment to our cause through our DAV scholarship program.

Each year, with the continued support of the Ford Motor Company Fund, DAV honors these budding patriots with scholarships for higher education in recognition and appreciation of their volunteer services to our American heroes.

The Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship Fund is named after one of the most revered leaders in the history of our cause. Jesse was a Marine veteran who was wounded in Vietnam in 1965. But that did not stop his life calling of service to others.

He joined the DAV in 1967 and became our organization's first African-American executive director before being selected in 1993 by the President of the United States to become the first African-American Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

This year we have selected eight of the nation's outstanding young volunteers to receive assistance pursuing their education through this program. The scholarships not only incentivize volunteerism but also connects future leaders with veterans and encourages a lifelong commitment on their behalf.

Now, let's get to know one of these young leaders and this year's top Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship winner a little more.

(Whereupon, the Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship video was viewed, followed by a round of applause.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: DAV National Voluntary Services Director John Kleindienst, will you please join me on stage. (Applause) And now it's my extreme pleasure to welcome our top recipient, Daniel Finney of Rock Hill, South Carolina, to the stage. (Standing Ovation)

(Whereupon, John Kleindienst and Daniel Finney joined the Commander for the presentation.)

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Daniel Finney, a volunteer at the Columbia VA Health Care System at the Rock Hill VA Clinic has donated more than 1,200 volunteer hours serving veterans over the past seven years.

While in high school, Daniel's influence and dedication was instrumental in introducing more than 15 new volunteers to the Dorn VA summer student volunteer program. He is currently volunteering on a National VA telehealth initiative connecting with veterans to teach them how to use virtual platforms for medical appointments.

Daniel is currently attending Winthrop University in South Carolina and studying exercise science with the goal of becoming a physician's assistant. (Applause)

MR. DANIEL FINNEY: Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

MR. FINNEY: I am extremely honored to be this year's Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship recipient. I want to thank the DAV for recognizing me for my ongoing volunteer efforts and selecting me for this prestigious award.

I want to thank my mother and father for their steadfast love and guidance on my journey as a servant-leader. I want to thank Ms. Vicki Johnson for nominating me and supporting me; Dr. Sabrina Clark for her amazing vision and dedication to providing opportunities for young adults to impact the lives of veterans; and last, but certainly not least, all veterans. Thank you, for without your selfless sacrifices I wouldn't be where I am today. (Applause)

We all know during these past 17 months COVID has brought challenges to us personally and in health care communities around the world, which forced us to adjust to a new lifestyle. This, including not being able to see loved ones face-to-face, quarantining, and asking people four or five times because you can't hear—asking people four or five times to repeat themselves because you can't hear what you're saying underneath those masks. (Laughter)

But, COVID has also presented adversity in my volunteer efforts. This was troubling because I was more concerned about the veterans' wellbeing during these tough times.

As luck would have it, I was made aware of an opportunity to continue my passion for volunteering with the veterans and I happily accepted. I was appointed to serve as a telehealth volunteer for a VA national pilot program.

The assignment allows me to virtually help veterans efficiently use their electronic devices to log onto the virtual appointments by providing step-by-step service so that they can continue to receive their care.

Now there is no doubt that COVID has brought devastation. But there was also change for the good: communities supporting one another, families spending time together, and the earth having time to heal.

The world utilized technology more than ever before and this allowed me to inspire change in the lives of others as I served as a national mentor to high school students who are seeking to volunteer and enrich the lives of the veterans across the country.

I have persevered and adapted to change. As a result, I have been blessed with the amazing opportunity, met and connected with people and inspired change in the youth to carry the torch to become the next generation of volunteers to care for our veterans.

A reporter, Margaret Gardner, wrote, "If we go back to the way things were, we will have lost the lesson. May we rise up and do better." It is my intent as a man, student, mentor, and volunteer to embrace the lesson. I will remain steadfast and focused in adopting the DAV's purpose to empower veterans to lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity.

In closing, thank you, Disabled American Veterans, for enabling me to be here for this prestigious honor. I challenge all DAV chapters to reach out and mentor young adults like myself because we are stronger together.

Thank you and Godspeed. (Standing Ovation)

(Whereupon, Mr. Kleindienst and Mr. Finney were joined by Adjutant Burgess and Commander Whitehead at which time an official photograph was taken, after which Mr. Kleindienst and Mr. Finney withdrew from the stage and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Thank you for all you do for veterans, Daniel. And I wish you nothing but continued success.

As we are all aware, we were unable to hold a traditional national convention last year in Dallas. This meant the winners of some of our most prestigious awards were not able to be recognized by the veteran community they serve.

While we don't have the time to invite everyone up on the stage, we do want to take a moment to recognize them. Ladies and gentlemen, please give a warm welcome to last year's top scholarship winner from Cheyenne, Wyoming, Tanner Johnston.

(Whereupon, Mr. Johnston stood and was recognized by a round of applause.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Tanner was inspired to give back by his father's 20-year Air Force career and has volunteered since he was 10-years old, ultimately amassing over 1,600 volunteer hours at the Cheyenne VA Medical Center. (Applause)

Members of DAV and the Auxiliary are, without a doubt, among the most dedicated and caring volunteers in our nation. They don't give for the recognition. They do it because of their compassion toward our veterans and a desire to assist in keeping our promises to those who have served.

It is now my pleasure to announce the winners of the 2021 George H. Seal Memorial Award.

The winner of this year's DAV George Seal Memorial Award resides in Columbia, South Carolina, and is a proud veteran of the United States Navy. It is my pleasure to introduce Ms. D. Davis. (Applause)

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: D.S. Davis, a member of Chapter 5 in Sumter, South Carolina, has volunteered for 15 years and has given more than 12,000 hours in service to her fellow veterans at the William Jennings Bryan Dorn VA Medical Center in Columbia, South Carolina. Davis has volunteered in just about every possible capacity at the medical center.

As a Navy veteran, Davis knows first-hand the struggles and challenges other veterans may face. Davis has demonstrated that resiliency is a skill that can be learned. And she has taught that spirit to many of her fellow veterans. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Ms. Davis advanced to the stage at which time an official photograph was taken.)

MS. D.S. DAVIS: Good morning, DAV, Auxiliary, guests. Good morning, Tampa.

(Response of "Good morning.")

MS. DAVIS: It's an honor to be here and something that I never would have dreamed of. Thank you so much for nominating me for this award and thank you for choosing me to be the recipient. This is something that comes naturally to me so I wouldn't think of asking for any kind of extras.

In my opinion, being a veteran and advocating for other veterans, listening to them, is how I have made the biggest impact to veterans' morale.

As a volunteer at the hospital and in other venues I have had the opportunity on many occasions to step in and speak out when the situation wouldn't allow a staff member to speak or to challenge an issue.

I have been the voice for many veterans who couldn't speak for themselves. And I've helped many find hope. I've listened when veterans had no one to talk to and sat beside their beds when there was no one left in their families to come and visit.

I filled the gap between the VA limits and the requirements of the community. I've helped veterans get into treatment programs, find housing, reconnect with families, and handle legal issues, to name a few.

Often they didn't meet the requirements of the VA or the standard set for the community recipients so somebody has to fill that gap.

I volunteered occasionally at the Hampton VA Medical Center but back then I was a mess. I had lost my best friend in the bombing of the U.S.S. Cole right after I got out of the Navy, about three weeks after I got out. And I shut down.

Everything became hard. I couldn't go out of the house by myself. I couldn't answer the phone any more. Making decisions became painful. So I was just kind of stumbling around. I didn't feel like I had a purpose any more.

I walked into the VA on September 11th. I saw a room full of men crying. I walked in and I asked what had happened. We sat and talked for hours. I think that's where my volunteer journey began. I found a purpose.

Through the years I have been able to sit beside people and listen to their stories, listen to what compelled them to do what they did, why they went in the military, what their lives have been like in the military, what they were like when they came out of the military. And it's been great to be able to be a part of that and to help people find hope again. That's where I feel my purpose.

This last little while, while we were on a pandemic stand-down, it's been really hard for every one of us. We all have to find something new to do now. We all have different needs than we did two years ago. It has affected every one of us. So we're going to have to step out in many different directions that we're not used to.

I fulfilled a very long-standing dream that I had of opening our first Homes of Hope House, an Anchor in the Storm, in Louisville, South Carolina, September of last year. It's a home for female veterans in transition.

I hope to have these homes up and running everywhere in the next ten years. (Applause) And I can think of nothing better than to have the DAV be a part of that. (Applause) Thank you all. (Whereupon, Ms. Davis withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Congratulations, Ms. Davis and thank you for all you do for veterans in South Carolina.

It is now my pleasure to introduce this year's DAV Auxiliary George H. Seal Memorial Trophy winner, Bonnie Wilkins, a passionate volunteer at the Marion VA Medical Center in Illinois.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Bonnie Wilkins is a member of DAV Auxiliary Unit 69 in Jackson County, Illinois, and began her volunteer work through the DAV Auxiliary an impressive 16 years ago.

Bonnie has volunteered in the community living center, voluntary services department, food on the move, compassionate contact corps, and flu clinics, to name just a few.

When veterans in her rural area were hit hard due to COVID, she coordinated the delivery of food boxes and also recruited veteran DAV volunteer drivers to participate in newly-created programs to support and serve their socially-isolated and depressed veterans. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Ms. Wilkins advanced to the podium with Auxiliary National Commander Franz.)

MRS. BONNIE WILKINS: Thank you. I am so proud that I was nominated by the Marion, Illinois, VA and then selected by the DAV for the George H. Seal Award. I am honored to accept this award and I dedicate it to my parents who wanted to make a difference for all our disabled veterans, and to the thousands of Auxiliary members in Illinois and throughout the United States and Puerto Rico who make a difference every day in the lives of our veterans, disabled veterans. Thank you. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Ms. Wilkins withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Congratulations, Bonnie. You are a true inspiration for all of us.

We will now take a brief moment to recognize our remarkable George Seal Award winners from last year.

The winner of the 2020 DAV George Seal Memorial Award is Eugene Onofrio, a DAV life member from Chapter 15 in Milford, Connecticut. Eugene is a dedicated VA hospital volunteer and a proud veteran of the United States Army. Eugene has volunteered for 27 years, dedicating more than 15,500 hours of service at the VA Connecticut Health Care System.

(Whereupon, Mr. Onofrio stood and was recognized with a round of applause.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: The 2020 DAV Auxiliary George H. Seal Memorial Award winner was Gretchen Davies, a devoted and passionate volunteer at the Milwaukee VA Medical Center,

She is a member of DAV Chapter 19 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. For the past nine years Ms. Davies has worked within the transportation network office, dedicating nearly 4,000 hours of service to veterans. (Applause)

Golden Corral was the groundbreaking restaurant that was the first to honor veterans nationwide with a free meal in conjunction with Veterans Day less than a month after the terrorist attacks of 9/11.

DAV is extremely proud to call them partners over the last 20 years. DAV chapters and departments have benefited enormously through the Military Appreciation Night program.

More importantly, a countless number of veterans and their families had their lives directly impacted due to the Golden Corral's support. The partnership extends well beyond the famous Military Appreciation Night fun.

While they were not able to join us in person, they did want the opportunity to speak to all of you. Ladies and gentlemen, Golden Corral CEO, Lance Trenary.

(Whereupon, a video presentation was viewed, followed by a round of applause.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Thank you, Lance, and all of Golden Corral for what you do for DAV. As our programs continue to evolve, one thing will remain the same. DAV will continue to deliver the most pertinent and direct services to impact the lives of veterans and their families.

National Adjutant Marc Burgess has continued to provide DAV both with the dedicated professionalism and compassionate leadership necessary to manage our day-to-day operations, as well as a clear vision for the future of our charity.

With a core knowledge of services to veterans, thoughtful and methodological leadership ability, and a keen ability not only to care for but also to inspire his staff and fellow members, this proud Navy veteran has proven himself a truly effective leader and a tremendous asset to DAV.

Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome your DAV National Adjutant, Marc Burgess.

(Whereupon Adjutant Burgess advanced to the podium amid a standing ovation.)

ADJUTANT BURGESS: Thank you for that introduction, Commander. But, more importantly, thank you for all you have done over the past two years to ensure DAV continues to provide a lifetime of support to veterans and their families.

I'm sure your tenure wasn't quite what you expected, but it has certainly been an eventful period for the veteran community and our organization.

Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, we've charted a great deal of growth and progress in the last twelve months, while continuing DAV's unparalleled focus on service, legislative advocacy, membership, employment, and volunteerism.

Now, let's take a look at what DAV has done on behalf of our nation's veterans and heroes throughout this unprecedented year.

(Whereupon, the video "The Year in Review" was viewed, followed by a round of applause.)

ADJUTANT BURGESS: As you can see, it's been a big year for DAV and the veterans that we serve. Looking to the future, your hard work will be as important as ever as we fight to ensure that health care, benefits, and services are accessible to our fellow veterans and their families.

But we couldn't achieve any of this without the leaders in this room and your fellow veterans and family members back home. While we often highlight what happens in Washington, D.C., we know that the real work of DAV takes place across the country as service officers, volunteers, and advocates all play their parts.

As we mark our century of service, I think about the many hands, hearts, and voices who made the DAV the nation's premier veterans' service organization, I am confident that our future is secure.

As long as all of you continue to lend your time and talents to our cause, DAV will continue to empower our nation's heroes and their families.

I am humbled to serve alongside you. Working together I know that we will achieve many more victories for veterans in the years ahead.

Commander, Whitehead, this concludes my report. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Adjutant Burgess returned to his seat on the dais and the Commander resumed his position at the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Thank you, Marc. The chair will entertain a motion to accept the National Adjutant's outstanding report. May I have a second.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So moved.

MR. KIRK JOHNSON: Kirk Johnson, District 16, I second.

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered. (Laughter)

Humana is one of the nation's leading health and well-being companies and I couldn't be happier about calling them a partner.

Their relationship with DAV aligns with its rich history of supporting the men and women who served. It expands Humana's growing commitment to organizations that provide critical programs and services for veterans and their families.

Joining us today from Humana is former U.S. Marine, Mr. Ed Sandrick. Ed has been with Humana for 20 years and has served in a variety of leadership roles.

In 2011 Ed assumed the role of Director of Humana Veteran Initiative and in 2013 moved to Humana's Strategic Alliances organization as the Director of the Veterans Channel.

After leaving active duty in the Marine Corps in 1979, Ed began a career in hospital administration at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago.

Ed has held a variety of executive-level positions in both hospital administration and managed care at the local and national level. He retired from the Marine Corps Reserve in 2000. Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Ed Sandrick.

(Whereupon, Mr. Sandrick advanced to the podium, amid a round of applause.)

MR. ED SANDRICK: Well, good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

MR. SANDRICK: My name is Ed Sandrick and I am honored to be with you. I am from Humana.

To the National Commander Stephen Whitehead, the National Adjutant Marc Burgess, honored guests and friends, it's great to be here in person. And on behalf of Humana and its 50,000-plus associates across the country, we salute you during this, your 2021 National Convention.

Like DAV, Humana is focused on empowering veterans to lead high-quality lives filled with the resources needed to maximize their physical and mental health. We're proud to have joined forces with DAV as it has expanded our capabilities in helping veterans overcome barriers.

Together, we're building vital pathways that address the unique health care needs of a population that deserves our best.

While our partnership with DAV is new, Humana has a longstanding relationship with the military and other veteran service organizations. We pride ourselves in being a key resource for veterans and their families and we aim to do well by doing good in the communities we serve across the country.

We understand that partnering with DAV and other VSOs gives us the honor to work side-by-side with organizations that share our commitment to helping veterans achieve their best health.

A part of our doing good is through Humana's Bold Goal, a population health strategy. We're addressing the social needs that may impede on the health of veterans.

As food insecurity, loneliness, and other social determinants of health impact the lives of veterans, Humana, through its Bold Goal, is actively leveraging a differentiated approach to positively lift and protect the veteran population.

We believe that Humana and DAV can work effectively together to improve the lives of our veterans and their families by leveraging our respective strengths as national organizations with local community presence. And we look forward to working with you for many years to come.

Thank you, again, for your partnership. And thank you for all you do for veterans. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Mr. Sandrick withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Well done, Marine. Thank you for all that you do for Humana and our veterans.

It is our distinct honor each and every year to recognize an individual who through both tenacity and actions reflects DAV's commitment that no veteran should have to face the challenging road to recovery alone.

Former Army Green Beret Mike McElhiney was one of the first American troops in Afghanistan in 2001. He was gravely injured when a U.S. bomb was mistakenly dropped on his location, resulting in the loss of his right arm. He was one of the first post-9/11 casualties and has seen a lot since his life was forever changed in service.

He got his first taste of advocacy when meeting a soldier with a similar injury who did not have the specialized prosthetic like his. A new mission began for him when he started making calls so that young soldier could experience a higher quality of life with the appropriate prosthetic.

Mike has since been a faithful advocate for veterans and DAV in Minnesota. As chief-of-staff for the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs, he regularly testifies in the state legislature on behalf of ill and injured veterans.

Through his advocacy, Mike has increased funding for state veterans' homes and connected DAV with supporters to fund critical programs that touch the lives of veterans throughout Minnesota and the nation.

Let's get to know him a little better.

(Whereupon, a video outlining Mr. McElhiney's service was viewed, followed by a round of applause.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Ladies and gentlemen, for his critical work in helping veterans overcome obstacles as well as his commitment to overcoming his very own struggles, we're proud to introduce our 2021 Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year and a DAV life member of Chapter 28 in Rochester, Minnesota, Mike McElhiney. (Standing Ovation)

(Whereupon, Mr. McElhiney advanced to the podium.)

MR. MICHAEL McELHINEY: Well, thank you, Commander Whitehead, Marc, staff, distinguished guests and, most importantly, the membership and the folks behind the scenes making it all happen.

This is truly an honor, something not expected, something I certainly didn't set out to do. You know this is quite overwhelming because, you know, every day I wake up, you know, I'm going to work, I'm doing my job, and that's how I see it.

You know I became involved with the DAV shortly after my wounds in 2002 at one of the Winter Sports Clinics. And I met a lot of great people out there and really saw, you know, innovation and things still out there in life.

That was one of my biggest fears when I was first wounded is, you know, what am I going to do now. But through the DAV, the folks that volunteer for us every day, I mean my life has been great.

You know I often look at myself as an anomaly. I'm a little emotional here. I apologize. But, you know, I think it was—I think I had life pretty easy you know in the military. From the time I was wounded I sent through Walter Reed's Ward 57 and that's like royalty. And I had never experienced you know treatment like that before.

But, you know, they did such a wonderful job. The DAV, again, took me right out to Aspen. And then I was able to finish my military career, which is something not everyone can do in a situation after a severe wound.

And so, you know, that's irregular, I think. Much more after the fact that's become more of the norm. And I think that's a great thing. There are still great folks out there that can do great things in the military, regardless of their injuries.

But, nonetheless, you know, I had it, again, fairly easy, I think, when I got out of the military. I was able to find a job. I was able to work with the people that I wanted to work with, that I associated with, the veterans, you know, our military communities.

You know people ask me, "Why do you do what you do?" And they're my people. They're my tribe. I grew up in a military family. I just—they're my people. I want to be nowhere else. And so going to work every day is quite easy and joyous for me.

But the whole time I was doing what I was doing I was never in it for accolades or recognition. It's just been easy in the State of Minnesota. And I think that, you know, nothing is really easy but we've got such a great team.

Commander Whitehead, Trent Dilks back here, the adjutant for the State of Minnesota DAV, does so much work behind the scenes and is so active with our legislature. He is really leading and pulling a lot of stuff together all the time. And I look at myself as a cog in the wheel.

I did some, you know, legislative work before I came to the position I'm at today in the department and it was just the right thing to do, to put effort forward to take care of all the veterans that have provided myself and people like me such a great and easy life here in the United States.

So I really appreciate this. I am not—I mean words cannot say what I'm feeling right now, Commander. I really, greatly appreciate it so thank you so much. (Applause)

(Whereupon, an official photograph was taken, after which Mr. McElhiney withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Thank you for your service, friendship, and your dedication to your fellow veteran. And congratulations, again, on a well-deserved honor, Mike.

Michael isn't the only outstanding veteran here. There are many, but one deserves our special consideration. For his critical work in helping veterans overcome obstacles, as well as his commitment to overcoming his own struggles in the wake of the devastating personal injuries, we are joined by our 2020 Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year, Adam Greathouse.

(Whereupon, Mr. Greathouse was acknowledged with a round of applause.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: The pandemic may have kept us apart throughout much of 2020, but Adam continued to shine as a volunteer and ambassador to disabled veterans in his home state of West Virginia.

We honored him during the Virtual Salute but now it is my honor to salute him back.

(Whereupon, Commander Whitehead saluted Mr. Greathouse.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: I will now ask the National Adjutant to read DAV's Statement of Policy, to list committee advisors whom I have appointed and who received the approval of the National Executive Committee at its most recent meeting, and to make any further announcements. Marc.

(Whereupon, Adjutant Burgess advanced to the podium.)

ADJUTANT BURGESS: Thank you, Commander.

"DAV was founded on the principle that this nation's first duty to veterans is the rehabilitation and welfare of its wartime disabled. This principle envisions:

"1. High quality hospital and medical care provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs for veterans with disabilities incurred in or aggravated by service in America's armed forces.

"2. Adequate compensation for the loss resulting from such service-connected disabilities.

"3. Vocational rehabilitation and/or education to help the disabled veteran prepare for and obtain gainful employment.

"4. Enhanced opportunities for employment and preferential job placement so that the remaining ability of the disabled veteran is used productively.

"5. Adequate compensation to the surviving spouses and dependents of veterans whose deaths are held to be service-connected under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

"6. Enhanced outreach to ensure that all disabled veterans receive all benefits they have earned and that the American people understand and respect the needs these veterans encounter as a result of their disabilities.

"It, therefore, follows that we will not take any action on any resolution that proposes legislation designed to provide benefits for veterans, their surviving spouses and dependents, which are based upon other than wartime service-connected disability.

"We shall not oppose legislation beneficial to those veterans not classified as service-connected disabled, except when it is evident that such legislation will jeopardize benefits for service-connected disabled veterans.

"And while our first duty as an organization is to assist the service-connected disabled, their surviving spouses and dependents, we shall within the limits of our resources assist others in filing, perfecting, and prosecuting their claims for benefits.

Since this represents the principle upon which our organization was founded and since it is as sound at this time as it was in 1920, we hereby reaffirm this principle as the policy for the Disabled American Veterans."

I would now like to read into the record National Commander Whitehead's appointed Convention Committee Advisors: for the Credentials Committee, Mike Dobmeier and Doug Wells; General Resolutions and Membership Committee, Scott Hope and John Retzer; Legislation and Veterans Rights Committee, Joy Ilem and Shane Liermann;

Constitution and Bylaws Committee, Rob Reynolds and Ed Hartman; Employment Committee, Jeremy Villanueva, Jeff Hall; Hospital and Voluntary Services Committee, Marquis Barefield and John Kleindienst; and Nomination of National Officers, Joe Johnston and Al Church.

The Advisors can pick up their Committee folders from the Resolutions Coordinating Office located in the Gandy Room on the third floor of the J.W.

Before I go any further, I would like to acknowledge a special guest. Please welcome Marine Major General James "Hammer" Hartsell, the executive director of the Florida Department of Veteran Affairs. (Whereupon, Major General Hartsell stood and was recognized with a round of applause.)

ADJUTANT BURGESS: I do have a few other announcements. At 2:00 this afternoon we will host the Service and Legislative Seminar, in which we'll welcome Principle Deputy Under Secretary for Benefits Michael Freuh, and the Assistant Under Secretary for Health for Discovery, Education, and Affiliate Networks, Veterans Health Administration, Dr. Carolyn Clancy.

People who are interested in attending should be in their seats by 1:45 so that the seminar can begin promptly at 2:00 p.m. And you don't want to miss this important discussion.

Tonight we will be honoring our top elected leader and your service during the National Commander's Reception held right here in the Tampa Ballroom at 7:30 p.m. And, remember, you will need your credentials to gain entry.

We'd also like to take a quick moment to thank our friends at Veterans Evaluation Services and TriWest Health Care Alliance for their continued and valuable support of our mission and this year's convention.

V-E-S has a mission to honor and serve America's veterans and active-duty claimants by providing quality and timely reports through fair and objective evaluations, making V-E-S a perfect fit alongside DAV.

Founded in 1996, TriWest has made it their mission to serve our nation's veterans and military community. Doing "whatever it takes" is not only their corporate motto, it is a deep-rooted desire to go above and beyond for their customers because they understand and honor our country's heroes.

Thank you V-E-S and TriWest for your support. (Applause)

Beginning this afternoon at 4:15 Convention Committees are scheduled to meet. Those of you who have been elected to Convention Committees are asked to be on time in the room assigned for your meeting. We ask that the Committees complete their work as soon as possible.

We are excited to continue our partnership with A&W Restaurants again this year. Given that many restaurants are still recovering from the COVID pandemic, this year's National Root Beer Float Day campaign will only take place in select A&W Restaurants.

The promotion will culminate on Friday, August 6th, when customers will receive a free Root Beer Float at the participating stores from 2 to 8 p.m., and will be invited to make a donation to DAV. (Applause)

Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, A&W remains a strong partner of DAV and we are grateful for their support again this year. We look forward to another successful event this summer and anticipate returning to a nationwide campaign in 2022.

Also, thanks to our great partners at A&W, immediately following this opening session free root beer floats will be made available to all of you in the Tampa Bay foyer. (Applause) Everybody likes a root beer float.

For Fun Night on Monday at 8 p.m. we will be treated to a special performance from Jefferson Starship. (Applause)

Fun Night is once again being presented by TriWest Health Care Alliance. And we can't thank TriWest enough for all of their dedicated support and generosity over the years. They help make this event a success and I know everyone in this room appreciates it.

Check out your program or convention app on your phone for more information on convention events and links to view and download photos, videos, reports and other convention content.

We also have our very own television channel while we're here in Tampa. You can find DAV TV on Channel 61 for our guests staying at the J.W. and Marriott properties. We will be streaming DAV's Centennial documentary, "The Battle Never Ends" and other DAV content through Tuesday.

Our first business session will convene tomorrow morning at 9 a.m. At that time we will hear reports from our headquarters executive directors and the Board of Directors' treasurer. We will also honor employers, VA employees, volunteers and our top recruiters.

Also, if you intend to donate to any DAV entity, in the interest of time please fill out the form that is in your bags prior to making your way to our donation booth located on Level 2 near Will-Call.

We are giving away three \$50 gift certificates that can be redeemed at the DAV store online here during national convention. All registered convention attendees are eligible but must be present to win. If I call your name and you are in the hall, please see Membership Director Doug Wells up here on the stage as soon as we adjourn.

And the three lucky winners are Elton Stokes, Marvin Chaney, and Robert Habern. (Applause) Commander, that's all the announcements.

(Whereupon, Adjutant Burgess returned to his seat on the dais as the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Thank you, Marc. Ladies and gentlemen, please rise while I ask Chaplain Nicodemus to lead us in a closing prayer.

AUXILIARY NATIONAL CHAPLAIN NICODEMUS: Please join me in prayer. Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you for being with us and the chance to get an inspiration from each and every person here today. We thank you for the century of service to disabled veterans and their families and for each volunteer in the audience that contributes to that, and our volunteers at home.

We thank you for our youth volunteers. And we know with your guidance they will go far to change the future for our, not only our organization but for the world.

We thank you for the privilege to have our volunteer drivers continue throughout the pandemic. We thank you for our leadership here of the DAV and Auxiliary nationally, state and locally, that not only thrived through the pandemic but utilized the latest of technology to grow and change and adapt.

We thank you for our veterans amongst us who use their skills to not only help their fellow veteran to adapt but help them overcome and live better lives because of their selfless service to each other.

We pray that you will go with us. We pray that you will comfort those who are grieving lost loved ones and keep us throughout our convention. In your name. Amen.

(Response of "Amen.")

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: The Convention stands in recess until 9:00 a.m. tomorrow morning. (Whereupon, the meeting recessed at 11:28 o'clock, a.m. on Saturday, July 31, 2021.)

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FIRST BUSINESS SESSION

August 1, 2021

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The First Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans 99th National Convention convened in the Tampa Bay Ballroom of the J.W. Marriott Tampa, Tampa, Florida, on Sunday, August 1, 2021, and was called to order at 9:00 o'clock, a.m., by National Commander Stephen "Butch" Whitehead.

COMMANDER STEPHEN "BUTCH" WHITEHEAD: The convention will please come to order. As a reminder, I would like to ask everyone to please silence your cell phones and portable devices. (Three raps of gavel.) Please join me in the Pledge of Allegiance.

(Whereupon, the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Two. I will ask the Reverend Charles Edward to lead us in prayer as we prepare to undertake the morning's business session.

(Whereupon, the Chaplain advanced to the podium.)

DR. CHARLES W. EDWARDS, JR.: Almighty God, father of power and might, we thank you for the gift of committed, courageous and dedicated people who have served in the Armed Forces of the United States of America and who now serve as members of the Disabled American Veterans.

Thank you for our National Commander, Mr. Stephen Whitehead, and each person in every level of responsibility within our organization who have loved and defended our nation and who have helped to pass on to the citizens of our country and the people of this world the blessings of the past, freedom, the challenge of the present, liberation, and the hope of the future, peace.

Provide all of us here today with a positive faith that we may see in every difficulty an opportunity, in every blessing an obligation, and in every task an objective.

Be with us today in our deliberations. Keep us within your protective care. And may your blessings rest and abide on all of us. In God we trust. Amen.

(Response of "Amen," as the Chaplain withdrew from and the Commander advanced to the podium and gave one rap of the gavel.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: In order for a delegate to be heard at this convention you must first be recognized by the Chair. Only those delegates at a microphone will be recognized. They must state their name, chapter number and the state they represent.

Comrades, the convention rules are a continuing part of our Bylaws. They are part and parcel of Article 3 and remain in effect continually. They are subject to amendment as provided in the Bylaws and do not require re-adoption.

Before we start here I do want to make one quick announcement from this morning's Memorial Service. There was a cell phone left in the room this morning. So if somebody was in the Memorial Service this morning, please come up and see Ron Minter for your phone.

I would like to call on the Credentials Committee for its report, Chairperson Brenda Reed.

(Whereupon, the Credentials Committee Chair advanced to the podium.)

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON BRENDA REED: Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON REED: Commander Whitehead, delegates, the National Convention Committee on Credentials met this morning in Tampa. This is a partial report for informational purposes only and reflects the registration as of 8:00 a.m. on 8/1/2021.

There are 922 delegates and 59 alternates registered, representing 42 departments and 341 chapters. There are 8 national line officers, 18 National Executive Committee members, 1 past national commander registered, for a total of 27 national officers. The total vote count is 7,741.

This completes the partial report of the Credentials Committee. Thank you.

(Whereupon, the Credentials Committee Chair withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Thank you, Brenda. At this time I would like to also introduce and recognize my National Chief-of-Staff Greg Remus; Officer-of-the-Day David Valtinson; and Sergeant-at-Arms James Burrows. Thank you for your support as it has made my job easier. (Applause)

I'd also like to recognize a very special guest and life member joining us today. Mr. Mickey Ganitch, will you please stand.

(Whereupon, Mr. Ganitch stood and was recognized with a standing ovation.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Ladies and gentlemen, at a spry 102 years young (Cheers) Mickey is a Pearl Harbor survivor and a U.S. Navy veteran. Let's give him another round of applause. (Applause)

I'd also like to take the opportunity. Do we have any other members of our Greatest Generation here? If we have another World War II veteran, will you please stand so you can also be recognized? (Whereupon, no other members stood.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Thank you for your service and historic contributions to our cause, Mickey. (Applause)

It is now my honor and pleasure to introduce the executive director of DAV's National Service and Legislative Headquarters in Washington, Randy Reese.

Randy is a native of Bristol, Virginia. He enlisted in the United States Army in 1984 and served as a rifle squad leader in the 82nd Airborne Division during the Persian Gulf War.

After the war, Randy served as an elite "Black-Hat" instructor in the Air Movement Operations and Jump Master Courses at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. It was there he suffered a disabling back injury while conducting a night parachute jump. He separated from the Army in 1995.

Randy went on to earn his paralegal degree from Kaplan College for Professional Studies and has become a nationally-recognized expert on veterans benefits and services since he joined DAV as a national service officer the year of his discharge.

In December 2018 Randy was appointed executive director of DAV's National Service and Legislative Headquarters in Washington, D.C., where he serves as DAV's principal spokesman before Congress, the White House, and the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

In this role he continues to lead our advocacy efforts in Washington as others have before him, keeping us at the forefront of the fight for veterans' rights on Capitol Hill.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in a warm welcome for your executive director of DAV's National Service and Legislative Headquarters, Randy Reese. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Executive Director of Washington Headquarters Reese advanced to the podium.)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF WASHINGTON HEADQUARTERS RANDY REESE: National Commander Whitehead, National Adjutant Burgess, distinguished guests and delegates to the 100th DAV and Auxiliary National Convention, I am pleased and honored to be with you today in person to report on DAV's service and legislative accomplishments since we last met.

We come together at a challenging time of transition. A pandemic that has left more than 600,000 Americans dead, and perhaps millions who will suffer long-term effects, is finally starting to lift.

We mourn and remember those we've lost and all those who have been profoundly affected by this deadly virus.

As disability rights advocate Helen Keller once observed, and I quote, "The world is full of suffering. It is full, also, of overcoming it." That's what we must do, what we've always done. In the military, as disabled veterans, we've adapted and overcome.

That's exactly what DAV did as COVID ripped across the country last year. At first we didn't know what to expect. But that's not an uncommon feeling for those of us that served.

It reminds me of my time as a Black Hat instructor at Fort Bragg, when new recruits to the 82nd would ask what they could expect from jump school. "Well," I'd say, "it's three weeks long." "What else," they'd ask. "The first week we separate the men from the boys," I'd tell them.

"Then, the second week we separate the men from the fools." (Laughter) "And the third week?" they'd ask. "Well, then the third week, the fools jump." (Applause) Which is exactly what I did, many times. Now, I think it's time for me to jump back to my report. (Laughter)

Winston Churchill once said, "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give." I think that perfectly captures the spirit of DAV's service program, of veterans helping veterans.

When the pandemic hit, our service team quickly stood up a new national phone system using Voice over Internet Protocol technology, or VOIP, through a Vonage software package to ensure we could continue assisting veterans even though we were forced to forego the face-to-face meetings.

Our decision a few years back to lean into electronic claim submissions really paid off for our clients when social distancing required us to operate in a virtual work environment.

At the Board of Veterans Appeals our experience with virtual hearings allowed us to support veterans as the Board expanded its use of new technologies to conduct hearings on computers, tablets, and even mobile phones.

And despite all the COVID restrictions, DAV was still able to assist veterans file nearly 140,000 new claims for benefits last year. And that's one of the reasons that 1.1 million veterans have chosen DAV to represent them.

With over 4,000 DAV-accredited or Certified National Department, Chapter, County, and Transition Service Officers, you can all be proud that when it comes to helping veterans with their benefit claims DAV remains second-to-none. (Applause)

We are also proud of DAV's Disaster Relief Program, which last year provided direct grants to 1,200 veterans affected by hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, and fires.

As the pandemic forced businesses to close and many of our brothers and sisters were left without work, we quickly set up a COVID-19 Unemployment Relief Fund. And I'm pleased to report that DAV was able to provide direct grants totaling over \$2 million to more than 8,000 veterans. (Applause)

And when Congress closed its doors to the public, our Legislative team also adapted and never stopped advocating to support veterans.

As COVID spread, Congress switched from holding in-person to virtual hearings and DAV found new ways to maintain our presence and influence in Washington, D.C.

Because of our reputation and expertise, we were able to continue promoting DAV's legislative agenda at virtual House and Senate hearings and roundtables.

In fact, since the pandemic hit, DAV presented testimony at more than two dozen hearings and roundtables, both virtual and hybrid, effectively communicating our views on critical policies and new legislation to improve veterans programs, benefits, and services, particularly VA health care.

We organized dozens of virtual meetings with VA officials, Capitol Hill policymakers, and our VSO stakeholders to build coalitions and advance our legislative agenda, with much success.

We worked with our Benefit Protection Teams and members across the country to help them conduct virtual visits with their elected officials to promote DAV's vision for veterans and our critical policy goals for the 117th Congress.

And now, as Congress and VA begin to transition back to in-person meetings, hearings and other activities, the relationships we've made and strengthened over the past year will maintain DAV as the leading voice for wounded, injured and ill veterans. (Applause)

One of the newest and biggest issues before Congress today is how to support veterans exposed to burn pits and other toxic exposures.

For years, DAV has called for legislation to concede veterans exposure to burn pits, provide them with health care, and make it easier to get their benefits.

I'm pleased to report that both the Senate and House Veterans Affairs Committees have passed comprehensive toxic exposure legislation that contains many of the policies we have been fighting for.

While the path forward remains complicated, with many obstacles yet to overcome, we've never been closer to enacting comprehensive burn pit and toxic exposure legislation. My friends, it's no longer a question of if but when, and with your continued support we will get it done. (Applause)

And this legislation will address not just burn pits, but also radiation, Agent Orange, and other dangerous chemicals that veterans of earlier generations have been exposed to.

I'm pleased to report that at the end of last year, Congress passed legislation that added three new presumptions for Agent Orange exposure that will help thousands of Vietnam veterans. And we're working with the House and Senate to add a couple more Agent Orange presumptions including hypertension.

Rest assured, we will continue pushing for comprehensive toxic exposure legislation that provides long overdue justice for veterans of all eras. (Applause)

As we provide veterans access to their benefits and health care, we must continue to ensure that the VA health care system can meet their needs. To accomplish that, VA must have sufficient clinical providers, updated IT systems, and safe and modern health care facilities.

That's why the VA Asset and Infrastructure Review process, AIR for short, currently underway, is so important to the future of veterans' health care. For too long, VA hospitals and clinics have been neglected, leaving too many veterans no choice but to get their care outside of the VA.

While we understand the need for community care, since VA cannot be everywhere at all times, we know that most veterans prefer VA. So over the next two years we need to be vigilant to ensure that the AIR process is done openly and honestly. Because the only conclusion that will be found is that it's time for Congress to fully fund VA's hospitals and clinics. (Applause)

We are also continuing our work to make certain that women and minority veterans have the same access to quality health care and benefits as all veterans. I'm pleased to report that Congress finally approved the Deborah Sampson Act last year. (Applause)

The Deborah Sampson Act includes a number of DAV recommendations to remove barriers and inequities for women veterans' health care and eliminate harassment in VA facilities. (Applause)

We are continuing to work closely with VA and Congressional leaders to ensure that the increasingly diverse veteran population is always welcomed and supported equitably. We must never leave behind any of our sisters or brothers who served in the military. (Applause)

We have also got an obligation to the families of veterans, those who serve and sacrifice for their loved ones. That's why we fought so hard to pass legislation that expands VA caregiver assistance programs to cover severely-disabled veterans of all eras.

And, although it's a year late, we were pleased when VA finally started admitting caregivers of veterans from World War II, the Korean and Vietnam last October.

Now we must complete this work to include caregivers of veterans injured between the Vietnam era and 9/11, like our own Past National Commander Dave Riley and his wife Yvonne. (Applause)

Over the past two years we have also been able to get legislation approved to eliminate the Survivor Benefit Plan and Dependency Indemnity Compensation offset and lower the DIC remarriage age to 55 for veterans' survivors.

But there is still more to be done, including passing new legislation to increase those DIC rates and provide graduated benefits to support more surviving spouses. We must never forget the families of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice. (Applause)

My friends, we've had a number of victories the past couple of years, and we should all be very proud of them. From our Service and Legislative Headquarters in Washington, D.C., to our National Headquarters in Kentucky, to our departments and chapters around the country, all our success comes by working together as a team.

Yet, we should recognize and reflect that this has also been a time of sorrow and loss for many, and they still have much to overcome.

A couple of weeks ago I was walking through the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial in Washington, which if you haven't been there, I highly recommend you visiting.

The Memorial is one place where we are slowly starting to see a sense of normalcy returning. More and more veterans, visitors and passers-by are stopping to reflect and pay tribute.

In fact, DAV Chapter 10 in Northern Virginia, which has put so many hours into cleaning and properly honoring this site, has finally been able to return with its volunteers after being unable to do so for the past year due to COVID.

This magnificent Memorial is filled with images and words of men and women who suffered and have been forever changed by their service. It's both somber and inspiring. I am particularly awed by the words etched in the glass panels from former Senator Bob Dole, a fellow DAV life member, that I'd like to share with you.

He said, "In the end, what gets people through a physical or emotional crisis is not new technology or medication. Those things can help, of course. But it's faith that gives you the strength to endure, faith that won't allow you to give up, faith that manifests itself in a ferocious determination to take the next step, the one that everyone else says is impossible."

Bob Dole not only said those words, he has lived them. And that's what we need to do, as well. We need to take the next step and then the one after that to continue helping our fellow veterans. And if we do, who knows what is possible.

Thank you. May God continue to bless the DAV and the work you all do. (Applause)

Commander, that completes my report and I ask that it be accepted by the Convention.

(Whereupon, the Executive Director Reese withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Thank you, Randy. May I have a motion to accept Mr. Reese's report?

MR. ROB HILLYARD: Rob Hillyard, Department of Wisconsin, senior vice, makes a motion to accept Mr. Reese's report as reported.

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: I have a motion. May I have a second?

MR. FRANCIS (INDISTINGUISHABLE): Francis (Indistinguishable), past department commander, Massachusetts, I second the motion.

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. The motion is carried. Thank you, Randy.

(Whereupon, Executive Director Reese withdrew from the stage.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: It is now my pleasure to introduce our National Headquarters Executive Director Barry Jesinoski for his report. Barry is a Persian Gulf War-era veteran of the United States Marine Corps (Cheers) who was medically discharged in 1993. You Marines, I'm telling you. (Laughter)

The Minnesota native was appointed to his current position in August of 2013 after serving as executive director of the National Service and Legislative Headquarters and in numerous other leadership positions at the executive level in both Washington, Cold Spring, and now Erlanger, Kentucky.

Barry is widely respected as a selfless and visionary leader who has earned the admiration of key leaders, critical associates and DAV members throughout the organization whose decisions directly impact veterans' lives.

As DAV continues to evolve and enhance the depth and scope of the services we offer our nation's veterans, Barry's leadership has dramatically enhanced the organization's reach and efficiency.

He serves as DAV's chief financial officer and chief operations officer. And his responsibilities cover all National Headquarters' departments, including Voluntary Services, Employment initiatives, Communications, Accounting, Fundraising, Membership, Human Resources, Information Technology, outreach and logistics of one of America's largest non-profit organizations.

Please join me in welcoming this trailblazing leader in the world of veterans' services, National Headquarters Executive Director Barry Jesinoski. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Executive Director of National Headquarters Jesinoski advanced to the podium.)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS BARRY JESINOSKI: Thank you, Commander. Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS JESINOSKI: Commander Whitehead, Adjutant Burgess, distinguished guests and delegates.

It's such a great pleasure to be with all of you here today to talk about the state of DAV from our perspective at national headquarters. And that perspective has changed tremendously, both literally and figuratively, in the past two years since we were able to gather as a body.

As many of you know, DAV has a new national headquarters facility. It replaces our aging and inefficient building that had been dedicated in 1966 and was double the size and on over double the land we needed for our current, though growing, operations.

As we prepared to move to the new location, we went through our archives and came across an artifact that meant a great deal to its creator.

(Whereupon, Mr. Jesinoski picked up a vase.)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS JESINOSKI: What you see here is a vase that was created by an American serviceman from an empty shell casing during World War II. The top is flared and on it is etched a beach scene with palm trees and an old hut in the background.

On the back, in simple letters, it says New Guinea, the site of some of the most arduous combat by Allied troops in all of World War II. One senses that the artist was looking for peace. In the midst of a long and difficult battle he chose to envision a place that would otherwise be an island paradise.

Trench art is likely a fascinating genre to many of us. The idea of combatants experiencing the deprivations of war and finding ways to escape through art is unique. It leaves us with an expression of beauty borne from conflict. It shows the resilience of our warriors who fought both an enemy bent on their destruction and an ongoing battle to maintain their humanity.

In our hearts, DAV members of all eras have proven themselves to be artists in their own right. To become eligible to join DAV requires one to have faced a life-changing setback. And once a life is taken off course, the veteran must learn to adapt and overcome.

Doing so requires a level of creativity. That's one of the most important characteristics that we bring to the table in our fight to make families whole after a sacrifice is made for our nation.

The sailor, soldier or Marine who made this vase put a tremendous amount of detail and time into the work. It was, likely, a form of relaxation and therapy for him. We can very well imagine that the war challenged him and changed him.

And while it may have taken away some of his capabilities, he grew in other directions and found ways to make his life work. He found a way to express beauty in a time of desolation and sought hope in a world of despair.

That is what we've seen from so many of our members through these trying last couple of years. And that's the approach we've taken at national headquarters to address the pandemic of our age.

DAV's new headquarters is a testament to the creativity inherent in our cause and a salute to the service and sacrifices of all who have served. From the start, we knew we needed a very efficient and appropriate space.

We considered our mission today and tried to forecast how it may evolve in the coming century. As was our approach in the military, we struck hard and fast. By pushing aggressively in the lead up to the pandemic, DAV saved over \$600,000 on the cost of steel alone for the project.

We made some difficult decisions, as well. On visits to our national headquarters in the past, many of you may have seen paintings by Normal Rockwell, two of them, and N.C. Wyeth, one of them, in our

visitors' center. The paintings were donated to DAV decades ago. They were beautiful pieces that we had restored, that we had maintained and even insured at a cost to our charity.

Yes, they provided our guests with a noteworthy experience. But while we own the originals, we did not own the rights to reproduce them. Our headquarters in Cold Spring received comparatively low traffic and, hanging on a wall, they weren't contributing to our purpose as a charity.

So, we used them to create a new work of art, one where design meets function. Between the proceeds from these paintings, the sale of our current headquarters, and assistance from a dedicated capital campaign, we anticipate that the total cost of the new facility will be fully covered. (Applause)

In the years to come, the savings we'll experience from conducting our national operations from a facility half the size of its predecessor will compound. With vastly improved energy and technical efficiencies, this project will result in a long-term savings to DAV.

It is designed to provide significantly more space for collaboration between team members and stakeholders. It's located in a much higher traffic area where we will be able to engage more veterans and increase our local awareness.

Traffic studies we reviewed reveal that over 150,000 cars per day pass by the location on I-71/75. And from nearly every vantage, DAV team members, supporters, and guests, will be reminded of our mission and the sacrifices made by those we represent.

Also, speaking of remembering sacrifices, one unique feature we're very proud of is adjacent to our new facility. The DAV Honor Garden provides a unique pathway for each military branch where members and guests can walk in contemplation, remembering their brothers and sisters and those members and supporters named on bricks that line the path.

By the way, you can secure a brick through a special booth called "Supporting More Victories for Veterans" in the exhibit area outside the ballroom. I wouldn't be DAV's chief financial officer if I didn't make that pitch. (Laughter)

We feel like we've done a thoughtful job that will be appreciated by both our members and supporters. We tried, foremost, to create a space that made us more effective for the veterans and the families that we serve.

We tried to think of everything. We even included the Space Force, though we don't have any members from our newest branch just yet.

And while we needed to upgrade from an aging and inefficient building, we know that DAV's new headquarters is not DAV. DAV is a community. It's all of you here. We are DAV.

While the construction was underway, we never stopped growing in terms of how we serve veterans and how we empower you, our members, to accomplish your mission in communities nationwide.

The new headquarters is just one of the major projects we've undertaken that is nearing the finish. And, as some of you know, and some of you have experienced as of late, DAV is implementing the largest internal IT infrastructure project in our history. We appreciate your patience.

Our new custom relationship management project combines nearly every contact in nearly every database across DAV into a single application. It allows us to customize our outreach and engagement, eliminates duplication of efforts, and allows us to fully understand and recognize the contributions of those who assist DAV in multiple ways.

It will make us better at serving you and more effective overall. Though it will be an ongoing project, it is ultimately an elegant solution to a very complex requirement to manage data in ways that serve veterans.

It's that same kind of thinking that allowed us to adapt in the face of the pandemic and other areas, as well.

Many here experienced the "Virtual Salute" we hosted in place of our national convention last year. We had an obligation to recognize the people who make our mission possible. But it wasn't the only engagement we had digitally.

Our ability to pivot from physical to virtual career fairs was a bright spot in dismal times for many. Last year we hosted 92 career fairs with more than 32,000 attendees. In addition to helping veterans and spouses find high-quality work, we recognized the toll unemployment was taking on those we served.

We are extremely proud of our collaboration with our team in Washington and our National Service Officers that provided the millions of dollars in relief to veterans who lost their jobs as a result of COVID-19.

We have kept our foot on the gas. And as we are looking into federal utilization of Service Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses we partnered with Patriot Boot Camp to assist veteran entrepreneurs and their spouses. If we could help more veterans succeed as business leaders, they are highly likely to fill the ranks of their new companies with their fellow veterans.

We continue to work with companies to promote hiring and assist their employees who have served. We held a financial town hall event with veterans with CNBC and worked to share information and resources for veterans who were ready and able to go to work.

We're also revamping our employer recognition program so it goes beyond an annual award and encourages more companies to hire veterans. If someone wants to hire disabled veterans, we want to recognize them. You can nominate an employer, by the way, by visiting PatriotEmployers-dot-org. That's PatriotEmployers-dot-org. The process is quite simple.

Volunteerism, of course, faced a sharp decline in the shadow of COVID-19. But we can be proud of our volunteers who undertook extraordinary measures to safely transport veterans to get the care that they earned.

When nearly everything was shut down during a global pandemic, we can proudly say that we never quit. Our Fords were on the road providing nearly a quarter-of-a-million rides. (Applause) Our sincere thanks to all of our volunteer drivers across the country. At no time was our transportation network down completely. (Applause)

Though we couldn't hold the National Disabled Winter Sports Clinic or the National Disabled Veterans Golf Clinic with the VA, we were able to work together to substitute virtual instruction to the profoundly disabled veterans who were stuck at home. DAV finds a way.

Our public service announcements enjoyed 9.7 billion impressions in 2020 and we're looking forward to launching a new series of Victories for Veterans messages by this time next year.

Between airings and promotions, "The Battle Never Ends," our centennial documentary, enjoyed more than 11 million impressions and continues to be available online.

Our partnership with Disney continues to grow and the centennial received notice on ESPN Radio where a feature on our founder, Judge Marx, aired from September 15th through the Veterans' Day timeframe.

We're receiving more public notice than at any time in our history.

And while we look forward to completing our important infrastructure projects, we're not taking any breaks, ever. We're constantly striving and looking to innovate.

While there remains an information technology gap with some of our members, it's shrinking. It was only in the past two years that we began seeing more mobile than desktop traffic to the website and online membership applications have exceeded paper submissions.

But to be the charity veterans deserve, we're developing and employing very creative digital recruiting techniques to target prospective members. We're rolling out initiatives like Recruit-A-Warrior that empower our members to bring more veterans into our cause.

The website will be enhanced again by early next year and we'll continue to refine and improve it in the years ahead.

We're digging into new ways people can support our cause and optimizing our existing approach.

If someone wants to donate their car, real estate, electronics, or clothing to support veterans, we want to make it as easy as possible for them to do it.

If someone wants to host their own digital fundraiser to support our cause while becoming more fit, we want to make sure they have the tools to do so.

And even if they want to sit on the couch and support veterans, we're looking into electronic gaming as a potential source of revenue and awareness. (Laughter) They can help, too.

In our difficult and challenging fundraising environment, DAV received almost \$11 million more in 2020 than we did in 2019. We've diversified our streams of revenue. And the investments we've made in outreach and innovative fundraising efforts have blossomed and are bearing fruit.

Our virtual DAV 5K had more participants than in any previous year during the pandemic. It raised over \$330,000 to support our mission. From both a net revenue and outreach perspective, it was our best event ever.

Speaking of the DAV 5K, we had a special "members challenge" last year. Our top fundraising member was Kurt Oehlstrom Frachetti from the great state of Ohio. (Applause)

Our top participating state was the DAV Department of New Jersey, led by Adjutant Johnnie Walker. (Applause)

This year's 5K will be held in Cincinnati on November 6th and will be available for virtual participation, as well, from November 6 through Veterans' Day. Thank you so much to all of you who have participated in all of our past events.

Your DAV is continually optimizing our operating procedures to make sure we're as lean and efficient as we can be while continuing to deliver the most substantive services to empower the veterans and families we serve.

A very famous DAV life member once said, "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country." As veterans who have benefited from DAV's services, it is our duty to become experts at connecting veterans with our services and to give back to support our patriotic cause.

If you're helping a veteran connect with the benefits they've earned, that veteran may also need a job. If you are driving a veteran to a medical appointment, he or she could probably use our assistance with benefits and employment.

If we help a veteran in any number of ways, we should ask them to join. And we should be prepared to tell them about our services and the great work we are doing to protect and secure new benefits in Washington.

If you can give, you ask that you consider supporting DAV. Think of the benefits the DAV helped you attain and consider giving back by joining the Warriors Club to continue giving.

Honor your fellow veterans and consider how you could build a legacy of support for them by including DAV in your estate plans. If interested, visit Free-Will-dot-com-slash-DAV to simply complete a will that will include DAV in a matter of minutes. There are many ways to give.

From our vantage today, we can look back on 101 years of tireless effort to ensure a promise is kept to our nation's heroes. We see the crushed shanties and battered spirits of our impoverished forbearers who marched in the Bonus Army.

We see our nation attacked, the turbulence of the '60s, and the toll that wars and scars have wrought on generations. We see the end of the War in Afghanistan, though the cost of that war, as has been the case with all wars, will be paid by those who bore it for decades to come.

As we look ahead, we are in a unique position to learn from our history and change its course.

We can achieve justice for our brothers and sisters who have and will see the wars of yesterday and tomorrow. We can honor their service and truly make them whole in spite of the obstacles in our path.

Doing so will require our dedication and creativity. But, together, DAV is up for the challenge.

Commander, this concludes my report. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Executive Director of National Headquarters Jesinoski withdrew from and Commander Whitehead returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Thank you, Barry, for that outstanding report.

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: May I have a motion to accept Mr. Jesinoski's report?

MR. LEE GIBBON: Lee Gibbon, Department of Ohio, Chapter 35, I make a motion to accept the report.

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: I have a motion. May I have a second.

MR. SCOTT HOPE: Mic 1, Scott Hope, Department of Pennsylvania, Chapter 76, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. The motion carried. Thank you. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Executive Director of National Headquarters Jesinoski withdrew from the stage.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: At this time, DAV would like to recognize the extraordinary generosity of the law firm Chisholm, Chisholm and Kilpatrick in Providence, Rhode Island. This past year the firm donated \$100,000 to support DAV's free programs and services in honor of our Centennial Celebration.

We are joined today by CCK's founding partners Scott Kilpatrick, Robert Chisholm and law partner Zachary Stolz.

(Whereupon, the members from CCK advanced to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: In 2008, Chisholm, Chisholm, and Kilpatrick initially collaborated with DAV in representing veterans with their appeals before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, and the Board of Veterans Appeals.

Since then, the firm has represented over 13,500 veterans in court with an overall success rate of 90 percent.

Chisholm, Chisholm, and Kilpatrick also works closely with our legal department in the stewardship of DAV's charitable bequests.

Apart from its work with our service and legal departments, the firm has donated well over half-a-million dollars to DAV. The money donated has supported projects such as the care and maintenance of the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial and DAV's services and programs.

We truly appreciate Chisholm, Chisholm, and Kilpatrick's continued support and its most recent gift of \$100,000 in honor of DAV's Centennial Celebration. (Applause)

Thank you, gentlemen, for the tremendous impact you've had on DAV. We thank Chisholm, Chisholm and Kilpatrick for your loyalty, commitment, and the talent that you have devoted to disabled veterans and our organization.

I now invite Scott Kilpatrick to say a few words on behalf of the firm.

MR. SCOTT KILPATRICK: Thank you. (Applause) Thirteen years ago CCK and DAV began a partnership to provide pro bono representation for veterans and their families who wished to pursue their VA benefits to federal court.

That year started with a few select cases. Today, through its partnership with DAV, our firm now files well over a thousand appeals a year to the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims.

This partnership has also led to dozens of precedential decisions that help ensure our government keeps it promise to our heroes.

We are honored to be trusted with this important work and in the spirit of our partnership with DAV and friendship we present this check for \$100,000 to support DAV's mission. Thank you. (Applause)

(Whereupon, an official photograph was taken, after which the members of CCK withdrew from the stage and Commander Whitehead returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Thank you, Scott. And thank you for all of your support and commitment over the years in the veteran community.

It is now my pleasure to recognize the Outstanding Local Veterans Employment Representative and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist recipients of 2021.

These awards recognize the commitment and compassion of two individuals who are dedicated to serving our nation's heroes. The recipients here today are outstanding examples of veterans helping veterans, and we're more than proud to honor them for their dedication and selfless service.

The award for Outstanding Local Veterans Employment Representative is presented to Army veteran and Texas native Lee Ware. Unfortunately, Lee was not able to make the trip to Tampa to be here in person to receive his award.

He began his career in February of 2018 and immediately made an impact on the employment department by facilitating the hires of 15 veterans within his first four months as a member of the North Texas District team.

While the COVID-19 pandemic was in full-swing, Mr. Ware helped coordinate the first two virtual career fairs in Tarrant County. These efforts placed over 300 veterans in front of 78 employers looking to hire. Congratulations, Lee. (Applause)

The 2021 Outstanding Disabled Veteran's Outreach Program Specialist is a passionate and tireless advocate for Texas veterans. This year's recipient is Tremayne Hubbard who was also unable to join us.

An Air Force veteran and DAV member, Tremayne has executed outreach to more than 150 veteran and community organizations while establishing strong partnerships dedicated to assisting veterans in overcoming significant barriers to employment.

In early 2020, because of his commitment and professionalism, he was handpicked to fill the West Texas District DVOP Coach position. Thank you, Tremayne, for your amazing work. (Applause)

Now, I'd like to invite our National Employment Director Jeff Hall to the stage.

(Whereupon, Employment Director Jeff Hall advanced to the stage.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Each year DAV recognizes companies that go out of the way to recruit and hire disabled veterans. It is my pleasure to announce the DAV Employer of the Year Awards for three outstanding organizations.

The 2021 DAV Small Employer of the Year Award goes to an incredible company that truly recognizes what veterans bring to the workforce. This year's Small Employer of the Year goes to a fitting company for the times we live in. Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Virtual Service Operations CEO Steve O'Keefe to the stage. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Mr. O'Keefe advanced to the stage.)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Virtual Service Operations takes a great deal of pride in offering nearly all of their new positions to veterans and disabled veterans.

VSO's company ethos and mantra they live by says it all, "We want to give veterans a meaningful, challenging and solid career, not just a job."

Currently, 26% of VSO's employees are veterans and approximately one-quarter of those individuals are service-connected disabled veterans.

MR. STEVE O'KEEFE: First of all, I would like to thank Commander Stephen Whitehead and Vice-Commander Andrew Marshall and the entire DAV team for what they do for the veteran community and, of course, recognizing VSO for our work with veterans.

VSO is successful because it hires veterans. VSO is successful because it hires veterans.

(Applause) The investments these men and women have made in the service of our country makes them invaluable team members.

By far, the DOD is the most significant training organization in the world. This is the truth laying in plain sight, a gold mine that is just awaiting the relatively small investment and the tools to mine it. It is there for every company to benefit.

Any company who wants to be successful should hire veterans. (Applause) Any company who wants a more diverse workforce in every aspect should hire veterans. (Applause) Any company who wants a virtuous workforce should hire veterans. (Applause) Thank you.

(Whereupon, an official photograph was taken then Mr. O'Keefe withdrew from the stage and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Thank you, again, Mr. O'Keefe. Our 2021 DAV Midsized Employer of the Year, Geo-Stabilization International, was not able to attend, but actively recruits veterans across the nation, partnering with numerous organizations and conducting outreach to find talented veteran candidates.

Currently, 11 percent of the company's 443 employees are veterans. And nearly 25 percent of their 138 new hires in 2020 were veterans. Outstanding job, Geo-Stabilization International. And keep up the great work. (Applause)

The 2021 DAV Large Employer of the Year is one of the largest electric power holding companies in the U.S., providing electricity to 7.8 million customers in six states. Duke Energy has a dedicated military and veteran recruiting team to support the attraction and hiring of veterans.

Their team is committed to building and maintaining long-term relationships with transitioning service members and veteran job seekers, hiring managers, and external veteran organizations.

I'll ask Melissa Seixas, state president of Florida with Duke Energy Corporation to the stage to accept DAV's Outstanding Large Employer of the Year Award. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Ms. Seixas advanced to the stage, at which time an official photograph was taken.)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: As a sign of their commitment to hiring veteran, the team at Duke Energy has established relationships with all DOD military installation transition assistance program offices. In addition, they actively participated and collaborated with the Veteran Employee Resource Group to leverage feedback from employee veterans, guard and reservists.

Through these partnerships, Duke assists service members who are exiting the military prepare for post-service careers, potentially leading to full-time opportunities through Duke Energy.

Duke Energy also conducts Veterans Day programs across the organization each year. Veteran employees are recognized for their military service and commitment to volunteering in the community to advocate for service members and veterans.

MS. MELISSA SEIXAS: Thank you all so much for having me here today. This is absolutely an honor to accept this award on behalf of Duke Energy Florida and to spend the morning here with all of you. Thank you for your service to our country.

And I am very proud to be standing in front of you as the president of Duke Energy Florida. I'm equally as proud to stand here in front of you as the daughter of a U.S. Army Colonel. (Applause)

So with Duke Energy Florida we value the leadership, the reliability, the (indistinguishable) that veterans bring to our organization as well as their loyalty and their integrity.

We are proud of our long history of providing career opportunities to our military, including transitioning service members, veterans, National Guard reservists, and military spouses, as well.

We actively participate in an Able America, a non-profit established here in Tampa in 2002, funded, in part, by the Duke Energy Foundation, that provides training and job placement assistance for transitioning wounded warriors and also disabled veterans.

We support transitioning special operations forces by participating in the United States Special Operations Command Warrior Care Internship Program, which is also headquartered here at MacDill Air Force Base. And one of the goals of the program helps special operations service members develop and implement a customized career transition plan. This includes assistance with fellowship opportunities at Duke Energy.

We employ more than 2,000 military veterans as project managers, engineers, cybersecurity analysts who defend our system, and line workers, craft and technical who help keep our customers energized every single day. And, annually, we hire almost 300 veterans.

We also have an internal veteran network group with over 850 members that mentor new hires, help veterans adjust to Duke Energy's culture, and eases the transition to civilian life through a program we call, Together we Stand for our Veterans.

And we have two representatives here from Duke Energy today: one, Benny Anderson who is also the person who submitted our nomination so we're very grateful to him; and also Loretta, who is our Florida representative, as well.

We have awarded more than a half-a-million dollars to nonprofit organizations providing assistance to veterans and their families in seven states served by our company. And each organization received a grant from the Duke Energy Foundation to strengthen programs providing essential services to military veterans and their families.

And it is a just great honor every day whenever we are in a meeting and I'm always surrounded by veterans and it makes me extremely proud as a leader of our company here in Florida.

So thank you, again, this has been a privilege. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Ms. Seixas withdrew from the stage and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Thank you, Melissa and Duke Energy for all the great work you are doing to help veterans live a higher-quality life.

In 2007 DAV created the Local Veterans Assistance Program, or LVAP, giving volunteers nearly unlimited opportunities to serve and receive the same recognition and incentives as those available to traditional VA and Transportation Network volunteers.

Under LVAP opportunities abound for individuals to assist veterans and their families. From something as precise as building a wheelchair ramp or setting up computer software to basic tasks like grocery shopping or running other errands, volunteers perform any task that may help improve a veteran's life.

I'll ask John Kleindienst and National Headquarters Executive Director Barry Jesinoski to the stage for their assistance, please.

(Whereupon, Mr. Kleindienst and Mr. Jesinoski joined Commander Whitehead on the stage.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Ladies and gentlemen, it is my extreme pleasure to recognize our top DAV state-level departments in the area of LVAP services.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The Division One Local Veterans' Assistance Program recipient is the Department of Virginia, Past Department Commander John Simmons with 189,979 hours. Here to accept the award is Department Adjutant Robert Cox. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Adjutant Cox advanced to the stage to receive the Commander's Award, at which time an official photograph was taken, after which Adjutant Cox withdrew from the stage.)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The Division Two Local Veterans Assistance Program Winner is the Department of South Carolina, Past Department Commander Willard Cunningham, with 169,449 hours. Here to accept the award is Department Adjutant Jamie Lleras. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Adjutant Lleras advanced to the podium to receive the Commander's Award, at which time an official photograph was taken, then Adjutant Lleras withdrew from the stage.)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The Division Three Local Veterans Assistance Program winner is the Department of Wisconsin, Past Department Commander Michael Hert, with 48,471 hours. Here to receive the award is Department Adjutant Larry Hill. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Adjutant Hill advanced to the podium to receive the Commander's Award, at which time an official photograph was taken, after which Adjutant Hill withdrew from the stage.)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The Division Four Local Veterans Assistance Program winner is the Department of Iowa, Past Department Commander Amy Bahl with 28,486 hours. Here to bring home the award is Department Adjutant Chris Salladay. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Adjutant Salladay advanced to the podium to receive the Commander's Award, at which time an official photograph was taken, then Adjutant Salladay withdrew from the stage.)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The Division Five Local Veterans Assistance Program winner is the Department of South Dakota, Past Department Commander Donald Sealock with 16,600 hours. Here to receive the award is Department Adjutant Dick Turnwell. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Adjutant Turnwell advanced to the podium to receive the Commander's Award, at which time an official photograph was taken, then Adjutant Turnwell withdrew from the stage.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Thank you all the volunteers in the VA hospitals, our Transportation Network drivers, and participants in the Local Veterans Assistance Program for their compassionate service to the disabled veterans and to their families. Thank you for your helping hands and kind hearts. Please join me again in giving them all a big hand for their service. (Applause)

Every day throughout the country DAV partners with thousands of passionate VA employees to ensure veterans are getting the resources they need and the assistance they have earned. We strive to work together as one in order to keep the promise to those who served.

It is my pleasure to now present the National Commander's Outstanding VA Employee of the Year award to three remarkable VA staff members in recognition of their leadership, compassion, and dedication supporting our nation's ill and injured veterans.

The Outstanding Veterans Health Administration Employee of the Year, Dr. Ronald Triolo. Dr. Triolo is the executive director of the Advanced Platforms Technology Center located inside the Louis Stokes Cleveland VA Medical Center.

Dr. Triolo has served the VA and veterans for much of his career. He was a long-standing member of the editorial board of the VA's Journal of Rehabilitation Research and Development and continues to be on the cutting edge of technology improving the lives of veterans.

In recognition of his research efforts, he was appointed to the prestigious College of Fellows of the American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering in 2014.

Due to a family matter, the good doctor was unable to join us in person, but let's take a look at what he had to say.

(Whereupon, a video of Dr. Triolo accepting the award was viewed.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Thank you, Dr. Triolo for all the great work you're doing for veterans. Now, I'll ask Executive Director Reese and DAV National Service Director Jim Marszalek to the stage for our next important presentation.

(Whereupon, Mr. Reese and Mr. Marszalek joined the Commander on the stage.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming the Outstanding Veterans Benefit Administration Employee of the Year, Navy veteran Ciena Faeth. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Ms. Faeth advanced to receive the Commander's Award, at which time an official photograph was taken.)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Ciena Faeth is recognized for her time serving as the Change Management Agent at the St. Petersburg VA Regional office right here in Florida from May 2019 until January 2021.

Ciena now works as a Management Analyst at the Pacific District office in Phoenix, Arizona where she conducts evaluative studies and serves as a consultant to the district director on issues related to the effectiveness and efficiency of the VBA field office operations.

A veteran of the U.S. Navy Reserves, she has always gone the extra mile to assist her fellow veterans and VBA employees alike because she understands their challenges.

MS. CIENA FAETH: I am overwhelmed with gratitude to be receiving DAV's VBA Employee of the Year. My passion for serving veterans continues to grow stronger every day. While working at VA and so closely with all of you in the DAV I learned how powerful we can be together and what a positive contribution we can make in our veterans lives.

As a veteran myself, it has been an honor and a privilege to serve our nation's heroes and to partner with an organization that puts veterans at the heart of everything they do.

Thank you so much for this prestigious award. And I look forward to all the tremendous things that we'll do together. Thank you. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Ms. Faeth withdrew from the stage and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Honoring our fallen and supporting their survivors in their time of grief is a sacred and patriotic duty. Please welcome to the stage the 2021 VA National Cemetery Administration Employee of the Year, Greg Smith. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Mr. Smith advanced to receive the Commander's Award, at which time an official photograph was taken.)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Greg Smith served five years in the U.S. Army. He separated from service in 1993 after suffering numerous injuries to both of his wrists. Despite his injuries, Mr. Smith has taken great pride in providing final respects to our nation's heroes at the Cheyenne, Wyoming National Cemetery.

Through his own hard work, dedication and commitment to his fellow veterans, Mr. Smith has quickly developed a reputation for going above and beyond the call of duty to help veterans and their families in need.

MR. GREG SMITH: First of all, I want to thank the DAV for putting on such an amazing program and thank each and every one of you for what you all do.

This award means a lot to me. Basically, I was given an award for doing my job. I come to work every single day to take care of my veterans and their families. And it's an honor to do that.

I want to thank Leroy Kenner. When I was at Wyoming with him, he welcomed me, made me feel like a team player. Floyd, thank you, too. And thank each and every one of you all. It's a great honor and I appreciate it. And let's keep serving our veterans. Thank you. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Mr. Smith withdrew from the stage and the Commander returned to the podium amid a round of applause.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Thank you, Mr. Smith, for all the great work you're doing. DAV has over 4,700 members dedicated to recruiting veterans into the organization in order to maintain a strong voice with lawmakers and a robust offering of services for our nation's veterans.

Much has changed throughout our 100-year history, including the needs of the veterans we serve and, just as importantly, the way we reach them.

Our dedicated recruiters have evolved to meet these challenges head-on and have worked diligently to welcome new members to ensure DAV's legacy lives on for future generations of veterans.

For our first award I'll invite Executive Director Barry Jesinoski and National Membership Director Doug Wells to the stage as we recognize our top division winners in recruiting for 2020-2021.

(Whereupon, Mr. Jesinoski and Mr. Wells joined the Commander on the stage.)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The Division 1 winner is the DAV Department of Massachusetts. Please give a round of applause for Past Department Commander Debra Olson. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Past Department Commander Olson advanced to the stage to receive the Commander's Award, at which time an official photograph was taken, after which she withdrew from the stage.)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The Division 2 winner is the DAV Department of Missouri. Please give a warm welcome for Past Department Commander Keith Newell. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Past Department Commander Newell advanced to the stage to receive the Commander's Award, at which time an official photograph was taken, after which he withdrew from the stage.)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The Division 3 winner is the DAV Department of Puerto Rico. Please give a warm welcome for Department Commander Ruben Arce. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Department Commander Arce advanced to the stage to receive the Commander's Award, at which time an official photograph was taken, after which he withdrew from the stage.)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The Division 4 winner is the DAV Department of Maine. Please give a warm welcome for Adjutant Joyce Gaddis. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Adjutant Gaddis advanced to the stage to receive the Commander's Award, at which time an official photograph was taken, after which she withdrew from the stage.)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The Division 5 winner is the DAV Department of South Dakota. Please give a warm welcome for Department Commander Dick Turnwall. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Department Commander Turnwall advanced to the stage to receive the Commander's Award, at which time an official photograph was taken.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Please stay right there, Dick. South Dakota, you've definitely stepped your game up this year.

Our next award is the General Jonathan M. Wainwright Award. It is presented to the Department that closes the year with the largest percentage increase in new members. The winner is the DAV Department of South Dakota. (Applause)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The General Jonathan M. Wainwright Award is named after a past DAV national commander and Medal of Honor recipient who served with distinction as the commander of allied forces in the Philippines at the time of their surrender to Japan in World War II.

(Whereupon, Department Commander Turnwall received the Commander's Award, at which time an official photograph was taken.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: And, again, don't go anywhere, Dick. (Laughter) The Judge Robert S. Marx Award is presented to the Department that completes the year with the highest percentage increase of fully-paid life members over the goal. This year's winner is—again—the Department of South Dakota. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Department Commander Turnwall received the Commander's Award, at which time an official photograph was taken, after which he withdrew from the podium.)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: The Judge Robert S. Marx Award is named after DAV's founder. Marx served in the United States Army in World War I. He earned the Distinguished Service Cross and was injured in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive in 1918. He later became a superior court judge and law professor.

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: I've got to do it. It's not on script here but way to go District 14. (Applause) No one is more likely to join DAV than the veterans who have experienced our assistance. Those who experience DAV's free services first-hand understand the life-changing value of our organization. But it still takes a special type of national service officer to communicate the value and advantages of joining the organization.

Our next award recognizes individuals who go above and beyond the call to ensure the long-term health of our membership. Therefore, it is with great pride that I present the top recruiter from our NSO corps who remarkably recruited 308 veterans to join our ranks.

Ladies and gentlemen, put your hands together for Carlo Melone of the Chicago, Illinois, service office. (Applause)

(Whereupon, NSO Malone advanced to receive the Commander's Award, at which time an official photograph was taken, after which he withdrew from the stage.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Our top recruiting member of the year is Keith Pelusi from DAV Chapter 57 in Dallas, Texas. He recruited 118 new members. Unfortunately, Mr. Pelusi was unable to attend this year's convention.

Since 1994, DAV has recognized the success of its members who have signed 100 or more new members for three consecutive membership years with a gold lapel pin and by entering their names into the Membership Recruiters Hall of Fame. A few of these folks may be here and will join us on the stage.

This year's inductees are: Keith Pelusi who recruited a total of 118 new members; Thomas Herrington who recruited a total of 103 new members; Andrew Edwards who added 104 new members to DAV; Daniel "Oh-Be-One" Kanabe who added 102 new members to DAV. (Applause)

(Whereupon, those inductees present advanced to the stage to receive their pin, at which time an official photograph was taken, then they withdrew from the stage.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Friends, think back to the time you were first introduced to DAV. How did it change your life? How can you help to do the same for another veteran? Take that leap and ask the question: Are you interested in becoming a DAV member? As always, thank you for another great recruiting year and keep up the wonderful work you do. (Applause)

And now I'd like to call on Board of Directors' Treasurer Robert Cox for his report. He's still putting his notes together. (Laughter)

(Whereupon, Board of Directors Treasurer Cox advanced to the podium.)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS TREASURER ROBERT COX: Commander Whitehead, fellow members of the National Executive Committee, and DAV members and guests, good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

BOARD OF DIRECTORS TREASURER COX: Let me begin by recognizing those with whom I've served on the Board of Directors: Chairman Dennis R. Nixon, Texas; Vice-Chairman Andrew Marshall, Florida; Secretary and National Adjutant Marc Burgess; Director and NEC Twelfth District, Kevin J. Walkowski, Wisconsin; Director and NEC Thirteenth District, Terry W. Sanders, Indiana; and Director and NEC Twenty-First District, John Donovan of Arkansas.

It is my honor and privilege to present a report on the financial affairs of our organization for the six-month period ending June 30, 2021. DAV's total fundraising support through that date was a little under \$63 million. (Applause) Contributions were in excess of \$50 million; bequests were just over \$12 million.

Under the Department Fundraising Program payouts to departments in December 2020 and April 2021 totaled just about \$3 million. Since the program began in 1994, almost \$110 million have been distributed to departments for their service programs.

The Board would like to thank all of our departments for their continued participation in these programs, and especially our members for their generosity.

As of June 2021, DAV received total support and revenue from all sources of roughly \$154 million. Also through June 2021, DAV had total expenditures of close to \$112 million, of which more than \$90 million were for service programs which is 81 percent of total expenses. (Applause)

Over the same period, fundraising expenditures of \$16 million were comparable to 2020.

Administrative outlays were a little above \$5 million.

As of June 30, 2021, the market value of our general fund long-term investment portfolio is roughly \$482 million.

DAV's net assets or net worth increased from slightly more than \$345 million at this time last year to in excess of \$462 million, a \$117 million increase, or 34 percent. (Applause)

As COVID restrictions are lifted, DAV will increase spending on services to veterans in accordance with our mission.

We are also devoting funds to new fundraising opportunities. We will continue to use our resources wisely.

We are also pleased to report that at June 30, 2020, the Life Membership Fund Reserve was approximately \$53 million.

Commander, it is my privilege to present DAV's proposed 2022 Annual Budget for ratification by the Convention.

At the May 26th, 2021, meeting of the Board of Directors the Board was presented the 2022 proposed budget. The Board unanimously approved the proposed budget at that time, a copy of which was provided to all Convention members at registration.

I would like to thank National Adjutant Marc Burgess and his staff for all their hard work which makes this report possible. Let me thank you, Commander Whitehead, for the support I received in my role as the Board of Directors' Treasurer. It has truly been a privilege to hold this position.

Commander, this concludes my report to the National Convention, a report I feel honored to offer to our delegates. I thank you and move for the adoption of my report and approval of the proposed 2022 annual budget. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Thank you, Robert, for your service and that very informative report. I have a motion. May I have a second?

MR. JOHN PARKER: Microphone 2.

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Mic 2.

MR. Parker: Smith for acceptance of the report with gratitude to the members – I'm sorry, John Parker, PDC, Chapter 35, Ohio.

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Thanks, John. All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed, same sign. So ordered.

(Whereupon, Mr. Cox withdrew from the podium.)

I would like now to call on Chairman Rob Reynolds for the report of the Committee on Constitution and Bylaws. This is the first reading of the proposed Bylaw changes.

(Whereupon, Convention Chairman and Past National Commander Robert Reynolds advanced to the podium.)

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER ROBERT REYNOLDS: Comrade Commander and delegates, good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER REYNOLDS: The National Convention Committee on Constitution and Bylaws was called to order on July 31, 2021, by the Committee Advisors, Rob Reynolds and Ed Hartman.

The first order of business was the election of a Convention Committee chairman and secretary. Rob Reynolds was elected as chairman and John Polk was elected as secretary.

The Committee then proceeded to review the resolutions submitted. And I now will report to you the resolutions recommended for adoption by this National Convention. For the purpose of saving time I will read only the number and the purpose of the resolution.

Resolution Number 510, include DAV's Statement of Policy as Article II, Section 2.1 of the National Bylaws and renumber the current section 2.1 as 2.2; Resolution Number 511, amend Article III, Section 3.10, Convention Rule 8A to remove the national blind chapter from having a delegate and alternate on each of the seven convention committees;

Resolution Number 512, amend Article VI, Section 6.4, Paragraph 4 of the Bylaws to place members of a revoked chapter into the chapter nearest to their home rather than placing their membership into the department-at-large chapter;

Resolution Number 513, amend Article VII, Section 7.4, Paragraph 3 of the Bylaws to remove the geographical locations of the national headquarters and the national service and legislative headquarters;

Resolution Number 514, delete Article VII, Section 7.8 in its entirety and renumber Section 7.9, 7.10 and 7.11 accordingly; Section 7.8 is redundant as the national adjutant already has the authority to oversee and direct all activities of the national organization as outlined in 7.4, Paragraph 1;

Resolution Number 515, amend Article XI, Section 11.3, Paragraph 3 of the Bylaws to allow the national organization to pass on the continued eligibility of membership of any member;

Resolution Number 516, amend Article XI, Section 11.5 to remove the reference to amputee veterans as the national amputee chapter surrendered their charter due to non-participation and no longer exists;

Resolution Number 517, amend the language related to membership transfers in Article XI, Section 11.8, Paragraph 1 of the Bylaws to coincide with the proposed change identified in Resolution Number 512;

Resolution Number 518, amend the language of Article XVII, Section 17.2, Paragraph 1 of the Bylaws to remove the geographical location of the national headquarters.

Comrade Commander, this completes the first reading of the report of the Committee on Constitution and Bylaws and the recommended changes to the Constitution and Bylaws.

(Whereupon, Convention Chair and Past National Commander Reynolds withdrew from the stage and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Thank you, Rob. There will be no action taken at this time. We will hear the final report on the Constitution and Bylaws Committee at the final business session on Tuesday. National Adjutant Burgess, do you have any announcements?

(Whereupon, Adjutant Burgess advanced to the podium.)

ADJUTANT J. MARC BURGESS: Join us right here in the Tampa Bay Ballroom for Fun Night tomorrow at 8:00 p.m. We will be treated to the musical sounds of Jefferson Starship. This year's concert is sponsored by our good friends at TriWest who have generously donated to bring us the fun that we all will experience tomorrow evening.

Don't forget that today at 4 p.m. is the cut-off for you to make reservations to attend the Line Officer Dinner Tuesday night. We will all need tickets to enter. And there will be assigned seating. So make sure that you all get your reservations for your seats for the Line Officer Dinner Tuesday night by 4 p.m. today.

Our regular business will begin again Tuesday morning at 8:30 a.m. We will start off with the Committee reports, including the final report of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee. We will hear reports on the Charitable Service Trust, the National Service Foundation, plus an update on our Memorial in Washington, D.C.

On Tuesday afternoon we will hold our final business session and conclude with nominations and elections of officers.

Also, you who wish to donate to any DAV entity, in the interest of time, you are encouraged to fill out the form in your bags prior to making your way to our donation booth located near Will-Call on Level 2.

We are giving away three \$50 gift certificates that can be redeemed at the DAV store online or here during National Convention. You must be present to win. If I call your name and you are in the hall please see Membership Director Doug Wells up here on the stage as soon as we adjourn.

And the lucky winners are: Donald Hodges, Rexana Torres-Ireland, and Mickey Ganich. (Applause)

As Barry mentioned in his report, we are selling bricks in the HB Plant Ballroom on the second floor of the J.W. This is a special way you can be a part of our new national headquarters' Honor Garden. You can get your name on a brick or use it as an opportunity to honor a veteran in your life, past or present, or a caregiver.

Please visit the Victories for Veterans booth in the hall. And we have a brick there that you can take a look at.

You can also get a closer look at the trench art of New Guinea and learn how you can recognize the service and sacrifices of an important veteran in this special way.

Commander, that's all my announcements.

(Whereupon, Adjutant Burgess returned to his seat and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Thank you, Marc. Ladies and gentlemen, please rise and I will ask Chaplain Edwards to please lead us in our closing prayer.

(Whereupon, the Chaplain advanced to the podium.)

CHAPLAIN EDWARDS: Our God, we realize that your power is without measure. The treasury of your goodness is without limit for you have blessed the Disabled American Veterans with many dedicated members to carry on the work, the work of assisting other veterans and their families.

Therefore, we ask you, Father that you stay close to all of us, giving us help, wisdom, and perseverance in this most noble cause. In God we trust. Amen.

(Response of "Amen.")

(Whereupon, the Chaplain withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: The Convention stands in recess until 8:30 a.m. Tuesday.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed at 10:35 o'clock, a.m., on Sunday, August 1, 2021.)

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National Service Offices Monetary Stats 2020	
Compensation	\$21,091,330,788
DIC	\$700,253,951
Veteran Pension	\$290,165,634
Survivor Pension	\$31,357,532
Education Benefits	\$995,490,034
Special Entitlements (Clothing Allowance)	\$31,832,696
Total Benefits	\$23,140,430,635

Disabled American Veterans

Financial Statements as of and for the
Year Ended December 31, 2020, and
Independent Auditors' Report

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

To the Board of Directors of
Disabled American Veterans:

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of Disabled American Veterans (DAV), which comprise the statement of financial position as of December 31, 2020, and the related statements of activities, functional expenses, and cash flows for the year then ended, and the related notes to financial statements.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; this includes the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditors' Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to DAV's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of DAV's internal control. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Opinion

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of DAV as of December 31, 2020, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Deloitte & Touche LLP

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2020

ASSETS		LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS
CASH	\$ 13,556,503	LIABILITIES:
ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE	6,694,066	Accounts payable
INTEREST AND DIVIDENDS RECEIVABLE	69,321	Accrued expenses
PREPAID EXPENSES	9,554,537	Pension liability
INVESTMENTS	459,040,521	Postretirement benefit obligation
PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT—Net	14,212,696	Other liabilities
OTHER ASSETS	1,170,145	Deferred revenue
		Life membership:
		Accounts payable
		Reserve for future distribution of
		life membership dues
		Total liabilities
		<u>134,696,001</u>
LIFE MEMBERSHIP:		NET ASSETS:
Cash	2,245,899	Without donor restrictions—undesignated
Accounts receivable	126,297	With donor restrictions:
Interest and dividends receivable	4,093	Purpose restrictions
Investments	43,272,470	Endowment funds
		Total net assets
		<u>415,250,547</u>
TOTAL	<u>\$549,946,548</u>	TOTAL
		<u>\$549,946,548</u>

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2020

	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions		Total
		Purpose Restrictions	Endowment Funds	
SUPPORT AND REVENUE:				
Support:				
Contributions received primarily from direct mail solicitations	\$109,711,296	\$11,223,840	\$ 254,912	\$121,190,048
National per capita dues	8,989,607			8,989,607
Contributed services and facilities—primarily services	24,747,973			24,747,973
Contributed media and materials—primarily media	70,815,998			70,815,998
Total support	214,264,874	11,223,840	254,912	225,743,626
Revenue:				
List royalties	368,682			368,682
Miscellaneous revenue	398,355			398,355
Total revenue	767,037	-	-	767,037
NET INVESTMENT RETURN	52,550,767		1,411,173	53,961,940
NET ASSETS RELEASED FROM DONOR RESTRICTIONS	9,556,753	(9,398,106)	(158,647)	-
Total support and revenue	277,139,431	1,825,734	1,507,438	280,472,603
EXPENSES:				
Program services:				
Service program	40,758,081			40,758,081
Employment program	1,121,220			1,121,220
Legislative service program	1,987,882			1,987,882
Voluntary service program	24,802,446			24,802,446
State services and disaster relief	7,075,017			7,075,017
Communications program	9,430,025			9,430,025
Public service announcement program—primarily contributed media	70,923,171			70,923,171
Membership program	5,302,757			5,302,757
Public awareness outreach	23,921,138			23,921,138
Total program services	185,321,737	-	-	185,321,737
Supporting services:				
Fundraising costs	32,860,778	325,000		33,185,778
Administrative and general	9,337,552			9,337,552
Total supporting services	42,198,330	325,000	-	42,523,330
Total expenses	227,520,067	325,000	-	227,845,067
EXCESS OF SUPPORT AND REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	49,619,364	1,500,734	1,507,438	52,627,536
OTHER CHANGES IN NET ASSETS:				
Change in fair market value of interest rate swap	(204,755)			(204,755)
Pension liability and other postretirement benefit obligation adjustment	(2,047,438)			(2,047,438)
Total other changes in net assets	(2,252,193)	-	-	(2,252,193)
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	47,367,171	1,500,734	1,507,438	50,375,343
NET ASSETS—Beginning of year	351,869,166	3,613,656	9,392,382	364,875,204
NET ASSETS—End of year	\$399,236,337	\$ 5,114,390	\$10,899,820	\$415,250,547

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

**STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2020**

	Service Program	Employment Program	Legislative Service Program	Voluntary Service Program	State Services and Disaster Relief	Communications Program	Public Service Announcement Program	Membership Program	Public Awareness Outreach	Total Program Services	Fundraising Costs	Administrative and General	Total Supporting Services	Total
Salaries	\$ 392,392	\$ 929,169	\$ 929,169	\$ 639,578	\$ -	\$ 1,426,466	\$ -	\$ 1,621,847	\$ (2,205)	\$ 29,240,341	\$ 3,558,538	\$ 6,621,994	\$ 10,180,332	\$ 39,420,873
Employee benefits	7,239,158	95,173	200,819	179,034	179,034	270,593	-	5,892,021	443	12,450	1,264,124	1,671,121	1,937,245	11,514,886
Payroll taxes	1,802,013	27,752	67,765	42,332	42,332	96,709	-	96,334	(88)	2,136,867	233,505	436,885	670,390	2,807,257
DAV Transportation Network and VAP volunteers				22,076,084						22,076,084				22,076,084
HSC and Transport Network Grants				201,374						201,374				201,374
Columbia Trust				23,450						23,450				23,450
Disaster relief			5,000	125,000	1,204,768	7,600				1,337,368				1,337,368
Disaster relief					2,863,306					2,863,306				2,863,306
State service program					3,000,175					3,000,175				3,000,175
Scholarships				53,125				55,293		55,293				55,293
Expenses of national convention														
Expenses of national commander and committees														
Travel/accommodations, training, and relocation	754,974	11,388	8,669	11,258		22,961		19,496		826,146	63,536	53,185	116,721	944,867
Facilities	2,671,289			585,949			69,996,010	58,140		70,293,292				70,293,292
Facilities	358,936			34,678	775	1,082,239	(1,276)	99,198		1,610,251				1,610,251
Postage and shipping	1,406	1,011	4,329	41,764		35,747	5,519	75,770	19,555	464,948	300,225	224,820	11,120,021	12,780,272
Postage and shipping	279,576	2,688	4,329	41,764		35,747	5,519	75,770	19,555	464,948	300,225	224,820	11,120,021	12,780,272
Equipment rental and maintenance	501,949	15,954	68,651	101,885	1,069	28,742		83,261	5,247	806,758	178,860	95,419	1,081,037	1,803,132
Supplies	83,005	1,491	83,005	3,294	3,944	12,804		1,104	2,008	91,038	3,835	261,072	264,907	355,945
Supplies	217,174	4,330	5,438	3,294				10,081		253,321	16,415	212,088	228,503	481,824
Telephone								54,890	34,467	3,925,309	4,928,400	120,590	5,048,999	8,974,299
Project costs		365,000				917,130				917,130				917,130
Printing of magazine	87,191			2,109		13,137		255,244	5,168	362,899	31,495,014	321,288	31,820,302	32,183,151
Cost of mailing materials	141,111									141,111		125,342	125,342	266,453
Check, light, water, and power	242,475									242,475		162,344	162,344	406,819
Depreciation														
Depreciation of property and equipment	1,205,500			82,154		13,280		12,527		1,329,668	61,420	405,452	466,872	17,965,540
Legal fees	219,156		1,207	2,294				8,708		230,158	33,809	252,978	286,787	516,945
Legal fees	137,451	151,000	55,478	6,276		1,221,516		182,468	64,487	2,188,290	989,815	3,178,105	5,911,289	8,100,000
Professional fees	58,825									58,825	31,250	253,418	284,668	343,493
Technology services	58,825									58,825	31,250	253,418	284,668	343,493
Other expenses	595,156		2,091	86,733		5,152		13,161	8,028	174,681	12,560	1,060,397	1,072,857	1,247,538
Support for membership service								1,162,297		1,162,297				1,162,297
Uncollectible pledges														
Depreciation from 100 other departments	266,247	54,137	634,470	505,999		804,470		15,042,210	23,689,186	27,478,719	(22,480,204)	(5,048,515)	(27,478,719)	-
Total	\$40,758,081	\$1,121,220	\$1,967,882	\$4,802,446	\$7,075,017	\$9,430,025	\$70,923,171	\$5,302,757	\$23,921,138	\$188,321,737	\$ 33,185,778	\$ 9,337,532	\$ 41,523,330	\$27,845,067

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2020

CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:

Change in net assets	\$ 50,375,343
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash used in operating activities:	
Noncash contributions	(528,522)
Pension liability and other postretirement benefit obligation adjustment	2,047,438
Change in fair market value of interest rate swap	204,755
Depreciation	1,796,540
Gain on disposal of property and equipment	(65,426)
Contributions restricted for endowment	(254,912)
Appropriation of endowment assets pursuant to spending-rate policy	158,647
Gain on sale and appreciation of investments	(48,283,535)
Changes in operating assets and liabilities:	
Accounts receivable	(472,327)
Interest and dividends receivable	(4,294)
Prepaid expenses	(1,743,343)
Other assets	(801,395)
Accounts payable	(1,880,644)
Accrued expenses	2,452,467
Pension liability and other postretirement benefit obligation	(785,279)
Other liabilities	(330,592)
Deferred dues and service fees collected in advance	(3,480,768)
Deferred revenue	(3,446)
Reserve for future distribution of life membership dues	(565,218)
	<u>(2,164,511)</u>
Net cash used in operating activities	<u>(2,164,511)</u>

CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:

Payments for property and equipment	(6,449,544)
Proceeds from the sale of property and equipment	66,446
Purchases of investments for endowments	(2,083,536)
Proceeds from the sale of investments for endowment	1,408,767
Purchases of investments	(190,374,096)
Proceeds from the sale of investments	<u>193,973,801</u>
Net cash used in investing activities	<u>(3,458,162)</u>

CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES:

Proceeds from contributions restricted for investment in endowment	254,912
Appropriation of endowment assets pursuant to spending-rate policy	(158,647)
Net cash provided by financing activities	<u>96,265</u>

NET DECREASE IN CASH (5,526,408)

CASH—Beginning of year 21,328,810

CASH—End of year \$ 15,802,402

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AS OF AND FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2020

1. ORGANIZATION

Disabled American Veterans (DAV) is a Congressionally chartered, not-for-profit service organization. DAV is dedicated to a single purpose: empowering veterans to lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity. DAV accomplishes this by ensuring that veterans and their families can access a full range of benefits available to them; fighting for the interests of America's injured heroes on Capitol Hill; and educating the public about the great sacrifices and needs of veterans transitioning back to civilian life.

- Providing free, professional assistance to veterans and their families in obtaining benefits and services earned through military service and provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and other agencies of government
- Providing outreach concerning its program services to the American people, generally, and to disabled veterans and their families, specifically
- Representing the interests of disabled veterans, their families, their widowed spouses, and their orphans before Congress, the White House, and the judicial branch, as well as state and local governments
- Extending DAV's mission of hope into the communities where these veterans and their families live through a network of state-level departments and local chapters
- Providing a structure through which disabled veterans can express their compassion for their fellow veterans through a variety of volunteer programs

During the year ended December 31, 2020, there was a global outbreak of a new strain of coronavirus, COVID-19, which continues to adversely impact global and domestic commercial activity. The full extent of the impact of COVID-19 on DAV will depend on various future developments, particularly the duration and depth of the pandemic, which may be influenced by emerging medical treatments and applicable health and safety regulations.

2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Financial Statements—The accompanying financial statements have been prepared on the accrual basis of accounting in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAP).

New Accounting Standards—In February 2016, the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) issued Accounting Standards Update (ASU) No. 2016-02, *Leases (Topic 842)*. This standard amends the existing guidance and requires lessees to recognize on the balance sheet assets and liabilities for the rights and obligations created by those leases with lease terms longer than 12 months. This update is effective for annual financial statements issued for fiscal years beginning after December 15, 2021, and is to be applied using a modified retrospective approach; early adoption is permitted. Management is in the process of evaluating the impact on the financial statements.

In June 2016, the FASB issued ASU No. 2016-13, *Financial Instruments—Credit Losses*, which is included in ASC Topic 326, *Measurement of Credit Losses on Financial Instruments*. The new standard revises the accounting requirements related to the measurement of credit losses and will require organizations to measure all expected credit losses for financial assets based on historical experience, current conditions, and reasonable and supportable forecasts about collectability. Assets must be presented in the financial statements at the net amount expected to be collected. This standard will be effective for the annual financial statements beginning January 1, 2023. A modified retrospective approach is to be used for certain parts of this standard, while other parts are to be applied using a prospective approach. Management has not yet evaluated the impact of ASU No. 2016-13 on the financial statements.

In September 2020, the FASB issued ASU No. 2020-07, *Not-for-Profit Entities (Topic 958): Presentation and Disclosures by Not-for-Profit Entities for Contributed Nonfinancial Assets*. The amendments require not-for-profit entities to present contributed nonfinancial assets as a separate line item in the statement of activities, apart from contributions of cash and other financial contributions. The standard also requires additional disclosure related to contributed nonfinancial assets. The amendment, which requires retrospective application, is effective for annual periods beginning after June 15, 2021. Management is in the process of evaluating the impact on the financial statements.

Newly Adopted Accounting Principles—In August 2018, the FASB ASU No. 2018-13, *Fair Value Measurement (Topic 820): Disclosure Framework—Changes to the Disclosure Requirements for Fair Value Measurement*. The amendments in this update modify the disclosure requirements on fair value measurements in Accounting Standards Codification (ASC) Topic 820, *Fair Value Measurement*, based on the concepts in the concepts statement, including the consideration of costs and benefits. The adoption did not have an impact on the financial statements.

In August 2018, the FASB issued ASU No. 2018-15, *Goodwill and Other-Internal Use Software (Subtopic 350-40): Customer’s Accounting for Implementation Costs Incurred in a Cloud Computing Arrangement that is a Service Contract*. The amendments in this update modify the accounting treatment for cloud computing arrangements, particularly for implementation costs incurred in a hosting arrangement. The effective date of ASU No. 2018-15 is for fiscal years beginning after December 15, 2020. Early adoption is permitted. DAV has chosen to early adopt as of January 1, 2020. The adoption resulted to the recording of prepaid implementation costs of \$1.5 million, which was reclassified from construction in progress and included in prepaid expenses and intangible assets of \$1.2 million included in other assets on the statement of financial position as of December 31, 2020.

In March 2017, the FASB issued ASU No. 2017-08, *Receivables—Nonrefundable Fees and Other Costs (Subtopic 310-20): Premium Amortization on Purchased Callable Debt Securities*. ASU No. 2017-08 amends guidance on the amortization period of premiums on certain purchased callable debt securities. The amendments shorten the amortization period of premiums on certain purchased callable debt securities to the earliest call date. The amendments should be applied on a modified retrospective basis through a cumulative-effect adjustment to beginning retained earnings. The adoption did not have a material impact on the financial statements.

In March 2019, the FASB issued ASU No. 2019-03, *Not-for-Profit-Entities (Topic 958): Updating the Definition of Collections*. The amendments in this update modify the definition of the term collections and require that a collection-holding entity disclose its policy for the use of proceeds from when collection items are deaccessioned (that is, removed from a collection). The adoption did not have an impact on the financial statements.

In August 2018, the FASB issued ASU No. 2018-14, *Compensation—Retirement Benefits—Defined Benefit Plans—General (Subtopic 715-20): Disclosure Framework—Changes to the Disclosure Requirements for Defined Benefit Plans*. The amendments in this ASU remove disclosures that no longer are considered cost beneficial, clarify the specific requirements of disclosures, and add disclosure requirements identified as relevant. The effective date of ASU No. 2018-14 is for fiscal years ending after December 15, 2021. Early adoption is permitted. DAV has chosen to early adopt as of January 1, 2020. As a result of the adoption, the disclosures regarding the amortization of net actuarial loss and prior service cost were removed, and an explanation of the reasons for significant gains and losses relating to changes in the benefit obligation was added.

Cash—DAV maintains its cash in bank deposit accounts, which, at times, exceed federally insured limits. DAV has not experienced any losses in such accounts.

Accounts Receivable—Amounts recorded as accounts receivable are reduced to their net realizable value, as appropriate.

Investments—Investments are recorded at fair value. The fair value of DAV’s investments is determined based on the quoted market prices of the related securities or quoted prices in active markets for instruments that are similar, or model-derived valuations in which all significant inputs and significant value drivers are observable in active markets. Gains and losses on the sale of investment securities are recognized based upon the specific identification method and are part of net investment income included in total support and revenue for the investments in the general fund. DAV’s policy is to report cash equivalents, which include money market funds, within its trust accounts as investments.

Property and Equipment—Property and equipment are stated at cost, less accumulated depreciation, and, at December 31, 2020, are composed of the following:

	Cost	Accumulated Depreciation	Net Book Value
Land and improvements	\$ 3,243,483	\$ 517,635	\$ 2,725,848
Buildings and improvements	11,842,583	10,089,755	1,752,828
Machinery and other equipment	28,779,288	26,355,532	2,423,756
Construction in process	<u>7,310,264</u>		<u>7,310,264</u>
Total	<u>\$51,175,618</u>	<u>\$36,962,922</u>	<u>\$14,212,696</u>

Depreciation is computed generally on the straight-line method over the estimated useful life of assets, which range from three to 50 years.

Contributions—DAV recognizes contributions when cash, securities, or other assets; an unconditional promise to give; or a notification of a beneficial interest is received. Conditional promises to give—that is, those with a measurable performance or other barrier and a right of return—are not recognized until the conditions on which they depend have been met.

Contributions received are recorded as support with or without donor restrictions depending on the existence and the nature of any donor restrictions. All contributions are considered available for unrestricted use, unless specifically restricted by the donor. Support that is restricted by the donor is reported as an increase in net assets with donor restrictions. Donated assets are recorded at their fair market value at the time of the gift.

Revenue Recognition from Exchange Transactions—DAV has multiple revenue streams that are accounted for as exchange transactions including sponsorships, cause marketing revenue, rental income, recycling income, and royalties. Revenue from these sources is recognized as services are performed or once the performance obligations are complete. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Winter Sports Clinic and the Centennial Celebration were both delayed and will resume when conditions are safe for these events to resume. As a result, DAV recorded a performance obligation equal to the exchange amount owed to our sponsors which will be fulfilled when the event takes place. The amounts recorded for 2020 were \$64,207 for the Winter Sports Clinic and \$24,825 for the Centennial Celebration and are included in accounts payable in the statement of financial position.

Net Assets without Donor Restrictions—All contributions and bequests without donor restrictions are resources available to support DAV's operations.

Net Assets with Donor Restrictions—Net assets with donor restrictions consist of assets whose use is limited by donor-imposed, time, and/or purpose restrictions.

DAV reports gifts of cash and other assets as revenue with donor restrictions if they are received with donor stipulations that limit the use of the donated assets. When a donor restriction expires, that is, when a stipulated time restriction ends or purpose restriction is accomplished, the net assets are reclassified as net assets without donor restriction and reported in the statement of activities as net assets released from restrictions.

Some net assets with donor restrictions include a stipulation that assets provided be maintained in perpetuity while permitting DAV to expend the income generated by the assets in accordance with the provision of additional donor-imposed stipulations.

See Notes 8 and 9 for more information on the composition of net assets with donor restrictions and the release from restrictions, respectively.

Contributed Services and Facilities—DAV operates extensive programs through which volunteers contribute many hours of service to veterans. The 812,000 hours that are donated to DAV's Transportation Network at the VA and donated hours of Department and Chapter Service Officers through the Local Veterans Assistance Program (LVAP) are used to tabulate contributed services. Using a value per hour of \$27.20 developed by Independent Sector, an organization that provides oversight to nonprofit organizations in America, the value of these hours contributed to the DAV's Transportation Network and LVAP program is \$22,076,084. This value, together with the value of certain contributed facilities, is recorded as support and expenses in the accompanying statement of activities and statement of functional expenses.

Contributed Media and Materials—DAV produces public service announcements through various mediums (television, radio, digital, print, out of home), of which approximately \$71 million was donated through independent third parties. The value of the donated media is provided through an independent third party utilizing an estimated market value for each type of medium. The most significant medium is television. Estimated market values for television announcements are determined using various inputs, including length of spot, city, station, day part, and industry media cost data. The value of contributed media and materials is recorded as support and expenses in the accompanying statement of activities and statement of functional expenses.

Salaries Expense—The salaries expense in the accompanying financial statements includes the cost of all national service officers and their support staff who work directly with veterans and their

dependents in providing counseling and representation in obtaining benefits and services. This expense also includes DAV's administrative and support staffs.

Income Taxes—As a not-for-profit service organization, DAV has received a determination from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) that it is exempt from federal income tax as a 501(c)(4) organization. Contributions made to DAV are tax deductible by the contributor as provided in Section 170 of the Internal Revenue Code.

Use of Estimates—The preparation of the financial statements in accordance with GAAP requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities, disclosures of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements, and the reported amounts of support, revenues, and expenses during the reporting period. Actual amounts could differ from those estimates.

Allocation of Expenses—The financial statements report certain categories of expenses that are attributable to one or more programs or supporting services of DAV. Those expenses include building maintenance, information technology and general administrative services. Building maintenance expenses are allocated based on a square footage basis; the information technology and general administrative services expenses are allocated based on the percentage of time tracked by department utilized.

Allocation of Joint Costs—The allocation of joint costs is based on the specific content of the qualifying material or media. In 2020, DAV incurred joint costs of \$47,383,333 for informational materials and activities that included fund-raising appeals. Of those costs, \$23,689,186 were allocated to public awareness outreach (program services) and \$23,694,147 were allocated to fund-raising costs.

3. LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Under the bylaws of DAV, any eligible person may become a life member. Amounts paid for membership are placed in separate life membership accounts and invested; the only withdrawals permitted from these accounts are amounts required to pay chapter, department, and national (DAV) per capita dues for services to be provided to the life members. Generally, life membership assets for DAV National Headquarters per capita dues are transferred to the general assets of DAV at the beginning of the membership year (July 1) and recognized as revenue in the statement of activities. The per capita chapter and department dues are distributed at the beginning of the membership year. The reserve for future distribution of membership dues represents the liability for the future life membership distributions to DAV National Headquarters, departments, and chapters to assist with providing member services.

The changes during 2020 in the reserve for future distribution of life membership dues are summarized below:

Balance—January 1, 2020	<u>\$46,073,473</u>
Additions:	
Membership dues received	4,885,422
Net investment return	4,239,113
Other income	<u>128,942</u>
Total additions	<u>9,253,477</u>
Distribution of membership dues:	
National headquarters	5,508,839
Local chapters	2,273,647
State departments	1,892,282
Other expense	<u>143,927</u>
Total distribution of membership dues	<u>9,818,695</u>
Balance—December 31, 2020	<u>\$45,508,255</u>

4. FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS

ASC 820, *Fair Value Measurements and Disclosures*, provides a framework for measuring fair value. This framework provides a fair value hierarchy that prioritizes the inputs to valuation techniques used to measure fair value, as follows: Level 1, which refers to securities valued using unadjusted quoted prices from active markets for identical assets; Level 2, which refers to securities not traded on an active market but for which observable market inputs are readily available; and Level 3, which refers to securities valued based on significant unobservable inputs. Assets are classified in their entirety based on the lowest level of input that is significant to the fair value measurement.

DAV did not hold any financial assets requiring the use of inputs that are unobservable and significant to the overall fair value measurement (Level 3) during 2020.

Asset Valuation Techniques—Valuation techniques used maximize the use of observable inputs and minimize the use of unobservable inputs. The following is a description of the valuation methodologies used for general fund, life fund, and pension plan assets recorded at fair value. There have been no changes in the methodologies used at December 31, 2020.

Cash equivalents, composed of money market funds, are categorized as Level 1. Such investments are valued at cost, which approximates fair value. The money market fund represents DAV's shares in a registered investment company's fund.

US government securities (US Treasury notes), common stocks, and exchange-traded funds (ETFs), categorized as Level 1, are valued at the closing price reported in the active market in which the individual security is traded.

Certificates of deposit and commercial paper, categorized as Level 2, are valued at fair value, which approximates amortized cost.

Municipal and corporate bonds, categorized as Level 2, are valued using third-party pricing services. These services may use, for example, model-based pricing methods that utilize observable market data as inputs. Broker-dealer bids or quotes of securities with similar characteristics may also be used.

Shares of registered investment companies (mutual funds), categorized as Level 1, are valued at quoted market prices that represent the net asset value of shares held at year-end.

Interest rate swap agreement-The fair value is estimated using forward-looking interest rate curves and discounted cash flows that are observable or can be corroborated by observable market data and, therefore, are classified within Level 2 of the valuation hierarchy.

The major categories of general fund financial assets measured at fair value on a recurring basis as of December 31, 2020, are as follows:

Asset Category	Fair Value Measurements Using		
	Quoted Prices in Active Markets for Identical Assets (Level 1)	Significant Observable Inputs (Level 2)	Total
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 17,586,692	\$ -	\$ 17,586,692
Certificates of deposit		247,338	247,338
Commercial Paper		1,728,064	1,728,064
US government securities	800,189		800,189
Corporate bonds		47,118,018	47,118,018
Municipal bonds		1,950,725	1,950,725
Common stocks	43,791,337		43,791,337
Mutual funds/ETFs:			
Domestic fixed-income funds	73,396,527		73,396,527
International fixed-income funds	195,962		195,962
Domestic equity funds/ETFs	263,339,922		263,339,922
International equity funds	611,461		611,461
Real estate equity funds	8,274,286		8,274,286
Total mutual funds/ETFs	345,818,158	-	345,818,158
Total general fund assets	\$ 407,996,376	\$ 51,044,145	\$ 459,040,521
Interest rate swap agreement	\$ -	\$ (204,755)	\$ (204,755)

The major categories of life membership fund financial assets measured at fair value on a recurring basis as of December 31, 2020, are as follows:

Asset Category	Fair Value Measurements Using		
	Quoted Prices in Active Markets for Identical Assets (Level 1)	Significant Observable Inputs (Level 2)	Total
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 212,657	\$ -	\$ 212,657
Corporate bonds		4,974,479	4,974,479
Common stocks	3,116,748		3,116,748
Mutual funds/ETFs:			
Domestic fixed-income funds	6,925,876		6,925,876
Domestic equity funds/ETFs	20,170,340		20,170,340
International equity funds	6,729,597		6,729,597
Real estate equity funds	1,142,773		1,142,773
Total mutual funds/ETFs	34,968,586	-	34,968,586
Total life membership fund assets	\$38,297,991	\$4,974,479	\$43,272,470

5. PENSION PLAN, POSTRETIREMENT BENEFITS AND OTHER BENEFITS

Pension Plan—DAV has a defined benefit pension plan covering substantially all of its employees and certain employees of Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary (DAVA). Benefits are based on years of service and employees' compensation. Contributions are intended to fully fund, over a period of seven years, the benefits attributed to service to date based on market interest rates established by the IRS. In 2020, DAV funded amounts in accordance with the recommended actuarially determined contribution amount. Contributions to the plan are based on the unit credit actuarial cost method.

Other Postretirement Benefit Plans—DAV provides certain health care and life insurance benefits (other postretirement benefits) for its retired employees and their spouses as well as certain retired employees and their spouses of DAVA. Substantially, all of DAV's employees may become eligible for these benefits if they have completed 20 years of service upon retirement. The post-Medicare retiree medical benefits are now a health reimbursement account (HRA).

DAV offers Medicare-eligible retirees access to health care coverage through a private exchange and provides an HRA to subsidize benefits. DAV established a catastrophic HRA with \$75,000 aggregate limit to cover catastrophic prescription drug expenses incurred by qualifying participants.

Summarized information for the plans as of December 31, 2020, measurement date is as follows:

	Pension	Other Postretirement Benefits
Accumulated benefit obligation	<u>\$ 81,499,481</u>	<u>\$ -</u>
Projected benefit obligation (PBO)	\$ 88,746,126	\$ -
Accumulated postretirement benefit obligation (APBO)		53,980,066
Fair value of plan assets	<u>(73,367,849)</u>	<u> </u>
Unfunded status recognized	<u>\$ 15,378,277</u>	<u>\$53,980,066</u>

Summarized information of the plans for the year ended December 31, 2020, is as follows:

	Pension	Other Postretirement Benefits
Components of net periodic benefit cost:		
Service cost	\$ 2,770,637	\$ 1,455,971
Interest cost	2,089,122	1,521,804
Expected return on assets	(3,762,653)	
Amortization of net loss	1,196,300	604,299
Amortization of prior service cost (benefit)	31,964	(4,156,585)
Recognized settlement loss	<u>1,498,143</u>	<u> </u>
Net periodic benefit cost (benefit)	<u>\$ 3,823,513</u>	<u>\$ (574,511)</u>
Components of pension and postretirement benefit obligation adjustment:		
Amortization of prior service cost (benefit)	\$ 31,964	\$(4,156,585)
Amortization of net loss	1,196,300	604,299
Actuarial net loss during the year	(3,928,421)	2,706,862
Pension settlement loss	<u>1,498,143</u>	<u> </u>
Pension and postretirement benefit obligation adjustment	<u>\$(1,202,014)</u>	<u>\$ (845,424)</u>

For purposes of year end disclosure, the following changes were made to the actuarial assumptions used in the valuation of the Pension Plan:

- The single equivalent discount rate changed from 3.08% to 2.29% based on the Plan's expected benefit payouts and the FTSE above median yield curve as of December 31, 2019.
- The mortality assumption for non-disabled participants was updated to the Pri-2012 Total Employee and Retiree Mortality Tables (base year 2012) and projected with Mortality Improvement Scale MP-2020, except for current beneficiaries of deceased participants. For current beneficiaries of deceased participants, mortality is based on the Pri-2012 Contingent Survivor Mortality Tables and projected with Mortality Improvement Scale MP-2020. For disabled participants, the mortality assumption was updated to the Pri-2012 Disabled Retiree Mortality Table (base year 2012) and projected with Mortality Improvement Scale MP-2020.

- PEP conversion interest rates were updated to the same yield curve rates used to determine the obligation under the spot rate method.

These changes had the cumulative impact of increasing the projected benefit obligation by \$5,500,000.

Beginning January 1, 2021, the expected return on assets was changed from 5.75% to 5.25% based on advice from the investment consultant. This change led to an increase in the estimated 2021 net pension cost of approximately \$360,000.

For purposes of year end disclosure, the following changes were made to the actuarial assumptions used in the valuation of the Other Postretirement Benefits Plan:

- The discount rate was updated to 3.28% for the January 1, 2020 actuarial valuation. Previously, a discount rate of 4.25% was used.
- The mortality table used was the Pri-2012 Headcount Weighted Mortality Table (base year 2012) with fully generational projection according to the MP-2019 scale. Previously, the RPH-2014 Mortality Table (base year 2006) with fully generational projection according to the MP-2018 scale was used.
- The HRA Utilization Assumption was changed from 100% to 85%.

These changes had the cumulative effect of decreasing the projected benefit obligation by \$775,000.

Amounts not yet recognized as a component of periodic pension cost at December 31, 2020, are as follows:

	Pension	Other Postretirement Benefits
Prior service cost (benefit)	\$ 63,927	\$(31,160,189)
Net actuarial loss	<u>22,368,884</u>	<u>11,731,173</u>
Amounts recognized as reduction (increase) in unrestricted net assets	<u>\$ 22,432,811</u>	<u>\$(19,429,016)</u>

	Pension	Other Postretirement Benefits
For the year ended December 31, 2020:		
Benefit expense (net periodic pension benefit cost of \$3,823,513 offset by \$26,510 reimbursed by DAVA)	\$ 3,797,003	\$(574,511)
Actual return on plan assets	8,313,866	
Employer contribution	2,800,000	1,234,282
Plan participants' contributions		50,877
Benefits paid	6,805,560	1,285,159
Weighted-average rate assumptions used for the December 31 valuation—for year-end benefit obligation:		
Discount rate	2.29 %	2.57 %
Rate of compensation increase	3.00	3.00

For the year-end benefit obligation, the Pri-2012 Total Employee and Retiree Mortality Table with Mortality Improvement Scale MP-2020 was utilized.

	Pension	Other Postretirement Benefits
For annual benefit cost:		
Discount rate	3.08 %	3.28 %
Discount rate—PBO normal cost	3.09	N/A
Rate of compensation increase	3.00	3.00
Expected return on plan assets	5.75	N/A

For the annual benefit cost, the Pri-2012 Total Employee and Retiree Mortality Tables (base year 2012) with Mortality Improvement Scale MP-2019 was utilized.

The APBO and related benefit cost are determined through the application of relevant actuarial assumptions. DAV anticipates the increase in its health care cost-trend rate to slow from 7.5% in 2020 to 4.5% in 2026, after which the trend rate is expected to stabilize.

DAV expects to contribute \$2.7 million to its pension plan in 2021.

DAV's pension plan investment allocation at December 31, 2020, is as follows:

Asset Category	Percentage of Plan Assets
Equity-based securities	55 %
Fixed-income securities	22
Real assets	3
Alternative	17
Cash and cash equivalents	<u>3</u>
Total	<u>100 %</u>

The primary objective of the investment policy is preservation of capital with an emphasis on long-term growth without undue exposure to risk and in recognition of the cash flow needs of the plan. The asset allocation ranges are: 42% to 59% equities, 20% to 35% fixed-income securities, 0% to 10% real assets, and 5% to 20% alternative strategies. Approximately, 0% to 13% of the combined investments are to be in money market or other liquid funds (cash requirements).

Pension plan financial assets are recorded at fair value using the measurement techniques outlined in Note 4. The major categories of pension plan financial assets measured at fair value on a recurring basis as of December 31, 2020, are as follows:

Asset Category	Fair Value Measurements Using		
	Quoted Prices in Active Markets for Identical Assets (Level 1)	Significant Observable Inputs (Level 2)	Total
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 2,395,512	\$ -	\$ 2,395,512
US government securities	<u>1,686,308</u>		<u>1,686,308</u>
US government agency notes		<u>2,230,668</u>	<u>2,230,668</u>
Municipal bonds		<u>716,084</u>	<u>716,084</u>
Corporate bonds		<u>6,977,244</u>	<u>6,977,244</u>
Common stocks:			
Real assets	<u>1,063,826</u>		<u>1,063,826</u>
Total common stocks	<u>1,063,826</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,063,826</u>
Mutual funds/ETFs:			
Equity-based securities	40,460,219		40,460,219
Fixed income	4,322,817		4,322,817
Real assets	1,122,779		1,122,779
Alternative	<u>12,392,392</u>		<u>12,392,392</u>
Total mutual funds/ETFs	<u>58,298,207</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>58,298,207</u>
Total pension plan assets	<u>\$ 63,443,853</u>	<u>\$ 9,923,996</u>	<u>\$ 73,367,849</u>

In selecting the expected rate of return on plan assets, DAV considers historical rates of return for the type of investments the plan holds, as well as future market expectations. Expectations are then applied to the target asset allocation to arrive at a weighted average of expected returns for the plan's portfolio of assets.

The pension plan benefit payments, which reflect expected future service, as appropriate, are expected to be paid as follows:

Fiscal Years Ending	Benefit Payments
2021	\$ 3,940,108
2022	3,014,965
2023	4,098,824
2024	5,030,765
2025	6,316,290
2026–2030	32,635,533

DAV offers retirees access to health coverage through a private exchange and provides an HRA to subsidize benefits.

The other postretirement benefit payments, which reflect expected future service, as appropriate, are expected to be paid as follows:

Fiscal Years Ending	Benefit Payments
2021	\$ 2,197,045
2022	1,917,323
2023	1,971,644
2024	2,053,266
2025	2,127,059
2026–2030	11,766,027

DAV also maintains a defined contribution salary savings and investment plan for its employees. For qualified participating employees, DAV contributes a percentage of the employees' base salary. DAV's contributions in 2020 were \$2,726,058 and are included in employee benefits expense in the accompanying statement of functional expenses.

Paid Time Off (PTO) Plan and Trust—The PTO Plan is a welfare benefit plan. The Plan established a trust to fund paid time-off benefits for eligible employees of DAV. DAV Benefit Plan Administration Committee serves as the Plan administrator. Fifth Third Bank serves as the trustee of the Plan. The Plan is subject to the provisions of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA). PTO benefits are funded by the Sponsor contributions to the Plan's trust and are recorded upon distribution. PTO participants can be part-time employees, which is anyone that works a minimum of 30 hours, and the benefit is prorated as compared to a full-time 40-hour employee. Remaining balances up to 40 hours of PTO are paid out at the end of each year. The Sponsor funds the Plan in sufficient amounts to cover currently payable benefits and estimated future benefits. Contributions to the Plan are deposited with a trustee. The PTO liability at December 31, 2020 was \$3.6 million and is included in accrued expenses in the statement of financial position.

PTO plan financial assets are recorded at fair value using the measurement techniques outlined in Note 4. The major categories of the PTO plan financial assets measured at fair value on a recurring basis as of December 31, 2020, are as follows:

Asset Category	Fair Value Measurements Using		
	Quoted Prices in Active Markets for Identical Assets (Level 1)	Significant Observable Inputs (Level 2)	Total
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 310,431	\$ -	\$ 310,431
Mutual funds/ETFs:			
Equity-based securities	3,032,600		3,032,600
Fixed income	1,120,807		1,120,807
Real assets	<u>189,820</u>	<u></u>	<u>189,820</u>
Total mutual funds/ETFs	<u>4,343,227</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>4,343,227</u>
Total PTO plan assets	<u>\$4,653,658</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$4,653,658</u>

6. LOANS PAYABLE

On May 7, 2020, DAV entered into a loan agreement with a bank for a draw note in the amount of \$13 million to fund the construction of a new headquarters building. DAV can borrow on the note for capital improvements projects until September 30, 2021, the conversion date. On the conversion date, the entire outstanding principal balance and all accrued and unpaid interests will be converted to a term loan. The term loan will be payable in monthly principal payments of \$216,667 plus interest starting November 1, 2021 through October 1, 2026, the maturity date. Interest is paid at a monthly variable rate of prime less 2.00% per annum. There was no outstanding balance on the note at December 31, 2020.

DAV is required under the loan agreement to comply with certain covenants, the most restrictive of these are to maintain its primary operating accounts with the bank and to maintain liquid assets of at least \$16 million.

7. DERIVATIVE AND HEDGING ACTIVITIES

DAV has entered into an interest rate swap agreement with a commercial bank, effective April 30, 2020, to reduce the impact of changes in interest rates on its floating rate bonds (see note 6). The agreement effectively changes DAV's interest rate exposure on its floating rate bonds due October 1, 2026 to a fixed 2.00% rate. The interest rate swap agreement matures at the same time the related bonds mature.

Derivatives are held only for the purpose of hedging such risks, not for speculation. Generally, DAV enters into a hedging relationship such that changes in the fair values or cash flows of transactions being hedged are expected to be offset by corresponding changes in the values of the derivative. At December 31, 2020, hedging relationships exist for bond indebtedness and the exposure to variable

cash flows related to variable rate debt. The fair value of the interest rate swap agreement is based on quotes provided by derivative specialists at DAV's bank with whom these agreements were made.

The change in the fair value of the interest rate swap agreement of \$204,755 for the year ended December 31, 2020 is included in other changes in net assets in the statement of activities.

8. COMPOSITION OF NET ASSETS WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS

Net assets with donor restrictions as of December 31, 2020, are restricted for the following purposes:

Subject to expenditure for a specified purpose:	
National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic	\$ 856,020
Service program	278,000
Disaster relief and COVID program	2,344,512
Transportation Network	342,730
Employment program	659,033
Other	<u>634,095</u>
 Total subject to expenditure for a specified purpose	 5,114,390
 Endowments subject to DAV's spending policy and appropriation	 <u>10,899,820</u>
 Total net assets with donor restrictions	 <u>\$ 16,014,210</u>

9. NET ASSETS RELEASED FROM DONOR RESTRICTIONS

Net assets were released from donor restrictions by incurring expenses satisfying the restricted purposes or by occurrence of the passage of time or other events specified by donors. The net assets released from restrictions for the year ended December 31, 2020, are as follows:

Purpose restriction accomplished:	
Service program	\$ 4,507,657
Disaster relief and COVID program	3,052,823
Employment program	1,105,781
Transportation Network	202,918
Endowment	158,647
Boulder Crest Retreat	150,000
DAV 5K events	129,826
National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic	116,486
Other	<u>132,615</u>
 Total net assets released from restriction	 <u>\$ 9,556,753</u>

10. LIQUIDITY AND AVAILABILITY OF FINANCIAL ASSETS

DAV intends to operate within a prudent range of financial soundness and stability. DAV regularly monitors liquidity required to meet its operating needs and other contractual commitments, while also striving to maximize the investment of its available funds. DAV has various sources of liquidity at its disposal, including cash and cash equivalents, readily marketable debt and equity securities and a draw loan.

DAV forecasts its future cash flows annually and monitors actual activity monthly. For purposes of analyzing resources available to meet expenditures over a 12-month period, DAV considers all expenditures related to its ongoing program, fund-raising, general and administrative activities, and capital purchases. DAV's working capital and cash flows have seasonal variations during the year attributable to the timing of contribution solicitation campaigns. Campaign expenses paid and contributions received fluctuate monthly with a heavier concentration near calendar year-end. Bequests also vary from year to year.

While DAV's investments are primarily unrestricted, funds withdrawn from the portfolio approximate 4% of the portfolio's average quarterly market value over the prior two years. Funds are liquidated based on cash flow forecasts. DAV has an investment policy with primary goals of safeguarding its assets; maximizing return on the investments through interest, dividends, and appreciation of capital; and avoiding undue interest rate risk in the fixed-income portion of the portfolio. The overall asset allocation is 70% equities and liquid alternative investments and 30% fixed-income investments and cash equivalents.

The following reflects DAV's financial assets at December 31, 2020, reduced by amounts not available for general use within one year of the statement of financial position date due to donor and purpose restrictions:

Total assets, excluding nonfinancial assets	\$ 525,009,169
Subtract: Life Membership Fund	(41,648,759)
Subtract: Donor-Restricted Endowment Fund, excluding \$207,986 available for general spending based on endowment usage policy (see note 11)	(10,691,834)
Subtract: Investments not available for general expenditures	<u>(1,294,229)</u>

Financial assets available to meet cash needs for general expenditures within one year	<u>\$ 471,374,347</u>
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11. ENDOWMENT

DAV's endowment (the "Endowment") consists of approximately 25 individual funds established by donors to provide perpetual source of support for DAV's activities. As required by GAAP, net assets associated with Endowment funds are classified and reported based on the existence of donor-imposed restrictions.

DAV's Board of Directors has interpreted the KY Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act (UPMIFA) as requiring the preservation of the fair value of the original gift as of the date of the donor-restricted endowment funds, unless there are explicit donor stipulations to the contrary. At December 31, 2020, there were no such donor stipulations. Because of this interpretation, DAV retained in perpetuity (a) the original value of initial and subsequent gift amounts donated to the endowment and (b) any accumulations to the endowment made in accordance with the direction of the applicable donor gift instrument at the time the accumulation is added. Donor-restricted amounts not retained in perpetuity are subject to appropriation for expenditure by DAV in a manner consistent with the standard of prudence prescribed by UPMIFA. DAV considers the following factors in making a determination to appropriate or accumulate donor-restricted endowment funds:

- The duration and preservation of the endowment
- The purposes of DAV and the donor-restricted endowment
- General economic conditions
- The possible effect of inflation and deflation
- The expected total return from income and the appreciation of investments

- Other resources of DAV
- The investment policies of DAV

As of December 31, 2020, DAV had \$10,899,820 of donor-restricted, perpetually endowed net assets.

Investment and Spending Policies—DAV has an investment policy specific to its endowment, which is monitored by DAV’s management team and implemented by the investment manager. The investment policy statement describes the objective for the fund and sets ranges for asset allocation. The objective of the endowment is to preserve and enhance the real (inflation adjusted) purchasing power of the endowment assets consistent with agreed-upon levels of risk that a prudent person would take under various economic conditions. At a minimum, long-term rates of return should be equal to an amount sufficient to maintain the purchasing power of the endowment fund assets, to provide necessary capital to fund the spending policy, and to cover the costs of managing the endowment fund investments. The desired total return over a long-term basis (as measured on a five-year rolling period and full market cycle) is expected to exceed the rate of inflation, as measured by the Consumer Price Index, plus the spending rate plus investment expenses. Actual returns in any given year may vary from this amount. In light of this return requirement, the portfolio is constructed using a total return approach with a significant portion of the funds invested to seek growth of principal over time. The assets are invested for the long term, and a higher short-term volatility in these assets is expected and accepted. DAV limits its investment in so-called alternative investments to those that have daily liquidity (mutual funds and ETFs).

The following is a summary of the asset allocation guidelines, with allowable ranges for each asset type.

Asset Class	Lower Range	Target Weight	Upper Range
Equity	55 %	65 %	75 %
Fixed income	5	15	25
Real assets	3	10	15
Alternatives	3	7	11
Cash equivalents		3	13

DAV uses an endowment-spending formula based on total return of the investments for determining the amount to spend from the endowment fund each year. The appropriation is a maximum of 3% of the average market value of the trailing 12 quarters, calculated annually as of December 31 of each year. In establishing this policy, DAV considered the long-term expected return on its endowment fund investments and set the rate with the objective of maintaining the purchasing power of its donor-restricted permanent endowment funds over time. The endowment investment fund earned a positive return in 2020. DAV withdrew \$158,647 from the endowment fund in 2020 in accordance with the spending rate policy.

From time to time, certain donor-restricted endowment funds may have fair values less than the amount required to be maintained by donors or by law (underwater endowments). We have interpreted UPMIFA to permit spending from underwater endowments in accordance with prudent measures required under law. At December 31, 2020, funds with original gift values of \$8,608,065, fair values of \$10,899,820, and deficiencies of \$0 were reported in net assets with donor restrictions.

Changes in endowment net assets for the year ended December 31, 2020, are as follows:

	With Donor Restriction
Endowment net assets—January 1, 2020	\$ 9,392,382
Contributions	254,912
Appropriation of endowment assets pursuant to spending-rate policy	(158,647)
Investment return—net	<u>1,411,173</u>
Endowment net assets—December 31, 2020	<u>\$ 10,899,820</u>

12. RELATED-PARTY TRANSACTIONS

DAV (Disabled American Veterans) National Service Foundation—Some members of DAV’s Board of Directors also serve on the Board of Directors for the DAV National Service Foundation (the “Foundation”). DAV also provides services to the Foundation, which puts DAV in the position to influence operating policies of the Foundation. The accompanying financial statements do not include the net assets (or changes therein) of the Foundation, which are held by the Foundation and available to DAV only through appropriation by the Foundation’s Board of Directors. The Foundation is a separate entity from DAV, operating under its own bylaws. Based upon financial statements at December 31, 2020, net assets of the Foundation were \$163,077,132. During 2020, DAV personnel assisted the Foundation on a limited basis in administering its business operations and fundraising program. For these services, DAV charged the Foundation \$129,963. DAV provides the Foundation with the use of facilities, equipment, and occasional magazine space at no charge.

In 2020, DAV contributed \$23,450 to The Columbia Trust, a fund with donor restrictions established by the Foundation, to provide funds for the service programs of needy DAV state departments and local chapters.

In 2020, the Foundation appropriated \$4,373,700 in support of DAV service program.

At December 31, 2020, the Foundation owed \$140,500 to DAV, which is recorded as accounts receivable in the accompanying statement of financial position.

DAV (Disabled American Veterans) Charitable Service Trust—Some members of DAV’s Board of Directors also serve on the Board of Directors for Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Charitable Service Trust (the “Trust”). DAV also provides services to the Trust, which puts DAV in the position to influence operating policies of the Trust. The accompanying financial statements do not include the net assets (or changes therein) of the Trust, which are held by the Trust and available to DAV only through grants approved by the Trust’s Board of Directors. The Trust is a separate entity from DAV, operating under its own bylaws. Based upon financial statements at December 31, 2020, net assets of the Trust were \$39,583,200. DAV personnel assist the Trust on a limited basis in administering its business operations, fund-raising, and grant programs. For these personnel services, DAV charged the Trust \$220,801. DAV provides the Trust with the use of facilities, equipment, and occasional magazine space at no charge.

In 2020, the Trust appropriated the following in support of DAV programs and services which are recorded as support and revenue in the accompanying statement of activities:

\$1,667,225	DAV Employment Program
200,000	Transportation Network
150,000	Veterans retreats
117,407	DAV COVID-19 relief
104,500	Assistance to disabled veterans and their families
100,000	DAV Centennial celebration
33,000	DAV Night Out program
26,000	Jesse Brown Youth Scholarship Program
22,500	National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic
10,000	DAV 5K
7,500	DAV "Just B Kids" Scholarship
(250,000)	National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic uncollectible pledge from 2019

In 2020, contributed media support valued at \$1,194,041 was donated to CST for DAV's use.

At December 31, 2020, the Trust owed \$250,127 to DAV, which is recorded as a receivable in the accompanying statement of financial position.

Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary—DAV provides services to the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary (the "DAVA"), which puts DAV in the position to influence operating policies of DAVA. The accompanying financial statements do not include the net assets (or changes therein) of DAVA, which are held by DAVA. DAVA is a separate entity from DAV, operating under its own bylaws. Based upon financial statements at December 31, 2020, net assets of DAVA were \$9,671,562. DAVA occupies space in the DAV National Headquarters' building and also uses certain office equipment owned by DAV. No fees are charged for such usage. The value of these contributed facilities is estimated to be \$8,106 in 2020.

Certain costs are paid by DAV on behalf of DAVA. In addition, DAV collects contributions on behalf of DAVA. At December 31, 2020, DAVA owed DAV \$112,572, the net of such costs less contributions of \$35,755, which is recorded as accounts receivable in the accompanying statement of financial position.

DAV also processes membership dues on behalf of DAVA. As of December 31, 2020, no amount was owed to DAVA for dues collected.

Disabled Veterans' LIFE Memorial Foundation—Some members of DAV's Board of Directors also serve on the Board of Directors for the Disabled Veterans' LIFE Memorial Foundation (the "DVLMF"). DAV also provides services to the DVLMF, which puts DAV in the position to influence operating policies of the DVLMF. The accompanying financial statements do not include the net assets (or changes therein) of the unaudited DVLMF. The DVLMF is a separate entity from DAV, operating under its own bylaws. Based upon financial statements at December 31, 2020, net assets of the DVLMF were \$18,980. During 2020, DAV personnel assisted the DVLMF on a limited basis in administering its business operations, as well as providing the use of facilities and equipment at no charge.

13. COMMITMENTS AND CONTINGENCIES

DAV is involved in certain legal actions arising in the ordinary course of its activities. Management believes that the ultimate liability, if any, with respect to these matters will not materially affect the financial position of DAV.

14. SUBSEQUENT EVENTS

On April 8, 2021, DAV closed on the sale of its national headquarters building in Cold Spring, Kentucky for \$6.5 million.

No other events have occurred after December 31, 2020, but before April 12, 2021, the date the financials were available to be issued, that require consideration as adjustments to, or disclosures in, the financial statements.

* * * * *

Committee on Credentials

Advisor: Douglas K. Wells Jr. and Michael Dobmeier

DISTRICT	MEMBER NAME	TITLE	DEPARTMENT	CHAPTER
1	Valila, Michael	Delegate	MASSACHUSETTS	4
	Colon, Heriberto	Alternate	MASSACHUSETTS	41
2	Sander, George	Delegate	NEW YORK	15
	Quinones, Pedro	Alternate	NEW YORK	15
3	Gaddis, Joyce	Delegate	MAINE	6
	McKinney, Darrell	Alternate	MAINE	1
4	Donberger, Mark	Delegate	DELAWARE	1
	Long, Leonard	Alternate	NEW JERSEY	42
5	McElroy, William	Delegate	PENNSYLVANIA	15
	Noel, Kevin	Alternate	PENNSYLVANIA	8
6	Clark, Charles	Delegate	MARYLAND	15
	Mitchell, Francis	Alternate	VIRGINIA	6
7	Reed, Brenda	Delegate	FLORIDA	4
	Cornish, John	Alternate	FLORIDA	38
8	Jones, Chris	Delegate	ALABAMA	9
	Carroll, Robert	Alternate	ALABAMA	9
9	Jimmerson, Burl	Delegate	GEORGIA	33
	Downer, Doris	Alternate	GEORGIA	92
10	Barenbrugge, Ricky	Delegate	MICHIGAN	19
11	Kaster, James	Delegate	OHIO	72
	Stith, Michael	Alternate	OHIO	35
12	Baird, David	Delegate	ILLINOIS	84
	Hill, Larry	Alternate	WISCONSIN	27
13	Kaminski, Robert	Delegate	KENTUCKY	8
	Cardinale, Scott	Alternate	KENTUCKY	173
14	Hubers, Kimberly	Delegate	SOUTH DAKOTA	1
	Walsh, Timothy	Alternate	SOUTH DAKOTA	1
15	Daniels, Theresa	Delegate	MISSOURI	11
	Jakub, Krista	Alternate	NEBRASKA	20
16	Ramos, Enrique	Delegate	CALIFORNIA	70
	Gallardo, Juan	Alternate	CALIFORNIA	70
17	Prestwich, Stephen	Delegate	UTAH	8
	Comeau, Timothy	Alternate	NEW MEXICO	5
18	Brewer, Shawn	Delegate	NEVADA	1
	Cooper, Lori	Alternate	ARIZONA	20
19	Gavin, JoAnn	Delegate	WASHINGTON	5
	Mullins, Calori	Alternate	WASHINGTON	2
20	Kinghorn, John	Delegate	TEXAS	165
	Woodfork, Robert	Alternate	TEXAS	17
21	Halford-Pandos, J.	Delegate	OKLAHOMA	32
	Francis, Melvin	Alternate	OKLAHOMA	7
99	Kaminsky, Paul	Delegate	Blind Chapter	1

Committee on General Resolutions and Membership

Advisor: Shawn Hope and Jon Retzer

DISTRICT	MEMBER NAME	TITLE	DEPARTMENT	CHAPTER
1	Kinsman, Bob	Delegate	MASSACHUSETTS	47
	Pelletier, Sheila	Alternate	MASSACHUSETTS	30
2	Quinones, Pedro	Delegate	NEW YORK	15
3	Santos, Stephen	Delegate	MAINE	19
	De Blois, Bernice	Alternate	MAINE	1
4	Werlich, Ronald	Delegate	CONNECTICUT	47
	Maeby, Ronnie	Alternate	CONNECTICUT	2
5	Jiga, Carlos	Delegate	PENNSYLVANIA	15
6	Arce, Ruben	Delegate	PUERTO RICO	16
	Hurley, Dennis	Alternate	WEST VIRGINIA	56
7	Zoller, Virginia	Delegate	FLORIDA	123
	Storey, Dennis	Alternate	FLORIDA	150
8	Merrihew, Gerry	Delegate	ALABAMA	9
	Waugh, Charles	Alternate	ALABAMA	66
9	Cunningham, Willard	Delegate	SOUTH CAROLINA	13
	Clark, Robert	Alternate	SOUTH CAROLINA	20
10	Hughes, Albert	Delegate	MICHIGAN	1
11	Parker, John	Delegate	OHIO	35
	Lenhart, Joseph	Alternate	OHIO	73
12	Starkey, Allen	Delegate	ILLINOIS	60
	Hilliard, Robert	Alternate	WISCONSIN	27
13	Dice, John	Delegate	KENTUCKY	89
	Zeigler, Damien	Alternate	KENTUCKY	89
14	Haugen, Ronald	Delegate	MINNESOTA	10
	Wolf, Mark	Alternate	SOUTH DAKOTA	13
15	Neuberger, Daniel	Delegate	KANSAS	28
	McDonald, Anna	Alternate	MISSOURI	2
16	Hernandez, Armando	Delegate	CALIFORNIA	1
	Sabatino, Nicole	Alternate	CALIFORNIA	2
17	Comeau, Timothy	Delegate	NEW MEXICO	5
	Schievelbein, Michael	Alternate	COLORADO	7
18	Cooper, Kevin	Delegate	ARIZONA	20
	Jones, Arthur	Alternate	NEVADA	13
19	Graham, Colin	Delegate	WASHINGTON	18
	Crary, Walter	Alternate	ALASKA	2
20	Beason, Betty	Delegate	TEXAS	240
	Griffin, Jean	Alternate	TEXAS	126
21	Komprood, Harry	Delegate	ARKANSAS	27
	Chisum, Scott	Alternate	OKLAHOMA	88
99	Harris, Herschel	Delegate	Blind Chapter	1

Committee on Legislation and Veterans Rights

Advisor: Joy Ilem and Shane Liermann

DISTRICT	MEMBER NAME	TITLE	DEPARTMENT	CHAPTER
1	Connor, Richard	Delegate	MASSACHUSETTS	11
	McGreevy, Eugene	Alternate	MASSACHUSETTS	11
2	Stephenson, Scott	Delegate	NEW YORK	158
	Du, Philip	Alternate	NEW YORK	144
3	Florey, Craig	Delegate	MAINE	6
	Manchester, Russell	Alternate	NEW HAMPSHIRE	18
4	Flynn, Benjamin	Delegate	DELAWARE	1
	Newell, Harry	Alternate	CONNECTICUT	47
5	Arnold, Philip	Delegate	PENNSYLVANIA	81
6	Wendel, Thomas	Delegate	VIRGINIA	10
	Martinez, Alexis	Alternate	PUERTO RICO	1
7	Rose, Laymond	Delegate	FLORIDA	16
	Linden, Albert	Alternate	FLORIDA	90
8	Hampton, Willie	Delegate	ALABAMA	4
	Ferguson, Thomas	Alternate	ALABAMA	9
9	Wilner, Brian	Delegate	SOUTH CAROLINA	44
	DiGloria, Richard	Alternate	GEORGIA	1
10	Dempsey, James	Delegate	MICHIGAN	13
11	Plahovinsak, John	Delegate	OHIO	63
	Gidden, William	Alternate	OHIO	35
12	Labelle, Al	Delegate	WISCONSIN	57
	Friedewald, Thomas	Alternate	ILLINOIS	36
13	Jackson, Holly	Delegate	KENTUCKY	173
	Arevalo, Adan	Alternate	KENTUCKY	156
14	Dilks, Trent	Delegate	MINNESOTA	12
	Berglund, Keli	Alternate	NORTH DAKOTA	3
15	Mudd, Steven	Delegate	IOWA	2
	Boykins, Ronald	Alternate	KANSAS	4
16	Wilson, Gerald	Delegate	CALIFORNIA	154
	Scannell, Paul	Alternate	CALIFORNIA	154
17	Vicker, Brett	Delegate	NEW MEXICO	5
	Gaspar, Maylen	Alternate	COLORADO	50
18	Mc Coy, Thomas	Delegate	ARIZONA	1
	Washington, Jerome	Alternate	NEVADA	1
19	McWilliams, Nichole	Delegate	WASHINGTON	47
	Bristow, Brooke	Alternate	WASHINGTON	5
20	Dunham, Gregory	Delegate	TEXAS	239
	Westfall-Haessig, Marshal	Alternate	TEXAS	157
21	Brown, Vici	Delegate	OKLAHOMA	43
	Pandos, Ronald	Alternate	OKLAHOMA	32
99	Pope, Leonard	Delegate	Blind Chapter	1
	Kaminsky, Paul	Alternate	Blind Chapter	1

Committee on Constitution and Bylaws

Advisor: Edward Hartman

DISTRICT	MEMBER NAME	TITLE	DEPARTMENT	CHAPTER
1	Patterson, William	Delegate	MASSACHUSETTS	45
	Sullivan, Michael	Alternate	MASSACHUSETTS	27
2	Sander, Shannon	Delegate	NEW YORK	15
	Quinones, Katherine	Alternate	NEW YORK	15
3	Patterson, Andrew	Delegate	NEW HAMPSHIRE	18
	Welch, Jesse	Alternate	NEW HAMPSHIRE	19
4	Cohen, Audrey	Delegate	DELAWARE	6
	Cohen, Philip	Alternate	DELAWARE	6
5	Cudworth, Robert	Delegate	PENNSYLVANIA	1
	Cudworth, Robert	Alternate	PENNSYLVANIA	1
6	Reynolds, Robert	Delegate	VIRGINIA	10
	Miller, Nachee	Alternate	DC	3
7	Tyson, Wallace	Delegate	FLORIDA	11
	Ayala, Thomas	Alternate	FLORIDA	1
8	Miller, Vernon	Delegate	MISSISSIPPI	17
	Steadman, Richard	Alternate	ALABAMA	45
9	Procnier, James	Delegate	NORTH CAROLINA	11
	Robinson, William	Alternate	SOUTH CAROLINA	1
10	Gonzales, Beth	Delegate	MICHIGAN	102
11	Martyn, Nolan	Delegate	OHIO	35
	Robertson, Reynolds	Alternate	OHIO	63
12	Polk, John	Delegate	WISCONSIN	19
	Johnson, Pearl	Alternate	ILLINOIS	60
13	Bava, Michael	Delegate	KENTUCKY	3
	Jackson, Holly	Alternate	KENTUCKY	173
14	Karg, Van	Delegate	MINNESOTA	37
	Baker, Jill	Alternate	SOUTH DAKOTA	1
15	Neuberger, Daniel	Delegate	KANSAS	28
	McDonald, Anna	Alternate	MISSOURI	2
16	Kerr, Michael	Delegate	CALIFORNIA	1
17	Dingler, Tillery	Delegate	NEW MEXICO	33
	Chaney, Jessica	Alternate	UTAH	1
18	Torres-Ireland, Rexana	Delegate	ARIZONA	14
	Wilson, Harold	Alternate	NEVADA	12
19	Gunno, Stanley	Delegate	WASHINGTON	2
	Hack, Saranna	Alternate	ALASKA	2
20	Fox, Janie	Delegate	TEXAS	128
	Carroll, Debra	Alternate	TEXAS	240
21	Pandos, Ronald	Delegate	OKLAHOMA	32
	Brown, Vici	Alternate	OKLAHOMA	43
99	Kaminsky, Paul	Delegate	Blind Chapter	1
	Pope, Leonard	Alternate	Blind Chapter	1

Committee on Employment

Advisor: Jeffrey Hall and Jeremy Villanueva

DISTRICT	MEMBER NAME	TITLE	DEPARTMENT	CHAPTER
1	Blonder, Jeffrey	Delegate	MASSACHUSETTS	64
	Devine, Dennis	Alternate	MASSACHUSETTS	3
2	Trulio, Joe	Alternate	NEW YORK	118
3	Borrazas, Richard	Delegate	NEW HAMPSHIRE	18
	Cvelbar, William	Alternate	VERMONT	3
4	Walker, Michael	Delegate	NEW JERSEY	24
	Roth, Edward	Alternate	NEW JERSEY	24
5	Morelli, Richard	Delegate	PENNSYLVANIA	11
	Fiumara, Philip	Alternate	PENNSYLVANIA	76
6	Gregory, Lisa	Delegate	VIRGINIA	7
	Hawkins, Tommie	Alternate	MARYLAND	13
7	Bueno, Eduard	Delegate	FLORIDA	13
	Graham, Jackie	Alternate	FLORIDA	13
8	Davis, Carroll	Delegate	MISSISSIPPI	11
	Emerson, Lisbeth	Alternate	ALABAMA	9
9	Hill, Sadie	Delegate	GEORGIA	6
	Small, Carolyn	Alternate	GEORGIA	33
10	Tucker, Lolita	Delegate	MICHIGAN	114
11	Wittneben, Jeffrey	Delegate	OHIO	9
	Bilinovich, David	Alternate	OHIO	72
12	Couture, Kenneth	Delegate	ILLINOIS	42
	Mennen, Mark	Alternate	WISCONSIN	17
13	Smith, Richard	Delegate	KENTUCKY	89
	Freeman, Steven	Alternate	KENTUCKY	89
14	Hall, Joseph	Delegate	NORTH DAKOTA	3
	Francis, Dan	Alternate	SOUTH DAKOTA	1
15	Hicks, Kenneth	Delegate	MISSOURI	2
	Jakub, Jamie	Alternate	NEBRASKA	20
16	Mendoza, Jose	Delegate	CALIFORNIA	12
	Ganitch, Michael	Alternate	CALIFORNIA	7
17	Schow, Terry	Delegate	UTAH	4
	Herren, Armand	Alternate	NEW MEXICO	5
18	Bourn, Delvin	Delegate	NEVADA	12
	Stewart, Johnny	Alternate	ARIZONA	26
19	Graham, Colin	Delegate	WASHINGTON	18
	Hack, Saranna	Alternate	ALASKA	2
20	Lougee, Rob	Delegate	TEXAS	147
	Reed, Donald	Alternate	TEXAS	78
21	Schermer, Anna	Delegate	OKLAHOMA	44
	Dech, Alicia	Alternate	OKLAHOMA	32

Committee on Hospital and Voluntary Services

Advisor: Marquis Barefield and John Kleindienst

DISTRICT	MEMBER NAME	TITLE	DEPARTMENT	CHAPTER
1	Bronson, Robert	Delegate	MASSACHUSETTS	30
	Levy, Philip	Alternate	MASSACHUSETTS	41
2	Guevara, Emanuel	Delegate	NEW YORK	126
3	Clough, Thomas	Delegate	NEW HAMPSHIRE	18
	Nicodemus, Robert	Alternate	VERMONT	3
4	Walsh, Elizabeth	Delegate	CONNECTICUT	15
	Taylor, Juliet	Alternate	CONNECTICUT	13
5	Butler, Jesse	Delegate	PENNSYLVANIA	15
	Johnson, Leonard	Alternate	PENNSYLVANIA	15
6	Walker, William	Delegate	DC	3
	Mills, Mark	Alternate	MARYLAND	18
7	Tolfa, Richard	Delegate	FLORIDA	16
	Bouters, Bradley	Alternate	FLORIDA	49
8	Waite, Richard	Delegate	LOUISIANA	33
	Perez, Anita	Alternate	ALABAMA	13
9	Colwell, James	Alternate	SOUTH CAROLINA	12
10	Tucker, Lolita	Delegate	MICHIGAN	114
11	Manning, Fred	Delegate	OHIO	15
	Allen, Johnnie	Alternate	OHIO	15
12	Lillis, Patricia	Delegate	WISCONSIN	57
	Alexander, Tim	Alternate	ILLINOIS	90
13	Nelson, Norman	Delegate	INDIANA	36
	Greer, DeAndre	Alternate	INDIANA	3
14	Turnwall, Dick	Delegate	SOUTH DAKOTA	11
	Colling, Bradly	Alternate	SOUTH DAKOTA	3
15	Shuey, James	Delegate	NEBRASKA	7
	Brooks, Ricky	Alternate	MISSOURI	11
16	Johnson, Kirk	Delegate	CALIFORNIA	85
	Colletti, Gary	Alternate	CALIFORNIA	46
17	Vicker, Brett	Delegate	NEW MEXICO	5
	Prestwich, Stephen	Alternate	UTAH	8
18	Washington, Charise	Delegate	NEVADA	1
	Billy, Lorrie	Alternate	ARIZONA	26
19	Sylvester, Lawrence	Delegate	WASHINGTON	23
	Wallace, Alex	Alternate	WASHINGTON	18
20	Jackson, William	Delegate	TEXAS	20
	Franklin, Anita	Alternate	TEXAS	128
21	Dunning, William	Delegate	OKLAHOMA	32
	Francis, Melvin	Alternate	OKLAHOMA	7
99	Hogan, James	Delegate	Blind Chapter	1

Committee on Nomination of National Officers

Advisor: Albert Church and Joseph Johnston

DISTRICT	MEMBER NAME	TITLE	DEPARTMENT	CHAPTER
1	Stack, Daniel	Delegate	MASSACHUSETTS	3
	Egan, William	Alternate	MASSACHUSETTS	57
2	Wohlrab, Thomas	Delegate	NEW YORK	144
	Martin, Michael	Alternate	NEW YORK	178
3	Hutchins, John	Delegate	MAINE	1
	Burns, Gary	Alternate	MAINE	1
4	Pescatore, Richard	Delegate	CONNECTICUT	5
	Walker, Johnnie	Alternate	NEW JERSEY	44
5	Kauffman, Joseph	Delegate	PENNSYLVANIA	113
	Hassinger, Jason	Alternate	PENNSYLVANIA	15
6	Madison, Cynthia	Delegate	VIRGINIA	27
	Colon, Pedro	Alternate	PUERTO RICO	1
7	Joyner, Dennis	Delegate	FLORIDA	16
	Wolfe, Kenneth	Alternate	FLORIDA	101
8	Belew, Kenny	Delegate	TENNESSEE	56
	Bratton, Jerry	Alternate	MISSISSIPPI	48
9	Walls, Thomas	Delegate	SOUTH CAROLINA	4
	Kemp, Emil	Alternate	GEORGIA	8
10	Haller, Roger	Delegate	MICHIGAN	2
	Barnes, Lloyd	Alternate	MICHIGAN	1
11	Hanneman, Dennis	Delegate	OHIO	77
	Uetterling, David	Alternate	OHIO	36
12	Kempainen, Matthew	Delegate	WISCONSIN	3
	Friedewald, Thomas	Alternate	ILLINOIS	36
13	Ashe, David	Delegate	INDIANA	19
	Carnagey, Robert	Alternate	INDIANA	17
14	Valtinson, David	Delegate	MINNESOTA	13
	Walker, John	Alternate	MINNESOTA	2
15	Jakub, James	Delegate	NEBRASKA	20
	Chevalier, Shala	Alternate	IOWA	5
16	Powers, Frederick	Delegate	CALIFORNIA	20
	Vogel, Ronald	Alternate	CALIFORNIA	20
17	Estes, Jerry	Delegate	UTAH	14
	Herrn, Armand	Alternate	NEW MEXICO	5
18	Cox, Ronald	Delegate	ARIZONA	26
	Girard, Cathryn	Alternate	NEVADA	15
19	Nabors, Ryan	Delegate	WASHINGTON	41
	Crary, Walter	Alternate	ALASKA	2
20	Paquette, Roland	Delegate	TEXAS	20
	Buchan, Jerry	Alternate	TEXAS	126
21	Stake, Charles	Delegate	ARKANSAS	57
	Burns, Jason	Alternate	OKLAHOMA	92
99	Lester, Ronnie	Delegate	Blind Chapter	1

National Executive Committee

DISTRICT	MEMBER NAME	TITLE	DEPARTMENT	CHAPTER
1	Follis, James	Delegate	MASSACHUSETTS	85
	Whitty, Francis	Alternate	MASSACHUSETTS	3
2	Ingram, Thomas	Delegate	NEW YORK	28
3	Guldner, Robert	Delegate	NEW HAMPSHIRE	19
	Gaddis, Joyce	Alternate	MAINE	6
4	Werlich, Ronald	Delegate	CONNECTICUT	47
	Walter T. Applegate	Alternate	NEW JERSEY	24
5	Arnold, Philip	Delegate	PENNSYLVANIA	81
	Johnson, Leonard	Alternate	PENNSYLVANIA	15
6	Dawson, Michael	Delegate	WEST VIRGINIA	56
	Miller, Nachee	Alternate	DC	3
7	Chicollo, Frank	Delegate	FLORIDA	4
	Keckler, Mary	Alternate	FLORIDA	67
8	Baker, William	Delegate	ALABAMA	9
	Waugh, Charles	Alternate	ALABAMA	66
9	Keesee, Gregory	Delegate	NORTH CAROLINA	45
	Jacqueline N. Tyes	Alternate	NORTH CAROLINA	10
10	Dempsey, James	Delegate	MICHIGAN	13
	Barenbrugge, Ricky	Alternate	MICHIGAN	19
11	Stith, Michael	Delegate	OHIO	35
	Hanneman, Dennis	Alternate	OHIO	77
12	Huckaby, Eric	Delegate	ILLINOIS	17
	Couture, Kenneth	Alternate	ILLINOIS	42
13	Hall, George	Delegate	KENTUCKY	169
	Ewing, Lee	Alternate	KENTUCKY	89
14	Hill, Robert	Delegate	SOUTH DAKOTA	22
	Helmbrecht, Gaylord	Alternate	SOUTH DAKOTA	1
15	Hansen, Karin	Delegate	KANSAS	28
	Gerke, David	Alternate	MISSOURI	2
16	Clyde Maddox	Delegate	CALIFORNIA	28
	Wilson, Gerald	Alternate	CALIFORNIA	154
17	Watson, Floyd	Delegate	WYOMING	2
	Estes, Jerry	Alternate	UTAH	14
18	Hohman, Glenn	Delegate	ARIZONA	14
	Cox, Ronald	Alternate	ARIZONA	26
19	Gavin, JoAnn	Delegate	WASHINGTON	5
	Gunno, Stanley	Alternate	WASHINGTON	2
20	Edwards, Charles	Delegate	TEXAS	128
	Johniken, Teresa	Alternate	TEXAS	3
21	Oliver, Danny	Delegate	OKLAHOMA	88
	Donovan, John	Alternate	ARKANSAS	10

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

SECOND BUSINESS SESSION

August 3, 2021

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The Second Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans 99th National Convention convened in the Tampa Bay Ballroom of the J.W. Marriott Tampa, Tampa, Florida, on Tuesday morning, August 3, 2021, and was called to order at 8:33 o'clock, a.m., by National Commander Stephen "Butch" Whitehead.

COMMANDER STEPHEN "BUTCH" WHITEHEAD: The convention will please come to order. As a reminder I would like to ask everyone to please silence your cell phone and portable devices. (Three raps of the gavel) Please join me in the Pledge of the Allegiance.

(Whereupon, the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Two. And I would like to call on Reverend Edwards to lead us in prayer.

(Whereupon, the Chaplain advanced to the podium.)

REVEREND CHARLES EDWARDS: God, our father, we thank you on behalf of those gathered here for the ability and nobility to remember you in all of our deliberations.

Be near us always, our God, to guide us in our decisions, to comfort us in our failures, and to keep us humble in our successes. We pray that this time we share will draw us closer together as individuals. Be with us as we meet our commitment in keeping our promise to America's veterans.

And as we serve within this great organization, the Disabled American Veterans, may you be filled with pride because of the chapters and departments in which we serve, the country, the Home of the Brave, the land, the freedom we defended, the creator, the God in whom we trust. Amen.

(Response of "Amen;" whereupon, the Chaplain withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Thank you. (One rap of the gavel) I remind each of you that in order for a delegate to be heard at this Convention you must be recognized by the Chair. Only those delegates at a microphone will be recognized. Upon being so recognized the delegate must state their name, chapter number, and the state they represent.

I would like to call on Credentials Committee Chairperson Brenda Reed for her report.

(Whereupon, the Credentials Committee Chair advanced to the podium.)

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON BRENDA REED: Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON REED: Comrade Commander and delegates, this is a partial report for informational purpose only and reflects the registration as of 8 a.m. on August 3, 2021.

There are 941 delegates, 59 alternates registered representing 42 departments and 349 chapters. There are 8 national line officers, 18 National Executive Committeemen, 2 past national commanders registered for a total of 28 national officers. The total vote count is 7,897.

This partial report reflects registration this morning. This completes the partial report of the Credential Committee, Mr. Commander.

(Whereupon, the Credentials Committee Chair withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Thanks, Brenda. And this is a reminder that the registration will close this morning at 10:00 a.m.

It is now my honor and privilege to introduce the president of DAV's Charitable Service Trust, Richard Marbes.

A Green Bay, Wisconsin native, Mr. Marbes enlisted in the United States Air Force in 1955 and served as an airborne radio operator. While assigned to medical evacuation and troop carrier squadrons in France and Germany he, himself, was medically evacuated back to the United States following an injury that resulted in the amputation of his leg. He was medically retired due to a service-connected disability in 1958. Please give a warm welcome to revered leader, Dick Marbes. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Chairman Marbes advanced to the podium.)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Past National Commander Dick Marbes served in DAV's highest elected position from 1993 to 1994. In 1978 he was named the Wisconsin Disabled Person of the Year. Since his retirement in 1987, he has pursued his passion for helping ill and injured veterans full-time.

A life member and service officer for Chapter 3 in Green Bay, he has held numerous elected positions at the chapter, department and national levels.

CHARITABLE SERVICE TRUST PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER RICHARD E. MARBES: Thank you, Commander Whitehead, for that kind introduction. And let me also extend the DAV Charitable Service Trust's gratitude to National Adjutant Burgess, and our national officers our delegates and guests.

As president let me introduce the Trust's governing board. They are Vice-President Marc Burgess, Secretary-Treasurer David Tannenbaum, and our Directors: National Commander Stephen Whitehead, Danny Oliver, Denise Williams and Dennis Nixon.

Like the rest of the world, we faced unprecedented challenges this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of the things we could not have imagined at the start of 2020 now seem almost normal in 2021.

Despite the uncertainties, because of your help, we were still able to assist America's heroes in regaining the confidence and quality of life they deserve. The Trust supported a wide range of special initiatives designed to promote mental, physical, and emotional well-being for veterans and their families.

We can be proud of our work alongside our partners that prevented so many in need from slipping through the cracks. (Applause)

Your support of the Trust makes you a valuable contributor in our work to renew lives.

The Trust carefully evaluates and addresses the most vital needs of ill and injured veterans and their families while empowering them to maximize their quality of life after combat.

More than 97 cents out of every donated dollar directly supports programs that contribute to the victories the Trust makes possible. (Applause)

In 2020, the Trust received the coveted 4-star rating and its second perfect score rating from Charity Navigator. As Charity Navigator is the nation's largest independent charity evaluator, this acknowledgement speaks volumes about the Trust's careful and efficient stewardship of donated funds.

The Trust was also presented with the GuideStar Platinum Seal of Transparency, the highest level of recognition offered by GuideStar. (Applause)

Corporate matching gift programs, bequests and other forms of contributions from corporations, foundations, and individual donors enable the Trust to fulfill its mission.

In 2020 these gifts, along with income derived from investments, totaled nearly \$11 million, allowing the Trust to devote more than \$7 million toward critical health care, education, employment, transition assistance, creative healing, therapeutic activities addressing both physical and psychological barriers, and legal services.

While we all know how families play a pivotal role in a veteran's health and well-being, the Trust has placed an emphasis on assisting organizations dedicated to helping families that heal together.

In doing so, Trust grants have supported wellness, mentoring programs, and alternative therapies aimed to improve the quality of life for veterans and their families. Through the wide range of initiatives supported by the Trust, we are able to aid and assist veterans through a multitude of challenges.

Last September, the Trust was again proud to support the outstanding work being done by Adaptive Adventures with an \$85,000 grant. For 21 years, Adaptive Adventures has worked to improve the quality of veterans' and their families' lives through adaptive sports opportunities.

The Adaptive Adventures Military Operations program promotes sports and fitness participation, better nutrition, socialization, and outdoor recreation for ill and injured veterans.

Take a look at how this program is helping to change the lives of some of our ill and injured members. (Whereupon, a video on the Adaptive Adventures Military Operations program was viewed, followed by a round of applause.)

CHARITABLE SERVICE TRUST PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARBES: Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming Chelsea Elder, Executive Director of Adaptive Adventures. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Ms. Elder joined Charitable Service Trust President and Past National Commander Marbes at the podium.)

MS. CHELSEA ELDER: Hello and thank you for this opportunity. As the daughter and caregiver of a disabled Vietnam veteran I could not feel more honored to be here with you today representing Adaptive Adventures.

Adaptive Adventures was founded in 1999 with a vision to ensure that all individuals with physical disabilities had access to participation in outdoor sports, regardless of their location, equipment needs, or economic status.

Thanks to the support of the DAV Charitable Service Trust, the VA Adaptive Sport Grant, and TriWest Health Care Alliance, we travel the country providing programs right in the parking lots of VA medical centers, establishing new programs in underserved communities while training up veteran ambassadors to create sustainability.

The success of our veteran programs would not be possible without the support of the DAV and the DAV Charitable Service Trust.

The impact that the DAV Charitable Service Trust has on our program, the veterans, and their families we serve, is truly immeasurable.

It is comprised of hundreds of thousands of moments, life-changing moments. And as the moments—sorry, life-changing moments such as the moments when we worked side-by-side with a VA therapist in rural Texas to order the veteran a recumbent bicycle that will allow them to not only recreate again but provide transportation to work and the moment that veteran eagerly looks on with newfound hope for greater independence.

Or the moments when a wife and kids realize that their dad can do way more than they expected from his power wheelchair as they go kayaking together, splashing and playing for the first time in years.

The moments when a veteran who had lost their purpose and their unit finds it again through mentoring and traveling with our program, learning how to deliver services to other veterans in desperate search of that freedom through mobility.

The moment when a veteran sits around the campfire and tells the group that they were ready to give up but this experience renewed their spirit and their will to keep on fighting.

Or the electric energy felt by dozens of partners when a new ongoing program is established and veterans who felt forgotten find their inclusive community and safety net of support.

It is the moment when a veteran begins to believe in themselves and their ability for the first time in a long time because we believe in them.

One of my favorite stories of impact is that of Frank, a United States Marine Corps (Cheers) and U.S. Army veteran that served 18 years who was injured in 2003 and again in 2010. Frank suffered a traumatic brain injury and shattered a vertebra in his lower back and had to relearn to walk.

Shortly thereafter, he received news that his son, Antonio, was diagnosed with ROHAAD disease. Years of pain caused Frank to bubble-wrap his family, attempting to protect them from suffering.

A few years ago, they stepped out of their comfort zone and attended an adaptive ski camp. That is where they were introduced to Adaptive Adventures. The entire family learned to ride ski bikes together. They played. They laughed. And their disabilities didn't stand in their way.

Their defining moment was watching Frank and Antonio ski down that mountain together. In Frank's words, and I quote, "From that moment on the bubble-wrap came off of our family. Over the last three years Adaptive Adventures has gotten our family on recumbent bikes, kayaks, and paddleboards. They have given us a whole new sense of adventure for a lifetime." End quote.

This is the powerful work that the DAV Charitable Service Trust is making possible, the opportunity for veterans and their families to find greater independence, healing, camaraderie, adventure, and improved physical, mental, social and emotional wellness.

Thank you so much for your support. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Ms. Elder withdrew from and Chairman Marbes returned to the podium.)

CHARITABLE SERVICE TRUST PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER MARBES:

Thank you, Ms. Elder, and thank you for all that you've done to help veterans and their families through adaptive sports. (Applause)

The Trust is proud of its legacy of service to empower veterans. These wonderful programs are truly life-changing and provide much needed assistance to those who served.

Thanks to the loyal supporters, corporations and foundations who generously donate to the Trust each year veterans are able to access the resources and services they need to lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity.

As I close out this year's report, I want to thank each of you for the work you've done and the work you continue to do, all in the name of our brothers and sisters who served this nation.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this presentation and recognize the tremendous services and support provided by the Trust's grant recipients despite the unprecedented circumstances surrounding the pandemic.

You can learn more about DAV's Charitable Service Trust and keep up-to-date with our initiatives at CST-dot-DAV-dot-org or by liking us on Facebook.

Commander, this concludes my report. (Applause)

DAV (Disabled American Veterans) Charitable Service Trust

Financial Statements as of and for the
Year Ended December 31, 2020, and
Independent Auditors' Report

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

To the Board of Directors of
Disabled American Veterans Charitable Service Trust:

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of DAV (Disabled American Veterans) Charitable Service Trust (the "Trust"), which comprise the statement of financial position as of December 31, 2020, and the related statements of activities, functional expenses, and cash flows for the year then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; this includes the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditors' Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the Trust's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Trust's internal control. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Opinion

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Trust as of December 31, 2020, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Deloitte & Touche LLP

April 12, 2021

DAV (DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS) CHARITABLE SERVICE TRUST

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2020

ASSETS

CASH	\$ 7,321,261
INTEREST AND DIVIDENDS RECEIVABLE	63,322
ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE	105,849
CAMPAIGNS' PLEDGES RECEIVABLE—Net of allowance for uncollectible pledges of \$209,140	77,965
PREPAID EXPENSES AND OTHER	12,718
INVESTMENTS—Includes charitable gift annuity reserve balance of \$6,665,215	36,784,982
SOFTWARE—Net	<u>36,246</u>
TOTAL	<u>\$ 44,402,343</u>

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

LIABILITIES:

Accounts payable—Disabled American Veterans	\$ 250,127
Accounts payable—other	70,474
Annuity payment liability	<u>4,498,542</u>
Total liabilities	<u>4,819,143</u>

NET ASSETS:

Without donor restrictions	39,522,200
With donor restrictions	<u>61,000</u>
Total net assets	<u>39,583,200</u>

TOTAL	<u>\$ 44,402,343</u>
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See notes to financial statements.

DAV (DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS) CHARITABLE SERVICE TRUST

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2020

	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
SUPPORT AND REVENUE:			
Contributions—net of assessment fees and provision for uncollectible pledges of \$461,006	\$ 7,876,921	\$ 731,042	\$ 8,607,963
Contributions of charitable gift annuities	261,662		261,662
Bequests	776,248		776,248
Net investment return	3,509,162		3,509,162
Net assets released from restrictions	<u>670,042</u>	<u>(670,042)</u>	<u> </u>
Total support and revenue	<u>13,094,035</u>	<u>61,000</u>	<u>13,155,035</u>
EXPENSES:			
Program services	7,310,192		7,310,192
Management and general	96,506		96,506
Fundraising	<u>131,547</u>	<u> </u>	<u>131,547</u>
Total expenses	<u>7,538,245</u>	<u> </u>	<u>7,538,245</u>
CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITY VALUATION ADJUSTMENT	<u>(166,409)</u>	<u> </u>	<u>(166,409)</u>
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	5,389,381	61,000	5,450,381
NET ASSETS—Beginning of year	<u>34,132,819</u>	<u> </u>	<u>34,132,819</u>
NET ASSETS—End of year	<u>\$ 39,522,200</u>	<u>\$ 61,000</u>	<u>\$ 39,583,200</u>

See notes to financial statements.

DAV (DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS) CHARITABLE SERVICE TRUST

STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2020

	Program Services	Management and General	Fundraising	Total
EXPENSES:				
Allocations to charitable programs	\$7,198,417	\$	\$	\$7,198,417
Administrative charges		47,041	103,198	150,239
Grant proposal processing	70,562			70,562
Professional fees	17,350	33,744		51,094
Banking fees		37,592		37,592
Advertising	12,194	813	3,252	16,259
Printing, postage, and supplies	3,755	4,928	5,772	14,455
Travel	4,306	8,339		12,645
Legal fees			6,840	6,840
Insurance	1,883	1,883		3,766
Depreciation of software	1,725			1,725
Maintenance		(42,113)		(42,113)
Other expenses		4,279	12,485	16,764
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>\$7,310,192</u>	<u>\$ 96,506</u>	<u>\$131,547</u>	<u>\$7,538,245</u>

See notes to financial statements.

DAV (DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS) CHARITABLE SERVICE TRUST

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2020

CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:	
Change in net assets	\$ 5,450,381
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash provided by operating activities:	
Noncash investment contributions	(98,680)
Change in net unrealized appreciation of investments	(2,505,507)
Depreciation of software	1,725
Charitable gift annuity valuation adjustment	166,409
Gain on sale of investment securities	(382,400)
Changes in operating assets and liabilities:	
Interest and dividends receivable	5,572
Accounts receivable	148,415
Campaigns' pledges receivable	19,924
Prepaid expenses and other	23,989
Accounts payable—DAV and other	(150,936)
Annuity payment liability	(261,662)
Net cash provided by operating activities	<u>2,417,230</u>
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:	
Purchase of software	(33,658)
Purchase of investments	(26,493,830)
Proceeds from the sale of investments	<u>26,133,025</u>
Net cash used in investing activities	<u>(394,463)</u>
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES:	
Proceeds from gift annuity agreement contributions	567,250
Payments to annuitants	<u>(619,320)</u>
Net cash used in financing activities	<u>(52,070)</u>
NET INCREASE IN CASH	1,970,697
CASH—Beginning of year	<u>5,350,564</u>
CASH—End of year	<u>\$ 7,321,261</u>

See notes to financial statements.

DAV (DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS) CHARITABLE SERVICE TRUST

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AS OF AND FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2020

1. ORGANIZATION

DAV (Disabled American Veterans) Charitable Service Trust (the "Trust") is a not-for-profit service organization formed under the laws of the District of Columbia for the single purpose of empowering veterans to lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity. To carry out this responsibility, the Trust supports physical and psychological rehabilitation programs; enhances research and mobility for veterans with amputations and spinal cord injuries; benefits aging veterans; aids and shelters homeless veterans; and evaluates and addresses the needs of veterans wounded in recent wars and conflicts and their caregivers.

During the year ended December 31, 2020, there was a global outbreak of a new strain of coronavirus, COVID-19, which continues to adversely impact global and domestic commercial activity. The full extent of the impact of COVID-19 on the Trust will depend on various future developments, particularly the duration and depth of the pandemic, which may be influenced by emerging medical treatments and applicable health and safety regulations.

2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Financial Statements— The accompanying financial statements have been prepared on the accrual basis of accounting in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAP).

New Accounting Standards—In June 2016, the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) issued Accounting Standards Update (ASU) No. 2016-13, *Financial Instruments—Credit Losses, which is included in ASC Topic 326, Measurement of Credit Losses on Financial Instruments*. The new standard revises the accounting requirements related to the measurement of credit losses and will require organizations to measure all expected credit losses for financial assets based on historical experience, current conditions, and reasonable and supportable forecasts about collectability. Assets must be presented in the financial statements at the net amount expected to be collected. This standard will be effective for the annual financial statements beginning January 1, 2023. A modified retrospective approach is to be used for certain parts of this standard, while other parts are to be applied using a prospective approach. Management has not yet evaluated the impact of ASU No. 2016-13 on the financial statements.

In September 2020, the FASB issued ASU No. 2020-07, *Not-for-Profit Entities (Topic 958): Presentation and Disclosures by Not-for-Profit Entities for Contributed Nonfinancial Assets*. The amendments require not-for-profit entities to present contributed nonfinancial assets as a separate line item in the statement of activities, apart from contributions of cash and other financial contributions. The standard also requires additional disclosure related to contributed nonfinancial assets. The amendment, which requires retrospective application, is effective for annual periods beginning after June 15, 2021. Management is in the process of evaluating the impact on the financial statements.

Newly Adopted Accounting Principles—In August 2018, the FASB issued ASU No. 2018-13, Fair Value Measurement (Topic 820): *Disclosure Framework—Changes to the Disclosure Requirements for Fair Value Measurement*. The amendments in this update modify the disclosure requirements on fair value measurements in Topic 820, Fair Value Measurement, based on the concepts in the concepts statement, including the consideration of costs and benefits. The adoption did not have an impact on the financial statements.

In March 2017, the FASB issued ASU No. 2017-08, *Receivables—Nonrefundable Fees and Other Costs (Subtopic 310 20): Premium Amortization of Purchased Callable Debt Securities*. ASU No. 2017 08 amends guidance on the amortization period of premiums on certain purchased callable debt securities. The amendments shorten the amortization period of premiums on certain purchased callable debt securities to the earliest call date. The amendments should be applied on a modified retrospective basis through a cumulative effect adjustment to beginning retained earnings. The adoption did not have a material impact on the financial statements.

Cash—The Trust considers all highly liquid instruments purchased with a maturity date of three months or less to be cash equivalents and are stated at cost, which approximates fair value. The earnings credit received on the Trust’s checking accounts was \$25,547 in 2020. The Trust maintains its cash in bank deposit accounts, which, at times, exceed federally insured limits. The Trust has not experienced any losses in such accounts.

Revenue Recognition—The Trust is a member of Independent Charities of America (ICA) and Military Family & Veterans Service Organizations of America (MFVSOA). ICA and MFVSOA are charitable agency federations, certified by the US Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to participate in the annual combined federal campaigns, as well as state and corporate workplace giving campaigns.

The Trust recognizes contribution revenue as an increase in net assets without donor restrictions when notification of the campaign designations is received and also recognizes an allowance for uncollectible pledges. Pledge receivables that are outstanding for more than one year are written off in their entirety. The Trust also evaluates pledges receivable for any amounts to be specifically reserved. Pledges receivable of \$77,965 are expected to be received in 2021. Amounts received from accounts previously written off are recognized as contribution revenue when received.

As a member of MFVSOA during 2020, the Trust was assessed a portion of MFVSOA’s annual operating budget based on the relative amount of total pledges made to the Trust compared with the sum of all member agency pledges. Pledges designated to MFVSOA (versus a member agency) and other revenue, such as interest income, are shared among all member agencies in this same proportion. Therefore, if MFVSOA’s revenue exceeds expenses, the member agencies share the excess income. This excess income is distributed in the following year. The Trust recognizes such distribution as an increase in net assets without donor restrictions when received. The Trust received \$15,581 in 2020, included in contributions without donor restrictions within the statement of activities, for excess income recognized by MFVSOA in 2019.

Investments—Investments include investment of contributions and charitable gift annuity agreements (see Note 7). Investments are recorded at fair value. The fair value of the Trust’s investments is determined based on the quoted market prices of the related securities or quoted prices in active markets for instruments that are similar, or model-derived valuations, in which all significant inputs and significant value drivers are observable in active markets. Gains and losses on the sale of investment securities are recognized based upon the specific identification method and are reflected as a separate component of revenue for the investments. The Trust’s policy is to report cash and cash equivalents, which include money market funds, within its trust accounts as investments.

Contributions and Bequests—The Trust recognizes contributions when cash, securities or other assets; an unconditional promise to give; or a notification of a beneficial interest is received. Conditional promises to give—that is, those with a measurable performance or other barrier and a right of return—are not recognized until the conditions on which they depend have been met.

Contributions and bequests received are recorded as support with and without donor restrictions depending on the existence and nature of any donor restrictions. The Trust received noncash contributions at a fair market value of \$98,680 in 2020.

Allocation of Expenses—The financial statements report certain categories of expenses that are attributable to one or more program or supporting services of the Organization. Those expenses include grant proposal processing, administrative charges, travel, printing, postage and supplies, professional fees, insurance, and advertising. All expenses are allocated based on estimates of time and effort toward each program or supporting service. Allocation estimates are reviewed annually based on the specific expense and adjusted accordingly.

Income Taxes—As a not-for-profit service organization, the Trust has received a determination from the Internal Revenue Service that it is exempt from federal income tax as a 501(c)(3) organization. Contributions made to the Trust are tax deductible by the contributor as provided in Section 170 of the Internal Revenue Code.

Use of Estimates—The preparation of the financial statements in accordance with GAAP requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities, disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements, and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the reporting period. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

3. NET ASSETS RELEASED FROM DONOR RESTRICTION

Net assets are released from donor restrictions by incurring expenses satisfying the restricted purposes specified by donors. The net assets released from restrictions in 2020 are as follows:

Purpose restrictions accomplished:	
To Disabled American Veterans	\$ 610,907
To DAV Departments and Chapters	7,135
To National Service Foundation	1,000
To NSF Columbia Trust	10,000
Program services	<u>41,000</u>
Net assets released from donor restrictions	<u>\$ 670,042</u>

4. LIQUIDITY AND AVAILABILITY OF FINANCIAL ASSETS

The Trust's working capital and cash flows are attributable to the contributions, net of assessment fees and uncollectible pledges, received throughout the year. As of December 31, 2020, the Trust's financial assets (total assets, less prepaid expenses and software) totaled \$44,353,379. All financial assets with the exception of the Charitable Gift Annuity Reserve investment of \$6,665,215 as of December 31, 2020, are available to fund expenditures within one year following the statement of financial position date.

The Trust has a policy to structure its financial assets to be available as its fundraising costs and general and administrative expenses come due. In addition, the Trust awards grants to board-approved applicants. As part of its liquidity management, the Trust invests cash in excess of daily requirements in various short-term investments. The short-term investments are invested for capital preservation and liquidity for cash flow requirements, such as money market funds, certificates of deposit, and commercial paper.

The Trust's long-term investment portfolio is for the deposit of proceeds and payment of obligations from charitable gift annuities. The portfolio is invested in marketable fixed-income and equity securities, index and actively managed mutual funds, and Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs). A portion of the balance is invested as required in accordance with governing regulatory agencies to pay the long-term charitable gift annuity beneficiary obligations. See Note 7 for further information. The remaining is invested with the intent of providing capital appreciation and total return to cover future expenditures and grants awarded.

5. FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS

Accounting Standards Codification 820, *Fair Value Measurements and Disclosures*, provides a framework for measuring fair value. This framework provides a fair value hierarchy that prioritizes the inputs to valuation techniques used to measure fair value, as follows: Level 1, which refers to securities valued using unadjusted quoted prices from active markets for identical assets; Level 2, which refers to securities not traded on an active market, but for which observable market inputs are readily available; and Level 3, which refers to securities valued based on significant unobservable inputs. Assets are classified in their entirety based on the lowest level of input that is significant to the fair value measurement.

The Trust did not hold any financial assets requiring the use of inputs that are unobservable and significant to the overall fair value measurement (Level 3) during 2020.

The Trust's policy is to recognize transfers between levels at the actual date of the event. There were no transfers during 2020.

Asset Valuation Techniques—Valuation techniques used maximize the use of observable inputs and minimize the use of unobservable inputs. The following is a description of the valuation methodologies used for assets recorded at fair value. There have been no changes in the methodologies used at December 31, 2020.

Cash equivalents, composed of money market funds, are categorized as Level 1, and are valued at cost, which approximates fair value. The money market funds represent the Trust's shares in a registered investment company's fund.

US government securities (US Treasury notes), common stocks, and ETFs, categorized as Level 1, are valued at the closing price reported in the active market in which the individual security is traded.

Certificates of deposit and commercial paper categorized as Level 2 are valued at fair value, which approximates amortized cost.

US government agency notes and municipal and corporate bonds, categorized as Level 2, are valued using third-party pricing services. These services may use, for example, model-based pricing methods that utilize observable market data as inputs. Broker-dealer bids or quotes of securities with similar characteristics may also be used.

Shares of registered investment companies (mutual funds), categorized as Level 1, are valued at quoted market prices that represent the net asset value of shares held at year-end.

The major categories of the Trust's financial assets measured at fair value on a recurring basis as of December 31, 2020, are as follows:

Asset Category	Quoted Prices in Active Markets for Identical Assets (Level 1)	Significant Observable Inputs (Level 2)	Total
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 850,712	\$	\$ 850,712
Commercial paper		2,247,585	2,247,585
US government securities	909,488		909,488
Certificates of deposit		6,228,453	6,228,453
US government agency notes		392,579	392,579
Municipal bonds		2,234,431	2,234,431
Corporate bonds		2,263,236	2,263,236
Common stocks	6,119,448		6,119,448
Mutual funds/ETFs:			
Domestic equity funds/ETFs	9,151,645		9,151,645
International equity funds	<u>6,387,405</u>		<u>6,387,405</u>
Total mutual funds/ETFs	<u>15,539,050</u>		<u>15,539,050</u>
Total assets	<u>\$ 23,418,698</u>	<u>\$ 13,366,284</u>	<u>\$ 36,784,982</u>

Fair value of the annuity payment liability of \$4,498,542, classified as Level 2 within the fair value hierarchy, as of December 31, 2020, was calculated as the net present value of expected annuity payments based on the following significant assumptions:

- (1) The discount rate expected to reflect yields available on high-quality investments; and
- (2) The mortality assumption based on expected annuitant longevity.

6. RELATED-PARTY TRANSACTIONS

During 2020, DAV personnel assisted the Trust on a limited basis in administering its business operations, fundraising, and grant programs. For these personnel services, the Trust reimbursed DAV \$220,801 in 2020. As of December 31, 2020, the Trust owed DAV \$250,127. DAV provides the Trust with the use of facilities, equipment, and occasional magazine space at no charge.

In 2020, the Trust distributed the following in support of DAV programs and services:

DAV Employment Initiative	\$ 1,667,225
Assistance to disabled veterans and their families	104,500
National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic	22,500
National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic - 2019 uncollectible pledge	(250,000)
DAV "Just B Kids" Scholarship	7,500
Transportation Network	200,000
Veterans retreats	150,000
Jesse Brown Youth Scholarship Program	26,000
DAV Covid-19 Relief	117,407
DAV Night Out Program	33,000
DAV Centennial Celebration	100,000
DAV5K Program	10,000

In 2020, contributed media support valued at \$1,194,041 was donated to CST for DAV's use.

In performing the duties of their positions, DAV's National Commander and National Adjutant serve on the Board of Directors of the Trust. In performing the duties of their positions as a Trust Director, some members also serve on the DAV National Service Foundation Board of Directors and the Disabled Veterans' Life Memorial Foundation's Board of Directors.

In 2020, the Trust granted \$635,000 to the DAV National Service Foundation—Columbia Trust Fund for the DAV Transportation Network Vehicle Grant Program. In 2020, the Trust also provided \$1,000 to the DAV National Service Foundation for use in assisting disabled veterans and their dependents.

7. ANNUITY PAYMENT LIABILITY

The Trust enters into charitable gift annuity agreements with donors. In the statement of activities, contributions of charitable gift annuities of \$261,662 for the year ended December 31, 2020, are the result of the portion of gift annuity contributions that exceed the annuity payment liability estimated at the date of the contribution.

The Trust recognizes an annuity payment liability as the present value of the future cash flows expected to be paid to the donors and their beneficiaries using a discount rate of 5% as of December 31, 2020.

In 2020, the Trust used the mortality table IAR-2012 in determining the liability to reflect the most up-to-date expectations with regard to longevity for individual annuitant lives.

In 2020, the Charitable Gift Annuity Valuation Adjustment of \$(166,409) consists of:

- Gain from deceased annuitants of \$267,970, and
- Other actuarial adjustments of \$(434,379), which are primarily related to discounting of the liability during the year ended December 31, 2020.

There are various state statutes and regulations that govern not-for-profit entities that enter into charitable gift annuity agreements with donors. As required by various state statutes and regulations, the Trust segregates the deposit of charitable gift annuity proceeds and reserves a portion for fulfillment of future annuity obligations. The required minimum balance of the reserve account is maintained and invested in accordance with applicable state statutes, the fair market value of which is \$5,677,259 as of December 31, 2020.

In addition to this reserve account, the Trust is required by California statutes to maintain segregated reserves for future obligations to charitable gift annuity donors residing in California. The fair market value for the California reserve account is \$987,957 as of December 31, 2020. The minimum required balance of the segregated accounts for California donors is calculated and invested in accordance with applicable California statutes and regulations.

The Trust also maintains the minimum amount of net assets without donor restrictions as required by any state for the acceptance of charitable gift annuities, which is \$1,000,000. The total net assets without donor restrictions that are subject to state statutes or regulations (calculated as the reserve funds (investments), less the annuity payment liability) amounted to \$2,166,673 as of December 31, 2020.

8. SUBSEQUENT EVENTS

No other events have occurred after December 31, 2020, but before April 12, 2021, the date the financial statements were available to be issued, that require consideration as adjustments to, or disclosures in, the financial statements.

* * * * *

(Whereupon, President Marbes withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Thank you, Dick. May I have a motion to accept that impressive report?

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER HILLYARD: Four.

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Mic 4.

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER HILLYARD: District 12, Senior Vice Hillyard from the Department of Wisconsin motions for Dick's, to accept the report as given.

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: May I have a second.

MR. JOHNSON: Mic 1.

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Mic 1.

MR. JOHNSON: Kirk Johnson, Chapter 85, the sunny State of California, seconds.

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: All in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered.

(Whereupon President Marbes withdrew from the stage.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Without further delay, please welcome back to the stage the Disabled Veterans' Life Memorial Foundation President and our Convention Chairperson Dennis Joyner.

(Whereupon, DVLMF President and Past National Commander Joyner advanced to the podium.)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: DAV Past National Commander Dennis Joyner was appointed board president for the Disabled Veterans' Life Memorial Foundation in 2015.

While speaking about the importance of the Memorial during its dedication ceremony on October 4, 2014, Dennis said the following:

"Although I've been blessed with many achievements in life, the achievement I am most proud of is this Memorial, a Memorial that gives me and the many thousands of other disabled veterans like me a sense of contentment knowing that what we gave, what our families gave, and what we continue to give will be forever remembered here in our Nation's Capital."

DVLMF PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER DENNIS JOYNER: Thank you, Commander Whitehead, for your kind introduction. Adjutant Burgess, national officers, delegates and guests.

It has been nearly seven years since our dream of a memorial to disabled American veterans became a reality. And I want to thank you and all of my brothers and sisters at DAV and the Auxiliary for the hard work put in to making it happen.

DAV was the leading donor, including hundreds of chapters and thousands of members. For those of you who helped support the Memorial with donations at the individual, chapter, or department levels, thank you. (Applause.)

I would like to take a moment and introduce the Disabled Veterans' Life Memorial Foundation Board of Directors: Vice-President is Marc Burgess; Secretary-Treasurer Gene Murphy; and our Directors: National Commander Stephen Whitehead, Dave Riley, Dave Gorman, Roberto "Bobby" Barrera, and Ex-Officio member Art Wilson. And, as many of you already heard at this convention, we lost a very dear member of our Board in Jim Sursely this year.

The Memorial and its upkeep would not be possible without these thoughtful veterans. Thanks to all of you. (Applause)

The 2014 opening of the American Veterans' Disabled for Life Memorial in Washington, D.C. was the culmination of a very long but remarkably worthwhile voyage, spanning nearly 20 years from inception to dedication.

Since the dedication, the Foundation's efforts have focused primarily on the areas of promotion and outreach, structural enhancements, maintenance, and public engagement.

During an unprecedented year, the Memorial continued to honor all who have defended our freedom and served as a meaningful reminder of the sacrifices made by our nation's veterans.

The Foundation has also continued sharing the Memorial's message through YouVisit's virtual tour technology which allows visitors to take a tour of the Memorial remotely.

The virtual tour technology proved to be a significant feature during 2020 as virtual visits became the global norm. Virtual visits were encouraged through DAV and the Foundation's social media channels in hopes of encouraging individuals to experience the Memorial and its profound attributes safely at home.

Through videos and photos, this feature allows for more user engagements, highlights our longstanding partnership with DAV, and provides additional public awareness and promotional opportunities.

In 2020 the tour captured the attention of more than 2,100 unique visitors, an increase of 141 percent over last year, bringing the total visitors to roughly 13,500 since the site's launch. (Applause)

Through organized events, broadcasts, and word of mouth from many of you who share in my awe of the Memorial, countless veterans and loved ones have witnessed the impact of its message first-hand.

In a positive sign of returning to pre-pandemic normalcy, our outstanding volunteers from Chapter 10 in Arlington-Fairfax, Virginia, met May 22nd to clean the Memorial in D.C. This was the group's first volunteer cleaning effort since 2019 due to the pandemic restrictions. Let's take a look and see how it went.

(Whereupon, a video on cleaning the Memorial was viewed, followed by a round of applause.)

DVLMF PRESIDENT AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER JOYNER: Great job. Thank you. Great job to all the volunteers and a heartfelt thank you to Chapter 10 for your continued dedication to the Memorial and your fellow veterans.

Just as it took the extraordinary generosity of many people and organizations to build the Memorial, it will now take the help of others to assist as we continue to transform our mission from construction and dedication to one of education and outreach.

It's on all of us to promote the Memorial and do what we can to make the public aware of its existence, its significance and all that it represents and honors.

In order to help us spread the word we have included a brochure about the Memorial in your convention bags. Please take a few seconds to review it, and share it with others in your local communities.

I would like to express my personal thanks, as well as the appreciation of every member of the Board of Directors, past and present, to DAV national organization, state departments, chapters, the Auxiliary, and all of DAV's outstanding members for their support.

You, DAV's members, are the reason and the means by which this became a reality. I believe you deserve a huge round of applause. (Applause)

I hope you will join me in recognizing the progress that has occurred, including the countless hours that have been dedicated to such a significant symbol of veterans' sacrifice.

We will continue to work alongside National Park Service staff, volunteers, and supporters in improving the site as needed and providing a means for both veterans and their loved ones to access its meaningful message throughout the country.

To take the virtual tour or learn more about the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial, visit A-V-D-L-M-dot-ORG. You can also follow us on Facebook.

Thank you, Commander. This concludes my report. (Applause)

(Whereupon, DVLMF President and Past National Commander Joyner withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Thank you, Dennis. May I have a motion to accept this report?

MS. MARCIA (UNDISTINGUISHABLE): Mic 2.

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Mic 2.

MS. (UNDISTINGUISHABLE): Marcia (undistinguishable) junior vice, Arlington Chapter 157, so moves.

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: May I have a second.

MR. JOHNSON: Mic 1.

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Mic 1.

MR. JOHNSON: Kirk Johnson, Chapter 85, California, seconds.

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered.

(Whereupon, DVLMF President and Past National Commander Joyner withdrew from the stage.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Okay, now, ladies and gentlemen, I would like anyone who wants to support the National Service Foundation but hasn't done so at the booth, to please make your way to the back of the room. And I'd ask that you do so as quietly as possible. If you have already donated at the booth, please bypass the table in the back and get in line, please.

(Whereupon, members left their seats to prepare to make donations to the National Service Foundation.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Incorporated in 1986, the National Service Foundation has played a unique role in safeguarding the long-term financial stability needed to support DAV services at the local, state and national levels. Using resources from the Foundation, DAV is able to continue caring for the veterans of today and tomorrow.

Although one of the Foundation's core missions is to support DAV's daily work to meet the most significant and immediate needs of veterans, increasing public awareness about the Foundation's mission is an extremely important component of what the Foundation does.

When they are able to open the hearts and minds of the American people, they better understand the needs of ill and injured veterans and their families which, in return, enables all of us to do our part to ensure veterans are properly cared for in the long term.

This includes providing free professional assistance with disability claims and benefits; no-cost transportation to and from medical appointments; and other vital services imperative to the quality of life of veterans and their families.

With "service before self" in mind, it is only fitting and an honor to introduce the president of DAV's National Service Foundation and past national adjutant of DAV, Arthur H. Wilson. (Applause)
(Whereupon, National Service Foundation President Wilson advanced to the podium.)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: A native of Massachusetts, Art Wilson enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in September 1962. He served as a runway construction specialist in Vietnam, the Philippines, Thailand, and Taiwan from 1964 to 1966.

Immediately after his discharge, Art's DAV career began as a National Service Officer apprentice in Atlanta. In 1973 he served as president of the National Guild of Attorneys-in-Fact before becoming the supervisor of DAV's National Appeals Office at the VA's Board of Veterans Appeals in Washington, D.C., in 1974.

He was appointed as DAV's National Adjutant and CEO in 1994, a position he held until his retirement in June 2013. Following his retirement, he was elected president of DAV's National Service Foundation and serves as an ex-officio member of the Disabled Veterans Life Memorial Foundation Board.

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT ARTHUR H. WILSON: Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT WILSON: Thank you, Commander for those very kind remarks and introduction. Adjutant Burgess, national officers, delegates, guests and our friends.

I begin this morning by introducing you to the DAV National Service Foundation's Board of Directors: Vice-President Marc Burgess; Secretary-Treasurer Alan Bowers; and our Directors are National Commander Stephen Whitehead, Joseph Johnston, Glenn Hohman, Delphine Metcalf-Foster, and ex-officio member and DAV Board Chair Dennis Nixon.

You know, it feels so good to be back and gathered in-person to carry out the vital work of our national convention.

The mission executed this week sets the tone for the very important year ahead. I want to thank all of you here today for your continued support, your commitment to our mission of service to veterans and their families. I applaud you. (Applause)

I think most of us in this room would agree that the pandemic was a little disruptive to our plans over the last 18 months. However, I'm extremely proud of the agility and the adaptability shown by the Foundation to keep our many services and programs up and running.

Implementation of a toll-free hotline in April of 2020 allowed veterans to directly connect to our national service officers throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and ensured access to their benefits was maintained. The hotline yielded more than 263,000 claimant contacts that may otherwise not have been possible.

I am extremely thankful to everyone who, once again, helped raise over \$1.6 million in donations and bequests for the Foundation and the Columbia Trust in 2020.

And for added impact, our national organization matches each donation, dollar-for-dollar, to the Foundation's Columbia Trust fund, up to a maximum of \$3 million per year, effectively doubling the value of your gifts.

Your amazing generosity allowed the Foundation to remain strong in 2020, with net assets of more than \$163 million at year-end. Your amazing generosity allowed the Foundation to remain strong.

Veterans have been best served through the wise stewardship of each dollar entrusted to the Foundation. The Foundation's unwavering commitment to this model is clearly demonstrated through the \$6 million that was expended toward direct programs of service for veterans and their families in 2020. This represents a remarkable 96 percent of total expenditures.

Throughout 2020 the Foundation expended nearly \$4.4 million to help the national organization provide necessary services to disabled veterans and their families. Most importantly, this support aided our national service program which provides veterans with no-cost professional services throughout the nation.

Another way the Foundation is able to provide support is through the Columbia Trust, a restricted fund that assists departments and chapters in providing direct services to veterans and their families at the state and local levels.

Impressively, in 2020, the Trust awarded grants totaling \$1.7 million to chapters and departments throughout the nation who, through these grants, were able to provide veterans with transportation, claims assistance, and to combat homelessness in their communities.

As evidenced by the Foundation's 2020 annual report, which is available online or by request, we had some very special groups and individuals who have been extraordinarily generous in their support of the Foundation.

One example of that generosity is the Ernestine Schumann-Heink Chapter Number 2 from Kansas City, Missouri, whose unwavering loyalty is reflected through the annual contributions since 1979.

In 2019 Chapter 2 earned the first ever Silver Level Star Award, featuring two stars which represents the giving of \$575,000 and \$650,000 milestones. Even in the face of a once-in-a-lifetime pandemic, the chapter remained steadfast and dedicated in its support of the Foundation. During 2020, the chapter achieved a cumulative lifetime total of \$677,000. (Applause) Remarkable.

As a direct result of your support, free advocacy and representation awaits disabled veterans at the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims.

The first firm to participate in the program was the Washington-based Finnegan, Henderson, Farabow, Garrett and Dunner. And in addition to contributing thousands of hours of direct services to veterans, Finnegan has also contributed millions—that's right, millions—of dollars to the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

Finnegan is the largest contributor in the National Service Foundation's history. Words don't seem to suffice but our gratitude to the firm's unwavering and substantial commitment to the mission of the National Service Foundation is profound, and we thank you. (Applause)

Additionally, two chapters achieved lifetime contributions of \$5,000 and earned a place on the Foundation's Grand Memorial Honor Roll of Distinguished Donors Virtual Wall. They are Chapter 73, Department of California and Chapter 12 in Department of Rhode Island.

To you, supporters of the Foundation, we offer our most sincere appreciation and gratitude. We simply could not accomplish so much without you. (Applause)

I would now like to take just a moment to proudly recognize the National Service Director Jim Marszalek and the DAV's elite corps of national service officers whose daily work is the backbone of the DAV's mission. You all should be extremely proud of the impact that you have had on the lives of this nation's disabled veterans and their families.

Even through the pandemic and the transitioning from physical assistance to virtual counseling, you have continued to serve our fellow veterans and their families impeccably.

One way we see that impact is reflected through the gifts made in honor of the national service officers for the work that our benefits advocates do for disabled veterans.

The Richard J. Cosgriff Pacesetter Performance Award recognizes the national service office in each division that has the largest combined total of contributions made in its name.

The winners are Division 1, the National Appeals Office in Washington, D.C., with a total of \$2,430. And accepting on their behalf is supervisor Tom Wendel. Tom. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Division 1 Richard J. Cosgriff Pacesetter Performance Award was presented, at which time an official photograph was taken, after which the NSO withdrew from the stage.)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT WILSON: Division 2 is the National Service Office in Togus, Maine, with a total of more than \$14,000. Welcome supervisor Brandon McKinney to accept the award on their behalf. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Division 2 Richard J. Cosgriff Pacesetter Performance Award was presented, at which time an official photograph was taken, after which the NSO withdrew from the stage.)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT WILSON: Division 3, the National Service Office in Chicago, Illinois, with a total of more than \$18,000. Supervisor Bennie Fugate is here today to accept on their behalf. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Division 3 Richard J. Cosgriff Pacesetter Performance Award was presented, at which time an official photograph was taken, after which the NSO withdrew from the stage.)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT WILSON: Division 4, the National Service Office in Saint Louis, Missouri with a total of more than \$43,000. Representing our Division 4 winners from Saint Louis is national area supervisor Andy Edwards. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Division 4 Richard J. Cosgriff Pacesetter Performance Award was presented, at which time an official photograph was taken, after which the NSO withdrew from the stage.)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT WILSON: Division 5, the National Service Office in San Diego, California, with a total of \$19,000. And accepting that award is Supervisor Guy Anastasia. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Division 5 Richard J. Cosgriff Pacesetting Performance Award was presented, at which time an official photograph was taken, after which the NSO withdrew from the stage.)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT WILSON: Division 6, the National Service Office in Cleveland, Ohio, with a total of more than \$17,000. Here today to represent Division 6 and to accept the award is Jacob Drost. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Division 6 Richard J. Cosgriff Pacesetting Performance Award was presented, at which time an official photograph was taken, after which the NSO withdrew from the stage.)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT WILSON: So just as a sideline, please join me again in thanking our nationwide corps of incredible national service officers. (Applause)

Okay, now I call on you, the chapters and departments, to be part of the cause by donating to the National Service Foundation or to the Columbia Trust so we can continue providing the vital services to veterans and their families throughout the nation. You can also donate online or by mail at the address noted on your screen.

This is a way to donate in honor of or commemorate our friends, brothers and sisters, and show our commitment to the nation's finest.

To kick off this time of giving, I am pleased to acknowledge contributions from Glynn Parker of \$1,000; Department of Connecticut for \$100,000. (Applause) Okay, now it's your turn to speak and show the nation that your chapter or department are willing to do their support in the cause that keeps us here today.

MR. KEITH DOORE: Keith Doore, Past Department Commander, State of Missouri, on behalf of Kimberly Tatham I have \$3,000 for the Charitable Service Trust, \$3,000 for the Disaster Relief Fund in the honor of the St. Louis NSO office. (Applause)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: On behalf of (indistinguishable) Chapter 1, Department of South Dakota, we have a \$10,000 donation to the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indistinguishable) Department of New York, we donate \$5,000 to the Charitable Trust Foundation. (Applause)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Good morning. Commander Evelyn (Indistinguishable) with the Auxiliary Department of Texas, I'm here with our juniors today and they have a donation of \$5,000 for the National Disabled Veterans Golf Clinic. (Applause)

ADJUTANT BURGESS: Can we get a picture of the juniors?

(Whereupon, an official photograph was taken with the Texas juniors.)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Scott (Indistinguishable) representing New York Chapter 158 who raised money at P.J.'s BBQ of \$500.00. (Applause)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Colorado Chapter 7 would like to make two donations, the first one in recognition of Carmen McGinnis and the great NSOs of Colorado, \$2,500; and the second one to the Columbia Trust Fund in the amount of \$2,500. Thank you, sir. (Applause)

MR. RICK (INDISTINGUISHABLE): Rick (Indistinguishable) Department of New Hampshire, I'm giving a thousand dollars to the Charitable Service Trust as well as a thousand dollars towards the National Service Foundation. We also have a donation from Chapter 18, Queen City, for another thousand dollars. (Applause)

MS. CYNTHIA BAILEY: Good morning. Cynthia Bailey from the Department of Virginia. I have a \$20,000 donation to the Charitable Trust Foundation; I also have a \$20,000 donation to the Golf Clinic; and I also request that our \$40,000 from the previous year be moved forward to the Winter Sports Clinic. Thank you. (Applause)

MS. SADIE HILL: Good morning. My name is Senior Vice-Commander Sadie Hill from the Department of Georgia. We wanted to make two donations, one was to Columbia Trust for \$2,000; the next one was the National Service Foundation, \$2,000. (Applause)

MR. DEAN TRAVIS: Dean Travis with the Department of Missouri. I'd like to donate \$25,000 to the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

MR. ROB (INDISTINGUISHABLE): Rob (Indistinguishable), Department of Wisconsin, representing the Department of Wisconsin. We have a check for \$2,000 for the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

MR. CUDWORTH: Well, as a proud member of the William C. Melia Chapter 1, Scranton, Pennsylvania, the nation's second-oldest chapter, I make a \$1,000 donation to the National Service Trust Fund in memory of Frank Tyson who passed away in 2020.

And I make a personal contribution in the memory of my brother, (Indistinguishable) Cudworth, United States Army Air Force bomber pilot, killed in action April 1943. (Applause)

MR. JOHN WALKER: John Walker representing the Department of Minnesota Foundation. We would like to donate \$15,000 to the Columbia Trust Fund. (Applause)

MR. RON (INDISTINGUISHABLE): Good morning, sir. From the great State of Minnesota, Ron (Indistinguishable), commander, Department of Minnesota, \$15,000, Columbia Trust. (Applause)

MR. JORDAN HARPER: Jordan Harper from the St. Louis, Missouri Chapter 1 donating \$15,000 to the DAV National Service Foundation. (Applause)

MR. LEE GIBBON: Lee Gibbon, Department of Ohio, Chapter 35, we have two donations. The first donation is the National Service Foundation, \$2,500 and Jesse Brown Memorial for \$2,500. (Applause)

MR. DICK TURNWALL: Dick Turnwall representing the Department of South Dakota. We have two donations. One is from the Department for \$500 to the National Service Foundation, and the second is from Past National Commander Gene Murphy donates \$200 in memory of Roger Andall. (Applause)

MR. KEN HICKS: Ken Hicks, Commander, Chapter 2, Kansas City, Missouri, give \$20,000 to the National Service Foundation on behalf of the St. Louis service officers. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. WILLIAM E. HEINZ: Good morning. My name is William E. Heinz. I'm from the Department of Pennsylvania. I am the department commander. On behalf of the Department of Pennsylvania we donated \$2,000 to the National Service organization. Thank you. (Applause)

MS. ANN SCHERMER: Good morning. Ann Schermer, commander of the Department of Oklahoma. We have \$2,500 for the National Golf Clinic. (Applause)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Good morning, ya'll from the great State of Louisiana. (Applause) Chapter 30 makes a donation to the National Service Foundation of \$10,000. (Applause)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Anchorage, Alaska, Chapter 7, we want to represent all of our members there and that are here this morning. We thank you for what you do and all of these wonderful contributions. We have \$2,500 for the National Service office and we just thank you so much. (Applause)

MR. ERIC OWENS: Eric Owens, the State of Kansas, past commander, present adjutant. We have a check for \$5,000 for the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

MR. HARRY (INDISTINGUISHABLE): Harry (Indistinguishable), department commander for the State of Arkansas, \$1,000 for the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

MR. MIKE HOLLAND: Mike Holland, Department of Tennessee, \$2,500 to the Columbia Trust Foundation and \$2,500 to the Winter Sports Clinic. (Applause)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Good morning. (Indistinguishable) from the Department of Massachusetts. The Department of Massachusetts is proud to support the National Service Foundation with a donation of \$1,000 and the Columbia Trust with another donation of \$1,000. Thank you very much. (Applause)

MR. GLENN HOHMAN: Good morning. Glenn Hohman, past department commander from the Department of Arizona. We are making a \$1,000 donation in memory of Past Department Commander Phil (Indistinguishable) out of Chapter 11 in Yuma and a \$1,000 donation in memory of Past Department Commander Robert "Bobby" (Indistinguishable) who is also an NEC and past board member. (Applause)

MR. TOM McCOY: Tom McCoy, commander, Department of Arizona, making a \$3,500 donation to the National Service Foundation. (Applause)

MR. JIM CASTER: Jim Caster, commander, Department of Ohio, District 11 at this time would like, in honor of Ohio, we'd like to donate \$5,000 to DAV National Service Foundation and \$2,500 to the Charitable Trust Foundation. Thank you very much. (Applause)

MR. MIKE STITH: I'm Mike Stith, Department of Ohio adjutant. I'd like to give a personal donation to the National Service Foundation of \$1,000 in honor of Jake Drost, Matt Hicks and all the Cleveland NSOs. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. JOHN RAYBURN: I'm John Rayburn, Department of Florida commander and also a member of Chapter 18. I'm proud to say this year Chapter 18 donated \$20,000 to Disaster Relief and a check for \$12,180 to Just B Kids. (Applause)

MS. JOYCE ROBERTS: Good morning. Joyce Roberts, department commander, South Carolina, we're donating \$2,000 to the National Service Fund and \$1,000 to the Columbia Trust. (Applause)

MR. JOHN MAKIS: John Makis, John C. McCarthy Chapter 4, Florida, \$3,000 to the National Foundation fund. (Applause)

MR. JIM KNOX: Jim Knox representing Central Florida Chapter 16, Orlando, Florida. We'd like to make a donation of \$5,000 to the National Service Foundation in memory of our chapter commander and past national commander Jim Sursely who died May 30th this past year. (Applause)

MR. MARK (INDISTINGUISHABLE): Good morning. My name is Mark (Indistinguishable), commander for the Department of Maryland. We'd like to make a donation to the National Service Foundation for \$5,000 and \$10,000 for the Emergency Relief Fund. (Applause)

MR. RICHARD SCHATZ: Good morning, National Commander Whitehead, Mr. Wilson. Richard Schatz, past department commander, Department of Rhode Island, currently its chief-of-staff. On behalf of the members of (Indistinguishable)-Carpenter-Bacon Chapter 12, Woonsocket, Rhode Island, \$500 to the Columbia Trust and \$500 to the National Service Foundation.

Also, on behalf of the members of Chapter 22 in Cumberland, Rhode Island, \$500 to the Columbia Trust and its Unit 22, \$100 to the Columbia Trust. (Applause)

MR. JOHN FISHER: Yes, my name is John Fisher. I'm representing the Department of Puerto Rico and Chapter 16 in (Indistinguishable). We donated \$200 to the National Service Foundation and also \$250 to the Columbia Fund. (Applause)

MS. MOZELLA MARIE (INDISTINGUISHABLE): Good morning, everyone. My name is Mozella Marie (Indistinguishable). And I come to you on behalf of the State of Kansas, the Sunflower State.

And I'm just replicating Dorothy and following the Yellow Brick Road because I am donating \$500 from the Department of Kansas, Karen, Eric, and Mozella, to the Women's Committee. Follow the Yellow Brick Road, ladies and follow my lead. Thank you. (Applause) Thank you.

MR. STEVEN SANTOS: Good morning. I'm Steven Santos. I'm senior vice commander for the Department of Maine. Department of Maine donates \$750 for the Columbia Trust; \$500 to the National Service Foundation, along with Chapter 1 in Maine donating \$500 to the National Service Foundation. And myself, I'm making a \$100 personal donation to the Winter Sports in honor of my dad, Joseph Jose Santos, U.S. Marine. (Applause) Thank you.

MR. JOHN CARMONA: Denver is in the house. My name is John Carmona. And I'm the department of Colorado. And we're making a donation of \$2,500 to the National Service Foundation and honoring Carmen McGinnis. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. THOMAS AYALLA: Good morning. My name is Thomas Ayalla, past department commander of Florida. Yes, I am standing up. (Laughter)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Glad he said it. I was thinking it.

MR. AYALLA: In honor of Jim Sursely, past national commander, past department commander of Florida, the Department of Florida would like to donate \$10,000 to the Columbia Trust. (Applause)

MR. TOM LINDELL: Good morning, everyone. I'm Tom Lindell, commander, DAV Chapter 10, Arlington-Fairfax, Virginia. I'm here to give a \$5,000 donation in memory of John Mackie to the National Service Foundation. And, as John would always say, "Chapter 10, greatest chapter in the known universe." (Applause)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Good morning. I'm adjutant from the Department of North Carolina and we're donating \$5,000 to the National Golf Clinic. (Applause)

MS. KATHRYN GERRARD: Good morning. Kathryn Gerrard, DAV Department of Nevada senior vice-commander, DAV Chapter 15, Pahrump, Nevada, I am making two personal donations on behalf of William "Bill" Doland, past department commander.

One of them is a \$500 donation to the Disaster Relief Fund and the other one is a \$500 donation to the Columbia Trust Fund. Thank you very much. (Applause)

MR. CHARLES HICKS: Good morning. Charles Hicks, Los Angeles Chapter 5, \$250 to the National Service Foundation and \$250 to Just B Kids. (Applause)

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER ALAN BOWERS: The National Service Foundation, I gave you a report yesterday and the major line in it said, 97 percent of our donations goes to our charitable cause. The National Service Foundation knows what it is doing and Terry and I are donating \$2,500. (Applause)

MR. DON BUTLER: Good morning, everybody. I'm Don Butler, commander for the tiny State of Connecticut. We'd like to make a donation to the National Service Foundation for \$101,000. (Applause)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Thank you.

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT WILSON: Thank you.

ADJUTANT BURGESS: Let's get a picture.

(Whereupon, an official photograph was taken, after which President Wilson returned to the podium.)

NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION PRESIDENT WILSON: Well, thank you, Commander. That completes the report of the National Service Foundation. Thank you, all. (Applause)

DAV (Disabled American Veterans) National Service Foundation

Financial Statements as of and for the
Year Ended December 31, 2020, and
Independent Auditors' Report

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

To the Board of Directors of
DAV (Disabled American Veterans) National Service Foundation:

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of DAV (Disabled American Veterans) National Service Foundation (the "Foundation"), which comprise the statement of financial position as of December 31, 2020, and the related statements of activities, functional expenses, and cash flows for the year then ended, and the related notes to financial statements.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; this includes the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditors' Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the Foundation's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Foundation's internal control. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Opinion

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Foundation as of December 31, 2020, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Deloitte & Touche LLP

April 12, 2021

**DAV (DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS)
NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION**

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2020**

ASSETS

CASH	\$ 2,408,114
INTEREST AND DIVIDENDS RECEIVABLE	17,706
ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE	26,460
INVENTORIES	793
PREPAID EXPENSES	11,788
INVESTMENTS	160,780,619
SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT IN PROCESS	<u>8,415</u>
TOTAL	<u>\$ 163,253,895</u>

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

LIABILITIES:

Due to Disabled American Veterans	\$ 140,500
Other liabilities	<u>36,263</u>
Total liabilities	<u>176,763</u>

NET ASSETS:

Without donor restrictions:	
Perpetual Rehabilitation Fund	83,859,721
The Columbia Trust	<u>1,153,278</u>
Total net assets without donor restrictions	<u>85,012,999</u>
With donor restrictions:	
Purpose restricted for mission	77,832,439
Purpose restricted for DAV Legislative Fund	<u>231,694</u>
Total net assets with donor restrictions	<u>78,064,133</u>
Total net assets	<u>163,077,132</u>
TOTAL	<u>\$ 163,253,895</u>

See notes to financial statements.

**DAV (DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS)
NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION**

**STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2020**

	With Donor Restrictions				
	Without Donor Restrictions	Purpose Restricted	Purpose Restricted Columbia	Purpose Restricted DAV Legislative	Total
SUPPORT AND REVENUES:					
Support—contributions and bequests	\$ 938,126	\$	\$ 671,900	\$	\$ 1,610,026
Revenues—net investment return	9,943,182	9,379,265	7,590		19,330,037
Net assets released from restrictions	2,796,490	(2,117,000)	(679,490)		
Total public support and revenue	13,677,798	7,262,265			20,940,063
EXPENSES:					
Program expenses:					
Grants and expenses in accordance with The Columbia Trust	1,651,175				1,651,175
Appropriations to DAV National Headquarters and other organizations	4,380,489				4,380,489
Total program expenses	6,031,664				6,031,664
Management and general expenses	117,740				117,740
Fundraising expenses	105,421				105,421
Total expenses	6,254,825				6,254,825
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	7,422,973	7,262,265			14,685,238
NET ASSETS—Beginning of year	77,590,026	70,570,174		231,694	148,391,894
NET ASSETS—End of year	85,012,999	77,832,439	\$	\$ 231,694	\$ 163,077,132

See notes to financial statements.

**DAV (DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS)
NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION**

**STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2020**

	Program	Management and General	Fundraising	Total
EXPENSES:				
Allocations to charitable programs	\$ 5,968,568	\$ 60,348	\$ 9,267	\$ 5,968,568
Administrative charges				69,615
Grant proposal processing	60,348			60,348
Printing, stationery, and supplies	130	3,220	48,186	51,536
Postage and shipping	2	4,116	34,316	38,434
Professional fees		28,800		28,800
Banking and credit card fees	2,616	10,004		12,620
Registration fees		3,825	6,812	10,637
Awards		7,627		7,627
Legal fees		128	6,840	6,968
Travel		6,944		6,944
Insurance		3,774		3,774
Maintenance		(11,646)		(11,646)
Miscellaneous		600		600
TOTAL	\$ 6,031,664	\$ 117,740	\$ 105,421	\$ 6,254,825

See notes to financial statements.

DAV (DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS) NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2020

CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:	
Change in net assets	\$ 14,685,238
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash used in operating activities:	
Net gain on sale and change in appreciation of investment securities	(16,103,089)
Changes in operating assets and liabilities:	
Interest and dividends receivable	(13,480)
Accounts receivable	(25,075)
Inventory	3,453
Prepaid expenses	4,908
Due to Disabled American Veterans	41,235
Other liabilities	<u>(2,365)</u>
Net cash used in operating activities	<u>(1,409,175)</u>
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:	
Purchases of investment securities	(57,370,354)
Proceeds from sale of investment securities	58,720,733
Software development in process	<u>(8,415)</u>
Net cash provided by investing activities	<u>1,341,964</u>
NET DECREASE IN CASH	(67,211)
CASH—Beginning of year	<u>2,475,325</u>
CASH—End of year	<u>\$ 2,408,114</u>

See notes to financial statements.

DAV (DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS) NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AS OF AND FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2020

1. ORGANIZATION

DAV (Disabled American Veterans) National Service Foundation (the “Foundation”) is a financial auxiliary of the Disabled American Veterans (DAV). The purpose of the Foundation, as set forth in Article 3 of the Articles of Incorporation, is as follows:

“To receive and maintain a fund or funds of personal or real property, or both; to solicit and obtain contributions from the public; and, subject to the restrictions set forth in the Articles of Incorporation, to use and apply the whole or any part of the income and principal of said fund exclusively for the promotion of social welfare (including incidental nonpartisan legislative activity in furtherance of such purpose) within the meaning of Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, primarily for the assistance, aid, maintenance, care, support, and rehabilitation of disabled veterans and their dependents, either directly or by contributions to the DAV, a Congressionally chartered organization, or any chapter or department thereof.”

During the year ended December 31, 2020, there was a global outbreak of a new strain of coronavirus, COVID-19, which continues to adversely impact global and domestic commercial activity. The full extent of the impact of COVID-19 on the Foundation will depend on various future developments, particularly the duration and depth of the pandemic, which may be influenced by emerging medical treatments and applicable health and safety regulations.

2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Financial Statements—The accompanying financial statements have been prepared on the accrual basis of accounting in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAP).

New Accounting Standards—In June 2016, the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) issued Accounting Standards Update (ASU) No. 2016-13, *Financial Instruments—Credit Losses*, which is included in ASC Topic 326, *Measurement of Credit Losses on Financial Instruments*. The new standard revises the accounting requirements related to the measurement of credit losses and will require organizations to measure all expected credit losses for financial assets based on historical experience, current conditions, and reasonable and supportable forecasts about collectability. Assets must be presented in the financial statements at the net amount expected to be collected. This standard will be effective for the annual financial statements beginning January 1, 2023. A modified retrospective approach is to be used for certain parts of this standard, while other parts are to be applied using a prospective approach. Management has not yet evaluated the impact of ASU No. 2016-13 on the financial statements.

In September 2020, the FASB issued ASU No. 2020-07, *Not-for-Profit Entities (Topic 958): Presentation and Disclosures by Not-for-Profit Entities for Contributed Nonfinancial Assets*. The amendments require not-for-profit entities to present contributed nonfinancial assets as a separate line item in the statement of activities, apart from contributions of cash and other financial contributions. The standard also requires additional disclosure related to contributed nonfinancial assets. The amendment, which requires retrospective application, is effective for annual periods beginning after June 15, 2021. Management has not yet evaluated the impact of ASU No. 2020-07 on the financial statements.

Newly Adopted Accounting Principles— In August 2018, the FASB issued ASU No. 2018-13, *Fair Value Measurement (Topic 820): Disclosure Framework—Changes to the Disclosure Requirements for Fair Value Measurement*. The amendments in this update modify the disclosure requirements on fair value measurements in Accounting Standards Codification (ASC) Topic 820, *Fair Value Measurement*, based on the concepts in the concepts statement, including the consideration of costs and benefits. The adoption did not have an impact on the financial statements.

In March 2017, the FASB issued ASU No. 2017-08, *Receivables—Nonrefundable Fees and Other Costs (Subtopic 310-20): Premium Amortization on Purchased Callable Debt Securities*. ASU No. 2017-08 amends guidance on the amortization period of premiums on certain purchased callable debt securities. The amendments shorten the amortization period of premiums on certain purchased callable debt securities to the earliest call date. The amendments should be applied on a modified retrospective basis through a cumulative-effect adjustment to beginning retained earnings. The adoption did not have a significant impact on the financial statements.

Cash—The Foundation considers all liquid instruments purchased with a maturity date of three months or less to be cash equivalents that are stated at cost, which approximates fair value. The earnings credit received on the Foundation’s checking accounts were \$11,117 in 2020. The Foundation maintains its cash in bank deposit accounts, which, at times, exceed federally insured limits. The Foundation has not experienced any losses in such accounts.

Inventories—Inventory consists of solicitation materials and other items.

Investments—Investments are recorded at fair value. The fair value of the Foundation’s investments is determined based on the quoted market prices of the related securities or quoted prices in active markets for instruments that are similar or model-derived valuations in which all significant inputs and significant value drivers are observable in active markets. Gains and losses on the sale of investment securities are recognized based upon the specific identification method and are reflected as a separate component of revenue for the investments of the Foundation. The Foundation’s policy is to report cash and cash equivalents, which include money market funds, within its trust accounts as investments.

Contributions—The Foundation recognizes contributions when cash, securities or other assets; an unconditional promise to give; or a notification of a beneficial interest is received. Conditional promises to give—that is, those with a measurable performance or other barrier and a right of return—are not recognized until the conditions on which they depend have been met.

Contributions received are recorded as support with or without donor restrictions, depending on the existence and nature of any donor restrictions. Donated assets are recorded at their fair market value at the time of the donation.

Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions—All contributions and bequests without donor restrictions to the Foundation are designated by the board of directors (the “Board”) for investment in a Board-designated endowment fund, known as the Perpetual Rehabilitation Fund, as a reserve for future needs.

Investment income derived from these invested amounts is included in net assets without donor restrictions and used for current operations of the Foundation or appropriated by the Foundation or use by DAV.

For 2020, there are no appropriations to the Columbia Trust excluded from the statement of activities due to the transactions being an internal appropriation.

For 2020, the Board has designated \$1,153,278, as total unrestricted net assets for The Columbia Trust and are not included in the Board-designated endowment fund. The Columbia Trust recorded a decrease in unrestricted net assets of \$911,338 in 2020. Unrealized appreciation (depreciation) of investments is designated to The Columbia Trust's net assets from the unrestricted general fund.

Net Assets with Donor Restrictions—Funds considered with donor restriction for mission are restricted by their purpose to being invested prudently and used in fulfilling the Foundation's mission. As of December 31, 2020, the net assets with donor restrictions of \$77,832,439 are included within the investments balance in the statement of financial position.

Funds contributed to The Columbia Trust are matched 100% by DAV, up to a maximum of \$3,000,000 per year. In 2020, The Columbia Trust received \$23,450 in contributions, which were matched by DAV. In 2020, The Columbia Trust received \$635,000, from the DAV Charitable Service Trust to be used for the DAV Transportation Network Van Grant Program.

Contributions for the DAV Legislative Program are considered contributions with donor restriction. Investment income of \$6,789 in 2020 from the DAV Legislative Fund was transferred to DAV for use by DAV's Legislative Program. The net assets with donor restrictions of \$231,694 as of December 31, 2020 are included within the investments balance in the statement of financial position.

Allocation of Expenses—The financial statements report certain categories of expenses that are attributable to one or more program or supporting services of the organization. Those expenses include grant proposal processing, administrative charges, postage and shipping, printing, stationery and supplies, legal fees and registration fees. All expenses are allocated based on estimates of time and effort toward each program or supporting service. Allocation estimates are reviewed annually based on the specific expense and adjusted accordingly.

Income Taxes—As a not-for-profit service organization, the Foundation has received a determination from the Internal Revenue Service that it is exempt from federal income taxes as a Section 501(c)(4) organization. Contributions made to the Foundation are tax deductible by the contributor as provided in Section 170 of the Internal Revenue Code.

Use of Estimates—The preparation of the financial statements in accordance with GAAP requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities, disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the reporting period. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

3. ENDOWMENT FUNDS

The following table represents the composition of the Foundation’s endowment net assets by type of fund for the year ended December 31, 2020:

	Without Donor Restrictions
Board designated Perpetual Rehabilitation Fund	<u>\$ 83,859,721</u>

The Foundation’s Board-designated endowment fund included in net assets without donor restrictions, also known as the Perpetual Rehabilitation Fund, for the year ended December 31, 2020, had the following activity:

Net assets—beginning of year	<u>\$ 75,525,411</u>
Public support—contributions and bequests	938,126
Revenues—net investment return	<u>9,943,182</u>
Total public support and revenue	<u>10,881,308</u>
Expenses:	
Program:	
Appropriations to DAV National Headquarters and other organizations	2,263,489
Grant proposal processing	<u>60,348</u>
Total program expenses	2,323,837
Management and general	117,740
Fundraising	<u>105,421</u>
Total expenses	<u>2,546,998</u>
Total change in Board-designated endowment fund	<u>8,334,310</u>
Net assets—end of year	<u><u>\$ 83,859,721</u></u>

4. LIQUIDITY AND AVAILABILITY OF FINANCIAL ASSETS

The Foundation’s working capital and cash flows are attributable to the contributions received throughout the year. As of December 31, 2020, the Foundation’s financial assets (total assets, less inventory, prepaid expenses and software development in process) totaled \$163,232,899. The financial assets, with the exception of the donor-restricted by purpose for DAV Legislative Fund investment of \$231,694 as of December 31, 2020, are available to fund general expenditures within one year following the statement of financial position date. Donor-restricted funds of \$77,832,439 for 2020 have been included because they are restricted for programs considered general expenditures by the organization. The Foundation has an investment spending policy that would allow for withdrawals from the long-term investment portfolio, from both general assets without donor restrictions and with donor restriction purpose restricted for its mission.

The Foundation has a policy to structure its financial assets to be available as its program, fundraising, management, and general expenses become due. In addition, as part of its liquidity management, the Foundation invests cash in excess of daily requirements in various short-term and long-term investments. The short-term investments are invested for capital preservation and liquidity for cash flow requirements in money market funds. The Foundation's long-term investments, such as marketable fixed-income and equity securities, index and actively managed mutual funds, and Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs), are invested with the intent of providing a safe return on investments for future use.

5. FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS

ASC Topic 820 provides a framework for measuring fair value. The framework provides a fair value hierarchy that prioritizes the inputs to valuation techniques used to measure fair value as follows: Level 1, which refers to securities valued using unadjusted quoted prices from active markets for identical assets; Level 2, which refers to securities not traded on an active market, but for which observable market inputs are readily available; and Level 3, which refers to securities valued based on significant unobservable inputs. Assets are classified in their entirety based on the lowest level of input that is significant to the fair value measurement.

The Foundation did not hold any financial assets requiring the use of inputs that are unobservable and significant (Level 3) to the overall fair value measurement during 2020.

The Foundation's policy is to recognize transfers between levels at the actual date of the event. There were no transfers during 2020.

Asset Valuation Techniques—Valuation techniques used maximize the use of observable inputs and minimize the use of unobservable inputs. The following is a description of the valuation methodologies used for assets recorded at fair value. There have been no changes in the methodologies used at December 31, 2020.

Cash equivalents, composed of money market funds, are categorized as Level 1, and are valued at cost, which approximates fair value. The money market funds represent the Foundation's shares in a registered investment company's fund.

Common stock securities and ETFs held are categorized as Level 1. They are valued at the closing price reported in the active market in which the individual security is traded.

Corporate bonds are categorized as Level 2, and are valued using third-party pricing services. These services may use, for example, model-based pricing methods that utilize observable market data as inputs. Broker-dealer bids or quotes of securities with similar characteristics may also be used.

Shares of registered investment companies (mutual funds) are categorized as Level 1. They are valued at quoted market prices that represent the net asset value of shares held at year-end.

The major categories of financial assets measured at fair value on a recurring basis as of December 31, 2020, are as follows:

	Markets for Identical Assets (Level 1)	Significant Observable Inputs (Level 2)	Total
Asset category:			
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 1,058,375	\$ _____	\$ 1,058,375
Common stocks	<u>16,808,802</u>	_____	<u>16,808,802</u>
Corporate bonds	_____	<u>19,094,450</u>	<u>19,094,450</u>
Mutual funds/ETFs:			
Domestic fixed-income funds	26,193,148		26,193,148
Domestic equity funds	94,215,609		94,215,609
International equity funds			
Real estate equity funds	<u>3,410,235</u>	_____	<u>3,410,235</u>
Total mutual funds/ETFs	<u>123,818,992</u>	_____	<u>123,818,992</u>
Total assets	<u>\$ 141,686,169</u>	<u>\$ 19,094,450</u>	<u>\$ 160,780,619</u>

The Foundation has adopted an investment policy for the Perpetual Rehabilitation Fund and investments with donor restrictions. The primary goals of the investment portfolio are safeguarding of the assets; maximizing return on the interest, dividends, and appreciation of capital; and avoiding undue interest rate risk in the fixed-income portion of the portfolio. The portfolio performance objective is to exceed a custom benchmark of 60% Russell 3000/40% Barclays Intermediate Government Credit over a five-year period and a full market cycle.

The Foundation relies on a total return strategy in which investment returns are achieved through both capital appreciation and current yield (interest and dividends). The Foundation targets a diversified asset allocation that places a greater emphasis on equity-based investment to achieve its long-term return objective within prudent risk constraints.

6. NET ASSETS RELEASED FROM DONOR RESTRICTIONS

Net assets are released from donor restrictions by incurring expenses satisfying the restricted purposes specified by donors. The net assets released from restrictions are as follows:

Purpose restrictions accomplished:	
Purpose restriction—mission	\$ 2,117,000
The Columbia Trust	<u>679,490</u>
Net assets released from restrictions	<u>\$ 2,796,490</u>

7. RELATED-PARTY TRANSACTIONS

During 2020, DAV personnel assisted the Foundation on a limited basis in administering its business operations and fundraising program. For these services, the Foundation reimbursed DAV \$129,963. At December 31, 2020, the Foundation owed DAV \$140,500. DAV provides the Foundation with the use of facilities, equipment and occasional magazine space at no charge.

As discussed in Note 2, DAV contributed \$23,450 to the Columbia Trust in 2020.

In 2020, the DAV Charitable Service Trust made contributions of \$635,000 to the Columbia Trust for the DAV Transportation Network Vehicle Grant Program. In 2020, the DAV Charitable Service Trust made contributions of \$1,000 to the National Service Foundation to be used in assisting disabled veterans and their dependents.

In 2020, the Foundation appropriated \$4,373,700 in support of DAV programs and services.

In performing the duties of their positions, DAV’s National Commander and National Adjutant serve on the Foundation’s Board. In performing the duties of their positions as a Foundation Director, some members also serve on the DAV Charitable Service Trust’s Board and the Disabled Veterans’ Life Memorial Foundation’s Board.

8. GRANTS AND EXPENSES OF THE COLUMBIA TRUST

At December 31, 2020, the grants and expenses of the Columbia Trust are as follows:

Grants to DAV chapters and departments in accordance with The Columbia Trust:	
Hospital Service Coordinator Program	\$ 477,490
Transportation Network Vehicle Grant Program	990,596
Other grants to service programs	119,993
Miscellaneous expenses	2,748
Grant proposal processing	<u>60,348</u>
Total	<u>\$1,651,175</u>

In 2020, temporarily restricted net assets of \$679,490 and net assets without donor restrictions of \$971,685 were used.

9. SUBSEQUENT EVENTS

No other events have occurred after December 31, 2020, but before April 12, 2021, the date the financial statements were available to be issued, that require consideration as adjustments to, or disclosures in, the financial statements.

* * * * *

(Whereupon, National Service Foundation President Wilson withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Thank you, Art, for that outstanding report and continued leadership. May I have a motion to accept the report from President Wilson for the National Service Foundation?

MR. LEROY ACOSTA: Comrade Commander.

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Which mic are we at?

MR. ACOSTA: Mic 1.

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Mic 1.

MR. ACOSTA: Leroy Acosta, Dick Cosgriff San Diego Chapter 2 move it.

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: May I have a second.

MR. ANDY PATTERSON: Mic 3.

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Mic 3.

MR. PATTERSON: Mic 3, Andy Patterson, Department of New Hampshire, Chapter 18, Queen City, Manchester, New Hampshire, second the motion.

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered.

(Whereupon, National Service Foundation President Wilson withdrew from the stage.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Now we are pleased to welcome Brian Wilner, newly-elected president of the Commanders and Adjutants Association for 2021-2022. Brian. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Mr. Wilner advanced to the podium.)

MR. BRIAN WILNER: National Commander Whitehead, National Adjutant Burgess, national officers, delegates, guests, good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

MR. DONOVAN: I am proud to have been elected as the president of the State Commanders and Adjutants Association for 2021-2022 year.

We pledge to continue our support of the national organization through our sponsorship of the State Commanders and Adjutants Orientation, the Mid-Winter Conference and the Winter Sports Clinic. We look forward to another very productive year in the DAV.

I would like to read into record our officers and committees members for the coming year: for president, Brian Wilner; vice-president, Burl Jimmerson.

Executive committee, Lisa Gregory, Paul Harmon, Pamela Beal, Kirk Johnson, William Robinson, Michael Elmore;

For the appointments: secretary-treasurer, Rita Alberegg; assistant treasurer, Dave Tannenbaum; judge advocate, Floyd Watson; chaplain, John King; assistant chaplain, Jerome Washington; sergeant-at-arms, Jerry Estes and Hugo Perez.

The Audit Committee: Paul Artizone, Nancy Espinosa, Deborah Olsen; Constitution and Bylaws Committee: Benjamin Flynn, Gregory Dunham, Jamie Jacob, J. Hafford Pandose.

Resolutions Committee: Donald Peake Jr., Cherise Washington; Special Projects Committee, Mary Ann Keckler, Danny Oliver, Louis A. Burgess.

Would National Commander Whitehead and National Adjutant Burgess please join me to receive a presentation?

(Whereupon, the Commander and Adjutant joined Mr. Wilner at the podium.)

MR. WILNER: On behalf of the State Commanders and Adjutants Association I would like to present you with two donations for the National Service Foundation. It is with a great deal of pleasure that we present our donation of \$3,000 to the DAV National Service Foundation. In addition, an additional check in honor of past president John Donovan for \$100. (Applause)

The first is a presentation of \$3,000 for the National Service Foundation.

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Thank you.

ADJUTANT BURGESS: Thank you, Brian. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Mr. Wilner presented Commander Whitehead and Adjutant Burgess with the checks, at which time an official photograph was taken, after which Mr. Wilner withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Thanks, Brian and thank you to the C&A for that wonderful donation.

I would like to call upon Chairman Jim Shuey for the report of the Committee on Hospital and Volunteer Services. Jim. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Committee on Hospital and Voluntary Services Chairman advanced to the podium.)

HOSPITAL AND VOLUNTARY SERVICES COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN JAMES SHUEY:

Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

HOSPITAL AND VOLUNTARY SERVICES COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN SHUEY: Comrade Commander and delegates, the National Convention Committee on Hospital and Voluntary Services was called to order on July 31, 2021, by the Committee Advisors John Kleindienst and Marquis Barefield.

The first order of business was the election of a Convention Committee chairperson and secretary. Jim Shuey was elected as chairperson and Kirk Johnson was elected as secretary.

The Committee then proceeded to review the resolutions submitted. And I will now report to you the resolutions recommended for adoption by this National Convention. For the purpose of saving time I will read only the number and the purpose of the resolutions.

Resolution 005, improve the care provided to veterans with service-connected disabilities affecting the ability to procreate through assisted reproductive technology; 006, support sufficient resources for poly-trauma units at VA medical centers;

007, support sufficient funding for VA prosthetics and sensory aids service and timely delivery of prosthetic items; 008, require assisting technology training for VA staff who work to rehabilitate blind and visually-impaired veterans;

009, urge VA to provide service-connected veterans meaningful access to personal health information; 010, encourage the Department of Veterans Affairs to submit candidate for the Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship Program;

011, support a robust, comprehensive rehabilitative and research program for veterans with traumatic brain injuries; 015, support enhanced medical services and benefits for women veterans; 016, support legislation to grant the president, vice-president and members of Congress the privilege to use the veterans' health care system and to receive their care exclusively from the VA; (Applause)

017, support state veterans' home programs; 018, provide comprehensive dental care to all service-connected veterans; (Applause) 019, support legislation to eliminate or reduce VA and DOD health care copayments for service-connected disabled veterans; 020, support sufficient resources for VA to improve health care for veterans living in rural and remote areas;

021, enhance CHAMP-VA benefits and services; 022, enhance long-term services and supports for service-connected disabled veterans; 023, support equity in access to services and benefits for racial and ethnic minority service-connected veterans;

024, support legislation to include protections under Section 1151 of Title 38, U.S.C., for veterans using VA community care services; 025, ensure VA clinical appeals process protects veterans; 026, support legislation to authorize scholarships for new mental health practitioners in exchange for agreements to serve veterans in VA facilities; (Applause)

027, support the rights and benefits earned by service-connected Native American and Alaska native veterans; 028, support the provision of comprehensive VA health care services to enrolled veterans; 029, oppose any restriction on eligibility of military retired veterans to receive care in DOD or VA health care systems; (Applause)

030, support consistent, reasonable access for service and guide dogs in VA facilities; 055, support legislation to change eligibility requirements for long-term nursing home care to include a disability rating of 60 percent service-connected with individual un-employability rating;

061, support legislation to extend eligibility of qualifying veterans' adult child for CHAMP-VA; 096, support VA research into the medical efficacy of cannabis for service-connected disabled veterans; (Applause) 098, improve timely reimbursement by VA for purchased care and protect veterans from debt collection and adverse credit reporting associated with such care;

100, support legislation to provide comprehensive support services for caregivers of severely wounded, injured and ill veterans from all eras; (Applause) 101, ensure sufficient resources for VA research to improve care and benefits for veterans exposed to military toxic and environmental hazards; (Applause)

102, require the Secretary of VA to increase efficiency in the recruitment, hiring and credentialing of certain health care professionals undergoing separation from the Armed Services; 103, encourage VA to process volunteer applications in a timely manner; (Applause)

105, ensure timely access to quality VA health care and medical services; 106, adequately fund and sustain the successful readjustment counseling service of the VA and its highly-effective vets center program; 107, oppose means testing service-connected veterans for VA health care;

109, support programs to provide psychological support and mental health counseling services to family members of veterans suffering from post-deployment mental health challenges or other service-connected conditions; (Applause)

110, support humane, consistent pain management programs in the veterans' health care system; (Applause) 111, oppose recovery of third-party payments for service-connected disabilities; 113, support effective recruitment, retention, and development of the VA health care system workforce;

114, reduce VA medication copayment equal to or less than lowest charged by private sector commercial outlets; 115, support modernizing VA health care infrastructure; 116, support improvements in provider training and beneficiary travel benefits for veterans seeking specialized treatment programs and care for military sexual trauma;

117, support legislation to improve VA programs designed to prevent and treat substance use disorders in veterans; 118, support program improvements and enhanced resources for the VA mental health programs and suicide prevention;

119, support sustained and sufficient funding to improve services for homeless veterans; 122, support automatic enrollment of medically-retired veterans into VA health care system with an opt-out provision; 167, support mandated VA research and expanded access to investigational drugs for ALS;

203, support new models of care within the VA for veterans with dementia; 207, urge VA to provide prompt screening and treatment for veterans exposed to depleted uranium and support additional research into the long-term health effects of such exposure;

209, support adequate funding for research and legislation to improve the care and benefits for veterans exposed to military toxic and environmental hazards; 241, develop clinical practice guidelines for prevention, early detection and intervention for lung cancer;

254, require a veterans' attending VA physician to provide medical opinion with regards to claim for VA disability compensation benefits when requested; (Applause) 255, urge VA to apply a consistent, coordinated care policy for service-disabled veterans with chronic health conditions who have a home residence in two states;

256, support VA medical and prosthetic research programs; 258, support top-priority access for service-connected veterans within the VA health care system; 259, urge VA medical facilities to provide enclosed animal relief areas for service animals;

260, urge the VA to support comprehensive research on health effects of children of male veterans exposed to Agent Orange; 261, encourage the Department of Veterans Affairs to submit candidates for the George H. Seal Memorial Award program;

262, implement a pilot program to assess the effectiveness of post-traumatic stress growth; 263, provide easy and equitable access to VA transportation benefits and services; 264, increase capacity at VA facilities by operating extended hours and weekends; (Applause)

279, establish studies on long-term effects of exposure to bisphenol, a substance found in plastic disposable water bottles; 300, provide beneficiary travel benefits for unscheduled acute and urgent care from VA; 324, repeal beneficiary travel deductible for service-connected disabled veterans and increase reimbursement rates; (Applause)

373, improve urgent and emergency care benefits for service-connected veterans; 500, support the expansion of stellate ganglion block and research and implementation to treat post-traumatic stress disorder; 508, strengthen and protect the VA health care system;

519, conduct studies to determine effectiveness of hyperbaric oxygen therapy on treatment-resistant T-B-I and P-T-S-D; and, finally, 524, extend appreciation to James A. Haley Veterans Hospital in Tampa, Florida, for their support of a medical room and the overall success of the 99th National Convention.

Comrade Commander, this completes the report of the Committee of Hospitals and Voluntary Services. On the behalf of the Committee I move for the adoption of these resolutions and that the Committee be discharged with the thanks of the National Convention.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 005 IMPROVE THE CARE PROVIDED TO VETERANS WITH SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITIES AFFECTING THE ABILITY TO PROCREATE THROUGH ASSISTED REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGY

WHEREAS, during the recent conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, reliance on dismounted patrols and frequent exposure to improvised explosive devices (IEDs) have significantly increased genitourinary (GU) trauma; and

WHEREAS, an estimated 12% of war injuries involve some kind of genitourinary trauma; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense (DOD) Joint Theater Trauma Registry reports that of the highest percentage of trauma admissions were GU injuries (the largest report of GU injuries during any military conflict), more than half were within child-bearing age, were injured due to explosions; and

WHEREAS, sexual functioning can be impaired by physical, psychological and social factors that can diminish the quality of life of military service personnel; and

WHEREAS, DOD currently offers multiple assisted reproductive technology services for military service personnel who have lost procreative ability due to service-related illness or injury to include those suffering neurological, physiological and/or anatomical loss; and

WHEREAS, emerging evidence suggests mental health conditions related to military service including post-traumatic stress disorder and toxic exposures during military service may be associated with infertility; and

WHEREAS, assistive reproductive services are only provided to consenting personnel who have lost the ability to procreate due to certain specific service-related injuries that omit mental health conditions and toxic exposures; and

WHEREAS, VA has based its guidance on providing assisted reproductive technology to gravely injured veterans or their legal different-sex spouses on DOD policy which limits options available to many other veterans have made great sacrifices in the protection of the nation; and

WHEREAS, veterans who, due to their military service are unable to procreate and require reproductive assistance, or who are unmarried or married to same-sex partners have already paid a price greater than any monetary assessment and have earned the right to have a family and it is incumbent on VA to make them whole to every extent possible; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31-August 3, 2021, supports legislation which would include in VA's health benefits package the use of assisted reproductive technologies for veterans who have lost the ability to procreate due to service-related injury or illness including any conditions that may affect fertility that were not present prior to military service and regardless of marital status.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 006 SUPPORT SUFFICIENT RESOURCES FOR POLYTRAUMA UNITS AT DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTERS

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Polytrauma System of Care is the largest integrated system of care dedicated to the medical and rehabilitation needs of veterans and service members with combat- and noncombat-related traumatic brain injuries (TBI) and polytrauma; and

WHEREAS, catastrophically injured veterans are treated at five Polytrauma Rehabilitation Centers (PRC), located in Tampa, Richmond, Minneapolis, San Antonio and Palo Alto, for intensive care and long-term restoration and rehabilitation; and

WHEREAS, Polytrauma Support Clinic Teams or Polytrauma Points of Contact are located in VA medical centers across the country to provide specialized outpatient care in coordination with their Polytrauma Network Site (PNS) and offer continuing medical and rehabilitation care and support closer to the home community for veterans who have experienced a mild to moderate TBI or polytraumatic injury; and

WHEREAS, veterans spend long periods in VA recovering from their injuries and receiving patient-centered care in specialized polytrauma settings; and

WHEREAS, this specialized care is extraordinarily expensive and complex, often addressing complications from multiple amputations, TBI, burns, hearing and visual impairments, multiple shell fragment wounds and other catastrophic injuries; and

WHEREAS, since VA's current nursing home capacity is primarily designed to serve elderly veterans, VA must make every effort to create an age-appropriate environment for younger veterans that recognizes their different psychosocial needs; and

WHEREAS, having the support of their families and friends is an integral part of these veterans' treatment and recovery process; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, calls on the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to continue to request and allocate sufficient resources for polytrauma centers and PNSs to ensure these centers include adequate space and other services for veterans' ongoing rehabilitation, social and recreational needs, and dedicated space, including therapeutic residential facilities, for disabled veterans and family members who must often stay for extended periods to assist in veterans' recovery and rehabilitation; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV calls on the Secretary to support provision of longer-term neurobehavioral and vocational support in age-appropriate settings within or outside of VA for veterans with moderate to severe injuries who require such programming.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 007
SUPPORT SUFFICIENT FUNDING FOR DEPARTMENT OF
VETERANS AFFAIRS PROSTHETICS AND SENSORY AIDS SERVICE
AND TIMELY DELIVERY OF PROSTHETIC ITEMS

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has operated a nationwide prosthetics and sensory aids program, organized as Prosthetics and Sensory Aids Service (PSAS), for more than a half-century; and

WHEREAS, tens of thousands of veterans need VA's life-changing PSAS care and services, and obtain a variety of items including prosthetic limbs, custom wheelchairs, orthotic items, eyeglasses, hearing aids, a variety of implantable surgical devices and supplies—a need that continues to rise due to the aging of the veteran population and grievous injuries in war veterans, past and present; and

WHEREAS, in FY 2020, VA provided 21 million prosthetic items or devices to 3.3 million veterans; and

WHEREAS, in FY 2020, VA provided artificial limbs to almost 27,000 veterans and wheeled mobility to about 148,000 veterans; and

WHEREAS, in many cases prosthetic items are a truly individualized extension of the body and can impact all aspects of veterans' lives; and

WHEREAS, VA must maintain flexibility in ordering and delivering a variety of state-of-the-art prosthetic aids to meet the unique needs of wounded, ill and injured veterans, including women veterans who require prosthetics that are sized appropriately for their bodies, and allow for the physical changes in their bodies during pregnancy and menses; and

WHEREAS, PSAS is nearing completion of regulations designed to standardize its procurement policies and administrative processes, and to improve its purchasing power and leverage its position in the prosthetic, orthotic and medical device marketplace; and

WHEREAS, changes in procurement practices have in some cases negatively affected the timeliness of delivery and quality of prosthetic, orthotic and other items to many veterans and may limit veterans' access to prosthetics that "promote, preserve or restore" function in accordance with current law; and

WHEREAS, throughout the process, VA should ensure appropriately trained prosthetic representatives and rehabilitation specialists are available to maintain VA's strong connection between veterans and clinical components of prosthetic care and services; and

WHEREAS, VA must rededicate itself to becoming a leader in prosthetic care by providing cutting-edge services and items to help injured, ill and wounded veterans fully regain mobility and achieve maximum independence in their activities of daily living, and in sports activities such as running, cycling, skiing, rock climbing and other physical exercises if they so choose; and

WHEREAS, research and development funding in addition to ongoing training to ensure that prosthetists and procurement officers are up-to-date on all available technologies is integral to VA's ability to provide such leadership to the field; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, urges VA to retain centralized funding for PSAS, which enables the program to deliver high-quality prosthetic items to all enrolled veterans needing such items and to train veterans on appropriate use and care of the device; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV urges VA to retain its goal of maximum recovery and independent living for our highest-priority veterans, to adopt procurement policies and staff training on advances in and other practices that accelerate the timely delivery of, and responsive maintenance and repair of, all prosthetic items, and to take fully and fairly into account the unique needs of severely injured and wounded veterans.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 008
ENSURE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS STAFF WHO
WORK TO REHABILITATE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED
VETERANS HAVE ADEQUATE TRAINING IN ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

WHEREAS, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) has established training and assessment protocols for blind and visually impaired veterans and provides them assistive technology training; and

WHEREAS, training on technology-related devices and equipment encompasses a growing proportion of the rehabilitation needs of veterans with blindness or visual impairment; and

WHEREAS, the VHA acknowledges competition for scarce computer assistive technology instructor specialists; and

WHEREAS, staff and supervisors within Blind Rehabilitation Service acknowledges difficulties recruiting and retaining certified computer assistive technology specialists and ensuring staff remain abreast of evolutionary advances in assistive technology for the blind; and

WHEREAS, enhancements of electronic assistive devices are continuously introduced; and

WHEREAS, blind and visually impaired veterans utilize assistive technology to accomplish tasks in manual skills, living skills, orientation mobility, computing and basic quality-of-life needs; and

WHEREAS, any individual within Blind Rehabilitation Service that either provides training or assesses visually impaired veterans must be knowledgeable on the capabilities of such devices; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, urges that the VA Blind Rehabilitation Service ensure that all personnel involved with the assessment and training of blind and visually impaired veterans receive regular training in the form of continuing education credits or achieve independent certification on technological solutions and adaptive aids.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 009
URGE THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO PROVIDE
SERVICE-CONNECTED VETERANS MEANINGFUL ACCESS
TO PERSONAL HEALTH INFORMATION

WHEREAS, America's veterans have earned and deserve high-quality, comprehensive and veteran-focused health care designed to meet their unique circumstances and needs; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care system was established to provide for the needs of wounded, injured and ill war veterans, and is authorized by Congress to provide a full continuum of care, including extensive preventive programs and comprehensive primary, acute and rehabilitative care including pharmaceutical, mental health and readjustment counseling services; and

WHEREAS, VA is estimated to spend at least \$16 billion from fiscal year 2018 to fiscal 2028 to replace the legacy Veterans Health Information Systems and Technology Architecture (VistA) Electronic Health Record (EHR) system with a commercial EHR system similar to the Department of Defense's (DOD's) MHS GENESIS system to address in large part the need to streamline interoperability between VA, DOD and non-VA providers; and

WHEREAS, in providing veterans a full continuum of high quality care, electronic health records promise our nation's ill and injured veterans more patient-centered care through clinical research, precision medicine, assuring quality such as timely access and coordination of such care, and public health surveillance; and

WHEREAS, an up-to-date electronic health record tethered to VA's modernized EHR system would encourage patients to be more engaged in their care by providing access to their health information; and

WHEREAS, health information should be presented in a meaningful way to enable veterans to be knowledgeable participants in care planning, and be "consumer friendly," such as including a module for veterans to schedule and monitor appointments and communications with VA and in-network providers, a single easy-to-read care plan to track the veteran's progress, having a simple method to communicate with their clinical team, and ensuring service coordination when transitioning across VA's integrated network of care settings with DOD, other federal partners and academic affiliates, and other high-quality community providers; and

WHEREAS, veterans and their family caregivers possess a body of knowledge about the veterans that their VA clinical team do not have, and access to their longitudinal electronic health record can drive better patient decisions, which in turn will improve health outcomes and lead to a higher quality of life; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, believes the benefits of electronic health records should be extended to provide a user-friendly electronic version of service-connected veterans' health information to empower them and their family caregivers to be active care participants.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 010
ENCOURAGE THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
TO SUBMIT CANDIDATES FOR THE JESSE BROWN
MEMORIAL YOUTH SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

WHEREAS, DAV created the Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship Program as a means to recruit young volunteers and to recognize the efforts of America's young volunteers who serve disabled veterans in Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities and the local community; and

WHEREAS, the scholarship program will award a total of \$110,000 in 2022 to 10 deserving youth volunteers in the form of a first place \$30,000 scholarship; a second-place \$20,000 scholarship; a \$15,000 third-place scholarship, a \$10,000 fourth-place scholarship, two \$7,500 fifth-place scholarships and four \$5,000 scholarships; and

WHEREAS, at the beginning of each calendar year, DAV solicits every VA Voluntary Service program manager to nominate one deserving youth volunteer from their facility in order to be considered for one of the scholarships, but with little response; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, strongly encourages each Voluntary Service program manager at every VA medical facility to submit the name of a deserving youth volunteer to be considered for one of the scholarships in appreciation of their dedication to serving America's veterans through their voluntary service efforts.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 011
SUPPORT A ROBUST COMPREHENSIVE REHABILITATIVE AND RESEARCH
PROGRAM FOR VETERANS WITH TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY

WHEREAS, traumatic brain injury (TBI) has been called the signature wound of veterans serving in Afghanistan and Iraq; and

WHEREAS, since 2000, 380,000 service members have been diagnosed with traumatic or acquired brain injury and brain injuries accounted for 22% of all combat injuries in recent deployments (compared to 12% in Vietnam); and

WHEREAS, veterans struggling with the chronic effects of combat injuries, falls, vehicular accidents and other trauma and illness leading to chronic brain injury that, in the most severe cases, will require a lifetime of services including extensive rehabilitation and lifelong personal and clinical support, including neurological, medical and psychiatric services, and physical, psycho-social, occupational and vocational therapies; and

WHEREAS, blast injuries were responsible for only a small portion of traumatic brain injury among post-9/11 veterans and service members, and despite significant drawdowns in those returning from deployment, workload in the polytrauma rehabilitation systems of care is projected to grow as veterans and service members continue to be exposed to falls, vehicular accidents and other acquired brain injuries that result in lasting brain damage and that the longer term rehabilitative needs of veterans continue; and

WHEREAS, VA has not yet developed the programs to meet the full spectrum of longer term needs to fill programmatic gaps VA acknowledges in neurobehavioral rehabilitation and community reintegration or to provide assisted living or other supported housing arrangements for veterans with moderate to severe traumatic brain injuries; and

WHEREAS, VA must also maintain programs to identify veterans with milder forms of TBI may experience a variety of symptoms, including headaches, irritability, sleep disorders, memory problems and depression; and

WHEREAS, research demonstrates that even mild TBI may have long-term mental health and medical consequences including a higher risk of developing dementia, and that symptoms are often co-morbid with post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and post-traumatic visual syndrome that can further confound diagnosis and treatment; and

WHEREAS, generations of veterans from earlier wars and conflicts may have suffered TBI, but this injury went unrecognized or was treated as mental illness; and

WHEREAS, milder forms of TBI may not be detected immediately, and the Department of Defense (DOD) and VA have recently released a suite of cognitive rehabilitation products for veterans and service members who sustain mild-to-moderate TBI, and have lingering cognitive impairment; and

WHEREAS, VA maintains active research collaborations with the National Institutes of Health, the National Institutes of Disability Rehabilitation Research “model centers” and the Defense Centers of Excellence in Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury and is an acknowledged world leader in research into TBI; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports permanent authorization for the TBI assisted living pilot project that has been supporting the neurobehavioral and community reintegration needs of veterans with moderate to severe brain injuries for the past decade; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV urges Congress to support permanent supported housing arrangements with specialized neurobehavioral rehabilitation for veterans with service-connected moderate to severe traumatic brain injuries; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV calls on VA to expand the universal screening it now provides to post-9/11 veterans to all generations of veterans and maintain resources within its polytrauma system of care to ensure their access to appropriate rehabilitation; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV urges that VA and DOD continue to engage in TBI studies or research and that such research includes older veterans of past military conflicts who may have suffered similar injuries that went undetected, undiagnosed and untreated.

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RESOLUTION NO. 015 SUPPORT ENHANCED MEDICAL SERVICES AND BENEFITS FOR WOMEN VETERANS

WHEREAS, the number of women serving in our military and veterans population continues to grow with women now comprising 10% of all veterans and 16% of our active duty service members; and

WHEREAS, women are now included in virtually all military occupations, including combat roles that expose them to the same injuries as their male peers; and

WHEREAS, the number of women veterans using Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care has doubled in the last decade, and women of recent service eras are younger, more likely to have service-connected conditions and are more reliant upon VA health care; and

WHEREAS, 42% of women veteran users of VA care are under the age of 45 and therefore within their child-bearing years, and their gender-specific needs often represent challenges to the current model and delivery of VA health care, which has traditionally focused on men; and

WHEREAS, significant numbers of women veterans, including those returning from current military deployments, are the primary or sole providers of dependent children, which can limit their ability to access services in inpatient, intensive outpatient or residential settings that have traditionally been available to address post-deployment mental health readjustment needs; and

WHEREAS, a significant number of women report military sexual trauma and domestic violence and need specialized mental health services from VA; and

WHEREAS, VA has too few proficient, knowledgeable health care providers with expertise in women’s health; and many facilities fail to adequately address environment of care standards that assure the safety, privacy and dignity of women patients; and

WHEREAS, many non-VA health providers in VA’s community care network, who fill gaps in critical gender-specific services for women veterans, including mammography, maternity care, and gynecology lack the training requirements to assure they are meeting VA quality and care standards and waiting times; and

WHEREAS, VA must improve outreach and services to meet the unique needs of women veterans who were catastrophically wounded, suffering amputations, blindness, spinal cord injury, post-traumatic stress, traumatic brain injury, or who were sexually assaulted; and

WHEREAS, DAV’s 2014 report, Women Veterans, The Long Journey Home found that despite a generous array of benefits to assist veterans with transition and readjustment following military service, serious gaps are evident for women in every aspect of existing federal programs; and

WHEREAS, DAV’s 2018 report, Women Veterans: The Journey Ahead found that the VA system still struggles to provide equitable access to women veterans which requires adapting existing programs and facilities to meet their distinct needs in a culture that honors women’s service and sacrifices, and assures that they feel safe and welcome; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, seeks to ensure the provision of health care services and specialized programs, inclusive of gender-specific services, by VA to eligible women veterans are provided to the same

degree and extent that services are provided to eligible male veterans, inclusive of counseling and/or psychological services incident to combat exposure or sexual trauma; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we urge VA to strictly adhere to stated policies regarding privacy and safety issues relating to the treatment of women veterans and to proactively conduct research and health studies as appropriate; periodically review, adjust and improve its women's health programs; and seek innovative methods to address barriers to care, thereby better ensuring women veterans receive the quality treatment and specialized services they so rightly deserve.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 016
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO GRANT THE PRESIDENT, VICE PRESIDENT
AND MEMBERS OF CONGRESS THE PRIVILEGE TO USE THE VETERANS
HEALTH CARE SYSTEM AND TO RECEIVE THEIR CARE EXCLUSIVELY
FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

WHEREAS, even though veterans' health care is funded through an advance appropriation, it is still at the discretion of Congress to provide the level of funding necessary for the veterans' health care system to meet the medical care needs of ill and injured veterans; and

WHEREAS, despite the increases in funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care system over the past decade, veterans often have difficulty accessing the care they need in a timely manner; and

WHEREAS, VA is recognized as the best health care system in the United States, and for providing high-quality health care services; and

WHEREAS, by using the VA health care system, the President, Vice President and members of Congress would be in a better position to judge the resource needs of VA to enable it to provide timely, high-quality health care to our nation's veterans; and

WHEREAS, similar to the members of the military, the President, Vice President and most members of Congress are required to spend a significant amount of time away from their homes, families and friends while Congress is in session; and

WHEREAS, because of the patriotism, devotion and sacrifices of our President, Vice President and members of Congress, ours is the most free nation on earth, where our citizens enjoy unequalled rights, privileges and prosperity; and

WHEREAS, the President, Vice President and members of Congress should therefore be granted the privilege of using the VA health care system for their health care needs; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports legislation to grant the President, Vice President and members of Congress the privilege to use the veterans' health care system and to receive their care exclusively from the VA.

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RESOLUTION NO. 017
SUPPORT STATE VETERANS HOME PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the State Veterans Home program is a partnership between the federal government and the states to provide long-term care for aging, ill and disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, there are 158 State Veterans Homes in all 50 states and in Puerto Rico, which provide skilled nursing care, domiciliary care and adult day health care daily to almost 30,000 veterans and their dependents; and

WHEREAS, State Veterans Homes provide more than 50% of VA-supported skilled nursing beds for veterans while receiving only 25% of VA's budget for skilled nursing care; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides a per diem payment that is authorized to cover up to 50% of the cost of care for skilled nursing care provided to veterans with service-connected disabilities rated 60% or lower and pays the full cost of skilled nursing care for veterans with 70% or higher service-connected disabilities or who require nursing home care for service-connected disabilities; and

WHEREAS, VA also provides lower per diem payments for eligible veterans receiving domiciliary care and adult day health care (ADHC) in State Veterans Homes; and

WHEREAS, some State Veterans Homes also provide specialized care for veterans with severe mental health, behavioral and memory issues; and

WHEREAS, under the State Home Construction Grant Program the federal government provides grants to cover up to 65% of the cost to construct, expand, rehabilitate, or repair a State Veterans Home, with states required to match a minimum of 35% of the cost; and

WHEREAS, lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the advantages of modern nursing home designs that provide veterans with single rooms in smaller communal facilities, which can improve safety during health emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as improve their quality of life through greater social interaction; and

WHEREAS, the costs to construct and operate more modern designs of State Veterans Homes are higher than for traditionally designed nursing homes; and

WHEREAS, a fiscal year 2019 regulation (RIN 2900-AO88) changed the rules and requirements for operating domiciliary care and ADHC programs, which increased the cost of these programs without providing commensurate increases from VA per diem support; and

WHEREAS, recognizing the growing number and needs of elderly veterans, including those with mental health, behavioral and memory issues, the State Veterans Home program must continue to be a major partner with the VA in meeting the long-term care needs of aging veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, calls on Congress and VA to provide sufficient funding to support State Veterans Homes, including adequate per diem payments for skilled nursing care, domiciliary care and adult day health care, which properly support different levels of care within each program; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports sufficient funding for the State Home Construction Grant Program, to include adequate funding to support renovations of existing and construction of new State Veterans Homes using more modern designs, AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Congress and VA should explore additional innovative programs to partner with State Veterans Homes to address the lack of options for aging veterans with severe mental health, behavioral and memory issues.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 018
PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE DENTAL CARE TO ALL
SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABLED VETERANS WITHIN THE
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

WHEREAS, DAV recognizes that oral health is integral to the general health and well-being of a patient and is part of comprehensive health care; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care system is mandated under section 1712, title 38, United States Code, to provide outpatient dental services to veterans rated 100% service connected, to veterans who were held prisoner-of-war or to those who have sustained dental trauma in performance of military service; and

WHEREAS, irrespective of service-connected disability, section 1701(9), title 38, United States Code, defines “preventive health services” as a broad collection of VA health services that improve, protect and sustain the general health and well-being of veterans enrolled in VA health care, to include “such other health care services as the Secretary may determine to be necessary to provide effective and economical preventive health care;” and

WHEREAS, according to the 2000 report by the Surgeon General of the United States, Oral Health in America, individuals who are medically compromised or who have disabilities are at greater risk for oral diseases, and, in turn, oral diseases further jeopardize their health, and that oral diseases are progressive, cumulative and become more complex over time, and can affect economic productivity and compromise the ability to work, and often significantly diminish the quality of life; and

WHEREAS, VA maintains oral and dental programs within its health care system; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports legislation to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide outpatient dental care to all enrolled service-connected disabled veterans.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 019
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO ELIMINATE OR REDUCE DEPARTMENT OF
VETERANS AFFAIRS AND DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE HEALTH CARE
CO-PAYMENTS FOR SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABLED VETERANS

WHEREAS, through dedicated service and sacrifice to a grateful nation, service-disabled veterans have earned the right to certain benefits; and

WHEREAS, as the beneficiaries of veterans' service and sacrifice, Americans want our government to fully honor our moral obligation to care for veterans and generously provide them benefits and health care entirely without charge; and

WHEREAS, premiums, health care cost sharing and deductibles are a feature of health care systems in which some costs are shared by the insured and the insurer in a contractual relationship; and

WHEREAS, studies have found that cost sharing reduces the use of care and can have detrimental health effects for the sickest and poorest participating patients; and

WHEREAS, subsequent research continues to determine adverse effects of cost sharing on health outcomes particularly for patients with chronic disabilities; and

WHEREAS, asking veterans to pay for part of the benefits a grateful nation provides for them is fundamentally contrary to the spirit and principles underlying the provision of benefits to veterans; and

WHEREAS, co-payments were initially imposed upon veterans using the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care system under urgent circumstances and as a temporary necessity to contribute to reduction of the federal budget deficit; and

WHEREAS, cost sharing is considered as a means of generating revenues to replace Congressionally appropriated funding for the Department of Defense (DOD) and VA health care systems; and

WHEREAS, to improve its ability to generate revenue on the backs of service-connected disabled veterans, some continue to propose policies to eliminate the current practice of first applying third-party payments to offset veterans copayment debts; and

WHEREAS, Congress has forgotten or abandoned the traditional benevolent philosophy of providing free benefits to veterans as repayment for the unusual rigors, including sustaining grave injuries that require a lifetime of care, they underwent for the good of our country; and

WHEREAS, based on practices in the private sector, the Secretaries of Veterans Affairs and Defense, in the recent past, moved to dramatically impose fees and increase premiums and co-payments, as if operating a commercial enterprise; and

WHEREAS, as a continuing cost of national defense and as our nation's foremost moral obligation, benefits for service-connected disabled veterans must remain a first priority of our government; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, calls for legislation to eliminate or reduce VA and DOD health care out-of-pocket costs for service-connected disabled veterans.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 020
ENSURE SUFFICIENT ACCESS TO CARE TO MEET THE HEALTH
NEEDS OF VETERANS RESIDING IN RURAL OR REMOTE AREAS

WHEREAS, 44% of active-duty service members identify rural or highly rural areas as their home of record and 33% of all veterans enrolled in the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) live in rural areas; and

WHEREAS, many rural areas are designated by the Health Resource Services Administration as Health Professional Shortage Areas for primary care, mental health and dental care or for any combination of these practice areas therein; and

WHEREAS, 56% of all rural veterans are enrolled in VHA, and rural veterans are older (57% of all enrolled rural veterans are elderly), poorer (52% are low income), sicker and less likely to have internet access (36% have no internet); and

WHEREAS, about half of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) community-based outpatient clinics are sited in rural areas, VA rural health and enterprise-wide initiatives have impacted close to a million veterans, VHA telehealth initiatives have served 84,500 enrolled veterans, the VA's Office of Rural Health has funded 450 projects in rural areas, including broadband and transportation programs, and trained 1,400 medical students in rural health; and

WHEREAS, VA's Office of Rural Health has identified strategies for improving health care for rural veterans including identifying more opportunities to collaborate with government agencies such as the Health Services Research Administration and the Indian Health Service; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 115-182, the VA MISSION Act of 2018, includes access standards that will enable many rural veterans to use care from community partners which may not have the veteran-specific expertise to which VHA patients are accustomed; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31-August 3, 2021, fully supports the right of rural veterans to be served by VA to the maximum extent practicable, but urges VA to develop training materials and conduct training and outreach to its community and federal partners in rural areas to ensure that these providers have understanding of veteran-specific exposures, risks, and evidence-based practices to best address their needs; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that VA continue to overcome barriers to care for rural veterans by continuing to improve access to telehealth initiatives and assisting veterans with transportation and travel.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 021 ENHANCE THE CIVILIAN HEALTH AND MEDICAL PROGRAM OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS BENEFITS AND SERVICES

WHEREAS, the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), known as CHAMPVA, is a health benefits program in which the VA shares the cost of certain health services with eligible beneficiaries; and

WHEREAS, eligible beneficiaries include: the spouse or child of a veteran who VA rated 100% permanently and totally disabled for a service-connected disability; the surviving spouse or child of a veteran who died from a VA-rated service-connected disability, or who, at the time of death, was rated 100% permanently and totally disabled; the surviving spouse or child of a military service member who died on active duty; and the primary caregiver of a veteran seriously injured during military service on or after September 11, 2001; and

WHEREAS, VA medical centers are authorized to provide services to CHAMPVA beneficiaries under the CHAMPVA In House Treatment Initiative (CITI) program at no cost to the beneficiary but are provided at the discretion of the VA medical center director and available only on a space-available basis, after the needs of veterans are met; and

WHEREAS, if the local VA medical facility does not participate in the CITI program, the beneficiary must seek care in the private sector and the CHAMPVA beneficiary is responsible for an annual \$50 deductible for medical services rendered and 25% of reasonable and customary charges for patient care and pharmaceuticals, up to \$3,000 each year; and

WHEREAS, beneficiaries who are chronically ill can incur out-of-pocket medical care costs up to \$3,000 per year and such costs can cause undue financial burden on a severely disabled veteran and family members; and

WHEREAS, numerous health care services such as chiropractic services, routine eye examinations, hearing aids, most dental benefits, and institutional and home-based long-term services and supports are not routinely covered under CHAMPVA; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31-August 3, 2021, supports legislation to make the CHAMPVA program more comprehensive, including dental and vision care, institutional and home-based long-term care, and eliminate the co-payments beneficiaries are required to pay out of pocket and lower the out-of-pocket costs for beneficiaries who do not live near a VA medical facility that participates in the CITI health care program; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports the CITI program and urges VA medical center directors to make that program available to CHAMPVA beneficiaries when resources are available.

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RESOLUTION NO. 022 ENHANCE LONG-TERM SERVICES AND SUPPORTS FOR SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABLED VETERANS

WHEREAS, historically the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) occupied a leadership position in fostering many long-term services and supports (LTSS) programs now routinely available in the private sector, founded the medical specialty of geriatrics in conjunction with affiliated schools of medicine, and

led the nation in biomedical research on aging, geropsychiatry and chronic illnesses prevalent in the veteran population; and

WHEREAS, today tens of thousands of service-connected veterans of all ages depend on the VA to meet their health care needs in post-acute and LTSS settings; and

WHEREAS, there is also a subset of service-connected veterans with chronic and terminal illnesses who need LTSS and will need institutional placements; and

WHEREAS, the number of veterans seeking LTSS has increased annually, and VA estimates this trend to continue into the future; and

WHEREAS, as our nation's veteran population ages, VA will face an ever-increasing demand for LTSS of all kinds; and

WHEREAS, in 1999, the Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits Act, Public Law 106–117, significantly enhanced VA's non-institutional LTSS and required such services be provided to any veteran for a service-connected disability and to any veteran who is service connected 50% or greater disabling, yet VA is only required to provide institutional LTSS to any veteran for a service-connected disability and to any veteran who is service connected 70% or greater; and

WHEREAS, lack of centralized planning upon which to base standardized policy leave VA facilities to determine locally their own mix of institutional and non-institutional approaches in providing LTSS, thereby relegating LTSS to a "second tier" of health care service and expectations within the VA system; and

WHEREAS, there is a large and glaring gap in VA's LTSS program with statutory authority prohibiting the Department from paying for veterans to reside in community residential care facilities such as assisted living and family group homes, despite referring thousands of veterans to and inspecting facilities nationwide; and

WHEREAS, the success of noninstitutional and home-based LTSS is critically dependent on the ability of veterans' caregivers, whether they be family or friends, to assist in their care; and

WHEREAS, VA home and community-based programs are not uniformly available in all VA health care facilities resulting in consistent waitlist of veterans in need of such care; and

WHEREAS, VA has not optimized its relationship with State Veterans Homes to ensure veterans in need of institutional and alternative forms of LTSS may avail themselves of state home facilities to consider all options for their provision; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports legislation to improve the VA's program of long-term services and supports for service-connected disabled veterans irrespective of their disability ratings; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV urges VA to ensure each VA medical facility is able to provide service-connected disabled veterans timely access to both institutional and non-institutional long-term services and supports.

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RESOLUTION NO. 023

SUPPORT EQUITY IN ACCESS TO SERVICES AND BENEFITS FOR RACIAL AND ETHNIC MINORITY SERVICE-CONNECTED VETERANS

WHEREAS, veterans from minority or ethnic backgrounds are expected to comprise an increasingly large proportion of the veterans population growing from 23.5% in 2014 to 36% by 2043; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) has been unable to provide data to demonstrate equity of access to benefits and services among racial and ethnic veterans and has not implemented repeated recommendations by the Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans to make such data available; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) has identified higher rates of service connection and higher utilization of mental health and substance use disorder services among minority veterans, more research is needed to understand disparate patterns of diagnosed condition rates between whites and minority veterans; and

WHEREAS, the VHA has been successful in reducing disparities in some care outcomes, it finds that disparities that are often the result of social and behavioral determinants of health, including financial and nonfinancial barriers to care, remain and often result in adverse health outcomes; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, urges the VBA to routinely report data on numbers of applications, utilization and completion of programs for veterans by racial and ethnic background and gender; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we urge VA to continue identifying and addressing social and behavioral determinants that may affect health outcomes in addition to barriers to health care for all service-connected veterans by minority and ethnic groups.

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RESOLUTION NO. 024
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO INCLUDE 1151 PROTECTIONS UNDER TITLE
38, UNITED STATES CDODE, FOR VETERANS USING DEPARTMENT OF
VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMUNITY CARE SERVICES

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is the primary care provider for millions of the nation's wartime and disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, veterans, when receiving services at a VA medical facility or from a VA physician, are provided recourse when an additional disability or death is proximately due to or caused by such care is deemed to be negligent or careless; and

WHEREAS, compensation can be awarded if an additional disability or death of a veteran was caused by a VA employee or facility's carelessness or negligence when providing hospital care, medical or surgical treatment, or examination; and

WHEREAS, veterans have increasing options to receive care in their local communities paid for by VA including from providers who participate in the VA's community care network established under Public Law 115-182, the VA MISSION Act of 2018; and

WHEREAS, it is expected that the quality of care provided by the contracted non-VA medical facility or contracted non-VA physician would be as good or better than the care provided by the VA; and

WHEREAS, in the unfortunate circumstance that an additional disability or death occurs due to the carelessness, negligence, lack of proper skill or error of medical judgment of a community care provider's services, paid for by VA, the veteran or his or her family would not have similar recourse as veterans receiving care within the VA under title 38, section 1151 of United States Code; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports legislation that would afford veterans the same protection under title 38 section 1151 of United States Code, if care rendered by a VA community care network provider (paid for by VA), results in an additional disability or death of the veteran due to carelessness, negligence, lack of proper skill or error of medical judgment of said community care provider.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 025
ENSURE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS CLINICAL
APPEALS PROCESS PROTECTS VETERANS

WHEREAS, through service to their nation in which they made extraordinary sacrifices and contributions, service-disabled veterans have earned and deserve high quality, comprehensive and veteran-focused health care designed to meet their unique circumstances and needs; and

WHEREAS, all federal providers and most health insurers have processes to ensure that beneficiaries have enforceable protections that allow them to obtain medically necessary care within their health benefits package; and

WHEREAS, these processes for patient grievances and central projections to receive care and services are imperative, particularly for health care systems such as the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA), which use capitated payment models for which there are incentives to conserve resources; and

WHEREAS, the VA MISSION Act (Public Law 115-182) greatly expanded VA's purchased community care program making more than 40% of veterans enrolled in the VA health care system eligible for VA community care; and

WHEREAS, VA's current clinical appeals process remains poorly understood, with many veterans unsure of how to resolve clinical disagreements and disputes; and

WHEREAS, continuity of care or services during the clinical appeals process is not guaranteed under the current process; and

WHEREAS, veterans have no right to external, expedited, or independent review, or to timely and fair hearings, including before a multidisciplinary clinical team, an administrative law judge or federal district court in VA's current clinical appeals, making the process less comprehensive and fair than appeals processes private health insurers and other federal payers are required to provide; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, calls on Congress to enact legislation requiring a standardized, fair and

impartial process to address veterans clinical disagreements, grievances and disputes to include statutory protections that are at least comparable to those afforded patients under other federal and federally supported programs; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV urges VA to revise the current clinical appeal process, with input from service-connected disabled veterans and other stakeholders, to one that is equitable and transparent, and train appropriate staff to execute the new policy in a standardized manner.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 026

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO AUTHORIZE SCHOLARSHIPS FOR NEW MENTAL HEALTH PRACTITIONERS IN EXCHANGE FOR COMMITMENTS TO SERVE VETERANS IN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FACILITIES

WHEREAS, the nation faces a looming shortage of practitioners in mental health, including physicians, nurse practitioners, psychologists, social workers, mental health therapists and other counselors; and

WHEREAS, the needs of the newest generation of war veterans suffering the effects of post-traumatic stress disorder and other mental health challenges, combined with the continuing mental health needs of older generations of veterans, may overwhelm the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA's) capacity to properly treat them with qualified providers so that they can recover from these illnesses; and

WHEREAS, after serving our nation, veterans should not see their health care needs neglected by the VA because VA lacks the capacity to serve them; and

WHEREAS, recent public laws have authorized VA to expand the types and numbers of mental health and other services VA must make available to veterans, their caregivers, dependents and survivors; and

WHEREAS, an existing scholarship program under chapter 76, title 38, United States Code, targeted to physicians, nurses and a variety of other health professions has been highly successful in recruiting new practitioners to VA careers and has expanded and improved care to wounded, injured and ill veterans; and

WHEREAS, hundreds of VA community-based outpatient clinics and Readjustment Counseling Service Vet Centers do not directly participate in the existing scholarship program as an aid to their local recruitment and employment efforts; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports legislation or administrative policy changes in the existing scholarship program to make its benefits available more broadly within both the community-based outpatient clinics and Readjustment Counseling Service Vet Centers of the Department so that these facilities will be able to adequately meet the needs of veterans of all generations who need mental health services and psychological counseling to aid in their recoveries.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 027

SUPPORT THE RIGHTS AND BENEFITS EARNED BY SERVICE-CONNECTED NATIVE AMERICAN AND ALASKA NATIVE VETERANS

WHEREAS, a higher percentage of Native Americans have served in the armed forces than any other racial or ethnic group, and many return to their communities in Indian Country upon discharge from the military; and

WHEREAS, the sovereign lands in Indian country are often hundreds of miles from VA facilities, where poverty, lack of transportation and poor roads put great hardships on Native American veterans who need and have earned Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care and other benefits; and

WHEREAS, in evaluating the needs of federally recognized Native American and Alaska Native veterans, especially those living on tribal lands, the VA Office of Tribal Government Relations has reported great travel distances without safe and accessible transportation to VA health care services, affordable and available housing, and a lack of local employment opportunity as pressing needs; and

WHEREAS, many Native American veterans who have completed military deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan and who may be challenged by readjustment and mental health disorders are not afforded responsive medical attention due to insufficient mental health service availability from Indian Health Service or Tribal Health Programs; and

WHEREAS, many VA clinical care providers lack knowledge and understanding of Native American and Alaska Native cultures, including traditional healing and ways of managing illness and disability that

are culturally and religiously appropriate, causing additional barriers to care for Native American and Alaska Native veterans; and

WHEREAS, in 2003 and renewed in 2010, VA executed with the Indian Health Service (IHS) of the Department of Health and Human Services, Memoranda of Understanding to coordinate and provide health care services, including mental health services, to Native American and Alaska Native veterans; and

WHEREAS, nearly a decade after its approval in 2010, the VA and IHS have yet to comprehensively implement the Memorandum of Understanding; and

WHEREAS, due to lack of implementation, tribal governments do not have broad knowledge of the existence of, or commitments in, the Memorandum of Understanding, and therefore have not generally disseminated relevant information to Native American and Alaska Native veterans about their VA and IHS rights and benefits under the agreement; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, urges the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and Secretary of Health and Human Services to ensure the Memorandum of Understanding between the VA and the IHS is fully implemented, and that direct providers of services, as well as their leaderships in both agencies, be held accountable to faithfully carry out the agreement so that service-connected Native American and Alaska Native veterans, especially those living on tribal lands, can receive the full benefits and services they have earned and deserve.

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RESOLUTION NO. 028 **SUPPORT THE PROVISION OF COMPREHENSIVE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE SERVICES TO ENROLLED VETERANS**

WHEREAS, it is the policy of DAV that veterans should be afforded quality and timely health care services by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) because of their honorable service to our nation; and

WHEREAS, care provided to veterans in the community when VA care is inaccessible should be done through responsive integrated networks that deliver high value quality care; and

WHEREAS, it is the conviction of DAV that quality health care for veterans is achieved when health care providers are given the freedom and resources to provide the most effective and evidence-based care available; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans Health Administration plays a critical role in the delivery of health care services to our nation's sick and disabled veterans and is the largest direct federal provider of health care services, the largest clinical training ground for the health professions and a leader in medical research; and

WHEREAS, although the veterans' health care system is provided advance appropriations for medical care, it is still at the discretion of Congress to provide a sufficient level of funding; and

WHEREAS, due to consistently inadequate appropriations levels, VA has been forced at times to restrict, ration and deny access to health care implicitly promised in connection with veterans' military service; and

WHEREAS, the VA health care system must be provided sufficient funding to ensure, at a minimum, the following standards are met:

- Promote and ensure health care quality and value, and protect veterans' safety in the health care system;
- Guarantee access to a full continuum of care, from preventive through hospice services, including complementary and integrative care such as yoga, massage, acupuncture, peer support, chiropractic and other nontraditional therapies;
- Receive adequate funding through appropriations for care of all enrolled veterans;
- Fairly and equitably distribute resources to treat the greatest number of veterans requiring health care;
- Ensure barriers to care for veterans in ethnic, racial and sexual minority groups are addressed, including staff expertise in addressing these groups' needs with sensitivity;
- Furnish quality primary care and gender-specific services necessary to meet the needs of a growing population of women veterans;
- Provide all supplies, prosthetic devices and medications, including over-the-counter medication, necessary for the proper treatment of service-connected disabled veterans;

- Preserve VA's mission and role as a provider of specialized services in areas such as blindness, burns, amputation, traumatic brain injury, spinal cord injury and dysfunction, mental illness and long-term care;
- Maintain the integrity of an independent VA health care delivery system as representing the primary responsible entity for the delivery of health care services to enrolled veterans;
- Modernize its human resources management system to enable VA to compete for, recruit and retain the types and quality of VA employees needed to provide comprehensive health care services to sick and disabled veterans;
- Maintain a strong and veteran-focused research program; and
- Establish and sustain effective telehealth programs as an aid to access to VA health care, particularly for rural and remote populations; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports legislation that embodies the concepts and principles enumerated above and establishes certainty to clearly defined VA health care services for enrolled veterans.

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**RESOLUTION NO. 029
OPPOSE ANY RESTRICTION ON ELIGIBILITY OF MILITARY MEDICALLY
RETIRED VETERANS TO RECEIVE CARE IN DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
OR DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE SYSTEMS**

WHEREAS, military medically retired veterans were promised and earned lifetime health care through the Department of Defense (DOD) for completion of the required period of military service; and

WHEREAS, as veterans, they are separately entitled to the same health care provided to eligible veterans generally through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); and

WHEREAS, one of the two health care systems may offer advantages that the other does not offer; and

WHEREAS, a veteran's use of this dual entitlement to receive the best services of both systems does not constitute unnecessary duplicate use of health care services or duplication of costs to the government; and

WHEREAS, entitlement to care under one system is not itself justification to end separate entitlement to care through the other system; and

WHEREAS, by virtue of their service and sacrifices, veterans have earned special benefits that are separate and in addition to benefits the government provides to other citizens; and

WHEREAS, enrollment in VA or DOD health care, especially in the case of service-connected disabled veterans, should never become a bar or obstacle to the receipt of benefits from either of these health care systems; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, opposes any action to restrict health care eligibility for military medically retired veterans in either the DOD or the VA health care systems.

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**RESOLUTION NO. 030
SUPPORT A CONSISTENT BENEFIT FOR SERVICE AND GUIDE
DOGS PRESCRIBED BY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
PROVIDERS AND EXAMINE THE BENEFITS OF TRAINING
SERVICE DOGS FOR DISABLED VETERANS**

WHEREAS, trained guide dogs and other trained service dogs can have a significant role in restoring or maintaining functionality and promoting maximal independence of individuals with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, some veterans with disabilities such as blindness, deafness, mental illness, and epilepsy and other seizure disorders are specifically aided by service and guide dogs prescribed for these purposes for persons with such disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) prescribes the use of guide and service dogs to veterans enrolled in VA health care when therapeutically indicated to perform specific tasks to allow veterans to restore or maintain function or maximize independence; and

WHEREAS, VA provides a veterinary benefit for all prescribed service dogs meeting the standards of certain accredited training organizations; and

WHEREAS, VA has recently completed a multi-site, multi-year study of the use of service dogs for veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder compared to those with emotional support dogs which found that veterans paired with service dogs had more significant reductions in the severity of symptomology and suicidal behavior and ideation; and

WHEREAS, VA is experimenting with dog training programs led by veterans for veterans, to determine if the training of service dogs itself is a therapeutic method to reduce symptoms in veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, urges VA to continue research to determine the most efficacious use of service dogs for defined populations, and, in particular, for veterans with mental health conditions, and to broadly publish the results of that research; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that VA determine any additional benefit for veterans with mental health issues involved in training service dogs for themselves or other veterans with disabilities; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that VA ensure that any veteran for whom a service dog is ordered receive the dog at no cost, including reimbursement for any follow-up training deemed appropriate, and a veterinary benefit for the life of that service dog.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 055 SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO CHANGE ELIGIBILITY FOR COMMUNITY NURSING HOME PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Notice 2020-32 establishes eligibility requirements and policy for veterans access to community nursing home care; and

WHEREAS, VA is required to furnish necessary nursing home care, when clinically indicated, to any veteran in need of nursing home care for a service-connected (SC) disability and any veteran in need of nursing home care who has a single or combined SC disability rating of 70% or greater. This includes a veteran with a single disability rated 60% but who has a total disability rating based on individual unemployability; and

WHEREAS, VHA Notice 2020-32 does not consider common etiology of disabilities in determining a veterans eligibility for community nursing home care; and

WHEREAS, common etiology is defined as disabilities that are the result of a single event or accident, i.e., multiple injuries due to an explosion or vehicle accident; and

WHEREAS, the lack of consideration of the common etiology factor may prevent a veteran from qualifying for community nursing home care; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports legislation to clarify that a veteran with multiple disabilities resulting from a single event or accident would be eligible for community nursing home care if those disabilities significantly impair the veteran's ability to perform activities of daily or independent living.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 061 SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO EXTEND ELIGIBILITY OF A QUALIFYING VETERAN'S ADULT CHILD FOR THE CIVILIAN HEALTH AND MEDICAL PROGRAM OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

WHEREAS, dependent children of certain veterans are provided medical care under the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA); and

WHEREAS, a child of a veteran is eligible for CHAMPVA if the veteran is rated permanently and totally disabled due to a service-connected disability, was rated permanently and totally disabled due to a service-connected condition at the time of death, died of a service-connected disability or died on active duty, and the dependent is ineligible for Department of Defense TRICARE benefits, and

WHEREAS, the eligibility of a dependent child for CHAMPVA ends at the age of 18, unless that dependent is enrolled in an accredited school as a full-time student until the age of 23, or marries or is a stepchild who no longer lives in the household of the CHAMPVA sponsor; and

WHEREAS, current law requires private health plans and insurers to offer coverage to adult children of beneficiaries to age 26 regardless of the child's financial dependency, marital status, enrollment in school, residency or other factors; and

WHEREAS, children of severely disabled veterans and survivors of veterans who paid the ultimate sacrifice should not be penalized or denied the same rights and privileges as other citizens of a grateful nation enjoy; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports legislation to extend the eligibility of a qualifying veteran’s child for CHAMPVA coverage to age 26 under the same conditions of covered adult children of beneficiaries in private health plans.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 096
SUPPORT DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS RESEARCH
INTO THE MEDICAL EFFICACY OF CANNABIS FOR
SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABLED VETERANS

WHEREAS, the Controlled Substances Act of 1970 classifies cannabis as a Schedule I substance, determined to have a high potential for abuse and no accepted medical use, making illegal the possession and use of cannabis even under a medical nature; and

WHEREAS, across 36 states, the District of Columbia, and the territories of Guam and Puerto Rico, state medical marijuana laws vary greatly, but all recognize the therapeutic effect of cannabis and cannabinoids; and

WHEREAS, the growing accessibility of cannabis and acceptance of its use for medical purposes by states set against federal law have raised important issues including public health concerns; and

WHEREAS, the lack of any amalgamated knowledge of cannabis-related health effects has led to uncertainty about what, if any, are the harms or benefits from its use; and

WHEREAS, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine conducted a rigorous review of scientific research published since 1999 about what is known about the health impacts of cannabis and cannabis-derived products—such as marijuana and active chemical compounds known as cannabinoids—ranging from their therapeutic effects to their risks; and

WHEREAS, the study, published on January 12, 2017, considered more than 10,000 scientific abstracts, many of which did not have control study groups, to reach nearly 100 conclusions; and

WHEREAS, the study found evidence to support that patients who were treated with cannabis or cannabinoids were more likely to experience a significant reduction in pain symptoms; oral cannabinoids provided relief for multiple sclerosis-related muscle spasms; and there was conclusive evidence the use of certain oral cannabinoids was beneficial for patients with chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting; and

WHEREAS, the study suggests that cannabis use increases certain risks, including but not limited to, being involved in a motor vehicle accident, developing schizophrenia, other psychoses, and social anxiety disorders, developing cannabis use disorder; and

WHEREAS, this and other studies in their entirety are not conclusive, comprehensive clinical studies of cannabis, cannabis-derived products and their delivery systems are needed to prove medical efficacy for veterans who receive health care as provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports more comprehensive and scientifically rigorous research by the VA into the therapeutic benefits and risks of cannabis, cannabis-derived products as a possible treatment for service-connected disabled veterans.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 098
IMPROVE TIMELY REIMBURSEMENTS BY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS
AFFAIRS FOR PURCHASED CARE, PROTECT VETERANS FROM DEBT
COLLECTION AND ADVERSE CREDIT REPORTING FROM SUCH CARE

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is authorized to provide a full continuum of health care to all service-connected veterans enrolled in the VA health care system, including preventive, primary, acute, specialty and rehabilitative care as well as pharmaceutical, mental health and readjustment counseling services; and

WHEREAS, to ensure veterans are able to receive timely comprehensive care, Congress authorized numerous VA programs since the early 1920s to purchase care for veterans from non-VA community providers; and

WHEREAS, according to the Government Accountability Office, VA's use of purchased care programs has increased 82% since the access to care crisis in 2014; and

WHEREAS, veterans who are treated by non-VA community providers under any of VA's community care programs should not be under any financial obligation to defray the full costs of VA authorized care; and

WHEREAS, the VA MISSION Act (Public Law 115-182) amended most but not all of VA's community care programs and instituted standards for VA to promptly pay for care provided to veterans by community care providers; and

WHEREAS, in innumerable cases, service-connected veterans have been billed directly for care provided by community providers despite VA's obligation to pay in a timely fashion; and

WHEREAS, in some cases, veterans do not receive timely billing or copayment due notification for services rendered through VA or a network community care provider, for more than six months or a year, to include services for emergency care or transportation: and

WHEREAS, should service-connected veterans be without the means to rectify debt assigned by community providers when VA payment is deficient or delinquent, providers are referring such debt to debt collection agencies as well as reporting such debt to credit reporting agencies, adversely affecting these veterans' credit worthiness when in fact no justification supports such collection actions or credit reporting against veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, urges VA to improve its administrative practices to promptly pay non-VA community providers for care under all of VA's purchased care program; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV urges Congress to enact legislation requiring VA to reimburse or require non-VA community providers to forgive any veterans' copayments for community care, including emergency care or transportation, that are billed more than 180 days after services are rendered; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV urges Congress to enact legislation to properly protect veterans' credit ratings and require VA to protect veterans from collections actions against service-disabled veterans because of delinquent or delayed payment to non-VA community providers.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 100
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO IMPROVE AND PROVIDE
COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES FOR CAREGIVERS OF SEVERELY
WOUNDED, INJURED AND ILL VETERANS FROM ALL ERAS

WHEREAS, severely disabled veterans present great challenges to the Department of Defense (DOD) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for acute, rehabilitative and long-term care health needs; and

WHEREAS, immediate family members and dependents are involved in the care and rehabilitation of severely injured veterans and are responsible for performing complete clinical care once provided by medical professionals often with little to no relief while shouldering a great and lifelong burden as home and institutional caregivers and attendants, giving up or severely restricting their employment, future financial security, education and social interactions, and suffering severe financial and personal penalties as a consequence in order to care for a severely ill loved one; and

WHEREAS, in the absence of such caregivers, the burden of direct care would fall on DOD and VA facilities or other institutions, at significantly higher financial cost and a reduced quality of life for these veterans; and

WHEREAS, the United States government owes its highest obligation to those who are put in harm's way at the call of the nation, and become wounded, injured and ill as a consequence of that service; and

WHEREAS, in 2011 VA established two distinct and unequal caregiver assistance programs under Public Law 111–163 where eligibility is based primarily on whether the veteran is injured or ill rather than the needs of the veteran and caregiver; and

WHEREAS, following implementation of VA's caregiver support program, DAV commissioned a veterans' caregiver survey and report published in 2017, which confirmed that despite government services to support family caregivers of veterans, over 80% indicate they do not receive those services most important to them such as medical training, caregiver education, home health aide services, respite care and direct financial assistance; and

WHEREAS, 25% of family caregivers report their veteran would need to be placed into institutional care, such as a skilled nursing or assisted living facility now and another 50% in the future; and

WHEREAS, in 2017 and again in 2018, VA announced a suspension of adverse decisions when VA medical centers were found discharging veterans and their caregivers out of the comprehensive caregiver support program at alarming rates: and

WHEREAS, an internal review recommended better communications with veterans and their family caregivers, the need to improve internal processes and procedures, and conduct additional staff training; and

WHEREAS, in 2018, VA medical centers were again found discharging veterans and their caregivers out of the comprehensive caregiver support program and citing inconsistent application of eligibility requirements causing the Secretary to place a temporary moratorium on discharges and tier reductions; and

WHEREAS, the VA MISSION Act (Public Law 115–251) requires the expansion of eligibility for VA's comprehensive caregiver support program, in two phases, to all veterans severely injured before September 11, 2001; and

WHEREAS, in equity and fairness, caregivers of all severely disabled veterans should be recognized and afforded generous relief, assistance and care for the duration of the lives of veterans injured or made ill by military service to our nation; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, calls on VA to dedicate appropriate resources and support needed to timely implement the expansion of the Comprehensive Family Caregiver Support program required by Public Law 115–182; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Congress should conduct strict oversight of the Comprehensive Family Caregiver Support program and ensure VA receives the resources needed to timely and equitably expand eligibility and provide supports and services; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports legislation that would expand access to and improve the provision of comprehensive caregiver support services, including but not limited to fully recognizing family caregivers, adequate financial support, sufficient health and homemaker services, respite, education and training, and other necessary relief, to caregivers of all veterans severely ill and injured due to military service; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Congress and VA must create and execute a strategic plan for military and veteran caregiver research, including longitudinal surveys and assessments, to evaluate current programs and services, and monitor the health and well-being of caregivers to ensure the program's effectiveness and better inform policymakers.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 101 ENSURE SUFFICIENT RESOURCES FOR DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS RESEARCH TO IMPROVE CARE AND BENEFITS FOR VETERANS EXPOSED TO MILITARY TOXIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

WHEREAS, veterans of all military conflicts from the World Wars to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have been exposed to environmental hazards and man-made toxins, including cold and other adverse weather conditions; mustard gas; herbicides; pesticides; chemical, biological and radiological agents; "burn pits;" and other combat and military occupational exposures; and

WHEREAS, returning from war, some veterans subsequently suffer disabling conditions and symptoms of illnesses that may be difficult to medically diagnose, and not be immediately identified as consequential to such dangerous exposures; and

WHEREAS, research conducted by the National Institutes of Health, the Departments of Defense (DOD) and Veterans Affairs (VA), and other federal departments and agencies has focused on associations linking toxic and environmental exposures with subsequent health status of veterans (and in the case of Vietnam veterans, some of their children); and

WHEREAS, sustained funding for such research is necessary to ensure veterans receive high-quality health care services and adequate compensatory benefits to which they are entitled due to diseases or injuries incurred from hazardous military exposures; and

WHEREAS, in studies mandated by Congress in public law, the National Academy of Sciences continues to review and evaluate scientific literature to determine whether associations exist that connect a variety of military exposures and certain physical disorders within populations of veterans; and

WHEREAS, effective evidence-based medicine to treat individual patients with acute or chronic diseases must rely on scientifically valid biomedical research and peer-reviewed literature; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, urges Congress to actively oversee its established mechanism of delegation to the National Academy of Sciences and the VA to determine validations of, and develop equitable compensation policy for, environmentally exposed veterans; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV urges Congress to provide adequate funding for research to identify all disabling conditions and effective screening and treatment for such disabilities that may have been caused by exposure to environmental hazards and man-made toxins while individuals served in the armed forces of the United States; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV urges greater collaboration between DOD and the VA to share necessary deployment, health and exposure data from military operations and deployments, in order to timely and adequately address the subsequent health concerns of disabled veterans, whatever the causes of those disabilities; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV intends to closely monitor programs of care within the Veterans Health Administration to ensure veterans disabled by exposure to environmental hazards and man-made toxins receive effective, high-quality health care, and that the biomedical research and development programs of the Department are fully addressing their needs.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 102
REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO
INCREASE EFFICIENCY IN THE RECRUITMENT, HIRING AND
CREDENTIALING OF CERTAIN HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS
UNDERGOING SEPARATION FROM THE ARMED SERVICES

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has demonstrated difficulty in timely filing vacant health care positions required to meet the needs of service-connected disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, certain active members of the Armed Forces serve in a health care capacity and are being discharged from the Armed Forces under honorable conditions, and are seeking employment in health care; and

WHEREAS, veterans should receive hiring priority with the VA; and

WHEREAS, the VA historically takes an excessive amount of time to recruit, screen and hire new employees, actions that could be expedited by hiring qualified veterans with current training and background checks; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports legislation to require the VA to carry out a program to increase efficiency in the recruitment and hiring by the VA of health care workers that are undergoing separation from the Armed Forces and to create uniform credentialing standards for certain health care professionals of the VA.

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RESOLUTION NO. 103
ENCOURAGE THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO
PROCESS VOLUNTEER APPLICATIONS IN A TIMELY MANNER

WHEREAS, many DAV members want to join the ranks of volunteers who serve disabled veterans in Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities and in local communities associated with the VA; and

WHEREAS, there is great variability in both the process and timeliness of providing prospective volunteers all the required screenings, interviews, orientations, and training prescribed by the VA facility; and

WHEREAS, these volunteers must undergo an arduous clearance process and background check that can require months of delay, as well as complete a lengthy application to volunteer and thus lose their services and the opportunity for voluntary activities to aid veterans; and

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of the VA Voluntary Service program manager to ensure that volunteer applications are processed in an expeditious manner, because volunteers perform a valuable service to veterans in facilities and save taxpayers millions of dollars; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, strongly encourages each Voluntary Service program manager at every VA medical facility to standardize and expedite the process better leveraging information

technology to attract and ensure volunteers are able to serve disabled veterans in VA medical facilities and in their communities.

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RESOLUTION NO. 105
ENSURE TIMELY ACCESS TO QUALITY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS
AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE AND MEDICAL SERVICES

WHEREAS, wounded and ill veterans' demands for care at many Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facilities have overwhelmed VA's current capacity; and

WHEREAS, given VA's limited resources, in some cases, VA is forced to ration care, leaving many of its over seven million veteran patients waiting long periods and driving farther for primary, specialty and dental care appointments; and

WHEREAS, the VA MISSION Act (Public Law 115-182) established a new Veterans Community Care Program and made all veterans enrolled in the VA health care system eligible for care in the community, yet the VA is unable to systematically monitor the timeliness of veterans' access to such care; and

WHEREAS, VA should identify and immediately correct the underlying problems to properly manage its health care capacity and identify additional resources needed to ensure timely access to primary, specialty and dental care for all service-connected disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, short-term solutions, such as staff reassignments, redirection of patients to alternative sites of VA care and restrictions of individual practitioners' available time with each patient while adding additional appointments to their daily schedules, can provide some immediate relief but are only temporary solutions in light of recognized clinical and administrative vacancies across the VA health care system; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, urges the VA to request and for Congress to provide necessary authorities, sufficient resources, and staff to reduce waiting times so wounded, ill and injured veterans can realize timely access to all medically necessary services.

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RESOLUTION NO. 106
ADEQUATELY FUND AND SUSTAIN THE READJUSTMENT
COUNSELING SERVICE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS
AFFAIRS AND ITS VET CENTER PROGRAM

WHEREAS, in 1979, Congress authorized the establishment of the Readjustment Counseling Service, an independent counseling activity within the then–Veterans Administration's Department of Medicine and Surgery; and

WHEREAS, in 1980, the Veterans Administration opened the first “Vet Center” to provide readjustment services and psychological counseling to Vietnam combat veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and other conditions related to combat exposure and their experiences in Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, the Vet Centers, now numbering 300 locations, 83 mobile vet centers and 19 vet center outstations nationwide, have proven to be a most useful and effective tool to assist veterans of all eras who seek care for issues associated with exposure to traumatic combat situations, challenges with reintegrating into families and communities and military sexual trauma, in addition to other problems and to certain family members; and

WHEREAS, Vet Centers provide cost-effective and highly beneficial services, including counseling for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other readjustment challenges, suicide prevention and crisis intervention, marriage and family counseling, and family bereavement counseling beneficial to recovery; and

WHEREAS, the Vet Center program has been successful counseling veterans from all prior conflicts needing such readjustment services, including World War II, the Korean War, the war in Vietnam, the Persian Gulf War, and veterans of combat service in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq; and

WHEREAS, Vet Centers lead all Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) mental health programs in conducting veteran-to-veteran peer counseling services, wherein veterans who have themselves experienced post-deployment mental health issues related to their military experience are trained to provide counseling to those still suffering ill effects; and

WHEREAS, Vet Centers are now charged with selecting and administering the peer retreats in both gender-exclusive and mixed gender groups of veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, commends the work of the Readjustment Counseling Service and of its Vet Centers of the VA, and encourages the Vet Centers to maintain funding levels commensurate with the growth in veterans' demand for services and to accommodate outreach to meet unmet needs of additional veterans within the Vet Center catchment areas.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 107
OPPOSE MEANS TESTING SERVICE-CONNECTED VETERANS FOR
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE

WHEREAS, Public Law 104-262 requires 0% service-connected disabled veterans to be means tested in order to receive treatment in a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facility; and

WHEREAS, countless thousands of veterans have relied on care from VA medical facilities for decades and now face the possibility of losing access to VA medical care because of income levels, consequently causing them undue financial hardship, pain and suffering; and

WHEREAS, these 0% service-connected disabled veterans have been relegated to the lowest eligibility categories for care and, in some cases, below nonservice-connected veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports the exclusion of service-connected disabled veterans from the requirements of means testing for treatment or service received at VA medical facilities and the inclusion of 0% service-connected disabled veterans in Priority Group 3.

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RESOLUTION NO. 109
SUPPORT PROGRAMS TO PROVIDE PSYCHOLOGICAL AND MENTAL
HEALTH COUNSELING SERVICES TO FAMILY MEMBERS OF VETERANS
SUFFERING FROM POST-DEPLOYMENT MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES
OR OTHER SERVICE-CONNECTED CONDITIONS

WHEREAS, veterans exposed to combat and other hardship deployments are known to be at risk for development of post-deployment mental health conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression and other serious mental health challenges; and

WHEREAS, left untreated or inadequately treated, a veteran suffering the chronic effects of PTSD, depression or other mental illnesses may suffer marriage and relationship breakdown, underemployment or loss of employment, financial hardship, social alienation and even homelessness, or involvement with the justice system; and

WHEREAS, a combat-exposed veteran who is not appropriately counseled for the psychological effects of PTSD or depression stands at greater risk of emotional and mental decompensation, whose consequences often fall directly on family members and dependents of such veterans; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) embraces recovery from mental illness as its guiding principle in all VA mental health programs, and involvement of family members and dependents is often vital to a veteran's eventual recovery from mental illness; and

WHEREAS, subsection 1712A(b)2, title 38, United States Code, authorizes the VA Readjustment Counseling Service, through its Vet Center program, to provide psychological counseling and other necessary mental health services to family members of war veterans under care in such Vet Centers, irrespective of service-connected disability status; and

WHEREAS, Congress enacted section 301 of Public Law 110–387 for the express purpose of authorizing marriage and family counseling in VA facilities to address the needs of veterans' families, including spouses and other dependent family members of veterans who are experiencing mental health challenges with attendant marital or family difficulties; and

WHEREAS, Congress enacted sections 101–103 of Public Law 111–163 and sections 161-163 of Public Law 115-182 for the purpose of authorizing a wide array of support, care and counseling services for personal caregivers of severely injured veterans from all eras of military service; and

WHEREAS, Congress has recently established a grant program under section 201 of Public Law 116–171, the Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act of 2019, which would allow grantees to provide a variety of supportive services to at-risk veterans and family members; and

WHEREAS, section 1782, title 38, United States Code, authorizes a program of counseling, training and mental health services, including psychological support, for immediate family members of disabled veterans who need care for service-connected disabilities; who have service-connected disabilities rated at 50% or more disabling; who were discharged or retired from the armed forces for injuries or illnesses incurred in the line of duty; who are World War I or Mexican Border Period veterans; who were awarded the Purple Heart; who are former prisoners of war; who were exposed to radiation or toxic substances; or who are unable to defray the expenses of their care; and

WHEREAS, section 1781, title 38, United States Code, authorizes a program of health care, including certain mental health services, for immediate family members and dependents of a veteran who is totally and permanently disabled from service-connected disabilities or who died from disabilities incurred during military service; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, calls on the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish appropriate and effective programs to ensure that veterans who are enrolled in VA health care receive adequate care for their wounds and illnesses, including mental health-related illnesses, and, when appropriate, family members—whether family caregivers, spouses or other family dependents—receive necessary counseling, including psychological counseling, training and other mental health services authorized by law to aid in the recovery of veterans.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 110 SUPPORT HUMANE, CONSISTENT PAIN MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS IN THE VETERANS HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

WHEREAS, pain is one of the most prevalent reasons individuals, including wounded, injured and ill veterans, seek health care; and

WHEREAS, hundreds of thousands of veterans suffer from traumatic amputations and other severe injuries incurred during military service, while others suffer from a host of painful organic diseases and disabling conditions; and

WHEREAS, chronic pain is closely linked with depression and other mental health challenges, including suicidal ideation; and

WHEREAS, the serious adverse side effects of opioids, including physical dependence, overdose and suicide, have made Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and other health care providers reconsider clinical guidance, policy and programming for pain management; and

WHEREAS, because of these adverse side effects, the number of veterans using opioid medications for pain management prescribed by the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), which skyrocketed in the 2000s and peaked in 2012, have plummeted (the veterans to whom it dispensed an opioid fell by 56% and those to whom it co-prescribed opioid/benzodiazepine by 83%) due to VHA's revision its policies and programs for managing opioids; and

WHEREAS, VA has adopted a stepped, interdisciplinary approach to pain management using a patient-centered and holistic approach to delivering health care in order to maintain and improve the health and quality of life of veterans and VA's pain management program has been emulated in other public and private health care settings nationwide; and

WHEREAS, access to opioids has been compromised for many disabled veterans who have used these medications as prescribed for many years to reduce pain and maintain their quality of life and productivity; and

WHEREAS, a growing number of veteran patients with chronic pain who have been prescribed pain medication over long periods have been abruptly denied without the benefit of tapering or counseling or provision of alternate means of pain relief to reduce or eventually discontinue opioid therapy; and

WHEREAS, abrupt denial of opioid medications can lead to devastating health consequences, including compromised health, overdose or suicidal behavior; and

WHEREAS, VA has not made access to substance use disorder treatment or medications for opioid use disorder including first line opioid agonists such as methadone, buprenorphine, or overdose reversal drugs such as naloxone universally available and accessible to veterans (even those at highest risk) across the system; and

WHEREAS, VA recognizes non-pharmacological therapies, including complementary and integrative health therapies such as yoga, massage, acupuncture, and chiropractic, as the best alternative in managing pain, yet VA policy does not require such therapies be available and be offered without locally imposed restrictions; and

WHEREAS, without appropriate psychological counseling and transition to suitable alternatives to controlled substances, including Schedule II controlled medications, veterans can suffer physical and mental anguish needlessly; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, urges VA to redouble its efforts to conduct a uniform national pain management program to ensure that veterans requiring pain management including those who have used prescribed pain medications for long time periods are managed with patient-centered, interdisciplinary and holistic approaches with balanced regard for both patient safety and humane alternatives to the use of controlled substances, and while under VA care receive their prescribed medications in a timely fashion; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV encourages VA to continuously review and update its clinical guidance, policies and programming to ensure compliance with federal law and adherence to best practices in prescribing, dispensing and disposing of controlled substances.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 111 OPPOSE RECOVERY OF THIRD-PARTY PAYMENTS FOR SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITIES

WHEREAS, the primary mission of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is to provide high-quality medical care to veterans eligible by reason of their service-connected disabilities; and

WHEREAS, VA is authorized to recover or collect the cost of care from third-party health insurers when insured veterans receive health care from VA for nonservice-connected conditions; and

WHEREAS, the collection of payments from third parties for the treatment of veterans' service-connected disabilities would abrogate VA's and the federal government's responsibility to provide such care and may result in increased premium payments by veterans; and

WHEREAS, to improve its ability to generate revenue on the backs of service-connected disabled veterans, some continue to propose implementing a policy to eliminate the current practice of first applying third-party payments to offset veterans copayment debts; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, opposes any legislation that would require VA to recover third-party payments for the care and treatment of a veteran's service-connected disabilities.

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RESOLUTION NO. 113 SUPPORT EFFECTIVE RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE SYSTEM WORKFORCE

WHEREAS, staffing shortages and vacancies at every level of the VA health care system and across numerous critical positions impedes service-connected disabled veterans who rely on VA to receive timely, high quality veteran-centric medical care; and

WHEREAS, Section 7412 of title 38, United States Code, requires the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Office of Inspector General (OIG) to determine and report on the top five clinical and nonclinical occupations of Veterans Health Administration (VHA) personnel covered under title 38, United States Code, section 7401, for which there are the largest staffing shortages; and

WHEREAS, the VAOIG reported that 95% of VA medical centers reported at least one severe staffing shortage as of December 31, 2019; and

WHEREAS, the two most common critical occupation shortages identified since the public health emergency due to the novel coronavirus 2019 began were medical officers (severe shortages at 87% of facilities) and nurses (severe shortages at 72% of facilities); and

WHEREAS, the remaining shortages are psychologists, medical technologists, and diagnostic radiologic technicians; and

WHEREAS, shortages in non-clinical personnel such as custodians, police officers, and general engineers may also affect operations; and

WHEREAS, VA facilities most frequently cited psychiatrists as a severe occupational shortage; and

WHEREAS, while the VA MISSION Act (Public Law 115–182) required VA to report on a public website the number of personnel vacancies and hires to ensure transparency in gains and losses of employees but VA has not reported this information even in the face of chronic health care professional shortages since 2015; and

WHEREAS, despite the total number of VA employees providing and supporting veterans' medical care has grown from 211,192 in 2015 to 337,908 estimated at the end of 2020 to meet the medical care needs of veterans; and

WHEREAS, there is a nationwide shortage of qualified doctors, nurses and specialists particularly in rural areas because VA must compete with other health care providers to recruit and retain the best and brightest clinical staff, and the federal hiring process for clinical staff remains lengthy and convoluted; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports a simple-to-administer alternative VHA personnel system, in law and regulation, which governs all VHA employees, applies best practices from the private sector to human capital management, and supports pay and benefits that are competitive with the private sector.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 114 REDUCE OR ELIMINATE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICATION CO-PAYMENTS

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has periodically increased medication co-payments from the original charge of \$2.00 to the current co-payments for a 1-30 day supply of medications ranging from \$5 for preferred generics to \$11 for brand-name prescription drugs; and

WHEREAS, Congress has not agreed to eliminate co-payments for VA health care services and medications, despite the origin of the requirement that was justified as a "temporary" measure to reduce the federal deficit; and

WHEREAS, many health care providers and payers provide preventive medication at no additional cost to the patient and many retail pharmacies make generic medications available for much lower co-payments than are charged to veterans using VA; and

WHEREAS, in many instances VA clinicians prescribe over-the-counter medications to veterans that would cost far less if purchased at a retail pharmacy or other commercial outlet including VA's own Veterans Canteen Service (VCS) than veterans are charged for co-payments for the same medications; and

WHEREAS, VA medication co-payments cause an undue financial hardship for many sick and disabled veterans, especially those on fixed incomes, who need relief due to their health care expenses; and

WHEREAS, VA already applies third-party payments to offset veterans' co-payment debts; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports legislation that will reduce the amount of medication co-payments paid by veterans to be equal to, or less than, the lowest price co-payments charged by retail pharmacies to veterans and nonveterans; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, in the case of over-the-counter medications, Congress should prohibit VA from charging medication co-payments that exceed the retail cost of these drugs sold in VCS retail stores.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 115 SUPPORT MODERNIZING DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE INFRASTRUCTURE

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) primary mission is to meet the needs of ill, injured and disabled veterans through inpatient hospital care, outpatient primary and specialty care, and long-term care, which is best accomplished through facilities operated by VA for the exclusive benefit of veterans; and

WHEREAS, VA operates the largest integrated health care system in the United States with over nine million enrolled veterans, and annually provides medical care to over seven million veteran users; and

WHEREAS, VA operates over 170 medical centers (VAMCs), almost 1,300 community-based outpatient clinics (CBOCs), over 100 nursing homes known as "community living centers" (CLCs), over 300 readjustment counseling "Vet Centers," and other facilities that deliver health care to veterans; and

WHEREAS, the majority of VA's medical centers are over 50 years old and were designed and built under an outmoded model of health care delivery based on centralized hospital inpatient episodes of care; and

WHEREAS, VA must continue modernizing its health care system to meet veterans' current and future health care needs, enhance access to its system of care, and optimize its use of federal resources; and

WHEREAS, VA's Strategic Capital Investment Planning (SCIP) program estimates it could require \$70 billion over the next 10 years to maintain VA's existing health care facilities and expand capacity to meet rising demand for care; and

WHEREAS, there has been a consistent pattern over many years of VA requesting, and Congress appropriating, far less than the level of funding required to maintain VA's health care infrastructure based on SCIP estimates; and

WHEREAS, the current budget and appropriations process is not conducive to fully funding VA's health care infrastructure needs; and

WHEREAS, congressional budget rules require the 10-year cost of VA leases to be offset in the first year of operation, making it difficult to renew or sign new leases for CBOCs, thereby threatening VA's timely delivery of health care; and

WHEREAS, the VA MISSION Act (Public Law 115–182) included a section to establish an Asset and Infrastructure Review (AIR) to assess all VA health care facilities and develop a plan to strengthen, expand and realign them to more effectively deliver health care in the future; and

WHEREAS, the AIR process began in 2021, requires VA to produce a comprehensive plan for its infrastructure by January 2022, which will be reviewed and approved by an independent commission in January 2023, and subsequently will be approved or rejected by the President and Congress in 2023; and

WHEREAS, the AIR process will only be successful if VA develops its infrastructure plan in consultation and collaboration with veterans service organization (VSO) stakeholders, and if VA and the commission operate in an open and transparent manner that listens to the concerns and preferences of veterans who use the VA health care system; and

WHEREAS, there is a history of ineffective VA management and congressional oversight of VA health care construction projects that requires fundamental reforms to streamline the approval, management and oversight processes; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports modernization of VA's health care infrastructure and urges VA to request, and Congress to approve, at minimum the level of infrastructure funding VA's SCIP process estimates is required; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Congress should carefully monitor any proposed changes in VA's infrastructure that could jeopardize VA's ability to meet veterans' needs for primary and specialized VA health care and rehabilitative services, or that would threaten VA's medical education, biomedical research or national emergency missions; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that VA and Congress must implement the AIR process fully and faithfully, consulting with VSOs and operating in an open and transparent manner, fulfilling the core principle that VA remain the primary provider and the coordinator of care for enrolled veterans; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Congress should examine new models for funding VA infrastructure to guarantee that adequate funding is readily available to maintain existing and build new health care facilities; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that VA and Congress should reform and streamline the approval, management and oversight of construction projects to more quickly deliver health care facilities and more efficiently use appropriated funding.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 116

SUPPORT IMPROVEMENTS IN PROVIDER TRAINING AND BENEFICIARY TRAVEL BENEFITS FOR VETERANS SEEKING SPECIALIZED TREATMENT PROGRAMS AND CARE FOR MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA

WHEREAS, the fiscal year (FY) 2018 Department of Defense Office of Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPRO) annual report on sexual assault in the military indicated that about 20,500 service members experienced unwanted sexual content in fiscal year (FY) 2018, which represented an increase of 6.2% in active duty women and .7% of active duty men who experienced sexual assault in 2016; and

WHEREAS, the growing prevalence of sexual assault in the military is alarming and often results in lingering physical, emotional or chronic psychological symptoms in assault survivors; and

WHEREAS, 33% of women and 2% of men enrolled in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care system report they had experienced military sexual trauma (MST); and

WHEREAS, in FY 2014, more than 76% of women veterans in VA who screened positive for MST received outpatient care for either a mental or physical health condition related to MST; and

WHEREAS, VA provides specialized residential and outpatient counseling programs and evidence-based treatments for MST survivors within VA medical centers, clinics and Vet Centers; and

WHEREAS, based on VA clinical determinations, some veterans request or are referred to VA medical facilities other than their local facilities or closest Veterans Integrated Service Network to receive the specialized care they need; and

WHEREAS, VA's current policy in beneficiary travel permits reimbursement to a veteran only from a veteran's home of record to the nearest VA facility by road mileage, whether or not that facility possesses the expertise needed for a particular type of care, including inpatient and residential treatment for MST-related needs; and

WHEREAS, if a VA clinician determines an MST survivor needs specialized care from a VA MST inpatient facility, VA's beneficiary travel policy may serve to obstruct access to that resource or force an MST survivor to self-pay travel costs in order to gain access to these specialized services; and

WHEREAS, VA has temporary authority under Public Law 116-159, which will expire September 30, 2021 to provide beneficiary travel to veterans seeking specialized care for MST from a distant Vet Center; and

WHEREAS, evidence-based treatment practices known to successfully treat veterans with MST-related mental health conditions are available but not systemically used by all providers treating these patients; and

WHEREAS, VA offers MST-related training and has produced clinical practice guidelines and formulated evidence-based treatments and states that its mental health providers who treat MST survivors complete specialized training to treat such patients; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31-August 3, 2021, calls on VA to authorize beneficiary travel to distant VA medical centers for veterans seeking specialized MST care; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV calls upon Congress to permanently extend authority for beneficiary travel to Vet Centers for such purposes, to ensure all MST survivors gain access to the specialized treatment programs and services they need to fully recover from sexual trauma that occurred in military service and are enabled to choose gender exclusive treatment options, including their preferred sex of provider, to the maximum extent possible; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports legislation to require all VA providers offering MST-related treatment, in addition to providers in the Veterans Community Care Program offering such care, to receive specialized training in addressing the needs of individuals who have experienced sexual assault; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV urges VA to continually improve its MST treatment programs and ensure dissemination of MST evidence-based clinical practice guidelines throughout the VA health care system.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 117
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO IMPROVE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS
AFFAIRS PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO PREVENT AND TREAT
SUBSTANCE-USE DISORDERS IN VETERANS

WHEREAS, the misuse and abuse of alcohol and other addictive substances is a major health problem for many Americans, including veterans; and

WHEREAS, in fiscal year 2018, 520,000 veterans were treated for diagnoses related to substance use or abuse within VA; and

WHEREAS, long-term use of opioids springing from the chronic pain diagnosed for many veterans has sometimes led to overuse or addiction; and

WHEREAS, substance-use disorders result in significant health and social deterioration and financial costs to veterans, their families and the nation; and

WHEREAS, data from a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) national study showed that 40% of VA outpatients reported hazardous use of alcohol and 22% reported full alcohol abuse, but only 31% of the respondents reported being counseled about alcohol use and fewer referred to care; and

WHEREAS, substance abuse increases risk for suicidal behavior in veterans, especially in women; and

WHEREAS, substance-use disorders are also associated with family instability, homelessness, decreased worker productivity and declining health status; and

WHEREAS, veterans are at risk for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and a wide array of other medical and psychological conditions, which may be associated with veterans' increased use of substances; and

WHEREAS, VA offers evidence-based treatment for substance use disorders including stepped care and medication assisted withdrawal for opioid abuse, few integrated treatment programs that would work to address both the substance-use disorder and co-occurring PTSD, depression, anxiety, or other medical or mental health conditions which may cause or exacerbate veterans' inappropriate use of substances; and

WHEREAS, in some locations, VA lacks timely access to a continuum of available services that ranges from detoxification to rehabilitation in order to effectively treat substance-use disorders; and

WHEREAS, few locations may offer gender exclusive care options that may be conducive to recovery for veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports program improvement and enhanced resources for VA substance-use disorder programs, including gender-exclusive options for veterans who prefer them, to achieve a full spectrum of evidence-based accessible and available treatment; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this treatment must include identification of effective evidence-based psychotherapeutic programs for veterans with co-morbid mental health and substance-use disorder conditions, regardless of their place of residence.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 118
SUPPORT PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT AND ENHANCED
RESOURCES FOR DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MENTAL
HEALTH PROGRAMS AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

WHEREAS, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) research indicates that rates of suicide among service members and veterans are significantly higher than for age-adjusted cohorts in the civilian population, with an average of 17.6 veterans a day committing suicide in 2018; and

WHEREAS, veterans are 21% more likely to commit suicide than their civilian counterparts, while the risk for suicide among female veterans was 2.4 times higher compared to civilian adult females; and

WHEREAS, VA has made suicide prevention its top clinical priority and developed a national strategy using a public health model to provide population-based initiatives to veterans who use VA health and those who do not; created a crisis intervention hotline, employing suicide prevention coordinators and developing a clinical algorithm to detect veterans with the most risk factors for suicidal ideation or suicide; and

WHEREAS, addressing the underlying conditions that may increase risk of suicide require a multidisciplinary, comprehensive mental health program that identifies, screens, diagnoses, treats veterans with evidence-based protocols, in a manner that is recovery-oriented, patient-centered, culturally sensitive and strives to tailor care to factors such as ethnic background and gender to ensure treatment engagement; and

WHEREAS, the most recent eras of veterans have demonstrated high reliance upon VA and higher utilization of mental health and substance use disorder services; and

WHEREAS, the President has recently expanded eligibility to mental health care to all service members within their first year of separation from the military and to emergency mental health care for those veterans who may have discharges characterized as other than honorable; and

WHEREAS, the VA reports that veterans of these recent eras have sought care for a wide range of medical and psychological conditions, including mental health conditions, such as adjustment disorder, anxiety, depression, and PTSD; and

WHEREAS, between FY 2006 and FY 2020, more than 1.72 million veterans received specialized mental health care from the VA, an increase of 85%; and

WHEREAS, VA has improved access to mental health services at its 820 community-based outpatient clinics, but such services still are not readily available at all sites; and

WHEREAS, we remain concerned about the capacity in specialized PTSD programs and the availability of a full continuum of VA substance-use disorder services from inpatient detoxification to long-term residential treatment beds; and

WHEREAS, although additional funding has been dedicated to enhancing and improving capacity in these programs, VA mental health providers continue to express concerns about sustained resources to support, and consequent rationed access to, these specialized services; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense and VA share a unique obligation to meet the health care, including mental health care and rehabilitation needs, of veterans who are suffering from readjustment difficulties as a result of wartime service; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports program improvements, data collection and reporting on suicide rates among service members and veterans; improved outreach through general media for stigma reduction and suicide prevention; sufficient staffing to meet demand for mental health services; and enhanced resources for VA mental health programs, including Vet Centers, to achieve readjustment of new war veterans and continued effective mental health care for all enrolled veterans needing such services.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 119 SUPPORT SUSTAINED AND SUFFICIENT FUNDING TO IMPROVE SERVICES FOR HOMELESS VETERANS

WHEREAS, compared to nonveterans, veterans are at higher risk of homelessness, and women veterans, especially face unique challenges that increase their risk of homelessness; and

WHEREAS, many veterans experience post-deployment readjustment conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder, substance-use disorders acquired during or worsened by their military service, or traumatic brain injuries that may make their participation in the workforce difficult or impossible, making them more prone to homelessness; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA's) specialized homelessness programs each year provide health care to almost 150,000 homeless veterans and other services to more than 112,000 veterans; and

WHEREAS, with greater numbers of women serving in military deployments and the greater likelihood of women veterans being single parents, new and more comprehensive housing and child care services are needed; and

WHEREAS, a wide variety of public and private programs are in place to assist veterans in preventing or overcoming chronic homelessness, but these programs are often underfunded; and

WHEREAS, the VA initiatives to end homelessness among veterans through enhanced collaboration with other federal, state, faith-based, veterans service organization and community partners have made significant inroads in decreasing homelessness among veterans; and

WHEREAS, annual point-in-time counts, a "snapshot" of homelessness on a given night in America, have demonstrated downward or stable trends in homelessness since 2009, but have not yet registered the economic or psychosocial impact of quarantine and lockdowns related to the COVID-19 pandemic; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, urges Congress to sustain sufficient funding to continue to support VA's initiative to eliminate homelessness among veterans and strengthen the capacity of the VA Homeless Veterans program to include: increasing its mental health and substance-use disorder programs' capacity, providing vision and dental care services to homeless veterans as required by law, incorporating child care and legal aid for veterans in homeless programs where possible, and improving its outreach efforts to help ensure homeless veterans gain access to VA's specialized health and benefits programs; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we urge Congress to continue to authorize and appropriate funds for competitive grants for transitional housing to community-based organizations; that it fund the Supportive Services for Veterans Families program to ensure prevention of homelessness among veterans and their families; that it authorize vouchers through Department of Housing and Urban Development and require VA to provide to effective case management and health and supportive services to necessary for them to stay housed; and that it fund the Department of Labor's Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program to reengage veterans in employment or other productive activity.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 122
SUPPORT THE AUTOMATIC ENROLLMENT OF MEDICALLY
RETIRED VETERANS INTO THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
HEALTH CARE SYSTEM WITH AN OPT-OUT PROVISION

WHEREAS, some service members, while on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces, may experience disabilities of varying degrees and these disabilities may impact job performance; and

WHEREAS, in some cases, these service members may be medically retired by physical and/or mental conditions, as determined by the Physical Evaluation Board (PEB), which stand in the way of completing their duties; and

WHEREAS, despite the availability of the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) to help active duty members, who are medically retired understand available benefits, the medical retirement process is often confusing; and

WHEREAS, as part of the TAP process, a presentation is made describing the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care System and Benefits; and

WHEREAS, enrollment into the VA health care system is presented as an opt-in option, placing the responsibility of enrollment on the veteran being medically retired and transferring veterans' medical records from the Department of Defense (DOD) to VA, is at times, problematic; and

WHEREAS, making enrollment into the VA health care system automatic during the separation process would relieve veterans being medically retired of responsibilities for enrolling themselves and would make the transfer of medical records from DOD to VA more seamless; and

WHEREAS, some veterans being medically retired may choose not to enroll in VA and an opt-out provision should be included in the automatic enrollment process; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports the automatic enrollment of medically retired veterans into the VA health care system with an opt-out provision.

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RESOLUTION NO. 167
SUPPORT RESEARCH ON, AND EXPAND ACCESS TO, INVESTIGATIONAL
DRUGS FOR AMYOTROPHIC LATERAL SCLEROSIS

WHEREAS, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) is a terminal neurodegenerative disease that leads to loss of muscle strength and coordination causing people affected to lose their ability to perform routine tasks of daily living and eventually lose control of bodily functions such as swallowing; and

WHEREAS, for reasons not clearly understood, and unrelated to specific duties, eras, or locations of service, military service itself is a risk factor for future diagnosis of ALS; and

WHEREAS, a veteran who served between 1910 and 1982 is about 1.5 times more likely to be diagnosed with ALS compared with someone who never served in the military; and

WHEREAS, current law and regulations direct the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to provide presumptive service-connected compensation for ALS (38 CFR §3.318); and

WHEREAS, the average age of patients with ALS is 55 years old and ALS has a poor prognosis with life expectancy after diagnosis, ranging from three to five years for most individuals; and

WHEREAS, there is currently no “cure” for ALS, but some treatments can slow progression or ease symptoms that lead to improved quality of life; and

WHEREAS, some promising investigational drugs and therapies have demonstrated increased survival and function for people diagnosed with ALS, but veterans have not had optimal access to these breakthrough therapies through the VA; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, encourages VA to seek out collaborative partnerships to allow veterans to participate in multi-site clinical drug trials that will expand access to breakthrough treatment for interventions intended to prevent, diagnose, mitigate, treat, or cure ALS; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that VA should prioritize research into ALS as a service-connected condition disproportionately affecting certain veterans.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 203
SUPPORT EFFECTIVE CARE FOR VETERANS WITH DEMENTIA
WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) faces a large and growing number of veterans with dementia, including Alzheimer's disease and other organic diseases of the brain, it is prevalent in more than 774,000 veterans, including over 400,000 veterans enrolled in VA health care; and

WHEREAS, the risk of Alzheimer's disease and dementia is higher for populations in VA that are already at risk for certain adverse health outcomes including women (2.5 times higher risk than men) and higher for African Americans (2 times) and those of Hispanic ethnicity (1.5 times) than white individual populations; and

WHEREAS, research shows that military-related exposures such as traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder, as well as depression, are linked to an increased risk of Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia and VA estimates that as many as a quarter of new cases of dementia may be associated with these military exposures; and

WHEREAS, advanced age also disproportionately affects veterans risk for developing dementia (46% of veterans are more than 65 years old compared to the 16.5% in the general population of the United States); and

WHEREAS, dementia is a chronic and incurable condition, costing VA three times more than the average patient; and

WHEREAS, dementia impairs key executive functions, such as memory and cognition, including language, insight, judgment, ability to plan; diminishes the ability for self-care; triggers behavioral and psychological problems; and creates a heavy burden on caregivers; and

WHEREAS, dementia is difficult to diagnose and is often missed by clinicians, and there are high levels of off-label use of antipsychotic medications, particularly in institutional settings, that may be inappropriate or even harmful for patients with dementia; and

WHEREAS, a team approach to supporting family caregivers of dementia patients by assisting them with navigating VA's complex array of health care and financial benefits, coaching them on effective approaches to managing challenging behaviors, diversional activities and non-verbal communication has proven more effective than off-label use of antipsychotic medication; and

WHEREAS, lifestyle changes that have been proven to delay or prevent disease for as many as a quarter of veterans with cognitive impairment; and

WHEREAS, VA's Geriatric Evaluation and Management (GEM) teams which include a memory care coordinator may assist family caregivers with education about VA services, patient health and wellness, patient safety, and making legal and care plans for the future; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, urges VA to increase support and resources for improved dementia care and programming, including GEMs with a dedicated memory care coordinator at each VA medical center.

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RESOLUTION NO. 207
URGE THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO PROVIDE
PROMPT SCREENING AND TREATMENT FOR VETERANS EXPOSED TO
DEPLETED URANIUM AND SUPPORT ADDITIONAL RESEARCH INTO
THE LONG-TERM HEALTH EFFECTS OF SUCH EXPOSURE

WHEREAS, the military utilized the extreme density of depleted uranium in projectiles and tank armor during the Persian Gulf War, Bosnia, and in Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF); and

WHEREAS, exposure to the heavy metal depleted uranium as a result of friendly-fire incidents, cleanup and salvage operations, and proximity to burning tanks and ammunition containing depleted uranium, poses hazards, including chemical toxicity to humans when internalized through ingestion inhalation, shrapnel and contaminated wounds; and

WHEREAS, over 1.1 million service members have deployed to the Southwest Asia theater of operations, and over 2 million OIF/OEF service members have deployed, and the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA's) Depleted Uranium Program, established in 1993, has assessed over 3,000 veterans exposed to depleted uranium; and

WHEREAS, during the Gulf War, an estimated 134 to 164 people experienced “level 1” exposure (the highest of three exposure categories as classified by the Department of Defense(DOD)) through wounds caused by depleted uranium fragments, inhalation of airborne depleted uranium, particles, ingestion of depleted uranium residues, or wound contamination by depleted uranium residues; and

WHEREAS, hundreds or thousands more may have been exposed to lower exposure through inhalation of dust containing depleted uranium particles and residue or ingestion from hand-to-mouth contact or contamination of clothing; and

WHEREAS, questions remain regarding testing process used by the DOD and VA, 10 veterans who served in OIF had confirmed depleted uranium detected in their urine, and all had depleted uranium embedded fragments or fragment injuries; and

WHEREAS, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) Committee, mandated by Congress to examine scientific and medical literature on the potential health effects of chemical, biological, and radiological agents, could not determine the likelihood of increased risk of adverse health outcomes among Gulf War veterans due to exposure to the agents examined in its 2000 report, due to the lack of exposure data; and

WHEREAS, the IOM Committee in its 2008 updated scientific and medical literature review regarding exposure to depleted uranium and long-term human health outcomes assigned a high priority to continue monitoring a possible association between exposure and several diseases and conditions; and

WHEREAS, the VA Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses recognized the limited number of research projects to examine the impact of the total exposures and experience of deployment and war on veterans' health; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, urges VA to provide prompt medical screening and treatment to any veteran that may have been exposed to depleted uranium; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the DAV supports additional research to examine the health effects of exposure to depleted uranium.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 209

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO IMPROVE THE CARE AND BENEFITS FOR VETERANS EXPOSED TO MILITARY TOXIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

WHEREAS, veterans of all military conflicts from the World Wars to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have been exposed to environmental hazards and man-made toxins, including cold and other adverse weather conditions; mustard gas; herbicides; pesticides; chemical, biological and radiological agents; “burn pits;” and other combat and military occupational exposures; and

WHEREAS, returning from war, some veterans subsequently suffer disabling conditions and symptoms of illnesses that may be difficult to medically diagnose, and not be immediately identified as consequential to such dangerous exposures; and

WHEREAS, research conducted by the National Institutes of Health, the Departments of Defense (DOD) and Veterans Affairs (VA), and other federal departments and agencies have focused on associations linking toxic and environmental exposures with subsequent health status of veterans (and in the case of Vietnam veterans, some of their children); and

WHEREAS, sustained funding for such research is necessary to ensure veterans receive high quality health care services and adequate compensatory benefits to which they are entitled due to diseases or injuries incurred from hazardous military exposures; and

WHEREAS, in studies mandated by Congress in public law, the National Academy of Sciences continues to review and evaluate scientific literature to determine whether associations exist that connect a variety of military exposures and certain physical disorders within populations of veterans; and

WHEREAS, effective evidence-based medicine to treat individual patients with acute or chronic diseases must rely on scientifically valid biomedical research and peer-reviewed literature; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, urges Congress to actively oversee its established mechanism of delegation to the National Academy of Sciences and VA to determine validations of, and develop equitable compensation policy for, environmentally exposed veterans; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV urges Congress to provide adequate funding for research to identify all disabling conditions and effective screening and treatment for such disabilities that may have

been caused by exposure to environmental hazards and man-made toxins while individuals served in the armed forces of the United States; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV urges greater collaboration between DOD and VA to share necessary deployment, health and exposure data from military operations and deployments, in order to timely and adequately address the subsequent health concerns of disabled veterans, whatever the causes of those disabilities; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV intends to closely monitor programs of care within the Veterans Health Administration to ensure veterans disabled by exposure to environmental hazards and man-made toxins receive effective, high-quality health care, and that the biomedical research and development programs of the Department are fully addressing their needs.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 241 DEVELOP CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINES ON PREVENTION, EARLY DETECTION AND INTERVENTION FOR LUNG CANCER

WHEREAS, lung cancer is the second most common cancer in men and women and the leading cause of death from cancer; and

WHEREAS, veterans are more likely to be exposed to hazardous and potentially carcinogenic agents such as dioxin, burn pits and environmental agents than non-military personnel; and

WHEREAS, individuals may not experience or recognize symptoms of lung cancer until the disease has progressed to an advanced stage; and

WHEREAS, even when lung cancer does cause symptoms, many people may mistake them for acute health conditions such as infections which may delay the diagnosis; and

WHEREAS, based on findings that low-dose cat scans (LDCT) caught more early stage lung cancer than chest x-rays, the American Cancer Society has developed guidance for screening high-risk individuals including use of annual LDCT screening for people at higher risk for developing lung cancer; and

WHEREAS, early detection may significantly increase the likelihood of successful treatment of lung cancer; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports the Department of Veterans Affairs developing and implementing new clinical guidance on the prevention, detection and treatment of lung cancer, including the appropriate use of LDCT scans for early detection of lung cancer in at-risk populations.

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RESOLUTION NO. 254 REQUIRE A VETERAN'S ATTENDING DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA) PHYSICIAN TO PROVIDE A MEDICAL OPINION WITH REGARD TO A CLAIM FOR VA DISABILITY COMPENSATION

WHEREAS, section 5103A, title 38, United States Code, requires the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to assist a veteran by providing a medical examination and opinion when necessary to make a decision on a claim for disability benefits; and

WHEREAS, section 3.159, title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, requires Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care providers, under specified circumstances, to provide statements and medical opinions on conditions, employability and degree of disability; and

WHEREAS, Veterans Health Administration (VHA) policy describes Disability Benefit Questionnaires (DBQ) as a documentation tool designed for easy use and provides a format for documenting medical evidence that aids Veterans Benefits Administration rating specialists in making decisions on claims; and

WHEREAS, it is also VHA policy that DBQs are intended for use by VHA primary care and specialty care providers, and VHA clinicians who are not disability examiners may complete DBQs; and

WHEREAS, VA's continued mission is to be a provider of choice for enrolled veterans, and delivering to them a comprehensive medical benefits package; and

WHEREAS, through education, training and experience, VA physicians gain special insight into the veterans' experience and specialized knowledge of the diseases and disabilities common to military service; and

WHEREAS, when VA physicians refuse to provide statements or opinions for veteran patients, those denials are inconsistent with the goal of the VHA to provide comprehensive care and place a serious burden on veterans who may not be able to afford a private medical opinion; and

WHEREAS, providing medical information for disability evaluations or examinations to support adjudication of claims remains inconsistent, because some local VA facilities' practices resist completing DBQs requested by claimants; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, urges VA to develop and implement a consistent policy requiring VA health care practitioners to provide medical statements or opinions when requested by veterans in conjunction with claims for VA benefits.

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RESOLUTION NO. 255
URGE THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO APPLY
A CONSISTENT COORDINATED CARE POLICY FOR ENROLLED
VETERANS WITH A HOME RESIDENCE IN TWO STATES

WHEREAS, many service-connected disabled veterans temporarily split their principal residence between two locations; and

WHEREAS, coordination and continuity of care are core features of high-quality primary care and have been shown to offer significant benefits, including lower rates of hospitalization and lower mortality; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) policy defining how patients are assigned to Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) primary care providers states that, in general, each veteran receiving VA primary care must be assigned a single primary care provider within the VA health care system; and

WHEREAS, under VHA Handbook 1101.11(3), veterans who spend a significant part of the year living between two regions and who have complex health care needs requiring close ongoing care management may have primary care providers assigned at two geographically distant facilities; and

WHEREAS, some service-connected veterans who would otherwise be eligible for a secondary VA primary care provider may be denied this critical service; and

WHEREAS, many service-connected veterans are unaware that their VA provider may assess their need for assignment to another facility to manage complex health needs to better coordinate execution of a personal health care plan between the preferred and alternate VA facilities; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, urges the VA to improve its care coordination policy for enrolled veterans with a home residence in two states, especially service-disabled veterans with complex medical needs, who may require the assignment of two primary care providers.

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RESOLUTION NO. 256
SUPPORT DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL
AND PROSTHETIC RESEARCH PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, to restore the wounds and injuries, to maintain the health of veterans of prior conflicts, and to develop new treatments for veterans wounded and injured in today's and future conflicts, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical and Prosthetic Research program provides a vital service and investment for veterans; and

WHEREAS, funded VA researchers are studying injuries and illnesses emanating from war, such as traumatic brain injury, burns, paralysis and amputations, and illnesses and diseases that disproportionately appear in the wartime veteran population, such as toxic environmental exposures, numerous organic illnesses, and post-traumatic stress disorder and other associated mental health sequela of war; and

WHEREAS, VA researchers have been recognized by multiple awards of Nobel Prizes, Lasker Awards (the "American Nobel Prize"), and many other public and private emblems of achievement, for elevating the standards of health care not only for wounded and injured veterans but for people all around the world, including publication of tens of thousands of research developments in peer-reviewed medical literature; and

WHEREAS, VA researchers contribute directly to the health of veterans by serving as clinical providers in VA health care facilities, and carry out important faculty and attending duties to sustain VA's affiliations with the nation's schools of health professions, thereby elevating the standards of health care for all; and

WHEREAS, VA research is conducted only after rigorous scientific peer review, supervised by institutional review boards, and only in conformance with the Common Rule and other ethical and humanitarian constraints to ensure informed consent and safety of all research volunteers, and the efficacy of approved research projects; and

WHEREAS, VA's clinician-scientists in VA Rehabilitation Research and Development Service, who constitute the world's foremost scientists working in this field, invent and adapt specialized prosthetic, orthotic and other appliances, supports and treatments, using numerous ground-breaking technologies, to improve the lives of countless numbers of severely disabled veterans, including many members of DAV; and

WHEREAS, the annual VA Medical and Prosthetic Research appropriation constitutes less than one-tenth of 1% of VA's health care budget, but research funding has been subjected to rescissions, and its annual appropriation fails even to account for uncontrollable research inflation; and

WHEREAS, VA has made some progress in addressing almost \$800 million in repairs, restorations and replacements that are needed for VA's research laboratories, some of which involve life and safety risks for VA employees and veteran volunteers, but at least \$200 million worth of critical repairs must still be made; and

WHEREAS, information technology research including cloud storage and credits to manipulate large databases is integral to identify genomic patterns and other associations between veterans and health outcomes, including the effectiveness or adverse outcomes of particular treatments for a given population; and

WHEREAS, this requires dedicated resources to the development, operations, and maintenance of information technology proportional to the resources provided the VA Medical and Prosthetic Research budget; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, strongly supports VA's Medical and Prosthetic Research program as a vital investment in the future, affecting wounded, injured and ill veterans, and urges VA and Congress to adequately fund this program by ensuring there is adequate eradication of infrastructure and information technology deficits, so that it may continue its remarkable traditions in helping veterans recover and rehabilitate, to improve the quality of their lives.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 258
SUPPORT TOP PRIORITY ACCESS FOR SERVICE-CONNECTED VETERANS
WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Veterans Health Administration (VHA) has issued national directives and policies to affirm its commitment to providing top-priority access to hospital care and medical services to veterans with service-connected disabilities, regardless of the percentage assigned to the service-connected disability rating, in absence of compelling medical reasons to the contrary; and

WHEREAS, many VA facilities are struggling to fulfill this mandate because of budget pressures, insufficient local resources and demand exceeding capacity because of increasing patient workloads; and

WHEREAS, DAV continues to receive complaints from service-connected veterans who are being denied priority access to VA health care services or report their access to care is being delayed; and

WHEREAS, due to inadequate resources, VHA at times has been forced to establish waiting lists and implement other types of health care rationing, absent compelling medical reasons; and

WHEREAS, VA is poised to realign and expand availability of health care services to meet the diverse needs of future veterans, reform its management by increasing efficiency, transparency and accountability to become more veteran-centric, and restructure all its community care programs into flexible and responsive integrated networks to deliver high value quality care; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports strict enforcement by the VHA, including VHA network and medical center directors, of governing policies providing service-connected veterans priority access to care, unless compelling medical reasons affecting other veterans prevent such priority from being extended to them.

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RESOLUTION NO. 259
URGE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL FACILITIES
TO PROVIDE REASONABLE ACCESS TO SERVICE DOGS
INCLUDING ENCLOSED ANIMAL RELIEF AREAS

WHEREAS, many veterans have service-connected conditions including visual, hearing or significant mobility impairments or mental illness for which the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will approve use of a service or guide dog upon completion of approved training protocols; and

WHEREAS, the VA recognizes the benefit of service and guide dogs to veterans when their use can facilitate the rehabilitation goals, increase functionality, enhance independence, and improve the quality of life for certain veterans; and

WHEREAS, Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive 1188(1) states that it is VHA policy to permit service animals to accompany individuals with a disability to all areas of a VHA property on the same terms and conditions, and subject to the same regulations, as generally govern the admission of the public, while maintaining a safe environment for patients, employees, visitors, and the service animal; and

WHEREAS, section 1.218, title 38, Code of Federal Regulations and VHA Directive 1188 states the veteran is responsible for the service dog while on VHA property and such responsibility includes providing water, food, and elimination breaks for the service dog in an outdoor area; and

WHEREAS, veterans with service-connected visual, hearing, significant mobility impairments or mental illness require service and guide dogs to safely navigate VHA property to access needed benefits and services; and

WHEREAS, receiving needed medical benefits and services often requires the veteran and their service animal to remain at the VA medical facility for extended periods; and

WHEREAS, veterans must have reasonable access to safe enclosed areas to meet the required responsibility for care and stewardship of service dogs while on VHA property for extended periods; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, urges that VA carry out its policies to permit reasonable access to VA facilities by service and guide dogs to veterans consistently throughout the system; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Congress should enact legislation setting forth VA standards for admission to VA properties and management of service and guide animals that are equivalent to rules applicable to every other private and public structure in the United States as dictated by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that each VA medical center provide enclosed areas in which a service dog has access to water and a safe area for exercise and elimination.

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RESOLUTION NO. 260
URGE THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO SUPPORT
COMPREHENSIVE RESEARCH ON HEALTH EFFECTS OF CHILDREN
OF MALE VIETNAM VETERANS EXPOSED TO AGENT ORANGE

WHEREAS, research studies reviewed by the National Academy of Medicine (NAM) have not shown that there are increased rates of birth defects among children of male Vietnam veterans, except for spina bifida, where it found a “limited/suggested” association between paternal exposure to the herbicides used in Vietnam, or to dioxin, and a higher risk of spina bifida among their children; and

WHEREAS, there is a growing body of evidence that exposure to herbicide and its contaminants can induce epigenetic changes that pass from parent to offspring in animal models; and

WHEREAS, NAM has found that the available epidemiologic studies are of insufficient quality, consistency or statistical power to permit a conclusion regarding the presence or absence of an association with birth defects (other than spina bifida) as well as childhood cancer (including acute myeloid leukemia) in offspring of exposed people; and

WHEREAS, to resolve questions regarding paternally transmitted effects to their offspring, the NAM continues to recommend that laboratory research be conducted to characterize herbicides and their contaminants’ potential for inducing epigenetic modifications, study paternal exposure in the absence of maternal exposure, review systematically defined clinical health conditions that are manifested later in the lives of offspring; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, urges the Department of Veterans Affairs to conduct comprehensive research, including those recommended by the NAM, to determine the level of association between herbicide exposure and birth defects and other conditions of children of male Vietnam veterans.

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RESOLUTION NO. 261

ENCOURAGE THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO SUBMIT CANDIDATES FOR THE GEORGE H. SEAL MEMORIAL AWARD PROGRAM

WHEREAS, DAV created the George H. Seal Memorial Award Program as a means to recruit, retain and recognize volunteers who serve disabled veterans in Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities and the local community; and

WHEREAS, the George H. Seal Memorial Award annually recognizes the remarkable efforts of an outstanding member of DAV and the Auxiliary who willingly donate their time and energy to disabled veterans in VA Voluntary Service programs; and

WHEREAS, at the beginning of each calendar year, DAV solicits every VA Voluntary Service program manager to nominate one deserving member of DAV and the Auxiliary from their facility in order to be considered for the George H. Seal Memorial Award, with little response; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, strongly encourages each Voluntary Service program manager at every VA medical facility to submit the name of a deserving member of DAV and the Auxiliary to be considered for this prestigious award in appreciation of their dedication and service to America's veterans through their voluntary service efforts.

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RESOLUTION NO. 262

IMPLEMENT A PILOT PROGRAM TO ASSESS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS GROWTH

WHEREAS, a significant portion (10-30%) of veterans from all combat eras experience the chronic effects of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD); and

WHEREAS, unsuccessfully treated PTSD is associated with significant adverse consequences such as substance use disorders, family dissolution, unemployment, homelessness, involvement in the justice system and even suicide; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has developed effective programs for addressing the chronic needs of most veterans struggling with PTSD through trauma exposure-based therapies and pharmaceutical interventions; and

WHEREAS, VA is an acknowledged world-leader in developing effective care for the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder and continues to explore promising interventions; and

WHEREAS, notwithstanding their use of effective VA treatment protocols for PTSD, there are high rates of dropouts in many traumatic exposure therapies and significant numbers of veterans continue to struggle; and

WHEREAS, post-traumatic stress growth emphasizes the development of resiliency by encouraging veterans to adopt different belief systems that may improve their abilities to cope, problem solve and find meaning in their lives after exposure to trauma; and

WHEREAS, certain post-traumatic stress growth programs such as the US Army's Comprehensive Soldier Fitness initiative—Master Resilience Training and the Boulder Crest Warrior programs have been associated with improved psychological health which may be sustained for months after treatment; and

WHEREAS, these programs are often provided by trained peer counselors who may themselves be in recovery from PTSD; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, urges VA to develop a pilot program to assess standardized post-traumatic stress growth programs to ensure effectiveness in achieving long-term health outcomes in meeting the needs of veterans with treatment-resistant, complex PTSD.

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RESOLUTION NO. 263
PROVIDE EASY AND EQUITABLE ACCESS TO DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS
AFFAIRS TRANSPORTATION BENEFITS AND SERVICES

WHEREAS, because of service-connected disabilities, many disabled veterans face mobility challenges when attempting to access Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care benefits and services; and

WHEREAS, VA is currently authorized to transport any person for any purposes to any location in connection with vocational rehabilitation, counseling and for the purpose of VA examination, treatment or care; however, transportation programs offered through VA do not meet all the transportation needs of service-connected disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, the VA Veteran Transportation Program has three components to accomplish its mission to improve the quality of life for veterans by increasing access to health care through integrated and cost-effective transportation solutions; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans Transportation Service (VTS) is intended to provide veterans with convenient and timely access to transportation services and to overcome barriers to receiving VA health care and services, and in particular to increase transportation options for veterans who need specialized forms of transportation to VA facilities; and

WHEREAS, wide variations in the eligibility for VTS transportation across the VA health care system is not consistent with overcoming barriers to receiving health care provided or purchased by VA to service-connected veterans; and

WHEREAS, the VA Beneficiary Travel program is not available to all service-connected disabled veterans with mobility challenges, and confusion among local VA facilities due to vague policies for using special-mode transportation, such as a wheelchair van, is reflected in lower-than-expected utilization; and

WHEREAS, the VA Highly Rural Transportation Grant program provides grants to assist only veterans in highly rural areas through innovative transportation services to travel to VA medical centers and to otherwise assist in providing transportation services in connection with the provision of VA medical care to these veterans; and

WHEREAS, VA lacks a consistent and comprehensive transportation policy for all service-connected disabled veterans across all established VA transportation and travel programs, benefits and services; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, urges the VA to operate an effective and efficient transportation program for all service-connected veterans and to simplify access to transportation benefits and services to receive timely and high-quality VA health care, benefits and services.

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RESOLUTION NO. 264
INCREASE VETERANS' ACCESS AT DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
FACILITIES BY EXTENDING COVERAGE ON WEEKDAYS AND WEEKENDS

WHEREAS, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is committed to provide quality care for eligible veterans when they want and need care; and

WHEREAS, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, VHA had made some progress to improve access to health care services as the needs and preferences of the veteran patient population evolved; and

WHEREAS, regular business hours for VHA services are considered to be from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, but offering extended operating hours could ease the burden on service-connected disabled veterans in balancing family, employment, community obligations and other commitments; and

WHEREAS, VHA Directive 2013-001 states Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical centers and Community-Based Outpatient Clinics that treat more than 10,000 unique veterans per year must provide access to a full range of primary care, including Women's Health and Mental Health General Outpatient services at least two hours beyond regular business hours at least once on weekdays and once every weekend; and

WHEREAS, local data including feedback from service-connected veterans and local DAV members should be used to determine which extended hour options would best meet the needs of each facility's enrolled patient population; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, urges VA to, based on local access data and patient feedback, implement extended operating hours at VHA health care facilities for services such as primary, specialty and mental health services.

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RESOLUTION NO. 279
ESTABLISH STUDIES ON THE LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF
EXPOSURE TO BISPHENOL A, A SUBSTANCE FOUND
IN PLASTIC DISPOSABLE WATER BOTTLES

WHEREAS, according to studies by the National Institute of Environmental Health, plastic disposable water bottle can leach bisphenol A (BPA) (also known as Phthalates), from the plastic into the drinking water when exposed to extreme or moderate heat over time; and

WHEREAS, according to studies by Johns Hopkins University researcher, Dr. Rolf Halden, chemicals called phthalates are “environmental contaminates that can exhibit hormone-like behavior by acting as endocrine disrupters in human and animals;” and

WHEREAS, studies reveal that heated plastics can increase the leaching of phthalates from containers into food or water and studies further reveal that some of the common effects are cancers; and

WHEREAS, plastic disposable water bottles were used on a massive scale in Iraq, Afghanistan and other extreme temperature locations for active duty personnel; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports legislation to allow for additional research and studies from the National Academy of Science and/or other research facilities to determine the long-term health effects, to include cancers, of exposure to heated plastics and water bottles.

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RESOLUTION NO. 300
PROVIDE BENEFICIARY TRAVEL BENEFITS FOR UNSCHEDULED VISITS TO
RECEIVE CARE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

WHEREAS, a cornerstone of patient-centered care is having excellent access to appropriate clinical care using appropriate modes of health care delivery at the time patients want and need the care; and

WHEREAS, VA beneficiary travel provides payment of travel expenses within the United States under section 111, title 38, United States Code, to help veterans and other persons obtain care and services from VA; and

WHEREAS, it is VA policy to pay travel expenses only for one-way travel to veterans who receive VA care without a scheduled appointment; and

WHEREAS, the nature of acute medical or psychiatric illness or minor injuries, for which there is a pressing need for treatment to prevent deterioration of the condition or impairing possible recovery, is generally unscheduled and episodic; and

WHEREAS, VA facilities have developed local policy to provide care to veterans on a “drop in” basis rather than through a scheduled appointment and without properly documenting such pre-scheduled encounters thus limiting travel benefits for service-connected veterans; and

WHEREAS, the VA MISSION Act (Public Law 115–182) provides veterans urgent care benefits through contracted community providers but will only pay beneficiary travel on a one-way basis having also defined urgent care as an unscheduled visit; and

WHEREAS, VA policy also subscribes to the principle that access to appropriate primary and urgent care must ensure sufficient capacity to accommodate unscheduled “walk-in” patients; and

WHEREAS, VA beneficiary travel partial reimbursement for unscheduled visits runs counter to the stated purpose of the benefit, which is to “help ensure that beneficiary travel is covered only when necessary for the provision of care or services;” NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, urges Congress and the VA to change current beneficiary travel policy to pay round-trip travel expenses to veterans who receive VA care without a scheduled appointment.

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RESOLUTION NO. 324
REPEAL BENEFICIARY TRAVEL DEDUCTIBLE FOR SERVICE-CONNECTED
DISABLED VETERANS AND INCREASE REIMBURSEMENT RATES

WHEREAS, the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is authorized under section 111 (g)(1), title 38, United States Code, to reimburse transportation expenses for certain service-connected veterans for VA authorized examination, medical treatment or care; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 110–387 required VA to permanently reduce to \$3.00 the applicable deductible, but service-connected disabled veterans are still subject to the deduction from the amount otherwise payable for each one-way trip unless the Secretary determines in an individual case that such deductible would cause severe financial hardship; and

WHEREAS, veterans currently receive a flat rate of 41.5 cents per mile for all transportation effective November 17, 2008; and

WHEREAS, service-connected disabled veterans eligible for beneficiary transportation reimbursements should not be required to help defray the cost of travel, in the form of a deductible, to and from a VA medical facility for medical examination, or health care treatment; and

WHEREAS, it is grossly unfair for the VA Secretary to impose the deductible upon service-connected disabled veterans seeking treatment for service-connected conditions and service-connected veterans rated 30% or more when traveling in connection with any disability; and

WHEREAS, adequate travel expense reimbursement is directly tied to access to care for many veterans and is not a luxury; and

WHEREAS, VA, in consultation with the Administrator of General Services, the Secretary of Transportation, the Comptroller of the United States and representatives of veterans service organizations, is required to conduct periodic investigations on the actual cost of travel incurred by veterans traveling to and from VA facilities for covered purposes; and

WHEREAS, after analyzing and adopting the findings of an Internal Revenue Service (IRS) report on operating costs for a privately owned automobile, the General Services Administration (GSA) determined that the per-mile operating costs for the official use of a privately owned vehicle by a federal employee in 2021 is 56 cents per mile; and

WHEREAS, VA continues to maintain that increasing veterans' beneficiary travel reimbursement rate to a rate more comparable to the GSA-approved rate would result in a reduction of funds available for direct medical care to our nation's veterans, and service-connected veterans should not shoulder the burden of receiving either medical care or adequate beneficiary travel payments; and

WHEREAS, when rates do not cover the cost of travel, veterans without resources are likely to delay health care access until their needs may become critical, resulting in higher health care costs and poorer health outcomes; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports legislation to repeal the Secretary's authority to impose a deductible for service-connected disabled veterans from the amount payable for beneficiary travel pay for medical examination, treatment or care; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV urges VA to adopt the IRS mileage reimbursement rate to protect against erosion of the value of the benefit due to inflation; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV urges VA to make provision in its budget for the cost of increasing veterans' beneficiary travel reimbursement rates to a more reasonable amount so that it can make the needed adjustment without the reduction in funds for direct medical care to sick and disabled veterans.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 373
IMPROVE URGENT AND EMERGENCY CARE BENEFIT
FOR SERVICE-CONNECTED VETERANS

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) aims to provide enrolled veterans a uniform benefits package that emphasizes preventive and primary care, and provides a comprehensive health care benefit plan including hospital, outpatient and long-term care; and

WHEREAS, a health care benefits package is incomplete without access to and coverage for urgent and emergent care; and

WHEREAS, the VA MISSION Act (Public Law 115–251) authorizes the VA furnish veterans urgent care, which is typically lower cost than emergency treatment, and with sufficient access can encourage veterans to receive health care in the appropriate setting; and

WHEREAS, the VA's emergency care statutory authorities, regulations, processes, and procedures are complex, inconsistently applied across the Veterans Health Administration and cause significant confusion for VA staff, veterans and community care providers; and

WHEREAS, the August 2019 VA Office of Inspector General report found a significant number of emergency care claims were inappropriately denied and many rejected claims were inappropriately processed, with some leading to wrongful denials and rejection of claims, and potentially placing undue financial risk on thousands of veterans; and

WHEREAS, such denied claims have transferred the liability of billions of dollars from the VA to veterans, resulting in serious financial challenges; and

WHEREAS, fear of incurring enormous financial liability from denied VA payment or reimbursement for emergency care causes many veterans to avoid or otherwise delay seeking or contacting emergency medical services; and

WHEREAS, Congress over the years enacted legislation to address barriers to emergency care and payment or reimbursement for such care for disabled veterans due to the VA's narrow interpretation of the existing authority for emergency care; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports legislation to amend title 38, United States Code, to simplify the eligibility for urgent and emergency care paid for by the VA; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV urges the VA to provide a more liberal and consistent interpretation of the law governing payment for urgent and emergency care and reimbursement to veterans who have received emergency care at non-VA facilities.

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RESOLUTION NO. 500

SUPPORT THE EXPANSION OF STELLATE GANGLION BLOCK RESEARCH AND IMPLEMENTATION TO TREAT POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

WHEREAS, every June is designated as “National Post-Traumatic Stress Awareness Month” to help raise public awareness, reduce the associated stigma, and help ensure that those individuals suffering from the invisible wounds of war promptly receive proper treatment; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) reports that approximately 20%, 12% and 30% of service members and veterans that served in Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom, the Persian Gulf War and the Vietnam War respectively, have had post-traumatic stress (PTS) in a given year; and

WHEREAS, both government and non-governmental organizations have made significant advances in the identification, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of PTS; and

WHEREAS, one of the most promising PTS treatment is Stellate Ganglion Block (SGB) and the VA Long Beach Healthcare System in California and the VA Center for Compassionate Care Innovation (CCI) are leading an effort to offer SGB to a subset of veterans who have not experienced relief from traditional PTS treatments; and

WHEREAS, there is growing evidence that SGB may alleviate certain PTS symptoms such as hyperarousal, exaggerated startle responses and anxiety, and it appears to calm an exaggerated “fight or flight” survival reflex in people living with PTS, which can become triggered by various events that do not warrant it, and veterans who received SGB for other health conditions like nerve pain report positive effects for their PTSD symptoms, including reduced anxiety and hypervigilance; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, urges the entire federal government to accelerate SGB research and that VA advertise SGB in all VA facilities, and that the VA expand the CCI-led clinical demonstration nationwide.

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RESOLUTION NO. 508

STRENGTHEN AND PROTECT THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

WHEREAS, this nation's highest obligation is to the men and women who were put in harm's way in its defense, and became wounded, injured and ill as a consequence of that service; and

WHEREAS, America's veterans have earned and deserve high-quality, comprehensive and veteran-focused health care designed to meet their unique circumstances and needs; and

WHEREAS, there are over 9 million veterans who have enrolled in the VA health care system, of whom over 7 million receive some medical services from VA each year; and millions of service-connected disabled veterans who rely on VA for all or most of their medical care; and

WHEREAS, the increasing demand for VA health care reflects changes in the veteran patient population such as the advanced aging of many World War II, Korea, and Vietnam veterans in greater need of health care; high veteran satisfaction with the VA's comprehensive and coordinated delivery of health care; and changes in health care practice such as the increasing use of pharmaceuticals, advances in technology and increasing provision of community care; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care system's primary mission is to provide service-connected veterans timely, high-quality health care that offers a full continuum of services, including, but not limited to foundational services such as primary care, mental health care, and specialized care for prosthetics, spinal cord injury and disease, blindness, amputees, polytrauma, toxic and environmental exposures, as well as pharmacy, and long-term services and supports in both institutional and non-institutional settings; and

WHEREAS, while funding for VA to furnish medical care has increased year after year, it has not kept pace with demand from the rising number of veterans using the VA, the growing volume and intensity of health services being used and the increasing reliance on using the VA health care system; and

WHEREAS, VA and Congress must work together to provide additional resources to maintain sufficient staffing levels; eliminate disparities in treatment; and improve information technology necessary for the care and treatment of injured and ill veterans; and

WHEREAS, the VA must maintain a "critical mass" of capital, human and technical resources to promote effective, high-quality care for veterans, especially those with sophisticated health problems, such as blindness, amputations, spinal cord injury or chronic mental health problems; and

WHEREAS, it is well documented that VA provides health care that is as good or better than private sector health care, and does so at a lower cost compared to other national health care systems; and

WHEREAS, veterans who use the VA health care system have repeatedly indicated their preference for and satisfaction with the care they receive directly from VA, notwithstanding existing problems that VA must overcome, including the lack of timely and convenient access in some locations; and

WHEREAS, independent assessments of the VA health care system have found that the principal cause of access problems was insufficient funding provided to VA to meet the growing demand for care by veterans; and

WHEREAS, VA must successfully complete the Asset and Infrastructure Review (AIR) currently underway to implement a long-term strategy to rebuild, modernize, maintain and expand medical facilities; and

WHEREAS, VA must continue to fully and faithfully implement the VA MISSION Act (Public Law 115–182) to ensure that VA remains the primary provider and coordinator of care for veterans, while optimizing the use of new community care networks to fill in gaps when and where VA is unable to deliver timely, convenient care; and

WHEREAS, VA must realign and expand availability of health care services to meet the diverse needs of future veterans, including women and minority veterans, and those who reside in rural and remote regions far from VA facilities; and

WHEREAS, VA must reform its management by increasing efficiency, transparency and accountability to become more veteran-centric and responsive as an organization; and

WHEREAS, in addition to its first mission of providing care to ill and injured veterans, VA is also expected to fulfill three other critical health care missions: educating and training health care professionals; conducting medical and prosthetic research; and serving the nation in times of national emergency; and

WHEREAS, VA facilities are affiliated with 168 medical schools for physician education and 40 other health professions represented through affiliations agreements with more than 1,800 colleges and universities, and annually train over 69,000 medical students and residents—about 70% of all physicians in the United States—nearly 29,000 nurses and more than 30,000 other health professionals; and

WHEREAS, VA's biomedical research and development programs have established new treatments and models of care tailored to the needs of disabled veterans, including a vast array of prosthetic, orthotic and other assistive devices, and elevated the standard of medical care for all Americans; and

WHEREAS, VA has a federal emergency preparedness responsibility to assist the Departments of Homeland Security and Health and Human Services with natural disasters and national emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, and VA also serves as a backup for the Department of Defense in times of war; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, believes the nation must continue to honor the service and sacrifices of our nation's ill and injured veterans by strengthening and protecting a modern, high-quality, accessible and accountable VA health care system; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that to provide timely and convenient access to enrolled veterans, the VA health care system remain the primary provider and the coordinator of care, while continuing to optimize the use of community care networks to fill in gaps, particularly in rural and remote areas; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV calls on Congress and the Administration to provide timely and sufficient funding to the VA health care system to meet the continuing demand for care by ill and injured veterans in order to fulfill our promises to the men and women who served; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV will oppose any recommendation or proposal that could lead to weakening, diminishing or dismantling of the VA health care system that millions of veterans have chosen and rely upon, or that would weaken VA research or medical education programs.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 519
CONDUCT WELL-DESIGNED STUDIES TO DETERMINE EFFECTIVENESS OF
HYPERBARIC OXYGEN THERAPY ON TREATMENT-RESISTENT TRAUMATIC
BRAIN INJURIES AND POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

WHEREAS, thousands of veterans have received treatment from VA for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI) (or both), which are often related to their military service, but have not experienced significant or sustained improvements in health; and

WHEREAS, the FDA has cleared Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (HBOT), as a combination treatment of increased oxygen (hyperoxia) at increased hydrostatic pressure for several types of injury indications such as wound healing, necrotizing infections, burns, radiation injury, and carbon monoxide poisoning, and its use for treating these conditions does not appear to have significant side effects for most populations; and

WHEREAS, in case series of TBI and/or PTSD populations, HBOT, has statistically significantly improved cerebral blood flow and mean scores on post-concussion symptoms (PCS), PTSD, depression, and anxiety symptom checklists, as well as cognitive functioning and quality of life, but these physiological changes have not necessarily been associated with clinically significant improvements in symptoms; and

WHEREAS, in 2018, VA published its Evidence Brief: Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy (HBOT) for Traumatic Brain Injury and/or Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, which reviewed available high-quality studies (Randomized Controlled Trials or RCTs), in response to veterans and other stakeholders anecdotal reports of improvements in functionality and quality of life; and

WHEREAS, VA's analysis found that there were no high quality studies available on the effect of HBOT on post-traumatic stress disorder and those available for TBI showed inconclusive benefits; and

WHEREAS, they also found evidence of increased risk for veterans with moderate to severe TBI who used HBOT to experience pulmonary complications; and

WHEREAS, the inconsistent evidence of effectiveness and lack of significant red flags for adverse health effects have led some to call for further evidence development on the off-label use of HBOT for TBI and/or PTSD for veterans in whom standard treatments have not been successful; and

WHEREAS, there is a significant need for innovative treatments for many veterans with treatment-resistant TBI and PTSD who have also expressed the desire for mental health and symptom relief that does not require the use of controlled substances that can lead to overuse and addiction; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, urges VA to conduct randomized controlled trials to determine the effectiveness of HBOT for veterans with treatment-resistant PTSD, and TBI; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that should VA determine that HBOT is effective, it should determine appropriate means of making this therapy accessible to appropriate veterans.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 524

EXTEND APPRECIATION TO THE JAMES A. HALEY VETERANS' HOSPITAL IN TAMPA FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE 99TH DAV NATIONAL CONVENTION

WHEREAS, the cooperation and professionalism extended by Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical personnel to the delegates and guests of the 99th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans and Auxiliary was laudable; and

WHEREAS, many of the delegates to our National Convention were in need of immediate medical treatment and required the assistance of prosthetic equipment to attend the National Convention; and

WHEREAS, in response to these requests, the health care officials from the James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital, staffed and maintained a high-quality outpatient clinic and prosthetic service within the Tampa Marriott Water Street; and

WHEREAS, the medical care and prosthetic services rendered to the delegates to this 99th National Convention were extended in a highly compassionate and professional manner; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, expresses its sincere gratitude and appreciation to the James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital for the professional and skillful health care delivered to the delegates to this 99th National Convention and for contributing to the overall success of this Convention.

* * *

(Whereupon, the Committee on Hospital and Voluntary Services Chair withdrew from the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Thank you. You have heard the motion. May I have a second?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Mic 4.

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Mic 4.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indistinguishable) Jr., past department commander, Connecticut, Chapter 2, second.

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: In accordance with Rule 9 now is the time for any rejected resolutions you wish read. Hearing none, all those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered.

(Whereupon, the Committee on Hospital and Voluntary Services Chair withdrew from the stage.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Next I would like to call upon Chairman Joe Hall for the report of the Committee on Employment.

(Whereupon, the Committee on Employment Chair advanced to the podium.)

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN JOE HALL: Comrade Commander and delegates. The National Convention Committee on Employment was called to order on August 1st, 2021, by the able Committee advisors Jeremy Villanueva and Jeff Hall.

The first order of business the election of a Convention Committee chairman and secretary. Joe Hall was elected as chairman and Jeffrey Blonders was selected as secretary.

The Committee then proceeded to review the resolutions submitted and I will now report to you the resolutions recommended for adoption by this National Convention. For the purpose of saving time I will read only the number and purpose of the resolution.

038, provide educational benefits for dependents of service-connected veterans rated 80 percent or more disabled; 123, support veterans preference in public employment; 124, eliminate the delimiting date for eligible spouses and surviving spouses for benefits provided under Chapter 35, Title 38, U.S.C.;

Support licensure and certification of active-duty service personnel; support outreach and employment of women veterans was Resolution 126; 127, eliminate the 12-year rule to request V-R-N-E benefits under Chapter 31, leaving the date to apply for that benefit open-ended;

128, monitor activities of the Mandatory Transition G-P-S program; 143, remove requirements that VA compensation of service-connected veterans is counted as income for the purposes of federal financial aid determinations; 172, support prompt payment of contracts to service-disabled veteran-owned businesses;

173, support legislation enhancing government-wide goals for participation by small businesses owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans; 174, support legislation to improve and protect education and employment benefits for disabled veterans and their survivors;

175, support legislation to reimburse, replace, and extend the education and vocational benefits for disabled veterans and their survivors for education and training impacted by COVID-19; 265, provide adequate funding and permanency for veterans' employment and training programs;

267, support extension of a period of employment services under V-R-N-E; 269, require the United States Congress to create a work projects program which guarantees federal employment to service-

disabled veterans; 270, support legislation to extend the duration of V-R-N-E benefits beyond 48 months;

272, support the adoption of programs and legislation to reduce the barriers to employment, education, and full use and access to other benefits earned through service in the military; 305, protect veterans from employment discrimination when receiving health care for service-connected conditions;

435, adequate staffing levels of the VA Veteran Readiness and Employment Service; 436, support legislation to provide a reasonable transition period for service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses to retain federal protected status following the death of the disabled veteran owner;

437, create an Economic Opportunity Administration within the Department of Veterans Affairs; 438, supporting fraud and prevention controls over service-disabled veteran-owned small business program; 439, support verification improvements for veteran-owned businesses within the VA;

441, oppose using DVOPs and LVER to work with or process assistance programs unrelated to veterans; 442, eliminate annual employment verification questionnaire by veterans in receipt of individual un-employability benefits; and 444, support legislation to strengthen and protect service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses.

Comrade Commander, this completes the report on the Committee on Employment. On behalf of the Committee I move the adoption of these resolutions and that the Committee be discharged with the thanks of the National Convention. (Applause)

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 038 PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS FOR DEPENDENTS OF SERVICE-CONNECTED VETERANS RATED 80% OR MORE DISABLED

WHEREAS, chapter 35, title 38, United States Code, extends educational assistance to the dependents of service-connected veterans who are evaluated as permanently and totally disabled; and

WHEREAS, many service-connected veterans are rated 80% and 90% disabled, whose dependents cannot afford to attend an institution of higher learning or pursue a vocational endeavor because of the reduced earning ability of such veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, seeks the enactment of legislation which would extend educational assistance under chapter 35, title 38, United States Code, to the dependents of veterans who have service-connected disability ratings of 80% or more.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 123 SUPPORT VETERANS' PREFERENCE IN PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT

WHEREAS, DAV strongly supports federal, state, and local veterans' preference laws; and

WHEREAS, under section 2108, title 5, United States Code, qualified veterans with military service in periods of conflict receive a five-point preference in federal hiring, and service-disabled veterans receive a 10-point preference; and

WHEREAS, numerous special hiring authorities exist in federal law for veterans and service-disabled veterans, including the veterans recruitment appointment authority, Veterans Employment Opportunities Act of 1998 hiring authority and the 30% or more disabled veterans hiring authority; and

WHEREAS, the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, as amended, requires most federal contractors to have an "Affirmative Action" plan for employment of service-disabled veterans, veterans who served during periods of conflict, and recently separated veterans; and

WHEREAS, the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act was enacted to protect veterans from job discrimination and ensure their right to re-employment after an absence due to service in the uniformed services, to include protection for seniority, health insurance and retirement benefits; and

WHEREAS, federal agencies generally have not taken a proactive position on identifying patterns and practices of veterans' preference employment discrimination violations; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports veterans' preference in federal, state and local employment, greater enforcement provisions and increased accountability for veterans hiring compliance; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports appropriate enforcement against systemic veterans' preference discrimination; broader utilization of veterans and service-disabled veterans hiring

preference; and substantive improvement of recruitment and hiring of veterans generally and service-disabled veterans specifically.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 124
ELIMINATE THE DELIMITING DATE FOR ELIGIBLE SPOUSES
AND SURVIVING SPOUSES FOR BENEFITS PROVIDED UNDER
CHAPTER 35, TITLE 38, UNITED STATES CODE

WHEREAS, dependents and survivors eligible for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) education benefits under chapter 35, title 38, United States Code, have 10 years in which to apply for and complete programs of education; and

WHEREAS, this 10-year period begins either from the date a veteran is evaluated by the VA as permanently and totally disabled from service-connected disabilities or 10 years from the date of such veteran's death due to service-connected disability; and

WHEREAS, in many instances, because of family obligations or the need to provide care to the veteran, spouses and surviving spouses may not have had an opportunity to apply for these benefits; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, seeks the enactment of legislation to eliminate the delimiting date for spouses and surviving spouses for purposes of benefits provided under chapter 35, title 38, United States Code.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 125
SUPPORT LICENSURE AND CERTIFICATION OF
ACTIVE DUTY SERVICE PERSONNEL

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense (DOD) establishes, measures and evaluates performance standards for every occupation within the armed forces, providing some of the best vocational training in the nation to its military personnel; and

WHEREAS, that training is not recognized as fulfilling the certification and licensure requirements of applicable civilian equivalent occupations by all of the states; and

WHEREAS, many former military personnel, certified as proficient in their military occupational specialty are not certified or licensed to perform a comparable job in the civilian workforce once they leave the military; and

WHEREAS, many occupational career fields in the armed forces could translate to civilian occupations if DOD, in collaboration with states, unions and certifying/licensing entities, would expand its training curriculum to meet the various certification and licensure requirements of applicable civilian equivalent occupations, or forge some other path to do so; and

WHEREAS, once DOD expands its training approaches to meet the requirements of civilian equivalent career paths, service members could take certification or licensure equivalency examinations to gain journeyman status on par with the military occupation level of proficiency for the state in which they plan to reside; and

WHEREAS, the state in which the military service member plans to reside could then confer the appropriate journeyman equivalent status; and

WHEREAS, as military service members continue to serve, additional training or education could be counted as continuing training or education credits, thereby allowing them to retain certification and/or licensure status; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 112-56, the VOW to Hire Heroes Act, mandates the Department of Labor's (DOL) Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training to carry out a demonstration project on credentialing to facilitate the seamless transition of members of the armed forces to civilian employment by selecting up to five military occupational specialties with a skill or set of skills that are required for civilian employment in industries with high career demand; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports the elimination of employment barriers that impede the transfer of military occupations to the civilian labor market; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV urges Congress to engage in a national dialogue, working closely with the Administration generally, and DOD, Department of Veterans Affairs and DOL specifically, as well as state governments, employers, trade unions, and licensure and credentialing entities, to

establish a clear process so that military training meets civilian certification and licensure requirements for the states in which veterans choose to live once they leave military service.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 126
SUPPORT OUTREACH AND EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN VETERANS

WHEREAS, many women who have served in the military are not aware of services available to them through State Employment Security Agencies/State Workforce Agencies and therefore are less likely to obtain employment and training assistance than their male counterparts; and

WHEREAS, over the past decade, a significant increase has occurred in the number of women veterans in need of employment and training services; and

WHEREAS, because of the reduction in federal programs and the reduction of jobs for women in the private sector, the number of unemployed women veterans continues to increase; and

WHEREAS, workforce trends indicate only job-ready and highly skilled women veterans are able to find career employment; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, urges Congress to enact legislation to establish and fund special programs and outreach to women veterans, especially service-disabled women veterans, in need of employment assistance from the nation’s basic labor exchange system and training assistance through programs operated under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV calls for additional training to be provided to service providers to address the delivery of services to, and the under-representation of, women veterans in career employment.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 127
ELIMINATE THE 12-YEAR RULE TO REQUEST DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS VETERAN READINESS AND EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS UNDER CHAPTER 31, FOR ALL VETERANS, LEAVING THE DATE TO APPLY FOR THAT BENEFIT OPEN-ENDED

WHEREAS, not all disabled veterans are aware of their possible entitlements to Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) programs at the time they are awarded service connection for disabilities; and

WHEREAS, not all awards of service connection are rated high enough to enable veterans to be awarded chapter 31 benefits; and

WHEREAS, not all disabled veterans are under the impression that they need vocational rehabilitation until later, often after the current 12-year rule excludes them from the benefit they need and would otherwise have been entitled to; and

WHEREAS, the VA puts no time limit on when a veteran may claim his or her disability, and the VA also does not put a time limit on requesting another service-connected benefit; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 116-315 removed this period of eligibility but only for veterans who were discharged after January 1, 2013; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, seeks legislation to eliminate the 12-year limitation to apply for VR&E benefits for all veterans, leaving a veteran’s date of entitlement open ended without time limit.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 128
MONITOR ACTIVITIES OF THE MANDATORY TRANSITION GOALS, PLANS, SUCCESS PROGRAM

WHEREAS, current law authorizes comprehensive transition assistance benefits and services for separating service members and their spouses, and requires that the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) and Disabled Transition Assistance Program (DTAP), now known as the Transition Goals, Plans, Success (GPS) program, be established and maintained; and

WHEREAS, the transition from military service to civilian life is very difficult for many veterans who must overcome obstacles to successful employment; and

WHEREAS, the transition program was created to help our separating service members successfully transition to the civilian workforce, start a business or pursue training or higher education

and is now mandatory for active-duty personnel, except under certain circumstances as specified in Public Law 112-56, the VOW to Hire Heroes Act; and

WHEREAS, participation by DAV and other veterans service organizations in the Transition GPS program is essential to service members to gain a full understanding of entitlements and free assistance and representation available upon discharge from military service; and

WHEREAS, the Transition GPS program expands the previous TAP and DTAP workshops from five to seven days (or longer in some instances) to strengthen, standardize and expand counseling and guidance for service members as they are separating from military service while transforming the military's approach to education, training and credentialing for service members; and

WHEREAS, the Transition GPS program, and its component TAP and DTAP workshops, are essential to easing some of the problems associated with transition, as is periodic review of training methodology and the collection and analysis of course participant critiques to ensure the program is fulfilling its intended objective, as mandated in Public Law 112-56; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, urges Congress to monitor the review of the Transition GPS program, its workshops, training methodology and delivery of services, and the collection and analysis of course critiques; and to ensure the inclusion of DAV and other veterans service organizations in workshops, in order to confirm the program is meeting its objective, and to follow up with participants to determine if they found gainful employment following such training.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 143

REMOVE REQUIREMENT THAT DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS COMPENSATION TO SERVICE-CONNECTED VETERANS IS COUNTED AS INCOME FOR PURPOSES OF FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID DETERMINATIONS

WHEREAS, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) monthly disability compensation is a tax-free benefit awarded to ill and injured veterans and is not considered income under the Internal Revenue Code; and

WHEREAS, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) requires dependents of service-connected disabled veterans in receipt of VA disability compensation to disclose their parents' compensation as income under penalty of perjury; and

WHEREAS, this requirement is contrary to the intent of the VA disability compensation award and contrary to tax law; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports legislation to counter this arbitrary and capricious victimization of ill and injured veterans and their dependents, which can render the dependent child of a service-disabled veteran ineligible for federal student aid; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this requirement is unjust to service-disabled veterans and their dependents.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 172

SUPPORT PROMPT PAYMENT OF CONTRACTS TO SERVICE-DISABLED VETERAN-OWNED BUSINESSES

WHEREAS, the program of contracts for Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSB) on a preferential basis should be of a great assistance to SDVOSBs that hire disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, we are aware of problems involving the nonpayment of contracts; and

WHEREAS, when these SDVOSBs complain about reduced payments, the threat of rejection from future contracts and/or the threat of being put out of business; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, seeks and strongly supports the immediate payment of all completed SDVOSB contracts that are unpaid for more than one year, the expeditious payment of all unpaid completed SDVOSB contracts and an investigation of the inappropriate tactics used against our comrades by an independent prosecutor.

RESOLUTION NO. 173
SUPPORT LEGISLATION ENHANCING GOVERNMENT-WIDE GOALS
FOR PARTICIPATION BY SMALL BUSINESSES OWNED AND
CONTROLLED BY SERVICE-DISABLED VETERANS

WHEREAS, section 502, Public Law 106-50, the Veterans Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development Act of 1999, codified “the Government-wide goal for participation by small business concerns owned and controlled by service-disabled veterans shall be established at not less than 3 percent of the total value of all prime contract and subcontract awards for each fiscal year;” and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization has the Center for Veterans Enterprise, which maintains VA’s database of Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (VOSB) and Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSB), as well as serving as an advocate for VOSBs, SDVOSBs, historically underutilized business (HUB) zone businesses and women-owned small businesses; and

WHEREAS, the database va.gov/osdbu vendor information pages (VIP) lists businesses that are 51% or more owned by veterans and is the only one within the federal government; and

WHEREAS, the VIP was originally established to act as a single-source database of certified VOSBs and SDVOSBs to supply all federal agencies and prime contractors information to assist the federal government with achieving the not less than 3% goal of set-aside contracts for SDVOSBs and/or contracts being awarded to SDVOSB or VOSB concerns, as mandated in Public Law 106-50; and

WHEREAS, while section 8127 (f)(4), Public Law 109-461, requires verification of veterans’ ownership of listed SDVOSBs and VOSBs, as well as verification of the service-disabled status of SDVOSBs, the federal agencies tasked with ensuring set-asides and timely, comprehensive verification have failed to do so; and

WHEREAS, according to the VA Office of Inspector General report, “Audit of Veteran-Owned and Service Disabled-Owned Small Business Programs,” Report Number 10-02436-234, dated July 25, 2011, 32 of 42 statistically selected businesses that were reviewed—76%—were either ineligible to participate in the programs or were ineligible for the awarded contracts; and

WHEREAS, few government agencies have met, much less exceeded, the set-aside program goal for disabled veteran-owned businesses; and

WHEREAS, based on section 1347, Public Law 111-240, the Small Business Jobs Act of 2010, SDVOSBs, HUB zone businesses, women-owned small businesses and small businesses now have the same meaning, thus providing parity to each of these businesses when competing for contracts; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, calls on all government agencies to meet the set-aside goal of not less than 3% of the total value of all prime and subcontract awards to businesses controlled by service-disabled veterans each fiscal year; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Congress should enact legislation requiring the federal government make set-asides mandatory rather than be goals, and should require underperforming federal agencies to make up shortfalls in achieving these goals in the subsequent fiscal year; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Congress should revise the enforcement penalties for misrepresentation of a business concern as a VOSB or SDVOSB from a reasonable period of time as determined by the Secretary to a period of not less than five years; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Congress must ensure adequate resources are available to the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization to expedite verification of VIP business listing eligibility and all federal agencies to effectively monitor and hold accountable those agencies that are not meeting the set-aside goal of not less than 3%, and require all federal agencies to list in their annual reports their prior fiscal year’s actual percentage of meeting this goal, the results of which would serve as an annual report card of which agencies need the most assistance in the development and implementation of stronger contracting compliance.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 174

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO IMPROVE AND PROTECT EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS FOR DISABLED VETERANS AND THEIR SURVIVORS

WHEREAS, VA's Veterans Readiness and Employment (VR&E) and Survivors and Dependents' Educational Assistance (Chapter 35) have been integral to improving the economic outlook for both service-disabled veterans and their survivors; and

WHEREAS, despite improvements in the overall veteran unemployment rate, service-disabled veterans still have a higher rate of unemployment than their civilian counterparts; and

WHEREAS, programs, such as the VetSuccess on Campus, that could be used to reach more rural locations, could be expanded and strengthened; and

WHEREAS, both Chapter 35 and VA's VR&E benefits should be strengthened and protected from budget cuts and fraud, waste, and abuse; and

WHEREAS, survivors and dependents of severely disabled veterans should see their benefits under Chapter 35 strengthened and increased so as not to cause a financial burden if they choose to attend school; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports legislation that would improve and protect VA's education and employment benefits for service-disabled veterans and their survivors.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 175

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO REIMBURSE, REPLACE AND EXTEND EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL BENEFITS FOR DISABLED VETERANS AND THEIR SURVIVORS FOR EDUCATION/TRAINING IMPACTED BY COVID-19

WHEREAS, all educational and vocational programs administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) have an established number of months of potential eligibility; and

WHEREAS, the underlying premise for the educational and vocational programs is to enable the veteran and/or their dependents to obtain college/university/trade school-based education; and

WHEREAS, during the COVID-19 pandemic, all schools/colleges/universities shut down in-person sessions to include both class and counseling; and

WHEREAS, this disruption impacted the quality of education obtained during that period and the schools/students continue to face difficulties in adjusting to this new format; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, proposes, seeks and strongly supports Congress directing the VA to not count the semesters/quarters of school that were interrupted, beginning in March 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions, against the overall number of months of eligibility for any veteran/dependent who was in receipt of benefits from any VA education or vocational program at the time, and continuing until such a time as Congress determines that stability to the educational process has returned; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports legislation to ensure that any delimiting date, whether through time frame of eligibility or, in the case of dependent children, the attainment of age, be extended for one full semester/quarter for each semester/quarter impacted by the COVID-19 disruptions to fully mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 closures that began in March 2020.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 265

PROVIDE ADEQUATE FUNDING AND PERMANENCY FOR VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT AND/OR TRAINING PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, the extended economic downturn has had a greater impact on veterans generally and service-disabled veterans specifically than many other groups; and

WHEREAS, there are numerous veterans employment and training programs reaching out to provide critical assistance but are in need of adequate staffing and funding; and

WHEREAS, these programs include the Veterans' Employment and Training Service of the Department of Labor, National Veterans Training Institute of the Small Business Administration, Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program, Local Veterans Employment Representative program, homeless assistance programs and others; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, seeks and supports adequate funding and permanency for all veterans' employment and training programs.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 267

SUPPORT EXTENSION OF A PERIOD OF EMPLOYMENT SERVICES UNDER THE VETERAN READINESS AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

WHEREAS, title 38, United States Code, §3105 states the period of a Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) program for a veteran may not exceed 48 months; and

WHEREAS, title 38, United States Code §3105 allows veterans counseling and placement and post-placement services for an additional period not to exceed eighteen months in any case in which the Secretary determines the provision of such counseling and services to be necessary to accomplish the purposes of a rehabilitation program in the individual case; and

WHEREAS, veterans with service-connected disabilities have substantial industrial impairments and face employment barriers even after rehabilitation or achievement of vocational goals; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, seeks to ensure that service-connected veterans receive the services necessary to obtain and maintain suitable employment and supports an extension up to 24 months for counseling and placement and post-placement services.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 269

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO CREATE A WORK PROJECTS PROGRAM THAT GUARANTEES FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT TO SERVICE-DISABLED VETERANS

WHEREAS, the federal government set a precedent with the creation of the Works Progress Administration (WPA), later renamed the Work Projects Administration (WPA) to complete major public works projects before World War II; and

WHEREAS, the WPA was highly successful in completing major public works projects, and

WHEREAS, general government infrastructure nationwide lacks sufficient funding to maintain the adequate safety of public roads, bridges, water supplies, and the like; and

WHEREAS, the nation's veterans have proved themselves as dedicated, highly trained, and capable workers, that bring leadership and maturity to the workforce; and

WHEREAS, such a program has the potential to significantly reduce veteran homelessness caused by high unemployment rates and demonstrate the gratitude of the people served by our veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, strongly supports legislation to require the United States Congress to create and fund, without reduction to VA or DOD funding, a jobs program similar to the WPA, which guarantees federal employment to service-disabled veterans being discharged from military service under other than dishonorable conditions.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 270

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO EXTEND THE DURATION OF VETERAN READINESS AND EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS BEYOND 48 MONTHS

WHEREAS, veterans that have a disability rating with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and are considered to have an employment handicap are eligible for Veteran Readiness & Employment (VR&E) services through the VA; and

WHEREAS, disabled veterans are eligible for VR&E for a duration not to exceed 48 months (or its equivalent when pursued on a part-time basis); and

WHEREAS, many veterans do not have any college prior to entering the VR&E program and require basic entry level courses to start college; and

WHEREAS, VR&E released its Longitudinal Study Annual Report for fiscal year 2016, in which it states that the average college degree takes up to five years to complete; and

WHEREAS, it would be more equitable if the laws and regulations were changed so that veterans were eligible for VR&E benefits beyond 48 months, extending them to a minimum of 60 months, to ensure that they can complete their program without additional financial burden; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports legislation that would allow VR&E benefits to be extended, to a minimum of 60 months, for eligible veterans, to ensure that they can complete their program without additional financial burden.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 272
SUPPORT THE ADOPTION OF PROGRAMS AND LEGISLATION TO
REDUCE BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND FULL USE
AND ACCESS TO OTHER BENEFITS EARNED THROUGH SERVICE
IN THE UNITED STATES MILITARY

WHEREAS, the DAV is dedicated to empowering veterans to lead high quality lives with respect and dignity; and

WHEREAS, a primary focus for the DAV is to provide free, professional assistance to service-disabled veterans and their families in obtaining benefits an services earned through military service; and

WHEREAS, furthering their education and seeking gainful employment to support themselves and their families becomes a veteran's immediate and continued focus upon leaving service; and

WHEREAS, upon separation from service, veterans do not always fully understand the scope and breadth of their earned benefits, how to access those benefits, and often do not understand or realize the barriers that impede or infringe on those benefits; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports the adoption of programs and legislation to identify, reduce and remove barriers to a service-disabled veteran's employment, continued education and full access and use of other benefits earned as a result of their service-connected disability.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 305
PROTECT VETERANS FROM EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION WHEN
RECEIVING HEALTH CARE FOR SERVICE-CONNECTED CONDITIONS

WHEREAS, the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) requires certain employers to allow employees to take reasonable unpaid leave for qualified medical and family reasons; and

WHEREAS, the National Defense Authorization Acts for fiscal years 2008 and 2010 amended the FMLA to include “qualifying exigency leave” and “military caregiver leave” to better balance the unique needs of employees with family members in the military and family members ill and injured while serving in the military; and

WHEREAS, the FMLA delays service-connected disabled veterans' eligibility to job-protected medical leave; and

WHEREAS, many service-disabled veterans with the ability to work need ongoing care to maintain their health status and retain their employability; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, urges Congress to extend protection under the FMLA to encompass the medical care needs of veterans with service-connected disabilities.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 435
SUPPORT ADEQUATE STAFFING LEVELS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
VETERANS AFFAIRS VETERAN READINESS AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) service is charged with preparing service-disabled veterans for suitable employment or providing independent-living services to those veterans with disabilities severe enough to render them unemployable; and

WHEREAS, transition of service-disabled veterans to meaningful employment relies heavily on VA's ability to provide vocational rehabilitation and employment services in a timely and effective manner, but the demands and expectations being placed on the VR&E service are exceeding the organization's current capacity to effectively deliver a full continuum of comprehensive programs; and

WHEREAS, the VR&E service has been experiencing a shortage of staff nationwide because of insufficient funding, which, as a result, has caused delays in providing VR&E services to service-disabled veterans, thus reducing their opportunities to achieve successful and timely rehabilitation; and

WHEREAS, to increase emphasis on employment, the VR&E service has begun an initiative entitled "Coming Home to Work," an early outreach effort to provide VR&E services to eligible service members pending medical separation from active duty at military treatment facilities, which will require additional staff to maintain efforts nationwide; and

WHEREAS, even though the focus of the VR&E service has drastically changed to career development and employment, it is not clear, despite VR&E's additional 80 employment coordinators, whether VA is able to meet the current and future demand for employment services; and

WHEREAS, in addition, the current 60 days of employment as the standard for a veteran to be considered fully employed is insufficient given that employers typically require longer probationary employment timeframes; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports strengthening of VA's VR&E service to meet the demands of service-disabled veterans by providing increased staffing and funding, a more timely and effective transition into the workforce, and placement follow-up with employers for at least six months.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 436
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE A REASONABLE
TRANSITION PERIOD FOR SERVICE-DISABLED VETERAN-OWNED
SMALL BUSINESSES TO RETAIN FEDERAL PROTECTED STATUS
FOLLOWING THE DEATH OF THE DISABLED VETERAN OWNER

WHEREAS, section 308, Public Law 108-183, the Veterans Benefits Act of 2003, established a procurement program for Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB); and

WHEREAS, Executive Order 13360, Contracting with Service-Disabled Veterans' Businesses, directs all federal agencies to provide opportunities for SDVOSBs to increase their federal contracting and subcontracting opportunities; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 109-461, the Veterans Benefits, Health Care, and Information Technology Act of 2006, established a Veterans First Contracting Program specifically for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to increase business opportunities with the VA for SDVOSBs; and

WHEREAS, SDVOSBs and other small businesses are the focus of Public Law 111-240, the Small Business Jobs Act of 2010, which provides enhanced opportunities for SDVOSBs to compete for federal projects and subcontracting opportunities; and

WHEREAS, the SDVOSB category has encouraged many service-disabled veterans to take the personal risk of establishing small businesses with the support of their families, their own personal financial resources, the VA and, in some cases, commercial institutions; and

WHEREAS, these SDVOSBs have created new job opportunities for American citizens and, in many cases, have hired other service-disabled veterans and veterans during very challenging economic times; and

WHEREAS, in enacting Public Law 111-240, the federal government acknowledges that it is essential to create and grow small businesses in order to create new jobs and help the country recover from a most severe recession and provide for future job growth; and

WHEREAS, the SDVOSB category requires the service-disabled veteran to own at least 51% of the stock in the business and remain active in the day-to-day operations of the business in order for the business to maintain its SDVOSB status; and

WHEREAS, the enabling legislation for the SDVOSB program does not currently include a provision dealing with the treatment of the business after the death of the veteran owner; and

WHEREAS, since loss of the company's SDVOSB status would put the service-disabled veteran's investment, family heirs and employees at severe risk due to either downsizing or closing the business due to loss of federal procurement opportunities; and

WHEREAS, section 8127 (h)(2)(C), Public Law 109-461, (applicable only to VA) allows for a 10-year transition period to the surviving spouse of a 100% service-disabled veteran owner of a SDVOSB or a veteran owner who dies as a result of a service-connected disability; and

WHEREAS, allowing the surviving spouses or heirs of service-disabled veterans to gain a reasonable transition period for the SDVOSB program would help to maintain the jobs created by the

SDVOSB for service-disabled veterans, veterans and other employees, and will not put these individuals at increased financial risk and hardship due to likely job loss or downsizing of the business; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports the enactment of legislation to provide a reasonable transition period for all SDVOSBs, not covered by Public Law 109-461, to retain their SDVOSB status with the federal government following the death of the service-disabled veteran owner via a surviving spouse, children or heirs, and thus allowing the business to restructure over time without necessarily downsizing, laying off workers or closing.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 437
CREATE AN ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ADMINISTRATION
WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

WHEREAS, veterans programs have become more complex over the years, the fragmented nature of these programs has resulted in a decreased ability of senior management to monitor the delivery of each veterans' employment, education, and training program; and

WHEREAS, when the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) was created, the initial reason for doing so was to avoid duplication, fragmentation or delay in the various services provided to veterans; and

WHEREAS, anticipating veterans' long-term needs, not only for health care and disability compensation but also for education and employment, requires a new approach; and

WHEREAS, establishing a fourth administration within VA dedicated to creating economic opportunities for veterans would increase the visibility and accountability of all veterans education and employment-related programs; and

WHEREAS, despite a steadily increasing workload due to more veterans becoming eligible as the compensation backlog is reduced, programs such as Veteran Readiness and Employment have seen a stagnation of budget requests and even reductions; and

WHEREAS, this new centralized veterans economic opportunity administration should be administered through a new position of Under Secretary for said organization; and

WHEREAS, such a move would allow the Under Secretary for Benefits to focus specifically on the delivery of disability compensation and pension benefits to disabled veterans, their dependents and survivors; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, recommends that Congress separate from the Veterans Benefits Administration all programs related to economic opportunity and create a new administration and that it should be appropriately funded and administered by an Under Secretary for Economic Opportunity.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 438
SUPPORT FRAUD PREVENTION CONTROLS OVER SERVICE-DISABLED
VETERAN-OWNED SMALL BUSINESS PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business Program (SDVOSB), designed to steer \$4 billion in government contracts to businesses owned by service-disabled veterans, has allowed over \$90 million to be fraudulently awarded to ineligible companies; and

WHEREAS, the Small Business Administration failed to properly check applicants before awarding contracts and failed to take action on service-disabled veterans' complaints of abuse; and

WHEREAS, testimony presented by the United States Government Accountability Office identified millions of dollars of SDVOSB contracts awarded to ineligible firms; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, seeks and strongly supports the investigation, prevention and monitoring controls and to ensure that fraud is aggressively prosecuted or companies having committed fraud are suspended, debarred or otherwise held accountable.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 439
SUPPORT VERIFICATION IMPROVEMENTS FOR VETERAN-OWNED
BUSINESSES WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

WHEREAS, the military is downsizing, and thousands of former military personnel who have honorably served their country could become unemployed when they leave the military; and

WHEREAS, small business development assistance to veterans who have honorably served this country is a veterans benefit that dates back to the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is authorized under the Veterans First program to enter into contracts first with Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSB) and then with Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (VOSB); and

WHEREAS, Congress has found that VA has entered into contracts pursuant to the Veterans First program with companies that were not legitimate SDVOSBs or VOSBs; and

WHEREAS, VA has implemented a formal verification process that is overly burdensome; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, recommends VA simplify its verification process for SDVOSBs and VOSBs interested in participating in the VA's Veterans First Contracting Program.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 441
OPPOSE USING DISABLED VETERANS OUTREACH PROGRAM SPECIALISTS
AND LOCAL VETERANS EMPLOYMENT REPRESENTATIVES TO WORK WITH
OR PROCESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS UNRELATED TO VETERANS

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Labor's Veterans Employment and Training Service administers programs to assist veterans with their employment and training needs; and

WHEREAS, Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists (DVOPS) provide intensive services to disabled veterans and veterans with barriers to employment in finding work, and Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) work with nondisabled veterans, informing them of employment opportunities, and outreach to community businesses to locate employment opportunities; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Public Law 112-56, the VOW to Hire Heroes Act, state employment agencies are now directed to utilize DVOPS and LVERs to work on other public assistance-related programs, which diverts DVOPS/LVERs from their prime mission to assist veterans with their employment and training needs; and

WHEREAS, this same law directs the Secretary of Labor to conduct regular audits to ensure compliance with this provision; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, urges Congress to reverse its decision from Public Law 112-56, and return the duties of DVOPS and LVERs to concentrate their work to aid veterans.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 442
ELIMINATE ANNUAL EMPLOYMENT VERIFICATION QUESTIONNAIRE BY
VETERANS IN RECEIPT OF INDIVIDUAL UNEMPLOYABILITY BENEFITS

WHEREAS, veterans receiving individual unemployability (IU) benefits must complete required Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Form 21-4140-1 (Employment Questionnaire) fully and accurately on an annual basis, and return the form to the VA within 60 days of receipt; and

WHEREAS, the veteran is required to turn in the VA Form 21-4140-1 annually for up to 20 years; and

WHEREAS, if veterans do not return the form within 60 days of receipt, their benefits are reduced; and

WHEREAS, it would provide a great justice to the disabled veterans of this nation who are currently in receipt of IU to not have the burden of submitting to the VA an income verification on an annual basis; and

WHEREAS, a majority of such veterans are incapacitated in some way; and

WHEREAS, this impedes such veterans from filing paperwork appropriately as they age and their disabilities progress through the years; and

WHEREAS, the VA, as well as the Internal Revenue Service, is better equipped to communicate employment verification of veterans agency to agency as opposed to veteran to VA; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, urges VA to amend its policy on the annual employment questionnaire so that veterans in receipt of IU benefits are relieved of this burden.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 444
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO STRENGTHEN AND PROTECT
SERVICE-DISABLED VETERAN-OWNED SMALL BUSINESSES

WHEREAS, the federal governments support of Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSBs) contributes significantly to restoring veterans' quality of life while aiding in their transitions from active duty; and

WHEREAS, the federal government sets aside over \$105 billion in annual small business spending which the SDVOSBs compete for; and

WHEREAS, the Vets First Program was created under Public Law 109-461 for Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (VOSBs) and expanded the Service-Disabled Veteran contracting program for VA procurements in order for veteran business owners and the government to benefit mutually; and

WHEREAS, the Vets First Program's purpose is to ensure that legitimately owned and controlled VOSBs and Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSBs) are able to compete for VA VOSB and SDVOSB set-asides, and help stimulate the small business community and create growth for the economy; and

WHEREAS, the success of the SDVOSB programs greatly benefits the service-disabled veteran community; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports the enactment of legislation that strengthens and protects SDVOSB programs.

* * *

(Whereupon, the Employment Committee Chair withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: You have heard the motion. May I have a second?

MR. STEVEN SANTOS: Mic 4.

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Mic 4.

MR. SANTOS: Steven Santos, senior vice-commander, Department of Maine, second the motion

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: In accordance with Rule 9 now is the time for any rejected resolutions to be read. Are there any resolutions that you wish to be read? Hearing none, all in favor of the motion signify by saying aye; those opposed. So ordered.

(Whereupon, the Employment Committee Chair withdrew from the stage.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: I would like to call upon Chairman Nichole McWilliams for the report on Legislation and Veterans Rights.

(Whereupon, the Committee on Legislation and Veterans Rights Secretary advanced to the podium.)

LEGISLATION AND VETERANS RIGHTS SECRETARY NICHOLE McWILLIAMS: Comrade Commander and delegates, the National Convention Committee on Legislation and Veterans Rights was called to order on August 1st, 2021, by the Committee advisors Joy Ilem and Shane Liermann.

The first order of business was the election of a Convention Committee chairman and secretary. Vicki Brown was elected as chairman. And Nichole McWilliams was elected as secretary.

The Committee then proceeded to review the resolutions submitted. And I will now report to you the resolutions recommended for adoption by this National Convention. For the purpose of saving time I will read only the number and the purpose of the resolutions.

Resolution 001, increase the Grant and Specially Adaptive Reimbursement rates for automobiles and other conveyances to certain disabled veterans and authorize reimbursement from new adaptive equipment technologies;

002, support legislation to improve the VA Fiduciary Program; 003, support legislation authorizing presumptive service connection based on herbicide exposures for military personnel that served at air bases in Thailand during the Vietnam War;

004, support legislation providing that special separation benefits payments not be withheld from VA disability compensation payments; 013, oppose any recommendation by any commission or other source to reduce or eliminate benefits for disabled veterans;

014, oppose all attempts to change the basis of the Department of Veterans' Affairs Rating Schedule from the average impairments of earnings capacity standard; 032, support legislation to remove prohibition against current receipt of longevity retired pay and veterans' disability compensation for all longevity retired veterans;

033, support legislation to provide a temporary total disability compensation rating for an amputee rating while a new prosthetic device is developed and delivered; 034, support interest payments for Department of Veterans' Affairs retroactive awards one year or more;

035, support legislation to provide for presumptive service connection for tinnitus and hearing loss; 036, support meaningful claims and appeals reform; 037, expand POW presumptions; 044, support legislation for VA to provide child care services and assistance to veterans attending VA health care, benefits, education, employment, homeless and rehabilitative programs; (Applause)

045, support reforms related to the recovery of debts by the VA; 046, require VA to request private medical records prior to future examinations; 047, provide for—I'm sorry, 047, provide for a compensable rating for hearing-impaired veterans required to use a hearing aid;

048, support legislation to establish multiple automobile grants for eligible veterans; 049, support using the proposed reduction due process to all disability evaluation reductions; 050, support legislation to establish a supplementary, specially-adapted house, S-A-H, grant;

052, support legislation to award special monthly compensation at R-1 to veterans with anatomical loss or loss of use of three extremities; 054, support elimination of the link between chronicity and continuity with chronic diseases listed in 38, C.F.R., Section 3.309;

056, protect claimants from those charging fees for VA claims preparation, presentation, or prosecution; 057, improve and reform DIC benefits; 058, reform and improve service-connected disabled veterans life insurance;

059, streamline and improve specially-adapted housing and special housing adaption grants; 060, improvements to modernization of information technology; 062, oppose reduction, taxation, or elimination of veterans' benefits;

063, support legislation to increase disability compensation; 066, support legislation to allow all veterans to recover amounts withheld as tax on disability severance pay; 069, support legislation that requires VA to consider private medical evidence provided by a licensed private health care provider;

070, support legislation to provide for realistic cost-of-living allowances; 072, support legislation to reduce the ten-year rule for dependency and indemnity compensation; 073, support legislation to exclude veteran disability compensation from countable income eligibility for benefits and services from other government programs;

074, support oversight of VA's practices in evaluating disability claims for residuals of military sexual trauma; 075, oppose subjecting disability compensation and D-I-C to means testing; 070 (sic), oppose the long-term rounding down of COLAs in veterans benefits;

078, support legislation that would exempt benefits paid to wartime service-connected disabled veterans from the Pay-Go/Cut-Go provisions of the (Indistinguishable) Enforcement Act; 079, amend the law to provide ten-year protection for service-connected disability ratings;

080, support legislation to provide for service connection for disabling conditions resulting from toxic and environmental exposures; 082, oppose any proposals that would reduce payments of Department of Veterans' Affairs disability compensation by payments of Social Security Disability Insurance or any other federal benefit paid to a veteran;

084, consider treatment for presumptive service-connected condition as a claim for VA compensation; 085, support a more liberal review of "Other than Honorable" discharge for the purpose of eligibility for VA benefits and health care services;

086, oppose lump-sum payments for service-connected disabilities; 087, oppose the imposition of time limits for filing disability compensation claims; 088, oppose any change that would redefine service-connected disability or restrict the conditions or circumstances under which it may be established;

089, oppose the change of definition of herbicide agent for the purposes of establishing service-connection for disabilities related to herbicide exposure; 090, support legislation to increase the number of presumptive diseases related to contaminated water at Camp Lejeune;

091, presumptive service-connection for diseases and illnesses due to contaminants at Fort McClellan, Alabama; 092, amend the VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities for mental disorders; 093,

compensate Persian Gulf veterans suffering from illnesses circumstantially linked to their service in the Persian Gulf War;

094, support meaningful appeals processing reform; 095, support sufficient, timely, and predictable funding for all VA programs, benefits and services; 135, support legislation to increase maximum evaluation for service-connected headaches;

137, support legislation to oppose the payment of attorney fees based upon periods when the attorney was not involved in the claim; 138, support legislation to expand the recognized wartime service periods to include those veterans who served in combat environments from hostile military or terrorist activity from November 4th, 1979 through August 1st, 1990;

139, support legislation to allow for the use of an Intent to File in cases where an initial or supplemental claim for the same or similar benefit on the same or similar basis was previously denied; 140, support legislation to expand VA mental health transition services to all service members upon discharge through any available network in or outside the military;

141, demand for scientific evaluation, including disabilities of the thyroid, as presumptive Gulf War Disorder; 142, support legislation placing the burden on VA to demonstrate fugitive felon status; 145, support legislation authorizing the presumption of service-connection for all radiogenic diseases and eliminate dose exposure estimate requirements;

146, support legislation recognizing racial trauma as a stressor for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder; 149, support legislation to include children in legal custody as VA dependents; (Applause) 150, support legislation to direct the Secretary of VA to coordinate within the VA and with the DOD to verify dependency status;

152, support the elimination of the 30-day requirement for diseases associated with exposure to contaminants in the water supply at Camp Lejeune; 153, Congress must act to provide individual un-employability—I'm sorry, 153, Congress must act to protect individual un-employability;

153, (sic) remove the delimiting date for Persian Gulf War illnesses; 156, support legislation for studies and presumptive diseases related to (indistinguishable) exposures; 157, support legislation for health care and concession for exposure to burn pits;

158, support legislation to remove the prohibition against DOD members who are federal employees from communication on behalf of the DAV with federal agencies; 159, support reauthorization of the Persian Gulf War Veterans Act; 160, support reauthorization of the Agent Orange Act;

161, support legislation to provide studies related to and health care benefits resulting from toxic exposures at K-2; 162, support legislation that recognize presumptive service-connection for hypertension and (indistinguishable) as related to Agent Orange;

163, support legislation to expand radiation risks activities; 179, support a change in regulatory requirements rating under Section 4.30 under Title 38, C.F.R., to provide for temporary total rating for incapacitation of more than 21 days;

180, extend eligibility for mortgage protection life insurance for 100 percent service-connected veterans; 187, support an increase in the Department of Veterans' Affairs Burial Allowance for service-connected veterans and provide automatic annual adjustments;

192, support legislation to provide a realistic increase in VA compensation rates to address loss of quality of life; 194, oppose regional dispersion of the Board of Veterans Appeals; 195, support legislation to require the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims to decide each of appellant's assignments of error;

196, support legislation to cap attorneys' fees for benefits counseling and claims services before the VA; 197, increase benefit rate for the Home Improvement and Structural Alterations of HISA grant; 231, amend provision regarding eligibility for automobile adaptive equipment to include any veteran whose service-connected disability inhibits his or her ability to safely operate a motor vehicle;

236, support legislation to grant Aid and Attendance to a veteran's seriously disabled child; 239, support legislation to require VA to implement an optional path for visual-impaired veterans; 283, support change in 38, C.F.R., 4.71-A, Diagnostic Code 5227, allowing for a compensable rating for unfavorable or favorable (indistinguishable) of the ring or little finger;

293, increase grant funding for the local cemeteries; 295, support legislation to concede Agent Orange exposure to Guam, American Samoan and Johnston Island; 314, remove requirement of manifestation of core acne and P-C-T and acute and sub-acute peripheral neuropathy within one year of exposure to Agent Orange;

315, support legislation to recreate—support legislation to create presumptive service connection for long-term health effects of anti-malaria medications; 319, the veterans' claim number should no longer be the veterans' Social Security Number;

320, support a change in regulatory requirements for temporary total disability ratings; 493, establish immediate authorization of grants by the Board of Veterans Appeals on all cases advanced on the docket; 504, support availability of all official VA forms and materials in all threshold languages.

Comrade Commander, this completes the report of the Committee on Legislation and Veterans Rights. On behalf of the Committee I move the adoption of these resolutions and that the Committee may be discharged with the thanks of the National Convention. (Applause)

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RESOLUTION NO. 001
INCREASE THE GRANT AND SPECIALLY ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT
REIMBURSEMENT RATES FOR AUTOMOBILES AND OTHER CONVEYANCES
TO CERTAIN DISABLED VETERANS, AND AUTHORIZE REIMBURSEMENT
FOR NEW ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT TECHNOLOGIES

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides grants to assist eligible disabled veterans and military service members in purchasing specially equipped automobiles or other conveyances; and

WHEREAS, when originally established, the grant was set at an amount sufficient to cover the average retail cost of automobiles; and

WHEREAS, later adjustments elevated grants to amounts representing 80% of the average cost of automobiles; and

WHEREAS, the amount of the automobile allowance has not been further adjusted concurrent with increases in costs of automobiles, resulting in substantial erosion of the value of the benefit due to inflation; and

WHEREAS, the current grant level constitutes about 66% of the total average retail price of automobiles; and

WHEREAS, the VA also provides reimbursement for special adaptive equipment, but the rates of reimbursement have not kept pace with present-day costs to repair or replace such equipment; and

WHEREAS, advances in new automobile technologies, such as collision warning systems, electronic stability control, backup cameras and GPS systems, would enable disabled veterans to more safely operate vehicles; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports legislation to increase the automobile grant level to an amount representing 80% of the average cost of new automobiles; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports legislation and policies that would increase the rates of reimbursement for repairs and replacement of specially adaptive equipment for automobiles and other conveyances consistent with present-day costs; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV calls on Congress and the VA to support legislation and policies that would expand the items approved for reimbursement, such as collision warning systems, electronic stability control, backup cameras, GPS systems and other available safety technologies.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 002
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO IMPROVE THE DEPARTMENT
OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FIDUCIARY PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Fiduciary Program was established to protect veterans and other beneficiaries who, due to injury, disease, or age, are unable to manage their own financial affairs; and

WHEREAS, a VA payee, referred to by the VA as a VA fiduciary, is a paid position held by an individual or organization appointed to manage a veteran's VA benefit payments when a veteran is deemed to be financially incompetent by a court or by the VA; and

WHEREAS, the VA Fiduciary Program has been rife with fraud stemming from fiduciaries funneling money and assets from vulnerable veterans; and

WHEREAS, the VA Office of Inspector General (OIG) found that the Eastern Area Fiduciary Hub (EAFH), located in Indianapolis, did not properly investigate most complaints against fiduciaries and of the 12 determinations that were made by EAFH almost \$1 million had been stolen from veterans, which means that the total dollar amount of misuse and potential fraud was likely well over \$1 million had the VA properly investigated the matter—other OIG investigations have uncovered millions more missing from veteran accounts in other hubs; and

WHEREAS, part of the problem is a lack of oversight, some of the VA-appointed fiduciaries have criminal records, but were still approved; and

WHEREAS, OIG investigations also found that the required audits of the fiduciaries were not being done by the VA, and this allowed the thefts to continue for years; and

WHEREAS, in some cases the VA doesn't tell the veteran that they appointed a fiduciary and emptied the bank accounts of the veteran; and

WHEREAS, in some cases, VA employees (unlawfully) gave VA fiduciaries permission to sell the veteran's home and unlawfully took the Social Security payments of the veteran's wife and gave those to the VA Fiduciary; and

WHEREAS, in some cases the veteran called the VA to report the financial abuse but was denied help by VA employees, because the vulnerable veteran could not provide "proof" of the abuse; and

WHEREAS, formal complaints filed with VA OIG about VA Fiduciary Program employees (i.e., field examiners and designated fraud investigators), are being denied because VA OIG no longer investigates complaints filed against the VA Fiduciary Program, rather veterans are being redirected to the applicable fiduciary hub suspected of malfeasance so the VA Fiduciary Program at that fiduciary hub can investigate itself for malfeasance; and

WHEREAS, vulnerable veterans are being wronged by both malfeasance of the VA Fiduciary and the institutional incompetence of the VA Fiduciary Program; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports legislation and changes to applicable regulations that require the VA to improve the VA Fiduciary Program by creating a better monitoring system, a timely dispute resolution system when beneficiaries make complaints, initiate investigations based on suspected reports of fiduciary fraud rather than putting the burden of proof on the vulnerable veteran, and make an outside agency, such as VA OIG, responsible for investigating complaints of VA employees who work in the VA Fiduciary Program and Fiduciary Hubs.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 003
SUPPORT LEGISLATION AUTHORIZING PRESUMPTIVE
SERVICE CONNECTION FOR CERTAIN DISEASES BASED ON
HERBICIDE EXPOSURE OF MILITARY PERSONNEL WHO SERVED
AT AIR BASES IN THAILAND DURING THE VIETNAM WAR

WHEREAS, American military personnel stationed at air and army bases in Thailand from January 9, 1962 to June 30, 1976, were exposed to herbicides; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) currently acknowledges certain personnel as having been exposed to herbicides who performed duties on the perimeters of these bases; and

WHEREAS, veterans who file claims related to their proximity to base perimeters are challenged to prove that they in fact performed duties resulting in exposure; and

WHEREAS, most personnel assigned to bases in Thailand were quartered in open-air barracks near perimeters where herbicides were habitually sprayed by the United States government; and

WHEREAS, the VA already presumes exposure to herbicide agents for any veteran who served in Vietnam, including some veterans who served in Vietnam's inland waterways; and

WHEREAS, spraying of herbicide agents along air base perimeters in Thailand would affect not only the service members who were assigned perimeter duties, but also other personnel stationed at these locations; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, calls on Congress to support legislation to provide presumptive service connection for illnesses and diseases related to herbicide exposure in veterans who were stationed at bases in Thailand from January 9, 1962 to June 30, 1976.

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RESOLUTION NO. 004
SUPPORT LEGISLATION PROVIDING THAT SPECIAL SEPARATION
BENEFITS PAYMENTS NOT BE WITHHELD FROM DEPARTMENT OF
VETERANS AFFAIRS DISABILITY COMPENSATION PAYMENTS

WHEREAS, as a result of the downsizing of our military forces, many career military personnel have left service prior to becoming eligible for longevity retirement pay; and

WHEREAS, these individuals are entitled to separation pay; and

WHEREAS, many of these individuals also become eligible for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability compensation; and

WHEREAS, a VA General Counsel opinion held that any funds received as a result of the Special Separation Benefit (SSB) must be recouped from any VA disability compensation payment; and

WHEREAS, SSB payments are in no way related to a disability; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports legislation to clarify that SSB payments are not disability payments and therefore should not be recouped from VA disability compensation payments.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 013
OPPOSE ANY RECOMMENDATION BY ANY COMMISSION OR OTHER SOURCE
TO REDUCE OR ELIMINATE BENEFITS FOR DISABLED VETERANS

WHEREAS, American citizens owe their freedoms and way of life to disabled veterans who made extraordinary personal sacrifices and who suffer lifelong disabilities as a consequence; and

WHEREAS, those who serve in our armed forces stand ready to endure any hardships and to be exposed to any hazards on behalf of their country and our citizens; and

WHEREAS, our government did not hesitate in asking them to give life or limb if necessary; and

WHEREAS, our elected officials surely should not renege on our reciprocal obligation when our disabled veterans ask for so comparatively little in return; and

WHEREAS, we, as a nation, owe no more important indebtedness nor greater moral obligation than the indebtedness and obligation we have to disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, some elected officials nonetheless prefer to minimize or ignore the suffering of disabled veterans, despite this debt and this national responsibility; and

WHEREAS, any effort on the part of legislators to find ways to avoid compensating disabled veterans, especially in time of war, is unconscionable; and

WHEREAS, honorable and great nations of conscience do not abandon their wounded, injured or ill wartime veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, reminds our elected officials of our undebatable responsibility to fairly and fully compensate veterans for all the effects of disabilities incurred or aggravated in the line of duty as provided for in the equitable standards of current law and regulations; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV vigorously opposes any recommendations made for the purpose of reducing, adding limitations on or eliminating benefits for service-connected disabled veterans and their families.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 014
OPPOSE ALL ATTEMPTS TO CHANGE THE BASIS OF THE DEPARTMENT
OF VETERANS AFFAIRS RATING SCHEDULE FROM THE “AVERAGE
IMPAIRMENTS OF EARNINGS CAPACITY” STANDARD

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Schedule for Rating Disabilities (VASRD) requires that “ratings shall be based, as far as practicable, upon the average impairments of earning capacity,” as stated in section 1155, title 38, United States Code; and

WHEREAS, the standard of “average impairments of earning capacity” was first adopted under the War Risk Insurance Act of 1917, and except for a short-lived alteration between 1924 and 1933 attempting to reflect individual occupational factors, this philosophy has formed the basis for determining levels of veterans disability compensation for almost a century; and

WHEREAS, the current VASRD has been updated, revised and modified numerous times to reflect advances in medical knowledge, diagnosis, treatment and technology for injuries, illnesses and disabilities related to military service, but the standard of average impairments of earnings capacity has remained unchanged due to its practicality, equity and fairness to disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, determining rating levels based on the average impairments of earning capacity ensures that veterans who have similar manifestations of the same disabilities are treated equally and fairly without consideration of their age, education, work experience or current work status; and

WHEREAS, by basing the VASRD on the average impairments of earnings capacity, rather than on individual measurements of earnings loss or functionality, disabled veterans are actually encouraged to

seek vocational rehabilitation training in order to find jobs and become more productive wage earners without fear of being penalized for doing so; and

WHEREAS, the VA is currently updating the entire VASRD and has committed to update each body of the section of the VASRD every five years, and throughout this process numerous proposals have been made, and will be considered, to alter the VASRD; and

WHEREAS, any attempt to replace average impairment of earnings capacity with a new standard based on individual earnings loss or measurements of functionality would dramatically alter the purpose and effectiveness of the VA disability compensation program, create disincentives for veterans interested in rehabilitation and work, and lead to reductions in compensation for millions of disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, any attempt to eliminate all consideration of impairments and impacts outside of the workplace fails to properly recognize that disability affects a veteran's entire life—including social, marital, familial, emotional and spiritual aspects—all of which have some effect on their earnings capacity; and

WHEREAS, any attempt to model the VA disability compensation program on the Social Security Disability Insurance or workers' compensation programs fails to recognize that those programs have separate purposes based on injuries and illnesses incurred in the civilian workplace, that do not compare with the unique challenges faced and sacrifices made by veterans who have served in our armed forces; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, opposes any attempt to change or modify the VASRD, or the statute and regulations underlying it, which would change the longstanding, accepted and successful policy that ratings shall be based, as far as practicable, upon the average impairments of earning capacity.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 032
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO REMOVE THE PROHIBITION AGAINST
CONCURRENT RECEIPT OF MILITARY RETIRED PAY AND VETERANS
DISABILITY COMPENSATION FOR ALL LONGEVITY RETIRED VETERANS

WHEREAS, current law provides that service-connected veterans rated less than 50% disabled who retire from the armed forces based on length of service do not receive disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in addition to full military retired pay; and

WHEREAS, proposed changes to military retirement plans and changes to the definition of longevity retired veterans by the Department of Defense could affect the veterans with service-connected disabilities; and

WHEREAS, these disabled veterans must therefore surrender retired pay in an amount equal to the disability compensation they receive; and

WHEREAS, this offset is unfair to veterans who have served faithfully in military careers inasmuch as these veterans have earned their retired pay by virtue of their long service to the nation and wholly apart from disabilities due to military service; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports legislation to repeal the offset between military longevity retired pay and VA disability compensation.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 033
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE A TEMPORARY TOTAL DISABILITY
COMPENSATION RATING FOR AN AMPUTEE VETERAN WHILE A NEW
PROSTHETIC DEVICE IS DEVELOPED AND DELIVERED

WHEREAS, four to six weeks are required to manufacture a prosthetic device; and

WHEREAS, the veteran amputee without an artificial limb can be incapacitated and unable to obtain or retain gainful employment; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Schedule for Rating Disabilities (VASRD) does not contain any provision for temporary total disability rating for a service-disabled veteran amputee during the period of waiting for delivery of a new prosthetic limb; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports legislation to amend the VASRD to provide a temporary total rating for a service-connected veteran amputee during the period required to replace a prosthetic device.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 034
SUPPORT INTEREST PAYMENTS FOR DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
RETROACTIVE AWARDS OF ONE YEAR OR MORE

WHEREAS, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) claimants are often denied timely receipt of their rightfully earned benefits due to prolonged bureaucratic delay in the VA adjudication process and/or through clear and unmistakable error on the part of VA rating board authorities; and

WHEREAS, under current law and regulation, VA claimants who incur indebtedness to the United States government, in addition to the principal amount of such indebtedness, are assessed and must pay interest charges; and

WHEREAS, in 1982, Congress enacted the Prompt Payment Act, Public Law 97-177, to require federal agencies to pay their bills to outside vendors on a timely basis or pay interest penalties to the outside vendors when payments are made late; and

WHEREAS, VA claimants who are denied timely receipt of their rightfully earned benefits do not receive interest payments from the government and therefore incur a loss of income, which could have been avoided had they received their earned benefits in a timely fashion; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, seeks the enactment of legislation that would require the VA to pay interest on all retroactive benefit awards in excess of one year after these claims are filed.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 035
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE FOR PRESUMPTIVE
SERVICE CONNECTION FOR TINNITUS AND HEARING LOSS

WHEREAS, veterans of the armed services who served in combat or in certain occupational specialties have a high incidence of hearing loss or tinnitus as a direct result of acoustic trauma; and

WHEREAS, many pre-service and discharge examinations, particularly for World War II and Korean conflict veterans, were usually accomplished with the highly inaccurate “whispered voice” test; and

WHEREAS, veterans, in those cases, were not afforded a comprehensive audiological examination upon entrance and discharge from military service; and

WHEREAS, in recent years, the second leading disability granted service connection by the Department of Veterans Affairs was for hearing loss or tinnitus, which recognizes the high incidence of acoustic trauma by veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports entitlement to service connection on a presumptive basis for any veteran suffering from hearing loss or tinnitus, which manifests itself to any degree and the evidence shows the veteran participated in combat or worked in a position or military occupational specialty likely to cause acoustic trauma.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 036
SUPPORT MEANINGFUL CLAIMS & APPEALS PROCESSING REFORM

WHEREAS, Congress has created a system for the administration of veterans benefits and services, the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) is responsible for processing veterans claims and appeals for a myriad of benefits and services; and

WHEREAS, the number of claims filed and appeals each year is growing, the complexity of claims and appeals filed is increasing, the backlog of non-rating claims and appeals pending is too large, and the accuracy of claims must continue to be approved; and

WHEREAS, VBA's primary emphasis of reducing the disability claims backlog resulted in less attention to other work that led to significant increases in non-rating related claims and a rising backlog of appeals; and

WHEREAS, VBA has reached out to veterans service organizations accredited to represent veterans in the claims process for assistance in reforming its claims processing system, particularly the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) because of our experience and success in representing more than 300,000 veterans each year; and

WHEREAS, VBAS has made measurable progress in reducing the number of disability claims pending in the backlog (defined as those pending more than 125 days), while also improving accuracy; and

WHEREAS, in 2016, DAV joined with VBA, the Board and other stakeholders to develop a new framework to reform and modernize how VA processes appeals that includes several appeal options that claimants could choose, including filing supplemental claims, seeking higher level review of VBA claims decisions, and filing formal appeals directly to the Board; and

WHEREAS, VBA is in the process of modernizing the system for adjudicating veterans' appeals; and

WHEREAS, when VBA reports on the average days pending for claims, VBA does not include non-rating claims, and these claims are just as important and should be accounted for when reporting average days of pending claims; and

WHEREAS, any claims or appeals reform must preserve or enhance veterans' due process rights and ensure that adjudications are fair, accurate, timely, and of acceptable quality; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, calls on Congress and VBA to support significant and meaningful claims and appeals processing reform to address VA's overall claims and appeals workloads; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV calls on Congress and VBA to ensure that all proposals to streamline and automate the claims development and rating process fully protect veterans rights and that automated rating processes, such as automated decision letters, provide sufficient and specific information to inform veterans and their advocates about the reasons and bases for rating decisions; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV calls on VA and Congress to ensure that sufficient funding is requested and provided to complete all reform and transformation initiatives; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports legislation and other policies that will strengthen training, testing and quality control, as well as accountability measures to ensure that VBA leaders and employees develop a corporate culture focused on getting each claims decided right the first time; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports legislation to give due deference to private medical evidence that is competent, credible, probative and otherwise adequate for rating purposes, as well as legislation and policies that encourage the use of private medical evidence, including allowing private physicians to gain access to all Disability Benefit Questionnaires (DBQs).

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 037 EXPAND PRESUMPTIONS FOR SERVICE CONNECTION FOR FORMER PRISONERS OF WAR

WHEREAS, former prisoners of war (POWs) suffered cruel and inhumane treatment, together with nutritional deprivation at the hands of their captors, which resulted in long-term adverse health effects; and

WHEREAS, POWs were subjected to numerous and varying forms of abuse dependent upon the place, time and circumstance of their captivity by the enemy; and

WHEREAS, for this reason, former POWs suffer from a wide range of physical and psychological maladies; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports legislation which would add those medical conditions that are characteristically associated with or can be reasonably attributed to the POW experience as presumptive disorders for former POWs.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 044 SUPPORT LEGISLATION FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA) TO PROVIDE CHILD CARE SERVICES/ASSISTANCE TO VETERANS ATTENDING VA PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) does not provide child care assistance or services for veterans; and

WHEREAS, multiple studies and surveys reveal that a significant barrier for veterans seeking and obtaining VA services is child care; and

WHEREAS, child care services would assist in removing a major obstacle for veterans, while vastly improving their ability to successfully comply with health care treatment and complete training, rehabilitative, and education programs; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports the enactment of legislation for the VA to provide child care services/ assistance to veterans attending VA health care, VA benefits programs, VA educational programs, VA employment services, VA homeless programs, and VA rehabilitative programs.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 045
SUPPORT REFORMS RELATING TO RECOVERY OF DEBTS
BY THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

WHEREAS, it is a reasonable expectation that recipients of overpayments are required to repay the debt; and

WHEREAS, the current overpayment and debt system allows the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to collect debts regardless of when the debt was created; and

WHEREAS, debt collections by the VA include complete recoupment of the veteran's monthly benefit payments, and in many cases, put the veteran at risk of financial hardships; and

WHEREAS, additional amounts of debt created by VA's lack of timely action are often added to the debt, thus creating an inequity on the veteran; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports legislation to reform the VA overpayment and debt collection systems; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports legislation to limit the amount of monies recouped from the veteran's monthly payment to not greater than 25% of the payment amount; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports legislation preventing the VA from collecting debts incurred more than five years prior; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports legislation that requires the VA to waive any additional amounts of debt created by their own lack of timely action on evidence and information received regarding but not limited to dependency changes, income changes, drill status, education changes, or incarceration adjustments.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 046
REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO REQUEST
MEDICAL RECORDS PRIOR TO ROUTINE FUTURE EXAMINATIONS

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is required to reexamine disabilities that have not become stabilized and are likely to improve; and

WHEREAS, VA regulations require a reduction in rating based on reexaminations disclosing improvement, physical or mental health conditions; and

WHEREAS, VA is not required to request any additional private or government medical records from the veteran prior to a future examination; and

WHEREAS, without any additional medical records prior to the examination, the VA rating specialist will not have sufficient evidence to determine whether the evidence makes it reasonably certain that any improvement will be maintained under the ordinary conditions of life and work; and

WHEREAS, reductions or proposed reductions based solely on VA examinations and not the entire medical evidence available, will not reflect the veteran's true disability picture and functional impairment; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, vigorously supports regulatory and statutory requirements to require VA be mandated to request any private or government medical records prior to scheduling any future examination.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 047
PROVIDE FOR A COMPENSABLE RATING FOR HEARING-IMPAIRED
VETERANS REQUIRED TO USE HEARING AIDS

WHEREAS, veterans can be rated at 0% based on their audiometric results and still be required to use hearing aids due to their specific type of hearing loss; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Schedule for Rating Disabilities (VASRD) is predicated on the industrial impairment that each disability provides to the disabled veteran; and

WHEREAS, hearing loss can impact a veteran's ability to communicate and negatively affect relationships, school/work performance, safety, and emotional well-being; and

WHEREAS, 38 C.F.R. 4.10, notes that "the basis of disability evaluations is the ability of the body as a whole, or of the psyche, or of a system or organ of the body to function under the ordinary conditions of daily life including employment;" and

WHEREAS, a National Institutes of Health study, The Socioeconomic Impact of Hearing Loss in US Adults, published in March 2014, noted, "even after controlling for education and important demographic factors, hearing loss is independently associated with economic hardship, including both low income and unemployment/underemployment. The societal impact of hearing loss is profound;" and

WHEREAS, the VASRD does account for required prosthetics or required medication for control as it provides a 10% evaluation for over 15 different disabilities that require daily medication for control of said disability; and

WHEREAS, it is a general principle of the VASRD that ratings are not offset by the function artificially restored by a prosthetic device;

WHEREAS, assigning a compensable rating for medically required hearing aids would be consistent with minimum ratings otherwise provided throughout the rating schedule; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports the VA granting veterans with high-frequency hearing loss a compensable rating (10%) when it has been medically determined that the veteran requires and has been issued a hearing amplification device.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 048
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO ESTABLISH MULTIPLE
AUTOMOBILE GRANTS FOR ELIGIBLE VETERANS

WHEREAS, Congress authorizes the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to provide financial assistance to eligible veterans through an automobile grant in the amount of \$21,058.69; and

WHEREAS, this one-time grant is used toward the purchase of a new or used automobile to accommodate a veteran or service member with certain disabilities that resulted from a condition incurred or aggravated during active military service; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Transportation (DOT) reports the average useful life of a vehicle is 11.5 years; vehicles that have been modified structurally, including modifications to accommodate the weight of a veteran and their wheelchair, can have an accelerated depreciation of usefulness; and

WHEREAS, on average, the cost to replace modified vehicles ranges from \$40,000 to \$65,000 when the vehicle is new and \$21,000 to \$35,000 when the vehicle is used; these substantial costs, coupled with inflation, present a financial hardship for many disabled veterans who need to replace their primary mode of transportation once it reaches its life of service; and

WHEREAS, the cost of replacing modified vehicles purchased through the VA automobile grant program presents a financial hardship for veterans who must bear the full replacement cost once the adapted vehicle has exceeded its useful life; the divergence of a vehicle's depreciating value and the increasing cost of living only compounds this hardship; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports the enactment of legislation to establish multiple automobile grants, for veterans to use once every 10 years, equaling the current grant maximum in effect at the time of vehicle replacement.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 049
SUPPORT USING THE PROPOSED REDUCTION DUE PROCESS
TO ALL DISABILITY EVALUATION REDUCTIONS

WHEREAS, 38 CFR 3.105(e) requires that a reduction in a disability evaluation which results in a reduction of compensation payments or the overall combined evaluation, must include a notice of a proposed reduction with all material facts, a 60-day period to present additional evidence, and the right to request a pre-determination hearing prior to a final reduction decision; and

WHEREAS, VA has determined that if a reduction in a disability evaluation does not result in a reduction of compensation payments, overall combined evaluation, a proposed reduction is not warranted; and

WHEREAS, in many instances, the VA will grant increases and new benefits in the same decision as reducing a disability evaluation but not changing the previous combined evaluation, thus leaving the veteran without proposed reduction due process, to include submitting new evidence and requesting a predetermination prior to a final reduction decision; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports the proposed reduction due process be applied to all reductions of a disability evaluation even when it does not change compensation payments or the overall combined evaluation.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 050
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO ESTABLISH A SUPPLEMENTARY
SPECIALLY ADAPTED HOUSING GRANT

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides grants to service members and veterans with certain permanent and total service-connected disabilities to help purchase or construct an adapted home or modify an existing home to accommodate a disability; and

WHEREAS, the Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) grant helps veterans with certain service-connected disabilities live independently in a barrier-free environment; and

WHEREAS, SAH grants can be used to construct a specially adapted home on land to be acquired; build a home on land already owned if it is suitable for specially adapted housing; remodel an existing home if it can be made suitable for specially adapted housing; apply the grant against the unpaid principal mortgage balance of an adapted home already acquired without the assistance of a VA grant; and

WHEREAS, the fiscal year (FY) 2019 maximum SAH grant amount is \$85,645 and must be used for the purpose of constructing or modifying a home to meet adaptive needs; and

WHEREAS, the maximum grant amount adjusts annually, and the grant benefit cannot be used more than three times up to the maximum dollar amount allowable; and

WHEREAS, eligible veterans can use the VA adapted housing grants, not to exceed the maximum amount at the time of the grant and once the maximum amount is reached, these veterans must bear the full cost of continued accessible living should they move, need to modify a home, or suffer an increase in the severity of their service-connected disabilities; and

WHEREAS, these veterans should not have to choose between surrendering their independence by moving into an inaccessible home or staying in a home simply because they are unable to afford the cost of new modifications; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports the enactment of legislation to establish a supplementary SAH grant for eligible veterans needing to relocate and for veterans experiencing an increase in the severity of their service-connected disabilities; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports the supplementary grant amounts be at least half of the maximum amount at the time of application for the supplementary grant.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 052
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO AWARD SPECIAL MONTHLY COMPENSATION AT
R(1) TO VETERANS WITH ANATOMICAL LOSS OR LOSS OF USE OF THREE
EXTREMITIES

WHEREAS, veterans with anatomical loss or loss of use, or a combination of anatomical loss and loss of use, of three extremities are significantly impaired in their ability to conduct activities of daily living; and

WHEREAS, veterans with loss or loss of use of three extremities require the assistance of others for the ability to dress and undress themselves, or to keep themselves clean and presentable, or to perform frequent adjustment of special prosthetic or orthopedic appliances, or to attend to bowel and bladder self-care, or to protect themselves from hazards or dangers incident to their daily environment; and

WHEREAS, these factors are considered basic criteria for determining the need for regular aid and attendance by the Department of Veterans Affairs; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports legislation to award special monthly compensation under the provisions of section 1114(r)(1), title 38, United States Code, to veterans with anatomical loss or loss of use of three extremities.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 054
SUPPORT ELIMINATION OF THE LINK BETWEEN
CHRONICITY AND CONTINUITY WITH THE CHRONIC DISEASES
AS LISTED IN FEDERAL REGULATIONS

WHEREAS, service connection may be granted for a disability resulting from disease or injury incurred in or aggravated by service; and

WHEREAS, to prevail on the issue of service connection there must be competent evidence of a current disability, medical or lay evidence of in-service occurrence or aggravation of a disease or injury, and medical or lay evidence of a nexus between the present disability and the in-service occurrence or aggravation; and

WHEREAS, a veteran may establish service connection by “chronicity” if the evidence demonstrates the existence of a chronic disease in service and later manifestations of the same disease; and

WHEREAS, prior to the precedent decision of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit in *Walker v. Shinseki*, 708F.3d 1331 (Fed. Cir. 2013), veterans could establish a nexus between a present disability and an in-service occurrence or aggravation by “chronicity” when evidence demonstrates the existence of a disease in service and present manifestations of the same disease; and

WHEREAS, prior to the precedent decision, the veteran may alternatively establish service connection by “continuity of symptomatology” if the evidence demonstrates a condition was “noted” during service, there is post-service evidence of the same symptomatology, and there is medical or lay evidence of a nexus between the current disability and the post-service symptomatology, and

WHEREAS, the precedent decision limited establishing service connection by chronicity only for the specific chronic diseases listed in title 38, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), section 3.309(a); and

WHEREAS, the precedent decision additionally abrogated previous decisions by the court extending the use of “continuity of symptomatology” to establish service connection for chronic diseases not specifically listed in the regulation, thereby overruling an entire body of case law, and

WHEREAS, the precedent decision removes veterans’ ability to argue “chronicity and continuity of symptomatology” in all claims for service connection and places a higher standard than intended or required by the plain language of the statute, thereby hindering the non-adversarial nature of the VA claims system; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports the enactment of legislation to establish service connection for a disease not specifically listed in 38 CFR, section 3.309(a), using chronicity or continuity of symptomatology.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 056
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO PROTECT CLAIMANTS FROM THOSE
CHARGING FEES FOR DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS CLAIMS
PREPARATION, PRESENTATION, OR PROSECUTION

WHEREAS, claims agents and attorneys recognized by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), can assist a claimant in the preparation, presentation, or prosecution of a claim; and

WHEREAS, fees may not be charged, allowed, or paid for services of agents or attorneys with respect to services provided before the date on which a notice of disagreement is filed with respect to the case; and

WHEREAS, veterans service organizations (VSOs) and the VA provide free assistance in the claims process; and

WHEREAS, many reports, past and present, have identified that certain entities charge claimants fees for the preparation, presentation, or prosecution of a claim; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports legislation to prohibit and penalize those who knowingly solicit or contract for charges or receive any fee or compensation for providing advice on how to file a VA claim, the preparation, presentation, or prosecution of such a claim, or unlawfully withhold from any claimant any part of a benefit or claim, all prior to the date on which a notice of disagreement has been filed.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 057
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO IMPROVE AND REFORM DEPENDENCY
AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION BENEFITS

WHEREAS, Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) was created in 1993 and has only been minimally adjusted since then; and

WHEREAS, DIC payments were intended to provide surviving spouses with the means to maintain some semblance of economic stability; and

WHEREAS, survivors who rely solely on the disabled veteran's compensation face significant financial hardships upon the death of the veteran; and

WHEREAS, monthly benefits for survivors of federal civil service retirees are calculated as a percentage of the civil service retiree's Federal Employees Retirement (FERS) or Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) benefits, up to 55%; and

WHEREAS, recent legislation has reduced the survivor's remarriage age from 57 to 55; and

WHEREAS, now survivors in receipt of DIC benefits risk losing entitlement if they remarry before the age of 55; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, strongly supports legislation that improves and reforms DIC benefits to include increasing the monthly amount and lowering the remarriage age for survivors of disabled veterans.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 058
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO IMPROVE SERVICE
DISABLED VETERANS LIFE INSURANCE

WHEREAS, the Congress of the United States has created a modernized service-disabled veterans life insurance program which will replace the existing Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance (S-DVI) program beginning January 1, 2023; and

WHEREAS, the modernized insurance program will allow veterans to enroll at any time, which is a change from the existing S-DVI, which only allows veterans to apply within two years of a VA decision that establishes a new grant of service connection; and

WHEREAS, veterans enrolled in the modernized insurance program may elect to be insured in the amounts of \$10,000; \$20,000; \$30,000 and \$40,000; and

WHEREAS, inflation has significantly increased, and the value of the maximum amount of S-DVI coverage has significantly decreased since the existing coverage amounts were set in law; and

WHEREAS, the existing S-DVI provides a waiver of premiums on the basic coverage of \$10,000 for eligible totally disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, the modernized insurance program will not provide a waiver of premiums at any amount for totally disabled veterans, effectively eliminating an existing benefit for future eligible veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports strong oversight of the implementation of the modernized service-disabled veterans insurance program by Congress and chartered veterans service organizations; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports a waiver of premiums for totally disabled veterans; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV continues to support an increase in the maximum amount of coverage allowed by the service-disabled veterans insurance.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 059

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO STREAMLINE AND IMPROVE THE REQUIREMENTS AND PROCESSING OF SPECIALLY ADAPTED HOUSING GRANTS AND THE SPECIAL HOUSING ADAPTATION GRANTS

WHEREAS, the Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) grant and the Special Housing Adaptation (SHA) grant have eligibility requirements, benefits, and limitations that are very specific and distinct from each other, which can cause confusion among veterans and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) adjudicators; and

WHEREAS, once eligibility has been established by the VA, the remaining grant processes have numerous requirements, which can be cumbersome and lengthy that include feasibility studies, minimum property requirements, and the veteran finding three separate contractors to solicit bids and then approval by the VA, all of this even before construction begins; and

WHEREAS, while the required SAH modifications must be compliant with both local municipalities' building codes and VA's own code, there must be a balanced focus on the immediate needs of the veteran; and

WHEREAS, contractors often decline to participate in these projects as VA has not completely digitized its payment processes, thus contractors may wait months before payment, all while increasing the processing time; and

WHEREAS, these often lengthy processes become of great concern for veterans with severely restricting disabilities or terminal illnesses, as veterans with ALS and other terminal illnesses often do not survive long enough to benefit from the improvements that an SAH grant could afford them; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports legislation to streamline the SAH and SHA eligibility requirements, improve the length of processing time, digitize VA payments, and expedite all applicants with ALS and other terminal illnesses.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 060

SUPPORT DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MODERNIZATION OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND IMPROVEMENTS TO INCLUDE DIGITAL SHARING, ADEQUATE FUNDING, AND IMPROVED ACCESS FOR DISABLED VETERANS

WHEREAS, updated and modern information technology (IT) with digital sharing of information within the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Defense (DOD), is critical to the delivery of VA health care, VA benefits, and VA educational services; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) made a critical decision to transform its paper-based claims system and replaced it with electronic streamlined business processes such as the Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS), National Work Queue (NWQ), Case Flow, eBenefits, and the Stakeholders Enterprise Portal (SEP); and

WHEREAS, several VA sites, including VA forms and applications, have been reported as not having ease of access by visually impaired veterans; and

WHEREAS, veterans service organizations (VSOs) providing representation for veterans and their families rely on VA systems while VBA has determined to no longer fund upgrades or updates to some of the existing programs; and

WHEREAS, lacking appropriate IT funding led to the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment's (VR&E) \$12 million IT debacle and the Education Service's continuing problems in making accurate payments under the new GI Bill program; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) will be integrating the new VA Electronic Health Records Modernization program, a commercial health IT program in collaboration with DOD, over the next ten years, while its existing VistA program will remain throughout the implementation phase; and

WHEREAS, the cost of full integration of the Cerner EHR is projected at \$16 billion over the next 10 years, with \$5.8 billion of those funds set aside to manage and support the current VistA infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, VHA and VBA must compete with other offices and agencies within VA for the limited IT funding available each year, delaying development and deployment of critical IT systems and programming; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports reforming and improving the budgeting and funding of VA IT systems for each individual Department within VA; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports secure and protected digital information sharing between the DOD and VA, as well as sharing within VA agencies; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports improving IT access for VSO representatives and veterans with disabilities, including those who are visually impaired.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 062

OPPOSE REDUCTION, TAXATION OR ELIMINATION OF VETERANS BENEFITS

WHEREAS, veterans benefits are earned benefits paid to veterans and their families for their service to the nation; and

WHEREAS, veterans benefits are part of a covenant between our nation and its defenders; and

WHEREAS, certain government leaders have continued to attack veterans benefits in an attempt to tax those benefits, reduce them or eliminate them completely; and

WHEREAS, these attacks recur with regularity and serious intent; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, vigorously opposes reduction, taxation or elimination of veterans benefits.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 063

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO INCREASE DISABILITY COMPENSATION

WHEREAS, it is the historical policy of DAV that this nation's first duty to veterans is to provide for the rehabilitation of its wartime disabled; and

WHEREAS, the percentage ratings for service-connected disabilities represent, as far as can be practically determined, the average impairment in earning capacity resulting from such disabilities in civil occupations; and

WHEREAS, compensation increases should be based primarily on the loss of earning capacity; and

WHEREAS, disabled veterans who are unable to work because of service-connected disabilities should be entitled to compensation payments commensurate with the after-tax earnings of their able-bodied contemporaries; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports the enactment of legislation to provide a realistic increase in Department of Veterans Affairs compensation rates to bring the standard of living of disabled veterans in line with that which they would have enjoyed had they not suffered their service-connected disabilities.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 066

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO ALLOW ALL VETERANS TO RECOVER TAXES ON DISABILITY SEVERANCE PAY

WHEREAS, certain funds received by military service members determined to be unfit for duty as a result of personal injury or disability are not taxable; and

WHEREAS, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) continues to tax military disability severance pay as regular income; and

WHEREAS, a United States District Court held that such military disability severance pay is nontaxable income; and

WHEREAS, the IRS has subsequently acquiesced to the District Court holding; and

WHEREAS, a three-year statute of limitation prevents individuals who have been discharged for more than three years from recovering the taxed funds taken by the IRS; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, strongly supports legislation that would allow all veterans to recover taxes from their disability severance pay.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 069
SUPPORT LEGISLATION THAT REQUIRES THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS
AFFAIRS TO CONSIDER PRIVATE MEDICAL EVIDENCE SUPPLIED BY
LICENSED PRIVATE HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

WHEREAS, section 5125, title 38, United States Code, Acceptance of Reports of Private Physician Examinations, authorizes the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to accept private reports in the adjudication of claims for veterans disability benefits; and

WHEREAS, Veterans Health Administration personnel, to include nurse practitioners and physician assistants in independent practices, of equal training and background to their private-sector counterparts, are authorized to complete such medical reports for VA adjudication purposes; and

WHEREAS, submission of private medical records by a claimant, if otherwise adequate for rating purposes, provides claimants with an alternate means to procure evidence in support of their claims, rather than being required to attend mandatory compensation and pension examinations; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, seeks the enactment of legislation that would require VA to consider private medical evidence supplied by licensed private health care providers to include, but not be limited to, reports from nurse practitioners and physician assistants in private practices.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 070
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE FOR REALISTIC
COST-OF-LIVING ALLOWANCES

WHEREAS, the Department of Labor provides statistical information and analysis that impacts the annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for disabled veterans, military retirees and Social Security recipients; and

WHEREAS, the calculations regarding COLAs are the domain of the Social Security Administration, using a formula that has been directly linked to the Consumer Price Index since 1975, prescribed by law when calculating any COLA increase; and

WHEREAS, in general, a COLA is equal to the percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) from the third quarter of one year to the third quarter of the next, and if there is no increase, there is no COLA; and

WHEREAS, the formula that derives the level of increase is tied to the United States economy on a very broad basis; stagnant economic activity does not mean disabled veterans' cost of living is flat; in fact, as they age and suffer from associated illnesses of aging, their costs increase; and

WHEREAS, it is unfair that disabled veterans are denied necessary increases in disability payments due to a formula that actually has little to do with the costs they bear; and

WHEREAS, there have been recent attempts to adjust the COLA downward in various methods such as "Chained CPI;" and

WHEREAS, disabled veterans disability compensation has not kept pace with the rest of the economy; even in years when there were COLA payments, disability benefits lagged; and

WHEREAS, many disabled veterans and their survivors are on fixed incomes and rely on COLAs to keep pace with their current living expenses; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports legislation to provide a realistic cost-of-living allowance for our nation's disabled veterans, their dependents and survivors.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 072
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO REDUCE THE 10-YEAR RULE
FOR DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION

WHEREAS, section 1318 (b)(1), title 38, United States Code, provides Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) benefits for survivors of deceased veterans who were rated totally disabled for 10 or more years; and

WHEREAS, the financial status of the surviving spouse is compromised due to the care required by the totally disabled veteran and provided by the caregiver spouse; and

WHEREAS, the veteran's spouse, acting as a caregiver, must in many cases limit, give up or put careers and other activities on hold; and

WHEREAS, it is inherently unfair that the spouse should carry this additional burden for 10 years or more before qualifying for DIC; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports legislation to reduce the 10-year rule for DIC qualification to a more reasonable period of time.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 073
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO EXCLUDE VETERANS DISABILITY
COMPENSATION FROM COUNTABLE INCOME FOR PURPOSES
OF ELIGIBILITY FOR BENEFITS AND SERVICES FROM
OTHER GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, by virtue of their service and sacrifices, disabled veterans deserve special benefits that are separate and in addition to benefits the government provides to other citizens; and

WHEREAS, compensation for the effects of service-connected disabilities is counted as income in determinations of eligibility for other government benefits and programs, such as low-income housing through the Department of Housing and Urban Development; and

WHEREAS, the value of compensation is negated and its purposes are defeated when a veteran's receipt of compensation is used to reduce or deny entitlement to government benefits or services available to other citizens; and

WHEREAS, when a veteran's compensation is offset against other entitlements, it is in effect deducted from eligibility for services generally available to citizens who did not serve, and thus the veteran receives nothing for his or her disability and is thus not compensated; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, seeks legislation to exclude veterans disability compensation from countable income for purposes of eligibility for benefits or services under other government programs.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 074
SUPPORT OVERSIGHT OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS
AFFAIRS PRACTICES IN EVALUATING DISABILITY CLAIMS
FOR RESIDUALS OF MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA

WHEREAS, DAV maintains a long-standing resolution from our membership that advocates an open process to govern establishment of service connection for diseases and injuries incurred in or aggravated during military service; and

WHEREAS, establishing a causal relationship between certain injuries and later disability can be daunting due to lack of records or human factors that obscure or prevent documentation or even basic investigation of such incidents after they occur; and

WHEREAS, military sexual trauma is ever more recognized as a hazard of service for 1% of men serving and 20% of women serving in the armed forces and later represents a heavy burden of psychological and mental health care for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); and

WHEREAS, an absence of documentation of military sexual trauma in the personnel or military unit records of injured individuals prevents or obstructs adjudication of claims for disabilities of this deserving group injured during their service, and may interrupt or prevent their care by VA once they become veterans; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense (DOD) has established an office of Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPRO) to establish department-wide policies and procedures for the handling of sexual assault and injury cases for active military service members and members of reserve and Guard units, including documentation, records retention and protection of the privacy of the individuals involved in such cases; and

WHEREAS, both DOD and VA have agreed on some procedures that would govern documentation sufficient to justify service connection of sexual assault and other military sexual trauma; and

WHEREAS, the VA has issued a regulation (section 3.304(f)(5), title 38, Code of Federal Regulations) that provides for a liberalization of requirements for establishment of service connection due to personal assault, including military sexual trauma, even when documentation of an "actual stressor" is not found, but when evidence in other records exists of a "marker" indicating that a stressor may have in fact occurred; and

WHEREAS, VA has trained adjudication personnel, especially its rating staffs in VA regional offices, in better evaluating disability claims for military sexual assaults and has emphasized these particular claims must be made subject to special attention in consonance with the new regulation; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports VA's practices in evaluating disability claims associated with military sexual trauma, and urges VA to conduct rigorous oversight of adjudication personnel and review of data to ensure the present policy is being faithfully followed and standardized in all VA regional offices.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 075 OPPOSE SUBJECTING DISABILITY COMPENSATION AND DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION TO MEANS TESTING

WHEREAS, the citizens of our nation heretofore have honorably recognized their indebtedness to those who sacrificed in military service by providing disability compensation as restitution for injuries, illnesses or diseases suffered in such service; and

WHEREAS, a disabled veteran is rightfully entitled to compensation for the effects of service-connected disability, without regard to any good fortune or income of the veteran or spouse from sources independent of the government's obligations to the veteran; and

WHEREAS, it is unfair for the government to seek to disclaim its obligation to disabled veterans or their survivors merely because of the receipt of other, unrelated income; and

WHEREAS, notwithstanding the special status of disability compensation and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, efforts have been made to deploy a means test to reduce or eliminate them in cases in which the veteran, spouse or survivor has obtained other income; and

WHEREAS, degrading compensation by providing it to the extent of the veteran's or survivor's economic needs rather than as a measure of restitution for personal injury or illness, thereby disassociates compensation from that which merits it and associates it with factors that govern purely gratuitous benefits; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, opposes any proposal to means test disability compensation and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 077 OPPOSE LONG-TERM ROUNDING DOWN OF COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENTS IN VETERANS BENEFITS

WHEREAS, to maintain the worth of veterans benefits, they must be adjusted to keep pace with the rise in the cost of living; and

WHEREAS, long-term rounding down of adjusted rates to the next lower dollar amount erodes the value of these benefits over time and thus does not keep pace with the rise in the cost of living; and

WHEREAS, the rounding down of veterans' cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) unfairly targets disabled veterans, their dependents and survivors for cost savings to the government; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, opposes long-term rounding down COLAs for veterans disability compensation, and compensation to their dependents and survivors.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 078
SUPPORT LEGISLATION THAT WOULD EXEMPT THE BENEFITS PAID TO
WARTIME SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABLED VETERANS FROM THE “PAY-GO/
CUT-GO” PROVISIONS OF THE BUDGET ENFORCEMENT ACT

WHEREAS, wartime disabled veterans have earned the benefits and services they, their dependents and survivors receive from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) as a result of the injuries sustained during wartime service; and

WHEREAS, the benefits and services received by wartime disabled veterans as a result of their service-connected disabilities is an extension of the costs of war; and

WHEREAS, this country has a moral obligation to continue to care for these citizen-soldiers who have risen in defense and support of the ideals of this great nation and who have returned to civilian life with service-connected disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the benefits and services provided to America’s veterans, dependents and survivors have not caused this nation’s deficit problems; and

WHEREAS, the so-called “PAYGO/CUTGO” provisions of the Budget Enforcement Act require any new benefits or services to be paid out of existing benefits or programs, in effect, requiring one group of disabled veterans to give up a benefit or service so that another worthy group of wartime disabled veterans can receive benefits or services to which they are entitled; and

WHEREAS, the adoption of budget caps and sequestration have often limited the ability of congressional appropriations committees to fully fund all veterans programs, services and benefits; and

WHEREAS, veterans suffering from ailments associated with their service in the military are compensated from funds generated by cutting the benefits of other service-connected veterans and their survivors; and

WHEREAS, the benefits and services provided to wartime disabled veterans are unique and not a gratuitous benefit; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports legislation to exempt VA benefits and services provided to service-connected disabled veterans, their dependents and survivors from the PAYGO/CUTGO provisions of the Budget Enforcement Act as well as from any budget caps or sequestration legislation.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 079
AMEND THE LAW TO PROVIDE A 10-YEAR PROTECTION
PERIOD FOR SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY RATINGS

WHEREAS, section 110, title 38, United States Code, now provides for the protection of all disability compensation ratings that have been continuously in effect for 20 or more years; and

WHEREAS, permanency should be conceded for disability compensation ratings that have been in effect for 10 years without change in evaluation with no further examination scheduled; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports amendment of section 110, title 38, United States Code, to provide that disability ratings in effect be permanently protected after a period of 10 continuous years.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 080
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE FOR SERVICE
CONNECTION FOR DISABLING CONDITIONS RESULTING FROM
TOXIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL EXPOSURES

WHEREAS, veterans of all military conflicts from the World Wars to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have been exposed to toxic and environmental exposures such as mustard gas, herbicides, cold weather, chemicals, biological agents, harmful levels of radiation and other combat operation exposures; and

WHEREAS, veterans may not know for years or decades about the toxic or environmental conditions they were exposed to during military service; and

WHEREAS, returning from war, veterans subsequently suffer from disabling conditions that are not immediately identified as a result of such exposures; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense (DOD) has not always been willing to publicly share information regarding exposures during military service with other government departments or agencies or with the individuals involved; and

WHEREAS, research conducted by the National Institutes of Health, DOD and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and other federal agencies has focused on relationships between toxic and environmental exposures and health outcomes of veterans and pending claims; and

WHEREAS, such research is necessary to ensure veterans receive high-quality health services and benefits to which they are entitled due to diseases or injuries resulting from deployment exposures; and

WHEREAS, in studies mandated by Congress, the National Academy of Sciences continues to review and evaluate scientific literature including specific research studies to determine whether a link exists between exposure and certain physical disorders; and

WHEREAS, VA and DOD must collaborate and share necessary deployment, health and exposure data to better address the health conditions experienced by disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, these studies to establish and recognize relationships between exposures and diseases, take several years to accomplish, requiring veterans to establish claims on a direct basis without conceded exposure to such toxins; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports legislation to establish a concession of individual exposures while awaiting conclusions of studies for presumptive diseases and conditions associated with all veterans' related exposures to toxic and environmental hazards; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV vigorously supports the VA's expeditious handling of veterans' claims and the payment of fair and just compensation for conditions associated with all veterans' service and related exposures to toxic and environmental hazards.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 082
OPPOSE ANY PROPOSAL THAT WOULD REDUCE
PAYMENTS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS DISABILITY
COMPENSATION BY PAYMENTS OF SOCIAL SECURITY INSURANCE,
SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY INSURANCE OR ANY OTHER
FEDERAL BENEFIT PAID TO A VETERAN

WHEREAS, consideration has been given to offsetting Social Security Insurance (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits from any other federal benefit; and

WHEREAS, the adoption of such a measure would reduce the overall income provided to veterans who have a compensable service-connected disability; and

WHEREAS, such an offset creates undue hardship on totally disabled service-connected veterans and their families by drastically reducing their total income; and

WHEREAS, benefits received from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) or under military retirement pay and other federal programs have differing eligibility criteria compared to eligibility for SSI or SSDI benefits; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, opposes any measure that proposes to offset the payment of any other federal benefit or earned benefit entitlement from VA compensation payments made to service-connected disabled veterans.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 084
CONSIDER TREATMENT FOR A PRESUMPTIVE
SERVICE-CONNECTED CONDITION AS A CLAIM FOR
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS COMPENSATION

WHEREAS, many service members have suffered from diseases that are recognized to be presumptive; and

WHEREAS, veterans suffering from diseases that include many types of cancer, as well as diabetes and other chronic diseases may not be aware that they may be eligible for service connection, even if they are being treated in a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facility; and

WHEREAS, many VA medical facilities are not currently staffed or equipped to provide appropriate counseling to veterans or their families on how to file a claim for service-connected benefits; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, urges Congress to enact legislation requiring that treatment by the VA for a condition or disease recognized as presumptively service-connected will be considered to be an Intent to File for service connection for compensation purposes.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 085
SUPPORT A MORE LIBERAL REVIEW OF OTHER THAN HONORABLE DISCHARGES IN CASES OF POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER, TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY, MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA AND OTHER TRAUMA FOR THE PURPOSE OF ELIGIBILITY FOR DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS BENEFITS AND SERVICES

WHEREAS, former service members who receive a non-punitive administrative discharge characterized as other than honorable (“bad paper”) are generally not considered eligible for care and treatment from the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) or other Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits; and

WHEREAS, the current rate of bad paper discharges by Afghanistan and Iraq service members with undiagnosed traumatic brain injury (TBI), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), military sexual trauma (MST) and other trauma are twice that during the Vietnam era and nearly four times the rate of veterans during the World War II era; and

WHEREAS, in 2014, the Secretary of Defense provided policy guidance to the Military Department Boards for Correction of Military/Naval Records (BCM/NR) to give “liberal consideration” in examining requests for discharge upgrades to evidence that PTSD may have contributed to the misconduct leading to less than honorable discharges; and

WHEREAS, former service members who have potentially suffered TBI, PTSD, MST or other trauma and are awarded bad paper discharges are likely to need medical care and benefits related to their military service; and

WHEREAS, without access to VA medical care and benefits, these former service members may be at higher risk of suicide and homelessness, along with involvement in the criminal justice system; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports a more liberal review of other than honorable discharges for purposes of receiving VA benefits and health care services in cases of former service members whose PTSD, TBI and MST or other trauma contributed to their administrative discharges characterized as other than honorable.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 086
OPPOSE LUMP-SUM PAYMENTS FOR SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITIES

WHEREAS, disability compensation is paid monthly to an eligible veteran on account of and at a rate commensurate with diminished earning capacity resulting from the effects of service-connected disease or injury; and

WHEREAS, such compensation, by design, continues to provide relief from the service-connected disability for as long as the veteran continues to suffer its effects at a compensable level; and

WHEREAS, by law, the rate of compensation is determined by the level of disability present, thereby requiring re-evaluation of the disability upon a change in its degree; and

WHEREAS, various entities have suggested lump-sum payments as a way for the government to avoid the administrative costs of re-evaluating service-connected disabilities and as a way to avoid future liabilities to service-connected disabled veterans when their disabilities worsen or cause secondary disabilities; and

WHEREAS, such lump-sum payments would not, on the whole, be in the best interests of disabled veterans but would be more intended for government savings and convenience; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, opposes any change in law to provide for lump-sum payments of Department of Veterans Affairs disability compensation.

* * *

**RESOLUTION NO. 087
OPPOSE THE IMPOSITION OF TIME LIMITS
FOR FILING COMPENSATION CLAIMS**

WHEREAS, some veterans suffer lifelong impairments from disabilities incurred in connection with military service; and

WHEREAS, disability compensation is a benefit available to veterans at any time they choose to claim it; and

WHEREAS, veterans who, for whatever reason, do not initially desire to claim and receive compensation should not forfeit the right to claim and receive it at some later time; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans' Claims Adjudication Commission, created by Congress to study the Department of Veterans Affairs claims processing system, suggested a time limit for filing compensation claims as a way to reduce VA's workload; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, opposes any change in law to limit the time for filing compensation claims.

* * *

**RESOLUTION NO. 088
OPPOSE ANY CHANGE THAT WOULD REDEFINE SERVICE-
CONNECTED DISABILITY OR RESTRICT THE CONDITIONS OR
CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH IT MAY BE ESTABLISHED**

WHEREAS, current law authorizes service connection for disabilities incurred or aggravated during service in the United States armed forces in the line of duty; and

WHEREAS, various proposals have been made to limit service connection to disabilities caused directly by the performance of duty; and

WHEREAS, disability incurred in the line of duty is sometimes not directly due to a job injury but may be due to less obvious factors attributable to the armed forces environment; and

WHEREAS, proof of a causal relationship may often be difficult or impossible notwithstanding an inability to dissociate the disability from service-related factors; and

WHEREAS, current law equitably alleviates the onerous burden of establishing performance of duty or other causal connection as a prerequisite for service connection; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, opposes changes in current law so as to redefine and restrict the conditions under which service connection may be established.

* * *

**RESOLUTION NO. 089
OPPOSE CHANGE OF DEFINITION OF A HERBICIDE AGENT
FOR THE PURPOSES OF ESTABLISHING SERVICE CONNECTION
FOR DISABILITIES RELATED TO HERBICIDE EXPOSURE**

WHEREAS, title 38, United States Code, §1116 defines a "herbicide agent" as a chemical in an herbicide used in support of the United States and allied military operations in the Republic of Vietnam during the period beginning on January 9, 1962, and ending on May 7, 1975; and

WHEREAS, title 38, United States Code, §1116 states that for the purposes of establishing service connection for a disability or death resulting from exposure to a herbicide agent, including a presumption of service connection, a veteran who, during active military, naval, or air service, served in the Republic of Vietnam during the period beginning on January 9, 1962, and ending on May 7, 1975, shall be presumed to have been exposed during such service to an herbicide agent containing dioxin or 2,4-dichlorophenoxyacetic acid, and may be presumed to have been exposed during such service to any other chemical compound in an herbicide; and

WHEREAS, Congressional records indicate the Secretary of Defense acknowledged herbicides were used on the Korean demilitarized zone as early as April 1968; and

WHEREAS, the VA manual M21-1 acknowledges herbicides were used at eight specific Thailand Royal Air Force bases; and

WHEREAS, the Administration's proposed budget for fiscal year 2019 seeks to amend title 38, United States Code §1116 to redefine herbicides as only those containing tetrachlorodibenzo-p-dioxin (TCDD); and

WHEREAS, the Administration's proposal states that herbicides with TCDD were only used in Vietnam and not on any other military base outside of Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, the Administration's proposal is inconsistent with known herbicide use outside of Vietnam and would only serve to limit service connection for herbicide exposure to only veterans with Vietnam service; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, opposes any change of definition of herbicides that would limit service connection only to those veterans physically in Vietnam.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 090
SUPPORT LEGISLATION FOR PRESUMPTIVE SERVICE
CONNECTION FOR ADDITIONAL DISEASES RELATED
TO CONTAMINATED WATER AT CAMP LEJEUNE

WHEREAS, military personnel and their families were exposed to contaminated water at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, from August 1, 1953 to December 31, 1987; and

WHEREAS, the Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012 established 15 different conditions where the exposed military personnel and their families were eligible to seek treatment at Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health facilities at no cost; and

WHEREAS, the conditions identified for cost-free health care were esophageal cancer, lung cancer, breast cancer, bladder cancer, kidney cancer, leukemia, multiple myeloma, myelodysplastic syndromes, renal toxicity, hepatic steatosis, female infertility, miscarriage, scleroderma, neurobehavioral effects, and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma; and

WHEREAS, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs established the presumptive list for service connection for diseases associated with said water supply exposure as of January 2017 and included only eight conditions: adult leukemia, aplastic anemia and other myelodysplastic syndromes, bladder cancer, kidney cancer, liver cancer, multiple myeloma, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, and Parkinson's disease; and

WHEREAS, the Secretary will continue to review relevant information to support the creation of additional presumptive conditions, as it becomes available; and

WHEREAS, an estimated 900,000 service members were potentially exposed to the tainted water; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, urges the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to consider expanding the presumptive list to include all conditions set in the Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-154) that were not previously included.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 091
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO ESTABLISH PRESUMPTIVE
SERVICE CONNECTION FOR DISEASES AND ILLNESSES RELATED
TO CONTAMINANTS AT FORT MCCLELLAN, ALABAMA

WHEREAS, after World War II until the based closed in 1999, Fort McClellan, located in Anniston, Alabama, was home of the Chemical Corps and Chemical Weapons school for the United States Army; and

WHEREAS, in 1953, Fort McClellan conducted "Operation Top Hat" which used military personnel to test exposure and decontamination methods that included sulfur mustard and nerve agents; and

WHEREAS, in 1962, Fort McClellan added the Biological Radiological Agency, Aberdeen Proving Grounds; and

WHEREAS, the Monsanto Chemical Plant, located in Anniston, was instrumental in the development and testing of the herbicides used during Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, in 2003, Monsanto Chemical settled a class action law suit with more than 200,000 residents of Anniston for more than \$700 million; and

WHEREAS, the 2005 Institute of Medicine (IOM) Report, Contaminants in the Subsurface: Source Zone Assessment and Remediation, shows that there were 67 different disposal sites on Ft. McClellan containing volatile organic compounds (VOCs) trichloroethylene (TCEs), Polychlorinated biphenyl (PCBs), semi-volatile organic compound (SVOCs), pesticides, explosives, heavy metals (Pb), unexploded ordnance (UXO), radioactive sources, and non-stockpile chemical materials; and

WHEREAS, the 2005 Institute of Medicine (IOM) Report recognizes that both the groundwater and soil were contaminated by those noted above; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans Health Care Administration (VHA) has recognized the potential exposures at Fort McClellan, noting in part:

Some members of the U.S. Army Chemical Corp School, Army Combat Development Command Chemical/Biological/Radiological Agency, Army Military Police School and Women's Army Corps, among others, may have been exposed to one or more of several hazardous materials, likely at low levels, during their service at Fort McClellan. Potential exposures could have included, but are not limited to, the following:

Radioactive compounds (cesium-137 and cobalt-60) used in decontamination training activities in isolated locations on base.

Chemical warfare agents (mustard gas and nerve agents) used in decontamination testing activities in isolated locations on base.

Airborne polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) from the Monsanto plant in the neighboring town; NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, calls upon Congress to immediately introduce legislation to authorize scientific studies of the environmental and toxic exposures at Fort McClellan; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports legislation to establish a concession of exposure to toxins and legislation to establish presumptive service connection for the veterans who were exposed on Fort McClellan.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 092
AMEND THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS SCHEDULE
FOR RATING DISABILITIES FOR MENTAL DISORDERS

WHEREAS, under section 4.130, title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, the criteria for evaluating mental disorders is ambiguous; and

WHEREAS, schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders, delirium, dementia, and amnesic and other cognitive disorders, anxiety disorders, dissociative disorders, somatoform disorders, mood disorders and chronic adjustment disorders are all evaluated using the same general rating formula for mental disorders; and

WHEREAS, the current edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders specifically lists different symptoms for post-traumatic stress disorder, schizophrenia and other psychiatric disorders; and

WHEREAS, one veteran service connected for schizophrenia and another veteran service connected for another psychiatric disorder should not be evaluated using the same general formula; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports amendment of section 4.130, title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, to formulate different criteria to evaluate the various mental disorders under the appropriate standards applicable to each diagnosis.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 093
COMPENSATE PERSIAN GULF WAR VETERANS SUFFERING
FROM ILLNESSES CIRCUMSTANTIALLY LINKED TO THEIR
SERVICE IN THE PERSIAN GULF WAR

WHEREAS, DAV has a significant concern regarding the multitude of ailments reported by a growing number of Persian Gulf War veterans who were exposed to both identified and unknown health hazards; and

WHEREAS, Persian Gulf War veterans were exposed to numerous and various environmental health hazards, including smoke from oil field fires and other petroleum agents, depleted uranium, chemical and biological elements, desert parasites, vaccines, chemoprophylactic agents and vehicle paints; and

WHEREAS, primary investigations and multifarious studies have thus far failed to identify the source or sources of these ailments; and

WHEREAS, the scientific/medical community's inability to identify the source(s) and pathological nature of the disease has caused considerable anxiety for these veterans and their families; and

WHEREAS, there appears to be a commonality of ailments plaguing Persian Gulf War veterans; and WHEREAS, these ailments have been unofficially labeled “Persian Gulf Syndrome,” “Multiple Chemical Sensitivity” and “Chronic Fatigue Syndrome;” and

WHEREAS, based on Government Accounting Office (GAO) Report (GAO 17-511) findings, approval rates for Gulf War Illness claims are about three times lower than for all other claimed disabilities which is due, in large part, to current law requiring veterans to suffer from an “undiagnosed” or “medically unexplained” illness for eligibility to receive disability compensation for medical conditions occurring in Persian Gulf War veterans; and

WHEREAS, based on the available medical evidence medical examiners must rule out all known diseases that could cause the veterans symptoms for it to be determined as an undiagnosed illness or unexplainable illness; and

WHEREAS, clinicians are highly unlikely to provide a diagnosis of an undiagnosed illness or unexplainable illness in most cases creating an unfair standard for Gulf War veterans to be properly service connected for conditions related to their military service; and

WHEREAS, as a result of the requirements in the existing law, these brave veterans suffering from these unknown ailments are often prevented from obtaining service connection and providing for their own basic needs and for the needs of their families; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, vigorously supports the Department of Veterans Affairs’ (VA’s) expeditious handling of Persian Gulf War veterans’ claims and the payment of fair and just compensation for those diagnosed and undiagnosed conditions associated with their service in the Persian Gulf theater or related exposures to certain chemical, biological and environmental toxins; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV strongly urges that these Persian Gulf War veterans continue to receive priority medical treatment for those ailments that may be associated with their service in the Persian Gulf; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we vehemently urge VA, the Department of Defense, and the Department of Health and Human Services to continue to cooperate in tests and studies to unlock the mysteries surrounding the ailments suffered by Persian Gulf War veterans, including the possibility of exposure to chemical agents by United States military personnel.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 094 SUPPORT RESOURCES AND OVERSIGHT OF THE APPEALS PROCESS

WHEREAS, in 2019, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) implemented the Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act (AMA), which impacts decisions at the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), the existing legacy appeals and AMA appeals at the Board of Veterans’ Appeals (Board); and

WHEREAS, in fiscal year (FY) 2020, the Board issued 102,663 decisions and surpassed its FY 2020 goal of 91,500 decisions by over 11,000 cases; and

WHEREAS, the Board improved FY 2021 decision output by approximately 8% over FY 2019’s 95,089 decisions; and

WHEREAS, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as of July 2021, there are over 90,000 pending hearings at the Board; and

WHEREAS, as of July 2021, the Board announced that, due to the pandemic, they will not be able to complete all pending legacy appeals by October 2022 as previously established; and

WHEREAS, in FY 2021, the Board will be receiving an additional 20 veterans law judges with required attorneys and support staff; and

WHEREAS, DAV and the Independent Budget recommended an additional 200 Board employees to address the backlog of appeals and hearings; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, calls on Congress to provide effective and continued oversight of the legacy and AMA appeals processes to ensure that adequate resources are provided to resolve the backlog of legacy appeals and the backlog of pending hearings at the Board, as well as provide regular oversight to monitor and measure VA’s progress so these reforms achieve their intended purpose.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 095
SUPPORT SUFFICIENT, TIMELY AND PREDICTABLE
FUNDING FOR ALL DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
PROGRAMS, BENEFITS AND SERVICES

WHEREAS, DAV believes that wounded, injured and ill veterans, through their extraordinary sacrifices and service, earned the right to health care, benefits and services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); and

WHEREAS, this nation's first concern should be to fulfill its obligation to those who served in the military services in defense of this country; and

WHEREAS, DAV worked for more than two decades to reform the budget process in order to assure sufficient, timely and predictable funding for VA health care programs; and

WHEREAS, DAV developed and supported new legislation to assure sufficient, timely and predictable funding for VA health care through the technique of advance appropriations, as well as through new transparency and accountability requirements covering VA health care budget requests; and

WHEREAS, the adoption of budget caps and sequestration have often limited the ability of congressional appropriations committees to fully fund all veterans programs, services and benefits; and

WHEREAS, spurred by DAV, Congress enacted Public Law 111-81, the Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act of 2009, a law that requires advance appropriations for VA's three medical care accounts that fund VA health care programs; and

WHEREAS, Congress enacted Public Law 113-235, the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act of 2015, that requires advance appropriations for three mandatory accounts of the Veterans Benefits Administration, compensation and pensions, readjustment benefits, and veterans insurance and indemnities; and

WHEREAS, VA's leadership, employees and veterans served by VA health care facilities have universally reported that advance appropriations have allowed VA to more efficiently and effectively deliver timely, quality health care to enrolled veterans; and

WHEREAS, VA health care programs and veterans mandatory benefits have largely been protected from the adverse effects of government shutdowns; and

WHEREAS, the remainder of VA's discretionary budget, which includes information technology (IT), medical and prosthetic research, construction and general operating expenses—primarily the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA)—could benefit from the timeliness and predictability offered by advance appropriations, particularly when unrelated budget stalemates, continuing resolutions and sequestration occur; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 111-81 required the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to study and report to Congress and the public on VA's budget submissions in fiscal years 2011, 2012 and 2013, including an evaluation of VA's budget estimates compared to the forecasts made by VA's internal actuarial model; and

WHEREAS, GAO reported significant findings of unjustified, questionable changes VA made during the internal budget development process, limitations of budget justifications and questionable reliability of proposed savings estimates; and

WHEREAS, recent budget requests for advance appropriations by the Administration and advance appropriations amounts provided for by Congress continue to be insufficient to meet the full demand for VA benefits and services; and

WHEREAS, DAV and congressional sponsors of the advance appropriations concept anticipated that full implementation of Public Law 111-81 would require continued oversight from Congress, DAV and others; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports legislation to authorize advance appropriations for all of VA's discretionary and mandatory budget, which would extend advance appropriations to include IT, medical and prosthetic research, major construction, minor construction, State Home construction, state cemetery construction grants, general operating expenses (VBA and general administration), the National Cemetery Administration, the Office of Inspector General, and all other mandatory benefits; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV continues to call on Congress and VA to fully and faithfully implement Public Law 111-81, the Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act of 2009, to assure sufficient, timely and predictable funding for veterans health care; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports legislation to permanently extend the GAO study and reporting requirements included in the Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act of 2009.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 135
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO INCREASE MAXIMUM EVALUATION
FOR SERVICE-CONNECTED HEADACHES

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) rating schedule notes that the minimum schedular rating for consideration of Individual Unemployability is 60% for a single condition, or a combination of 70% with one of them being at least 40%); and

WHEREAS, at present, a veteran with the highest schedular rating for headaches, 50%, must be shown to have a very frequent completely prostrating and prolonged attack productive of severe economic inadaptability as stated at title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, section 4.124a, diagnostic code 8100; and

WHEREAS, a veteran currently in receipt of the maximum 50% rating for headaches due to very frequent completely prostrating and prolonged attacks productive of severe economic inadaptability would not also qualify for consideration of a claim for Individual Unemployability based on that single disability; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, proposes that the VA amend its regulations to increase the maximum evaluation for an individual with migraine headaches from the current 50% evaluation to a 60% rating to more appropriately address the industrial impairment attributable to that level of disability.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 137
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO OPPOSE THE PAYMENT
OF ATTORNEY FEES BASED ON PERIODS WHEN THE
ATTORNEY WAS NOT INVOLVED IN THE CLAIM

WHEREAS, revisions in the law and regulations governing the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) have allowed for private agents and attorneys to charge for their representation of claimants before the VA; and

WHEREAS, those regulations, 38 CFR § 14.636(e), contain some indications that there may be provision for limitation of the final payment awarded to the private agents and attorneys based on reasonable limitations, as noted in the written description of Fees Permitted:

Fees permitted for services of an agent or attorney admitted to practice before VA must be reasonable. They may be based on a fixed fee, hourly rate, a percentage of benefits recovered, or a combination of such bases. Factors considered in determining whether fees are reasonable include:

- (1) The extent and type of services the representative performed;
- (2) The complexity of the case;
- (3) The level of skill and competence required of the representative in giving the services;
- (4) The amount of time the representative spent on the case;
- (5) The results the representative achieved, including the amount of any benefits recovered;
- (6) The level of review to which the claim was taken and the level of the review at which the representative was retained;
- (7) Rates charged by other representatives for similar services; and
- (8) Whether, and to what extent, the payment of fees is contingent upon the results achieved; and

WHEREAS, VA rarely, if ever, restricts the amount of fee paid to the private agents and attorneys beyond restricting the amount to 20% of any retroactive amount payable; and

WHEREAS, many private agents and attorneys act in the role of representative in a particular case for only a matter of months, providing limited interaction on behalf of the claimant, and not demonstrating any particular knowledge of the case; and

WHEREAS, regardless of whether the private agent and/or attorney did any actual work that resulted in the eventual grant of benefits the claimant is required to pay the 20% fee; and

WHEREAS, this frequently results in a windfall payment to the private agent and/or attorney at the immediate and direct expense of the claimant; and

WHEREAS, some private agents and/or attorneys, once they have engaged the signature of the client on the representation agreement have prematurely disengaged as the representative without waiving their right of recovery for any future award; and

WHEREAS, that future award is often years later resulting in an ever-expanding amount of retroactive pay; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports the enactment of legislation to restrict the amount of payment to a private agent and/or attorney to a reasonable analysis of the actual work put into the case, and in no case should the payment extend beyond the date when either the claimant or the private agent and/or attorney ends the representation, and withdrawal by the private agent and/or attorney should result in a loss of all rights to recovery where they, for whatever reason, have opted to break the client/representative relationship.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 138
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO EXPAND THE RECOGNIZED WARTIME SERVICE PERIODS TO INCLUDE THOSE VETERANS WHO SERVED IN COMBAT ENVIRONMENTS FROM HOSTILE MILITARY OR TERRORIST ACTIVITY FROM NOVEMBER 4, 1979 THROUGH AUGUST 1, 1990

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recognizes specific periods of time as being war time periods; and

WHEREAS, the Vietnam era ended on May 7, 1975 and the Persian Gulf War era began on August 2, 1990 (38 CFR §3.2(f) and (i)); and

WHEREAS, hundreds of thousands of United States service members were subjected to combat environments from hostile military or terrorist activity beginning on:

- November 4, 1979 with the seizure of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran and the subsequent ill-fated rescue mission, Operation Eagle Claw;
- May 1981 terrorist threats from and resulting combat action with Libya; the April 18, 1983 bombing of the US Embassy in Beirut;
- the October 23, 1983 bombing of the Marine Barracks in Beirut; the October 25, 1983 invasion of Grenada;
- the December 12, 1983 bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait;
- the September 20, 1984 bombing of the U.S. Embassy annex northeast of Beirut;
- the April 5, 1986 bombing of La Belle, a discotheque in West Berlin known to be popular with off-duty U.S. service members;
- the resulting Operation El Dorado Canyon on April 15, 1986, that involved 200 U.S. aircraft bombing Libya;
- the 1989 buildup of U.S. troops in Panama with increasing tensions and hostilities leading to the December 20, 1989 invasion of Panama by U.S. troops in Operation Just Cause;
- the unknown number of anti-terrorist activities that remain classified to this day; and

WHEREAS, any of the military participants of any of these combat environments from hostile military or terrorist activity who were wounded, physically or mentally, are entitled to service-connected compensation from the VA, they are otherwise not entitled to pension; and NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports a new war time period covering the time frame of November 4, 1979 until August 1, 1990, plausibly identified as Middle East and South America Hostile enemy and terrorist activity.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 139
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO ALLOW FOR THE USE OF AN
INTENT TO FILE IN CASES WHERE AN INITIAL OR SUPPLEMENTAL
CLAIM FOR THE SAME OR SIMILAR BENEFIT ON THE SAME OR
SIMILAR BASIS WAS PREVIOUSLY DECIDED

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) published regulations allowing for the use of an intent to file (ITF) that would make it easier for veterans to file fully developed claims that would allow for quicker decisions easing the backlog of cases with the VA; and

WHEREAS, with the enactment of the Appeals Modernization Act on February 19, 2019, VA regulations specifically restricted the use of the ITF with a supplemental claim, defined by VA as any complete claim for a VA benefit on an application form prescribed by the Secretary where an initial or supplemental claim for the same or similar benefit on the same or similar basis was previously decided; and

WHEREAS, the typical veteran does not maintain the legal sophistication to clearly understand when the claim they are presently seeking to file is a claim for the same or similar benefit on the same or similar basis was previously decided; and

WHEREAS, VA relies on its partnership with veterans service organizations (VSO) to assist with many claim related activities; and

WHEREAS, VSOs in turn rely on the development and submission of claims from a wide range of volunteer assistants; and

WHEREAS, the VSO volunteers have no reasonable way to understand when the veteran they are assisting is presenting a claim where the same or similar benefit on the same or similar basis was previously decided; and

WHEREAS, by accepting the use of the ITF in Supplemental Claims, VA would have the opportunity to notify the veteran of the fact that the claim filed was considered to be the same or similar benefit on the same or similar basis that was previously decided; and

WHEREAS, that would allow the veteran, with VSO volunteer and professional staff assistance, to prepare a better claim; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports the enactment of legislation to allow for the use of an ITF for any claim, to specifically include Supplemental Claims.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 140
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO EXPAND DEPARTMENT OF
VETERANS AFFAIRS MENTAL HEALTH TRANSITION SERVICES
TO ALL SERVICE MEMBERS UPON DISCHARGE

WHEREAS, at present, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides limited mental health transition services to individuals who have incurred a traumatic physical injury; and

WHEREAS, individual service members being discharged with severe mental health issues due to traumatic experiences incurred on active duty are not being identified for enrollment in mental health transition services; and

WHEREAS, VA has committed to expanding its suicide prevention programs; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports enacting legislation that would expand the provision of mental health transition services to individuals who have, or are reasonably suspected to have been, exposed to traumatic events including, but not limited to, military sexual trauma, combat or other exposure to a hostile military or terrorist activity, natural or manmade disaster, or an individual disaster that would reasonably be believed by the lay person to have caused significant emotional distress.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 141
SUPPORT LEGISLATION FOR SCIENTIFIC EVALUATION TO INCLUDE
CONDITIONS OF THE THYROID AS A PRESUMPTIVE GULF WAR DISORDER

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has an established list of disabilities that are presumptively associated with service in Southwest Asia (SWA); and

WHEREAS, SWA refers to Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the neutral zone between Iraq and Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, the Gulf of Aden, the Gulf of Oman, the Persian Gulf, the Arabian Sea, the Red Sea, and the airspace above these locations for certain veterans (38 CFR §3.317(e)(2)); and

WHEREAS, VA recognizes signs or symptoms of undiagnosed illness and medically unexplained chronic multi-symptom illnesses associated with SWA service to include (1) fatigue, (2) signs or symptoms involving skin, (3) headache, (4) muscle pain, (5) joint pain, (6) neurological signs or symptoms, (7) neuropsychological signs or symptoms, (8) signs or symptoms involving the respiratory system (upper or lower), (9) sleep disturbances, (10) gastrointestinal signs or symptoms, (11) cardiovascular signs or symptoms, (12) abnormal weight loss, and (13) menstrual disorders; and

WHEREAS, 10 of the common symptoms of a thyroid disorder include fatigue; weight changes (gain too much weight with hypothyroid and too little weight with hyperthyroid); muscle and joint pain; neck swelling (goiter); hair and skin changes; bowel changes; menstrual abnormalities; depression; carpal tunnel (weakness or tingling in the arms, wrists, hands, and legs); and finally, family history; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, proposes that the VA immediately establish studies to determine whether thyroid disorder(s) are more common in veterans with SWA service than the general population given that many of the common symptoms of a thyroid disorder are also the currently recognized signs or symptoms of undiagnosed illness and medically unexplained chronic multi-symptom illnesses associated with SWA service.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 142

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO REFORM FUGITIVE FELON STATUS

WHEREAS, at present, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has a recognized policy denying compensation, pension, or dependent benefits to an individual listed as a fugitive felon; and

WHEREAS, at present, VA accepts indications of fugitive status from local authorities, but VA does not require information from the originating agency that any attempt has ever been made to locate the alleged fugitive and VA does not seek clarification on whether or not the claimant was actually fleeing or otherwise avoiding prosecution, custody, or confinement, the criteria for establishing fugitive status; and

WHEREAS, the presumption by VA against the claimant results in loss of VA benefits and significant hardships by the erroneously identified claimant in attempting to reinstate their benefits; and

WHEREAS, the individual often has years of government bureaucracy to overcome despite the fact that they have lived in the same location for years without anyone actually attempting to contact them prior to the VA's declaration of fugitive status; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports the enactment of legislation that requires VA to verify that the originating agency has actually attempted to locate the claimant, and that the claimant has fled justice or was otherwise avoiding prosecution, custody, or confinement, before VA can seize their current benefits and establish overpayment for prior benefits dispensed.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 145

SUPPORT LEGISLATION AUTHORIZING THE PRESUMPTION OF SERVICE CONNECTION FOR ALL RADIOGENIC DISEASES AND ELIMINATE DOSE ESTIMATE REQUIREMENTS

WHEREAS, members of the United States armed forces participated in test detonations of nuclear devices, served in Hiroshima or Nagasaki, Japan, following the detonation of nuclear weapons, including “cleanup” operations at test sites and have conducted other activities exposing them to ionizing radiation; and

WHEREAS, the United States government knew or should have known the potential harm to the health and well-being of these service members, but did not consistently keep adequate records on radiation exposure; and

WHEREAS, those described as “atomic veterans” served our nation with honor, courage and devotion to duty; and

WHEREAS, remedial legislation passed by Congress in 1984 has not been effective in ensuring that all atomic veterans are compensated for their radiogenic diseases; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has indicated only about 50 claimants have been awarded disability compensation and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation pursuant to Public Law 98–542, the Veterans’ Dioxin and Radiation Exposure Compensation Standards Act; and

WHEREAS, title 38, Code of Federal Regulations §3.311, requires dose estimate exposure levels for claims based on radiation, and is a higher standard than for other disabilities associated with exposure such as claims based on herbicide exposure during the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, the government has spent tens of millions of dollars to provide dose reconstruction estimates that do not accurately reflect actual radiation dose exposure of these veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, calls on Congress to enact legislation to provide presumptive service connection to atomic veterans for all recognized radiogenic diseases; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that any veteran involved in cleanup operations following a detonation of a nuclear device hereinafter be considered an atomic veteran for purposes of eligibility for benefits and services provided by VA; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV calls on Congress to support the elimination of dose exposure estimates required for diseases presumptive to ionizing radiation exposure and presume exposure to ionizing radiation for any radiation-exposed veteran with proof of radiation risk activities to include atmospheric and underwater detonations.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 146 SUPPORT LEGISLATION RECOGNIZING RACIAL TRAUMA AS A STRESSOR FOR POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

WHEREAS, current regulations direct that credible supporting evidence that the claimed in-service stressor occurred, 38 CFR §3.304(f); and

WHEREAS, that regulation currently recognizes five situations where the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has specifically set out criteria for special consideration of the stressor: (1) diagnosed during service, (2) combat, (3) fear of hostile military or terrorist activity, (4) prisoner of war, and (5) in-service personal assault; and

WHEREAS, a service member experiencing a racial trauma is exposed to an unexpected scenario in which they are largely helpless and over which they have no control; and

WHEREAS, their response may include feelings of anger, confusion, disbelief, dysphoria, fear, feelings of desocialization or derealization, hopelessness, humiliation, rage, shame and shock; and

WHEREAS, these recognized traumatic reactions may result in the disabled veteran experiencing and manifesting symptom clusters consistent with a diagnosis of PTSD, including:

Re-experiencing through distressing memories, flashbacks, intrusive thoughts, nightmares, physical and emotional distress at reminders; and

Avoidance through agoraphobia, attempting not to think about it, avoidance of people the same or similar race that is responsible for the racial trauma, isolation, substance use/abuse, and

Negative alterations in cognitions manifested by the presence of anger, anxiety, belief that the world is unsafe, depression, guilt, helplessness and/or hopelessness, horror, inability to trust, self-blame, and/or self-doubt, and

Alterations in arousal and reactivity that may include anger/rage with little provocation, concentration and memory problems, diminished interest or participation in prior significant activities, guilt, hypervigilance, fear, increased startle response, irritability, reckless or self-destructive behavior, reduction in positive emotions, sadness, shame, sleep impairment, social withdrawal, verbal and/or physical aggression; and

WHEREAS, the law and regulations currently in effect require the veteran to provide “credible supporting evidence that the claimed in-service stressor occurred;” and

WHEREAS, this limitation on the law limits the disabled veteran’s ability to prove their case where the assailants may have been in their chain of command and therefore would be the ones responsible for ensuring the documentation, or lack thereof, of the incident; and

WHEREAS, even in the presence of a racial trauma perpetuated outside of the chain of command, the disabled veteran may not have been able to ensure formal documentation either through invalidation by those members of their command or due to fear and shame of reprisal or invalidation; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports legislation to specifically include racial trauma as one of the identified categories of stressors in 38 CFR §3.304(f).

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 149
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO INCLUDE CHILDREN IN LEGAL CUSTODY AS A
DEPENDENT FOR DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PURPOSES

WHEREAS, per Title 10, United States Code, (USC) § 1072(2)(I), military service members and military retirees can claim a dependent child that is an unmarried person who is placed in the legal custody of the member or former member as a result of an order of a court of competent jurisdiction in the United States (or possession of the United States); and

WHEREAS, 38 USC § 101 (4)(A) in part, defines dependent child as a person under the age of eighteen years, or who before attaining the age of eighteen, became permanently incapable of support, or who after attaining the age of eighteen but not after attaining the age of twenty-three, is attending an education or training program; and

WHEREAS, a child is a person who is a legitimate child, or a legally adopted child, or a stepchild who is a member of the veteran's household; and

WHEREAS, when a child is placed in the legal custody or guardianship of a veteran, the child does not meet the above criteria as a dependent for VA purposes; however, the child would be recognized by the Department of Defense, therefore creating an inequity; and

WHEREAS, the veteran and the child are placed at an disadvantage of not being able to utilize VA programs and benefits; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports legislation to amend the definition of a child to include those placed into legal custody or guardianship of the veteran, even if on a temporary basis.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 150
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO DIRECT THE SECRETARY OF
VETERANS AFFAIRS TO COORDINATE WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT
OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF
DEFENSE TO VERIFY DEPENDENCY STATUS

WHEREAS, current law and regulations allow for additional compensation for veterans who have a service-connected disability rating of 30% or more for the dependents; and

WHEREAS, it is the veteran's responsibility to inform the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) of changes in dependency; and

WHEREAS, veterans are often confused by the different sections of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and report changes to the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and/or through the Department of Defense's Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS); and

WHEREAS, VBA will establish an overpayment due to dependency changes that were not directly reported to VBA regardless of whether VHA and/or DEERS reflected the changes; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports legislation to formally direct the VA Secretary to accept any reports of dependency changes made to the VHA and/or documented in DEERS to mitigate any alleged overpayment due to changes in dependency status; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports legislation to formally direct the VA Secretary to establish a method to accept and incorporate DEERS changes automatically into the VBA process, and to allow VHA changes to dependency to be reported to VBA.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 152
SUPPORT THE ELIMINATION OF THE 30-DAY REQUIREMENT
FOR DISEASES ASSOCIATED WITH EXPOSURE TO CONTAMINANTS
IN THE WATER SUPPLY AT CAMP LEJEUNE

WHEREAS, title 38, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §3.307(a)(7)(i) provides contaminants in the water supply means the volatile organic compounds (VOC) trichloroethylene (TCE), perchloroethylene (PCE), benzene and vinyl chloride, were in the on-base water supply systems located at United States Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune; and

WHEREAS, 38 CFR §3.307(a)(7)(iii) notes that a veteran, or former reservist or member of the National Guard, who had no less than 30 days (consecutive or nonconsecutive) of service at Camp

Lejeune during the period beginning on August 1, 1953, and ending on December 31, 1987, shall be presumed to have been exposed during such service to the contaminants in the water supply; and

WHEREAS, the 30-day requirement is not based on the potential systemic, external and internal exposures to the VOCs; and

WHEREAS, review of the National Research Council, Committee on Contaminated Drinking Water at Camp Lejeune study, Contaminated Water Supplies at Camp Lejeune: Assessing Potential Health Effects, notes that the internal doses of TCE from showering provide inhalation and dermal exposure that is equivalent with ingesting two liters of water; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) notice of proposed rulemaking on the above-referenced subject, as published in the Federal Register on September 9, 2016, notes, "VA experts agree that there is no science to support a specific minimum exposure level for any of the conditions;" and

WHEREAS, the VA plainly states, the 30-day requirement is intended to provide consistency with the Honoring America's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012, Public Law 112-154; and

WHEREAS, the VA notes in multiple instances that the 30-day requirement is to keep consistency with the requirement for health care but does not assert that there is a scientific basis or legal requirement for the 30-day period; and

WHEREAS, the 30-day requirement is not consistent with any other laws or regulations providing presumptive service connection for exposure to toxic substances, such as veterans exposed to herbicide agents during service in Vietnam; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports the elimination of the 30-day requirement for Diseases Associated with Exposure to Contaminants in the Water Supply at Camp Lejeune as it is not: based on the potential systemic, external and internal, exposures to the VOCs; predicated on any science; based on any legal requirements nor consistent with existing laws and regulations concerning presumptive service connection for exposure to toxic substances.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 153
SUPPORT CONGRESSIONAL ACTION TO ENSURE THAT TOTAL
DISABILITY BASED ON INDIVIDUAL UNEMPLOYABILITY REMAINS
AVAILABLE FOR ALL VETERANS REGARDLESS OF AGE OR
RECEIPT OF ANY OTHER EARNED FEDERAL BENEFITS

WHEREAS, when a veteran's disability is rated less than a total 100% evaluation, but he or she is unable to obtain or maintain substantial gainful employment, VA regulations allow the veteran to apply for Total Disability Based on Individual Unemployability (TDIU); and

WHEREAS, TDIU is based on the severity of the individual veteran's unique disability picture and its impact on the veteran's ability to obtain and maintain substantial gainful employment. Generally, the veteran must have a single disability rated at 60% or a combined evaluation of 70% to be eligible for TDIU; and

WHEREAS, reports published by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) in November 2013, August 2014, and December 2016, as well as the Government Accounting Office (GAO) report in June 2015, made recommendations to limit TDIU based on age and entitlement to additional earned federal benefits; and

WHEREAS, the Administration's proposed 2018 budget contained a proposal to terminate IU ratings for veterans at age of 62 and cut off TDIU benefits for any veteran already in receipt of Social Security retirement benefits; and

WHEREAS, the December 2018 CBO report contained a proposal to terminate IU ratings for veterans at age of 65 and cut off TDIU benefits for any veteran already in receipt of Social Security retirement benefits; and

WHEREAS, VA regulation 38 C.F.R. § 4.19, states the VA is precluded from considering the veteran's age in their determination of a TDIU; and

WHEREAS, TDIU is not a retirement or pension program and is neither similar nor related to Social Security retirement benefits; and

WHEREAS, a VA determination of a TDIU is not the same nor is it similar to federal unemployment insurance; it is a disability compensation benefit; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, urges Congress to enact legislation to protect TDIU for it to remain available for all veterans regardless of age or receipt of any other earned federal benefits.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 155

REMOVE THE DELIMITING DATE FOR PERSIAN GULF VETERANS' ILLNESSES

WHEREAS, thousands of Gulf War veterans still suffer from chronic and unexplained physical symptoms; and

WHEREAS, current law limits filing dates for illnesses and injuries in veterans from certain service during active-duty periods, including the Southwest Asia theater of military operations; and

WHEREAS, title 38, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), § 3.317(i), stipulates that diseases associated with service in the Persian Gulf must "manifest either during active military, naval, or air service in the Southwest Asia theater of operations, or to a degree of 10% or more not later than December 31, 2021;" and

WHEREAS, the numerous symptoms experienced by sick Gulf War veterans are not well understood, and the causes of such symptoms remain elusive and answers could likely remain obscure for some time; and

WHEREAS, little significant research is being conducted on long-term health effects of many of the agents to which veterans were potentially exposed during the Gulf War; and

WHEREAS, additional research into the long-term health effects of exposures is needed, a fact confirmed in the "Gulf War and Health: Volume 10: Update of Health Effects of Serving in the Gulf War, 2016" on the health effects of exposures during the Gulf War; and

WHEREAS, filing periods for injuries and illnesses related to service in any theater of military operations must remain open ended to assure that benefits and services are available when those conditions ultimately manifest; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, urges Congress to support legislation to remove the delimiting date for disabilities as a result of active-duty services in the Southwest Asia theater of operation.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 156

SUPPORT LEGISLATION FOR STUDIES AND PRESUMPTIVE DISEASES RELATED TO PFAS EXPOSURE

WHEREAS, the acronym "PFAS" relates to perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances that are man-made chemicals with at least one fully fluorinated carbon atom, are present in fire-fighting foams and do not break down in the environment; and

WHEREAS, in the 1970s, the Department of Defense (DOD) began using aqueous film forming foam (AFFF) to fight fuel fires and emergency response is a major source of PFAS contamination of ground water on military bases; and

WHEREAS, in 2018, the DOD examined 524 installations for two of the most prevalent PFAS chemicals in AFFF, perfluorooctane sulfonate, or PFOS, and perfluorooctanoic acid, or PFOA, and found 401 locations with some level of contamination; and

WHEREAS, in March 2020, DOD released new data showing that more than 600 military sites have been contaminated with PFAS, far more than previously disclosed; and

WHEREAS, according to the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ASTOR), some studies in humans suggest that certain PFAS may be associated with: fertility issues and pregnancy-induced hypertension/preeclampsia, increased cholesterol, changes in the immune system, increased risk of certain cancers (e.g., testicular and kidney cancer), changes in fetal and child development, liver damage, increased risk of thyroid disease, and increased risk of asthma; and

WHEREAS, some studies have reported these possible health outcomes, the overall scientific and medical evidence is currently inconclusive; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports legislation to establish and maintain a registry for eligible individuals who may have been exposed to PFAS to ascertain and monitor the health effects of the exposure of members of the Armed Forces; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports legislation requiring DOD or VA to contract with the National Academies of Science, Medicine and Engineering to provide a study on the long-term health effects of PFAS exposure; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports the establishment of presumption of service connection or a concession of exposure for PFAS and establish presumptive diseases related thereto.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 157
SUPPORT LEGISLATION FOR HEALTH CARE AND
CONCESSION OF EXPOSURE FOR BURN PITS

WHEREAS, it is estimated that over 3.5 million veterans were exposed to airborne toxins from burned waste products including, but not limited to: plastics, metal/aluminum cans, rubber, chemicals (such as paints, solvents), petroleum and lubricant products, munitions and other unexploded ordnance, wood waste, medical and human waste, and incomplete combustion byproducts; and

WHEREAS, during Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm (1990-1991) and since, burn pits were utilized not only in Iraq, but also in Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia and since September 11, 2001, burn pits have been used throughout the operations in Afghanistan, Djibouti, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, and Yemen, as well as in Iraq after March 20, 2003; and

WHEREAS, there is no current presumptive service connection, veterans must file claims for direct service connection for diseases and illnesses related to burn pit exposure and according to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), from June 2007 through May 2020, adjudicated 12,517 direct service connection claims for diseases related to burn pit exposure and roughly 80% of those claims have been denied; and

WHEREAS, in September 2020, the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine completed its report, "Respiratory Health Effects of Airborne Hazards Exposures in the Southwest Asia Theater of Military Operations," and concluded that there was inadequate or insufficient evidence to determine associations between exposure to toxins from burn pits and respiratory-related conditions; and

WHEREAS, if burn pit-exposed veterans are not service connected and it has been more than five years since the end of their combat service, they are not eligible for VA health care for these conditions; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports legislation to establish health care for burn pit exposed veterans to include by amending title 38, United States Code, 1710 to extend the five-year combat requirement or by including burn pit exposure as part of the toxic exposure eligibility; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that DAV supports legislation requiring DOD or VA to contract with the National Academies of Science, Medicine and Engineering to provide a study on the long-term health effects of burn pit exposure; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports the establishment of a concession of exposure or a presumption of service connection for burn pit exposure and the establishment of presumptive diseases related thereto.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 158
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO REMOVE THE PROHIBITION AGAINST
DAV MEMBERS WHO ARE FEDERAL EMPLOYEES FROM
COMMUNICATING ON BEHALF OF DAV WITH FEDERAL AGENCIES

WHEREAS, in order to support DAV's mission to provide assistance to service-connected disabled veterans, it often requires DAV members to communicate on behalf of DAV with federal agencies, including the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); and

WHEREAS, DAV members who are federal employees are subject to federal ethics representational and communication prohibitions, including section 205 of title 10, United States Code. Section 205 provides representational and communication prohibitions that any federal employee is barred from acting as agent of any organization other than the federal government when communicating with federal agencies; and

WHEREAS, the Office of Government Ethics (OGE) is responsible for ethics policy in the federal government; and

WHEREAS, OGE has recognized that section 205 bars many reasonable communications by federal employees acting in their personal capacity with federal agencies, even when assisting charitable and service organizations; and

WHEREAS, OGE has recommended changes to section 205, but the changes have not been enacted; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports a legislative amendment to section 205 to establish a statutory exception to the representational and communication prohibitions for the benefit of Congressionally chartered veterans service organizations, including DAV.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 159

SUPPORT REAUTHORIZATION OF THE PERSIAN GULF WAR VETERANS ACT

WHEREAS, the Persian Gulf War Veterans Act of 1998, codified at title 38, United States Code, § 1118, provides for presumptive service connection for diseases related thereto; and

WHEREAS, subsection (b) provided requirements for the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to follow when prescribing new presumptive diseases including determinations of positive association of diagnosed or undiagnosed illnesses, reports from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM), and positive significantly statistical association; and

WHEREAS, subsection (c) provided that not later than 60 days after the date on which the Secretary receives a report from NASEM, the Secretary shall determine whether or not a presumptive is warranted for each illness covered by the report; and

WHEREAS, if the Secretary determines that a presumption of service connection is warranted, the Secretary shall, not later than 60 days after making the determination, issue proposed regulations setting forth the Secretary's determination; and

WHEREAS, if the Secretary determines that a presumption of service connection is not warranted, the Secretary shall, not later than 60 days after making the determination, publish in the Federal Register a notice of the determination and the notice shall include an explanation of the scientific basis for the determination; and

WHEREAS, if the Secretary determines that a presumption of service connection is warranted, the Secretary shall, not later than 60 days after making the determination, issue proposed regulations setting forth the Secretary's determination; and

WHEREAS, the provisions of the Persian Gulf War Veterans Act of 1998 as noted above in subsection b, subsection c, and subsection d all expired on September 30, 2011; and

WHEREAS, there are no longer any requirements for a positive association or time requirements for the Secretary to act on scientific reports; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports legislation to reauthorize all sections of the Persian Gulf War Veterans Act of 1998 to ensure that the presumptive process for diseases related to toxic exposures as noted, remain available for veterans exposed.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 160

SUPPORT REAUTHORIZATION OF THE AGENT ORANGE ACT

WHEREAS, the Agent Orange Act of 1991, codified at title 38, United States Code, section 1116, provides for presumptive service connection for diseases related thereto; and

WHEREAS, subsection (b) provided requirements for the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to follow when prescribing new presumptive diseases including determinations of positive association of diagnosed or undiagnosed illnesses, reports from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM), and positive significantly statistical association; and

WHEREAS, subsection (c) provided that not later than 60 days after the date on which the Secretary receives a report from NASEM, the Secretary shall determine whether or not a presumptive is warranted for each illness covered by the report; and

WHEREAS, if the Secretary determines that a presumption of service connection is warranted, the Secretary shall, not later than 60 days after making the determination, issue proposed regulations setting forth the Secretary's determination; and

WHEREAS, if the Secretary determines that a presumption of service connection is not warranted, the Secretary shall, not later than 60 days after making the determination, publish in the Federal

Register a notice of the determination and the notice shall include an explanation of the scientific basis for the determination; and

WHEREAS, if the Secretary determines that a presumption of service connection is warranted, the Secretary shall, not later than 60 days after making the determination, issue proposed regulations setting forth the Secretary's determination; and

WHEREAS, the provisions of the Agent Orange Act of 1991 as noted above in subsection b, subsection c, and subsection d all expired on September 30, 2015; and

WHEREAS, there are no longer any requirements for a positive association or time requirements for the Secretary to act on scientific reports; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports legislation to reauthorize all sections of the Agent Orange Act of 1991 to ensure that the presumptive process for diseases related to toxic exposures as noted, remain available for veterans exposed.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 161
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE STUDIES RELATED TO,
AND HEALTH CARE AND BENEFITS RESULTING FROM TOXIC
EXPOSURES AT KARSHI-KHANABAD AIR BASE, UZBEKISTAN

WHEREAS, over 15,000 U.S. service members were deployed to the Karshi-Khanabad Air Base (K2) in Uzbekistan from 2001 to 2005; and

WHEREAS, while it was a Soviet air base, K2 had contained chemical weapons, enriched uranium and soil saturated with fuels and other solvents; and

WHEREAS, recently declassified Department of Defense documents reveal that U.S. service members were exposed to multiple toxic hazards while stationed at K2, including jet fuel, kerosene, dangerous levels of particulate matter in the air, as well as possible exposure to depleted uranium; and

WHEREAS, other health assessment tests found the base had elevated levels of volatile organic compounds, and total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH) were detected at numerous locations throughout K2; and

WHEREAS, air samples at the base found elevated levels of tetrachloroethylene, as well as the residuals of chemical weapons including cyanide in the showers; and

WHEREAS, a 2015 U.S. Army study found that veterans exposed at K2 have a 500% increased likelihood of developing cancer, to include malignant melanoma and neoplasms of the lymphatic and hematopoietic tissues; and

WHEREAS, veterans may not know for years or decades about the toxic or environmental conditions they were exposed to during military service; and

WHEREAS, returning from war, veterans may suffer from disabling conditions that are not immediately identified as a result of such exposures; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) does not recognize or acknowledge service at K2 with high probability of exposure to any toxic exposures; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports the recognition of the existence of toxic substances and environmental hazards at K2, and concession of exposure by all U.S. service members who served at K2 between January 1, 2001 and December 31, 2005; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports legislation to grant K2 veterans eligibility to VA health care, to include hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care by expanding the definition of toxic exposures in title 38, United States Code, section 1710; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports studies to identify illnesses and diseases that have a positive association, including a sufficient, limited, or suggestive association, with exposure to any toxic substances or high levels of particulate matter and dust resulting from open burn pits that may have been at K2.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 162
SUPPORT LEGISLATION THAT RECOGNIZES PRESUMPTIVE
SERVICE CONNECTION FOR HYPERTENSION AND MONOCLONAL
GAMMOPATHY OF UNDETERMINED SIGNIFICANCE AS RELATED
TO EXPOSURE TO AGENT ORANGE AND HERBICIDES

WHEREAS, during the decade from 1961 to 1971, our military forces sprayed approximately 21 million gallons of herbicide agents in Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, these herbicide agents, the most common of which was designated “Agent Orange,” contained the contaminant dioxin, one of the most toxic substances known to exist; and

WHEREAS, the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM) update, “Veterans and Agent Orange,” published in 2016, noted that although the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has not found hypertension to be presumptively related to service in Vietnam, the committee reaffirmed the conclusions of previous studies that hypertension should be placed in the category of limited or suggestive evidence of association; and

WHEREAS, the VA study, “Herbicide Exposure, Vietnam Service, and Hypertension Risk in Army Chemical Corps Veterans,” found that exposure to herbicides is “significantly associated” with the risk of hypertension, or high blood pressure, in members of the Army Chemical Corps; and

WHEREAS, the December 2018 NASEM updated report reviewed the VA study and stated there is sufficient evidence of a relationship between hypertension, monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance (MGUS), and Agent Orange exposure; and

WHEREAS, in a March 2019 congressional hearing, the VA indicated that a decision on these presumptives could be released within 90 days; and

WHEREAS, subsequently, in a September 2019 Senate hearing, it was noted that VA leadership, in accordance with Policy 0215, had been considering the addition of these diseases since early summer 2019; and

WHEREAS, at a hearing in December 2020, VA stated they were still seeking additional evidence before they could include the diseases; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports legislation to add hypertension and MGUS to the presumptive list in section 3.309(e), title 38, Code of Federal Regulations.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 163
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO EXPAND RADIATION RISK ACTIVITIES

WHEREAS, members of the United States armed forces participated in “cleanup” operations at various sites during different times, which are not recognized as radiation risk activities; and

WHEREAS, currently the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) does not recognize participation in the cleanup of the crash site of a B-52 bomber carrying four hydrogen bombs, and a KC-135 air refueling tanker in Palomares, Spain for the period of January 7, 1966, to March 31, 1967, as a radiation risk activity; and

WHEREAS, approximately 650 acres were contaminated with radioactive material; and

WHEREAS, as part of the U.S. effort, active service members participated in the clean-up; and

WHEREAS, the Radiation Safety Journal Health Physics published an article in December 2019, stating the Air Force used the incorrect maximum safety radiation doses at the time confirming the service members who participated in cleanup operations were likely exposed to unsafe levels of plutonium; and

WHEREAS, the VA currently does recognize those veterans who participated in nuclear testing at Enewetak Atoll from 1951 to 1959; and

WHEREAS, the VA does not recognize those 5,000 service members who participated in the subsequent cleanup operations, which moved contaminated soil and dirt from nuclear test sites into the concrete barriers built in the area from January 1, 1977 to December 31, 1980; and

WHEREAS, the presumption of service connection for radiation exposure applies to radiation risk activity participants, which does not include participants in cleanup operations; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, calls on Congress to enact legislation to expand radiation risk activities and presume exposure to those service members who participated in cleanup operations; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV supports legislation to expand current VA acknowledged radiation risk activities to include cleanup operations at both Palomares, Spain and Enewetak Atoll.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 179
SUPPORT A CHANGE IN REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS
RATING UNDER SECTION 4.30 OF TITLE 38, CODE OF FEDERAL
REGULATIONS TO PROVIDE FOR A TEMPORARY TOTAL RATING
FOR INCAPACITATION OF MORE THAN 21 DAYS

WHEREAS, with advances in modern medicine and increasing emphasis on more efficient use of health care resources, health care providers are being encouraged to utilize suitable alternatives to inpatient care; and

WHEREAS, as a consequence, veterans are often treated through home health services or convalesce at home rather than in the hospital; and

WHEREAS, convalescent ratings are currently only authorized where inpatient or outpatient treatment resulted in surgery or immobilization of a major joint by cast; and

WHEREAS, there are instances where the veteran's treatment did not involve surgery or casting of a major joint, but the veteran has undergone healing, convalescence, or a therapeutic course in the home, with a duration of more than 21 days; and

WHEREAS, exacerbation of a service-connected disability sometimes makes work activities contraindicated for periods of more than 21 days; and

WHEREAS, in such instances, the therapeutic course, convalescence, or restriction from work would occur in the home in lieu of hospitalization for more than 21 days; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports a change in section 4.30 of title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, to provide for a temporary total rating if treatment or exacerbation of a service-connected disability results in a condition of temporary total incapacity for employment or temporary unavailability for employment by reason of home health care or ambulatory care, bed rest or confinement to the home, or contraindication of work activities for more than 21 days.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 180
EXTEND ELIGIBILITY FOR VETERANS' MORTGAGE PROTECTION
LIFE INSURANCE TO SERVICE-CONNECTED VETERANS
RATED PERMANENTLY AND TOTALLY DISABLED

WHEREAS, Veterans' Mortgage Life Insurance (VMLI) is presently available to veterans entitled to the specially adapted housing award under section 2101(a), title 38, United States Code; and

WHEREAS, service-connected veterans rated as permanently and totally disabled cannot obtain mortgage life insurance through commercial insurance companies; and

WHEREAS, their survivors and dependents must bear an undue hardship upon the death of such veterans; and

WHEREAS, the VMLI program provides mortgage life insurance to severely disabled veterans and service members who have also received a specially adapted housing grant from the Department of Veterans Affairs; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, seeks the enactment of legislation which would extend VMLI to service-connected veterans who are rated as permanently and totally disabled.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 187
SUPPORT AN INCREASE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS
AFFAIRS BURIAL ALLOWANCE FOR SERVICE-CONNECTED VETERANS
AND PROVIDE AUTOMATIC ANNUAL ADJUSTMENTS

WHEREAS, the National Cemetery Administration burial allowance provides partial reimbursement for eligible funeral and burial costs, with a maximum payment of \$2,000 for service-connected burial allowance, \$300 for nonservice-connected burial allowance and \$749 for nonservice-connected plot allowance; and

WHEREAS, passage of Public Law 111–275, the Veterans’ Benefits Act of 2010, resulted in an increase in both plot allowance and burial allowance from \$300 to \$749 for nonservice-connected deaths in Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facilities, effective October 1, 2011; and

WHEREAS, this law did not increase the \$2,000 for burial and funeral expenses for service-connected deaths outside of VA facilities, nor is it indexed to the Consumer Price Index for annual adjustments; and

WHEREAS, the plot allowance introduced in 1973 was an attempt to provide a plot benefit for veterans who did not have reasonable access to a national cemetery, but neither the plot allowance nor the burial allowance was intended to cover the full cost of a civilian burial in a private cemetery; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports legislation to increase the burial allowance payable in the case of death due to service-connected disability regardless of whether the death occurs in a VA and provide for automatic annual adjustments indexed to the rise in the cost of living.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 192
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE A REALISTIC INCREASE
IN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS COMPENSATION
RATES TO ADDRESS LOSS OF QUALITY OF LIFE

WHEREAS, the Veterans’ Disability Benefits Commission (the Commission) was established by Public Law 108–136, the National Defense Authorization Act of 2004, to address several measures, one of which was loss of quality of life; and

WHEREAS, current law requires that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) rating schedule compensate service-disabled veterans for average impairment of earning capacity; and

WHEREAS, the Commission concluded early in its deliberations that VA disability compensation should recompense veterans not only for average impairments of earning capacity, but also for their inability to participate in usual life activities and for the impact of their disabilities on quality of life; and

WHEREAS, the Institute of Medicine (now the National Academy of Medicine) reached the same conclusion; moreover, it made extensive recommendations on steps to develop and implement a methodology to evaluate the impact of disabilities on veterans’ quality of life and to provide appropriate compensation; and

WHEREAS, the Commission concluded that the VA rating schedule should be revised to include compensation for the impact of service-connected disabilities on quality of life; and

WHEREAS, for some veterans, quality of life is addressed in a limited fashion by special monthly compensation for loss of limbs or loss of use of limbs; and

WHEREAS, the Commission urged Congress to consider increases in some special monthly compensation awards to address the profound impact of certain disabilities on quality of life and to assess whether other ancillary benefits might be appropriate; and

WHEREAS, while a recommended systematic methodology is being developed for evaluating and compensating for the impact of disability on quality of life, the Commission recommended that an immediate interim increase of up to 25% of compensation rates be enacted; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports the enactment of legislation to provide a realistic increase in VA compensation rates to address loss of quality of life.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 194
OPPOSE REGIONAL DISPERSION OF THE BOARD OF VETERANS’ APPEALS

WHEREAS, veterans and other claimants for veterans benefits may appeal ratings and other decisions of the various and geographically dispersed benefit offices and medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); and

WHEREAS, inaccuracy and lack of uniformity are pervasive among the claims decisions of the many VA field offices; and

WHEREAS, one board, the Board of Veterans’ Appeals (Board) in Washington, D.C., hears all appeals; and

WHEREAS, appellants, Board members and taxpayers derive numerous benefits from an appellate board housed in one centralized location, some of the more obvious of which are:

- Availability of the collective expertise of the entire board;

- Professional interaction and association among Board members and staff;
- Shared and uniform training;
- Common and shared goals and responsibilities;
- Economies of scale from pooled resources and the most efficient workload distribution, with the flexibility and capacity to readjust the workload as necessary between members and support staff;
- A positive environment and employee incentives for developing creative solutions and innovations to meet and overcome the challenges inherent in a system of mass adjudication of claims;
- More efficient and effective centralized case management and storage;
- More effective centralized Board administration and hands-on employee oversight; and

WHEREAS, Congress created the Board after repeated failed experiments with various configurations of regional appellate panels that were plagued by persistent inefficiencies and problems and were proven impractical and poorly suited to properly dispose of veterans' appeals; and

WHEREAS, such regional reorganization of the Board would be extremely unwise, wholly unwarranted and not in the best interests of veterans or taxpayers; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, categorically opposes any decentralization of the Board of Veterans' Appeals.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 195
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO REQUIRE THE UNITED STATES COURT
OF APPEALS FOR VETERANS CLAIMS TO DECIDE EACH OF
APPELLANT'S ASSIGNMENTS OF ERROR

WHEREAS, Congress passed the Veterans' Judicial Review Act of 1988 (VJRA) and created the United States Court of Veterans Appeals (currently the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims) (Court); and

WHEREAS, the VJRA granted the Court the authority to decide all relevant questions of law and to hold unlawful and set aside or reverse any finding of material fact adverse to the claimant, which is clearly erroneous; and

WHEREAS, due to long delays in claims processing at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), it can take veterans years to get their appeals before the Court; and

WHEREAS, in many appeals, the Court will ignore the appellants' legal arguments and remand an appeal to the Board of Veterans' Appeals (Board) based on the General Counsel's confession of error that the Board failed to provide adequate reasons or bases for its decision to deny the benefit; and

WHEREAS, a remand due to lack of reasons or bases allows the VA to reopen the evidentiary record and obtain other evidence to support the continuation of the denial; and

WHEREAS, a veteran must appeal to the Court a second time and, in some cases, a third or fourth time to obtain a decision on the merits of his or her appeal; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports legislation that would require the Court to decide each assignment of error and to reverse any such errors found; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Congress should enact legislation providing the Court should have the authority to modify or remand any Board decision found to contain any error or errors, that the authority to modify should include the power to order an award of benefits in appropriate cases, and that an appellant should be expressly permitted to waive confessions of error made by the appellee.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 196
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO CAP ATTORNEYS' FEES FOR
BENEFITS COUNSELING AND CLAIMS SERVICES BEFORE
THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

WHEREAS, our nation established veterans programs to repay or reward veterans for their extraordinary service and sacrifices on behalf of their fellow citizens; and

WHEREAS, in the spirit in which special benefits are provided to especially deserving beneficiaries, our citizens intended these benefits to be dispensed through an open, helpful and informal system in which the government is duty bound to receive every claimant as entitled and provide every reasonable assistance in developing and shepherding the claim through the entire administrative process while affording consideration of all legal avenues toward granting every benefit that can be supported in law; and

WHEREAS, the programs are also designed in a manner that ensures veterans and their families will receive the full measure of aid from disability compensation and other payments without taxation and with protections that ensure they are not diverted to others who have no entitlement to them; and

WHEREAS, Congress has set the rates of these modest benefits to be minimally adequate for their intended purposes, such as assisting disabled veterans and their families in purchasing the necessities of life or obtaining services necessary to ameliorate the effects of disability, and the amounts provided do not contemplate or allow for any reduction or diminishment in buying power such as will occur when a portion is diverted to attorneys; and

WHEREAS, acquiescence in any general situation in which obtaining veterans' benefits required hiring an attorney and surrendering a portion of disability compensation or other benefits obtained to the attorney fundamentally contradicts and undermines the spirit of the benefit programs created solely to aid and meet the special needs of disabled veterans and their dependents and survivors; and

WHEREAS, it is inappropriate for Congress to disavow the government's obligation to ensure veterans receive the benefits due them by passing them off to the legal profession where their plight might well depend on or be determined by their potential for producing attorney fees; and

WHEREAS, in 2006, Congress passed legislation, Public Law 109-461, the Veterans Benefits, Health Care and Information Technology Act of 2006, which allows attorneys to charge a veteran a fee for counseling and claims service following the filing of a Notice of Disagreement; and

WHEREAS, the initial intent of veterans' benefits recognized that no disabled veteran should have to pay an attorney significant fees to obtain the benefits that a grateful nation provides and the veteran is rightfully due; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, seeks legislation to provide for a reasonable cap on the amount of fees an attorney can charge veterans for benefits counseling and claims services before the Department of Veterans Affairs.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 197 INCREASE THE HOME IMPROVEMENT AND STRUCTURAL ALTERATIONS GRANT

WHEREAS, under section 1717, title 38, United States Code, the Home Improvement and Structural Alterations (HISA) program, veterans with service-connected disabilities or veterans with nonservice-connected disabilities may receive assistance for any home improvement necessary for the continuation of treatment or for disability access to the home and essential lavatory and sanitary facilities; and

WHEREAS, a HISA grant is available to veterans who have received a medical determination indicating that improvements and structural alterations are necessary or appropriate for the effective and economical treatment of the veteran; and

WHEREAS, a veteran may receive both a HISA grant and either a Special Home Adaptation grant or a Specially Adapted Housing grant; and

WHEREAS, the HISA improvement benefit provides up to \$6,800 to service-connected veterans, and up to \$2,000 to nonservice-connected veterans as a result of the Caregiver and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, calls for a reasonable increase in HISA benefits for veterans.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 231 AMEND PROVISIONS REGARDING ELIGIBILITY FOR AUTOMOBILE ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT TO INCLUDE ANY VETERAN WHOSE SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY INHIBITS THE ABILITY TO SAFELY OPERATE A MOTOR VEHICLE

WHEREAS, section 3902, title 38, United States Code (USC), and section 17.119(a), title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, restrict the eligibility for adaptive automobile equipment to those veterans who qualify for the automobile grant as specified in section 3901, title 38, USC; and

WHEREAS, not all veterans whose service-connected disabilities prohibit the safe operation of a motor vehicle meet the requirements of section 3901, title 38, USC; and

WHEREAS, these service-connected disabled veterans should be provided the adaptive equipment necessary to safely operate a motor vehicle; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports the enactment of legislation that would authorize the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide or assist in providing the adaptive equipment deemed necessary to any veteran whose service-connected disability interferes with the safe operation of a motor vehicle.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 236
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO GRANT ENTITLEMENT TO AID AND ATTENDANCE TO A VETERAN'S SERIOUSLY DISABLED CHILD

WHEREAS, title 38, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), part 3, section 356, provides additional compensation for a veteran whose child is shown to be permanently incapable of self-support by reason of mental or physical defect at the date of attaining the age of 18 years; and

WHEREAS, a veteran's seriously disabled and/or handicapped child is significantly impaired in their ability to conduct activities of daily living; and

WHEREAS, title 38 United States Code, section 1114, provides aid and attendance benefits for veterans, their spouse, and dependent parents who have significant disabilities as to be in need of regular aid and attendance; and

WHEREAS, title 38 CFR, part 3, section 352, Veterans Affairs states entitlement is held to exist when the veteran requires the assistance of others for the ability to dress and undress themselves, or to keep themselves clean and presentable, or to perform frequent adjustment of special prosthetic or orthopedic appliances, or to attend to bowel and bladder self-care, or to protect themselves from hazards or dangerous incidents to their daily environment; and

WHEREAS, the veteran's seriously disabled child in many cases, requires the aid and attendance of another individual to perform functions of daily living; and

WHEREAS, the seriously disabled child is already deemed to be handicapped by the Department of Veterans Affairs; and

WHEREAS, it is inherently unfair that the veteran and the seriously disabled child carry this additional burden without additional compensation despite being an immediate family member of the veteran; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports legislation to allow the seriously disabled child of a veteran who meets the aforementioned criteria, be granted the ability to seek additional compensation by way of aid and attendance.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 239
REQUIRE THE VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION AND THE VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION TO ADDRESS THE NEED FOR TELEPHONE ACCESS TO HOSPITAL SERVICES AND BENEFITS FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED VETERANS TRYING TO OBTAIN SAID HEALTH CARE AND OTHER BENEFITS VIA LAND LINE OR MOBILE PHONE DEVICES

WHEREAS, title 42, United States Code, section 12102, establishes persons' disabilities and Major Life Activities to be covered; and

WHEREAS, in enacting the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, Congress intended that the Act "provide a clear and comprehensive national mandate for the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities" and provide broad coverage; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) is required as a public entity to follow the precepts of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); and

WHEREAS, it is also VHA policy that contacting the hospital via a telephonic device requires the veteran to engage the automated system through a series of keypad tones; and

WHEREAS, these actions are prohibitive where numeric depressions on a keypad such as a land line or mobile device are difficult if not overwhelming for a visually impaired veteran; and

WHEREAS, a second person is often required to assist the veteran in initiating first contact counter to the precepts of the ADA; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, urges the VA to develop and implement a consistent policy requiring VA health care facilities and Veterans Benefits Administration offices and call centers with optional paths for telephonic initial contact.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 283
SUPPORT CHANGE IN LAW ALLOWING A COMPENSABLE
RATING FOR UNFAVORABLE OR FAVORABLE ANKYLOSIS
OF THE RING OR LITTLE FINGER

WHEREAS, title 38, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 4.71(a), Diagnostic Codes 5224, 5225, 5226, allow a compensable rating for the thumb, index finger, and long finger respectively, due to unfavorable or favorable ankyloses; and

WHEREAS, a significant component of grip resides in the ring and little finger; and

WHEREAS, unfavorable or favorable ankyloses of the ring or little finger results in loss/loss of use of the involved digit; and

WHEREAS, unfavorable or favorable ankyloses of the ring or middle finger results in impairment of the entire hand; and

WHEREAS unfavorable or favorable ankyloses of the ring or little finger impacts employment for any occupation that requires delicate and precise use of the hand and fingers (jewelers, data entry, upholsterer, mechanic, surgeon); NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports the assignment of a compensable rating for unfavorable or favorable ankyloses of the ring or little finger, pursuant to 38 CFR 4.71(a), diagnostic code 5227.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 293
INCREASE GRANT FUNDING FOR LOCAL VETERANS' CEMETERIES

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Veterans Cemetery Grants Program was established in 1978 to complement VA's National Cemetery Administration; and

WHEREAS, the program was established to assist states, territories and federally recognized tribal governments in providing grave sites for veterans in those areas where VA's National Cemeteries cannot fully satisfy their burial needs; and

WHEREAS, the funding of the grant may be used only for the purpose of establishing, expanding or improving veterans' cemeteries that are owned and operated by a state, federally recognized tribal government, or U.S. territory and can only be provided to these entities; and

WHEREAS, the current budget for this grant program is \$5 million per year while the total application requests for this funding far exceed the allocated budget; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, requests an increase in the VA's Local Veterans' Cemeteries Grant Program budget to \$10 million per year to cover the establishing, improvement, operations and maintenance for these cemeteries.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 295
SUPPORT LEGISLATION THAT CONCEDES EXPOSURE TO HERBICIDE
AGENTS OF SERVICE MEMBERS WHO SERVED IN GUAM, AMERICAN
SAMOA AND JOHNSTON ATOLL DURING THE VIETNAM ERA

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has claimed that the herbicides sprayed on the Pacific Islands of Guam, American Samoa and Johnston Atoll were commercial herbicides rather than tactical herbicides; and

WHEREAS, the VA has denied disability compensation claims related to exposure to herbicides by veterans who served in Guam, American Samoa and Johnston Atoll on this basis; and

WHEREAS, in a 2018 report, the Government Accountability Office stated that both commercial and tactical herbicides contain the chemicals 2, 4, 5-T and 2, 4-D, the toxins in Agent Orange, which, when combined, make the deadly toxin 2, 3, 7, 8-TCDD; and

WHEREAS, in May 2020, the National Veterans Legal Services Program and the Veterans Legal Services Clinic published a report indicating that veterans who served in Guam from 1962 to 1975 were at least as likely as not exposed to herbicides during their service, to include dioxin-containing herbicides other than Agent Orange; and

WHEREAS, veterans who served in American Samoa during the Vietnam era claim to have witnessed Agent Orange or other herbicides transported or stored at the island; and

WHEREAS, evidence in private and government records show that Agent Orange was stored on Johnston Atoll between 1972 and 1977, that the herbicide was disposed of at sea during the summer of 1977, and military personnel were likely exposed during the storage and disposal places; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports enactment of legislation that conceded exposure to herbicide agents of service members who served in Guam, American Samoa and Johnston Atoll during the Vietnam era.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 314

REMOVE REQUIREMENT OF MANIFESTATION OF CHLORACNE AND PORPHYRIA CUTANEA TARDA, AND ACUTE AND SUBACUTE PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY WITHIN ONE YEAR OF EXPOSURE TO AGENT ORANGE

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) currently recognizes a total of fourteen diseases as presumptive to Agent Orange exposure; and

WHEREAS, title 38, United States Code (USC) 1116 establishes presumptive service connection for diseases based on exposure to Agent Orange which requires that chloracne and porphyria cutanea tarda to become manifest to a degree of 10% or more within one year after service in the Republic of Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, title 38, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 3.307(a)(6)(ii) requires the presumptive disease, acute and subacute peripheral neuropathy to become manifest to a degree of 10% or more within one year of exposure to herbicides; and

WHEREAS, the limitations placed on the three above noted diseases, create unreasonable requirements on veterans to provide evidence of manifestations of symptoms from 50 years ago and creates an inequity; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports legislation to remove the requirement of manifestation of symptoms to a compensable degree within one year of exposure for chloracne and porphyria cutanea tarda, and acute and subacute peripheral neuropathy.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 315

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO CREATE PRESUMPTIVE SERVICE CONNECTION FOR LONG-TERM HEALTH EFFECTS OF ANTI-MALARIAL MEDICATIONS

WHEREAS, malaria is a serious infectious disease transmitted by mosquitoes and is found in Iraq, Afghanistan, and many areas in Africa, South America, and Asia; and

WHEREAS, mefloquine, an antimalarial drug, was approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in May 1989 and was widely prescribed to U.S. military service members until 2009; and

WHEREAS, the Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine reported on three randomized controlled trials between 2001 and 2003 and the studies confirmed mefloquine's potential for causing psychological illness, and all three study reports described an excess of neuropsychiatric adverse effects in the mefloquine arm; and

WHEREAS, the December 2010 study, Suicide by skull stab wounds: a case of drug-induced psychosis was the first report of a completed suicide with very strong evidence of mefloquine implication; and

WHEREAS, in 2013, the FDA published a safety alert on mefloquine and added a black box warning (its strongest warning) to the drug label; and

WHEREAS, the FDA notice pointed out that neurologic side effects can include dizziness, loss of balance (vestibular problems), tinnitus and psychiatric side effects which can include anxiety, paranoia, depression, or hallucinations; and

WHEREAS, the FDA noted that the neurologic or psychiatric side effects may occur at any time during drug use, and may last for months to years after the drug is stopped; and

WHEREAS, the study, Neuropsychiatric Outcomes After Mefloquine Exposure Among U.S. Military Service Members, published in January 2017, found that relative risks for adjustment disorder, anxiety, insomnia, and PTSD were higher for mefloquine when compared with doxycycline, another antimalarial drug; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports the enactment of legislation to establish presumptive service connection for the long-term health effects caused by antimalarial drugs to include mefloquine.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 319
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO REMOVE THE VETERAN'S PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION INFORMATION FROM HIS/HER CLAIM IDENTIFICATION

WHEREAS, an individual's Social Security number is now assigned at birth, and is directly linked to bank accounts, income taxes and all personal credit references; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) promised many years ago to discontinue using veterans Social Security numbers as the veterans claim number; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, that the VA discontinue using Social Security numbers and promptly assign a unique “C” or Claim Number to all veterans who have or will file a disability claim with the VA.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 320
SUPPORT A CHANGE IN REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS FOR TEMPORARY TOTAL DISABILITY RATINGS

WHEREAS, with advances in modern medicine and increasing emphasis on more efficient use of health care resources, health care providers are being encouraged to utilize suitable alternatives to inpatient care; and

WHEREAS, as a consequence, veterans are often treated through home health services or convalesce at home rather than in hospital; and

WHEREAS, convalescent ratings are currently only authorized where inpatient or outpatient treatment resulted in surgery or immobilization of a major joint by cast; and

WHEREAS, instances occur in which a veteran's treatment does not involve surgery or casting of a major joint, but the veteran undergoes healing, convalescence or a therapeutic course in the home, with a duration of one month or more; and

WHEREAS, exacerbation of a service-connected disability sometimes contraindicates work or other activities for periods of one month or more; and

WHEREAS, in such instances, a therapeutic course, convalescence or restriction from work for one month or more would occur in the home in lieu of hospitalization; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports a change in section 4.30, title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, to provide a temporary total rating of a veteran if treatment or exacerbation of a service-connected disability results in a condition of temporary total incapacity for employment or temporary unavailability for employment by reason of home health care or ambulatory care, bed rest or confinement to the home, or contraindication of work activities for one month or more.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 493
ESTABLISH IMMEDIATE AUTHORIZATION OF GRANTS BY THE BOARD OF VETERANS' APPEALS ON ALL CASES ADVANCED ON THE DOCKET

WHEREAS, in a case before the Board of Veterans' Appeals (Board), an appellant can request the case advanced on the docket, due to financial hardship, homelessness, and/or a serious illness; and

WHEREAS, once the Board grants an appeal that is advanced on the docket, it is then sent to either the agency of original jurisdiction (AOJ) or the Appeals Resource Center (ARC) for the decision to be granted, authorized and promulgated prior to payment of benefits to an appellant; and

WHEREAS, the average processing time of these cases by the AOJ or the ARC can be more than 90 days; and

WHEREAS, many appellants with serious illness die prior to the grant and authorization; and

WHEREAS, this delay defeats the purpose of the Board granting a case to be advanced on the docket; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports the allocation of VA Resources either to the Board of Veterans' Appeals or via the National Work Queue, to grant, authorize, and promulgate all cases advanced on the docket and granted by the Board of Veterans' Appeals within 30 days of the decision.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 504

SUPPORT THE TRANSLATION OF VETERANS AFFAIRS LITERATURE

WHEREAS, a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) report of 2018 noted that approximately 75% of non-English speaking veterans do not file for VA compensation benefits; and

WHEREAS, VA public service announcements, forms, and instructions are usually only in English with a few provided in Spanish; and

WHEREAS, this greatly limits non-English speaking veterans and their family members to understand instructions and complete applications; and

WHEREAS, VA forms and procedures for applying for VA benefits should be translated to the same threshold languages recognized by the Census Bureau, specifically, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Russian, Arabic, Tagalog, Polski, French, Haitian, Creole, Portuguese, Japanese, and Spanish; and

WHEREAS, one of DAV's primary missions is to increase veteran awareness, outreach and access to VA benefits; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, urges the VA to translate forms and procedures for all VA benefits into the threshold languages and improve accessibility for non-English speaking veterans.

* * *

(Whereupon, the Committee on General Legislation and Veterans Rights Secretary withdrew from the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: You have heard the motion. May I have a second?

MR. AL LaBELLE: Mic 2.

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Mic 2.

MR. LaBELLE: Al LaBelle, delegate, Chapter 57, Department of Wisconsin, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: In accordance with Rule 9, now is the time for any rejected resolutions to be read. Are there any rejected resolutions you wish to read? Hearing none, all those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered.

(Whereupon, the Committee on Legislation and Veterans Right Secretary withdrew from the stage.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: I'd like to call upon Chairman John Parker for the report on the Committee on General Resolutions and Membership.

(Whereupon, the Committee on General Resolutions and Membership Chair advanced to the podium.)

GENERAL RESOLUTIONS AND MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN JOHN PARKER:
Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

GENERAL RESOLUTIONS AND MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN PARKER: This is the report for the National Convention Committee Chairman on General Resolutions.

Comrade Commander and delegates, the National Convention Committee on General Resolutions was called to order on July 31, 2021, at 4:22 p.m., by the Committee advisors John Retzer and Scott Hope.

The first order of business was the election of a Convention Committee chairman and secretary. John Parker was elected as chairman. And Armando Hernandez was elected as secretary.

The Committee then proceeded to review the resolutions submitted. And I will now report to you the resolutions recommended for adoption by this National Convention. For the purposes of saving time I will read only the number and the purpose of the resolutions.

039, support meaningful accountability measures but with due process for employees of the VA; 040, seek the immediate release of any Americans who may still be held captive following any war and the return and identification of the remains of any Americans who died during these wars;

041, support for defense POW/MIA accounting command; 042, support foreign POW slave labor claims against Japanese firms; 043, support to remove and renew prisoner-of-war/missing-in-action discussions; 129, provide weekend burials at National Cemeteries;

130, extend space-available air space to 30 percent or higher service-connected disabled veterans separated from service prior to October 1st, 1949; 131, encourage all disabled veterans to become registered voters and vote; 132, support the continued growth of veterans' treatment courts for justice-involved veterans;

219, condemn public desecration of the flag of the United States; (Applause) 220, support the construction of a courthouse for the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims; 221, oppose

any authorization of use of members of the Armed Forces for human experimentation without their knowledge and informed consent; (Applause)

247, support legislation to extend U.S. citizenship to Honorably discharged service-connected veterans at the time of discharge; (Applause) 252, extend the travel area for the service-connected disabled veterans having a permanent disability rating of 100 percent may travel from within the continental United States and to continental United States and overseas;

253, extend the space-available air travel to caregivers of eligible veterans; 275, support legislation to protect honorably discharged wartime non-citizen veterans with service-connected injuries or illnesses from deportation while applying for citizenship; (Applause)

509, support federal laws, regulations and programs and policies that enhance and oppose those that diminish DAV's ability to fulfill its mission of assisting service-disabled veterans, their families and survivors; 520, appreciation to all who are responsible for the success of the 99th National Convention;

521, appreciation to the J.W. Marriott Tampa Water Street Hotel for the success of the 99th National Convention. This year the Committee on General Resolutions and Membership adopted Resolution 522 expressing appreciation to Michael P. Dover for his longstanding service as National Chaplain which will be read in its entirety.

"WHEREAS, DAV National Chaplain Michael P. Dover of Ellerslie, Georgia, joined the United States Army as an infantryman in 1981 and honorably served for the next 20 years; and

"WHEREAS, Chaplain Dover retired as a Master Sergeant and service-connected disabled veteran in 2001; and

"WHEREAS, He received both his associate and bachelor of theology degrees from the Christian Life School of Theology in Columbus, Georgia, and his bachelor of science degree in Business Management from Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia; and

"WHEREAS, He has more than 34 year of ministry experience with the last 19 years as an ordained minister; and

"WHEREAS, Chaplain Dover joined DAV in 2005 and in 2006 served as commander of the DAV Department of Georgia; and

"WHEREAS, He received his Chaplain certification through the International Federation of Christian Chaplains and has spent time in service as a Southern Baptist Convention Disaster Relief Chaplain and Prison Fellowship International Chaplain; and

"WHEREAS, He served as president of Southern Atlantic Center for Veteran Education and Training, Incorporated, which has, since its inception in 2006, assisted more than 10,000 homeless veterans; and

"WHEREAS, The membership of DAV unanimously elected Chaplain Dover as National Chaplain for the more than one-million-member organization during the 2014 National Convention in Las Vegas, Nevada; and

"WHEREAS, Since 2014 he has served to foster spiritual resilience and strength throughout the DAV members, their families, and survivors; and

"WHEREAS, In 2016 he was deservingly inducted into the Georgia Veterans Hall of Fame; and in 2019 he was appointed by then Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert Wilke to serve on the Veterans' Advisory Committee on Cemeteries and Memorials; and

"WHEREAS, He has volunteered his time as Chaplain at the Crossroad Men's Addiction Recovery Program at the Harris County Jail in Hamilton, Georgia, where he conducts chapel services and mentors individuals with life-controlling issues; and

"WHEREAS, He also volunteers as part of the Homeless Veteran and Veterans Stand-Down initiative in Columbus, Georgia, where he has assisted more than 3,000 homeless veterans since its inception; and

"WHEREAS, For his work and dedication for helping others, Chaplain Dover was twice appointed Lieutenant Colonel Aid-de-Camp governor's staff in Georgia, the ceremonial title recognizing the selfless work and individual service striving to improve the lives of those around him;

"NOW, THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED, That DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31 through August 3, 2021, expresses its members' heartfelt appreciation and profound gratitude to Chaplain Dover for his sacrifice of selfless service"—Water.

(Whereupon, Chairman Parker spilled the water.)

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL RESOLUTIONS AND MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN PARKER: Shoot. Sorry. I said, "Shoot." (Laughter) Long memories.

"— profound gratitude to Chaplain Dover for his sacrifice of selfless service, professionalism and dedication to his fellow wounded, ill and injured veterans, their families and survivors, and DAV during his remarkable seven-year tenure as DAV's National Chaplain; and

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That DAV salutes and extends our sincere appreciation to Chaplain Dover's wife Latrelle for her steadfast support and sacrifices during his years as National Chaplain."

Thank you, again, Chaplain Dover for your years of dedicated service to our organization and the veterans it serves. (Applause) Not done.

Our Committee also adopted another resolution expressing appreciation to a leader who served in the organization for multiple years and now sits in a unique place in DAV history. I will now read Resolution 523, appreciation to National Commander Stephen "Butch" Whitehead in its entirety.

"WHEREAS, DAV National Commander Stephen "Butch" Whitehead of Rosemont, Minnesota, joined the Minnesota National Guard in 1991 and honorably served with the Guard for the next 29 years; and

"WHEREAS, Commander Whitehead's military career included active service with the U.S. Army on two deployments, one of which was in Iraq in March 2006 and his unit came under fire from mortar attacks in February 2007; and

"WHEREAS, His unit suffered multiple casualties, including Commander Whitehead who received a serious concussion and was later diagnosed with Traumatic Brain Injury; and

"WHEREAS, Commander Whitehead received numerous military honors, including the Bronze Star in 2007 for combat service in Iraq; Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal with four bronze oak leaf clusters, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Medal, and Humanitarian Service Medal; and

"WHEREAS, In 2012 he was awarded the Veterans Voices Award by then Governor Mark Dayton of Minnesota which celebrates veterans who are creating, leading and building their community beyond their military service; and

"WHEREAS, His dedication to service exemplified when, in November 2019, Commander Whitehead rejoined the military, assuming responsibility as the Command Sergeant Major of the Army National Guard's 34th Red Bull Infantry Division, which provides training and readiness oversight for nine National Guard brigades and more than 23,000 soldiers across Minnesota and eleven other states; and

"WHEREAS, He has dedicated more than 34 years of his life to our nation's military and our nation's ill and injured veterans, including as Executive Director of Disabled American Veterans, a Minnesota Foundation for the DAV Department of Minnesota; and chair for multiple department-level committees; and he has been appointed to the Minneapolis Veterans Affairs Medical Center Consumer Advisory Board; and

"WHEREAS, The membership of the DAV unanimously elected him for the first post-9/11 veteran to lead the more than one-million-member organization during the 2019 DAV National Convention in Orlando, Florida; and

"WHEREAS, He was tasked with the unforeseen challenge of steering DAV through a pandemic and, due to the circumstances, became the second National Commander in DAV's history to serve two terms of office; and

"WHEREAS, He oversaw the effective transition of DAV's services to meet the COVID-19 public health safety requirements and helped ensure DAV was able to maintain its critical assistance and services to veterans and their families during this extraordinary period; and

"WHEREAS, On the onset of the COVID-19 outbreak Commander Whitehead and his family purchased materials and made hundreds of face masks, by hand, that he personally delivered to veterans staying in the Minneapolis VA Medical Center when personal protective equipment was scarce; and

"WHEREAS, His dedication and commitment to the importance of mental health helped get signed into law the Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act of 2019, comprehensive legislation to help increase outreach and services to veterans who are at risk for suicide and to improve VA mental health services; and

"WHEREAS, Commander Whitehead served as an ambassador for the President's Roadmap to Empower Veterans and End a National Tragedy of Suicide, PREVENTS, to build awareness about mental health and connect veterans to critical lifesaving services; and

"WHEREAS, He continued to be a fierce advocate for his fellow veterans exposed to toxic substances from burn pits, pushing hard for passage of the Veterans Burn Pit Exposure Recognition Act of 2020, which was conceptualized by DAV; and

"WHEREAS, He has shown compassion and outstanding leadership during his two years as national commander, delivering DAV's message before a joint session of Congress, all while advancing DAV's mission; and

"WHEREAS, Commander Whitehead has advocated passionately on behalf of all veterans to ensure a properly funded VA so that the veterans receive the health care and benefits that they earned, along with proper recognition of the military service and sacrifices made by their family members and survivors; and

"WHEREAS, Commander Whitehead has been a vocal and outspoken leader on women's veterans issues, fighting for passage of the Deborah Sampson Act and spreading awareness about the need to end sexual harassment and assault at VA medical centers;

"NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31, through August 3, 2021, expresses its members' heartfelt appreciation and profound gratitude to Commander Whitehead for his sacrifices, selfless service, professionalism, and dedication to his fellow veterans forever changed in service, their families, survivors, and the DAV during his historic two-year term as DAV National Commander; and

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That DAV also salutes and extends our sincere appreciation to Commander Whitehead's wife, Kim, for her steadfast support and sacrifices during his years as DAV National Commander."

Comrade Commander, this completes the report of the Committee on General Resolutions. (Applause) On behalf of the Committee I move for the adoption of these resolutions and that the Committee be discharged with the thanks of the National Convention. Thank you. (Applause)

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 039

SUPPORT MEANINGFUL ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES, BUT WITH DUE PROCESS, FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

WHEREAS, in order to assure that veterans receive the benefits and services they have earned, every Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) employee, manager and leader must faithfully fulfill their duties and responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, when VA employees fail veterans due to poor performance or misconduct, these individuals must be held accountable for such failures; and

WHEREAS, accountability constitutes a range of actions, including remedial training, demotion, suspension and, when justified, termination; and

WHEREAS, VA's long-term future must foster an environment in which the best and brightest individuals choose VA employment over other federal or private employers; and

WHEREAS, poor performance and misconduct cannot be tolerated, but all VA employees must be confident that fairness and due process govern selection, promotion, demotion, sanction or termination; and

WHEREAS, without such assurances of fairness and due process in the workplace, talented individuals may not entertain working in or remaining at VA; and

WHEREAS, pending legislative proposals before Congress would heighten accountability; however, any bill enacted by Congress should include standards by which accountability can be measured while ensuring due process and fairness for VA employees subject to such standards; and

WHEREAS, civil service protections enacted decades ago came about as a consequence of cronyism, politicization and ill treatment of civil servants, including terminations for almost any reason or no reason; and

WHEREAS, ensuring that the civil service remains free of political influence is a principle that must be protected to guarantee that VA employees are either appointed, demoted or terminated for political or personal reasons; and

WHEREAS, sanctions against VA employees based on performance must be made only if measurable performance standards have been clearly communicated but still violated; and

WHEREAS, VA managers must be empowered to use existing policies in a timely manner to sanction employees who fail to meet their documented performance standards; and

WHEREAS, applying sanctions exclusively to VA employees in the wake of a scandal is in contravention of civil service rules that regulate the entire federal workforce; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, insists any legislation changing the existing employment protections in VA must strike a balance between holding civil servants accountable for their performance, while maintaining VA as an employer of choice for the best and brightest.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 040
SEEK THE IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF ANY AMERICANS WHO
MAY STILL BE HELD CAPTIVE FOLLOWING ANY WAR AND
THE RETURN AND IDENTIFICATION OF THE REMAINS OF ANY
AMERICANS WHO DIED DURING THESE WARS

WHEREAS, the members of DAV are deeply concerned for the thousands of American service members still unaccounted for in the aftermath of wars; and

WHEREAS, numerous efforts by high-level American delegations, including members of Congress, have visited Southeast Asia in continuing efforts to solve the mystery of the whereabouts and fate of our missing in action (MIA) from the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, the brave families of the missing continue to live in uncertainty and anguish regarding their sons, husbands and other family members; and

WHEREAS, still today more than 73,000 are unaccounted for from World War II, though some 40,000 are deemed unrecoverable, mostly deep sea losses, some 7,500 from the Korean War, over 1,600 still missing in Southeast Asia from the Vietnam War, two from the Persian Gulf War and two from the Afghanistan/Iraq War, who have not been forgotten; and

WHEREAS, though DAV was disappointed with the timing of our government's decision to normalize relations with the government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV), prior to having achieved the fullest possible accounting of our prisoners-of-war (POW) and missing in action from Southeast Asia; and

WHEREAS, DAV believes that the SRV can increase its unilateral efforts to account for Americans still missing in action, especially those who were last known alive in captivity or immediate proximity to capture; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, urges the United States government to ensure this issue be considered as one of America's highest priorities by accelerating efforts to obtain the release of any American who may still be held captive and obtain, to the fullest possible extent, an accounting of those still missing and the repatriation of the remains of those who died while serving our nation; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we urge the government of the SRV to increase its unilateral efforts to account for American POW/MIAs, including locating and making available remains of Americans last known alive in captivity that have not previously been returned.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 041
SUPPORT FOR DEFENSE PRISONER-OF-WAR/MISSING-IN-ACTION
ACCOUNTING COMMAND

WHEREAS, members of DAV have long been deeply committed to achieving the fullest possible accounting for United States personnel still captive, missing and otherwise unaccounted-for from all of our nation's wars; and

WHEREAS, personnel and funding for the Defense Prisoner of War/Missing in Action (POW/MIA) Accounting Agency (DPAA) have not been increased at a level commensurate with the expanded requirement to obtain answers on Americans unaccounted-for from all of our country's wars and conflicts; and

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of the United States government to account as fully as possible for America's missing veterans, including—if confirmed deceased—the recovery and identification of their remains when possible; and

WHEREAS, DAV deeply appreciates Vietnam's 2009 proposal to expand the pace and scope of POW/MIA accounting cooperation, including use of United States Navy vessels for underwater operations; and

WHEREAS, the DAV recognizes the contributions to successful investigative efforts made by the Defense Intelligence Agency's Stony Beach Team of specialists; and

WHEREAS, this accounting effort should not be considered complete until all reasonable actions have been taken to achieve the fullest possible accounting; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, remains steadfast in its commitment to the goal of achieving the fullest possible

accounting for all United States military and designated civilian personnel missing from our nation's wars; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call upon our government to support personnel increases and full funding for the efforts of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory, including specific authorization to augment assigned personnel when additional assets and resources are necessary.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 042
SUPPORT FORMER PRISONER-OF-WAR SLAVE
LABOR CLAIMS AGAINST JAPANESE FIRMS

WHEREAS, on May 30, 2009, the government of Japan, through then–Ambassador to the United States Ichiro Fujisaki, offered an official apology to American prisoners of war (POWs) for their abuse, misuse, pain and suffering caused by Imperial Japan; and

WHEREAS, in September 2010, the government of Japan reinforced its apology by initiating a visitation program for former POWs to visit Japan, to return to the sites of their imprisonment and to receive the apology directly from senior Japanese government officials; and

WHEREAS, the United States owes much to these soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen, the majority of whom fought in the early heroic battles of World War II in the Philippines, on Wake Island, Guam, Java and in the Sunda Strait; and

WHEREAS, the American POWs of Imperial Japan were forced into slave labor throughout the Japanese Empire in the most unjust, brutal and inhumane conditions; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports and commends the efforts of the American POWs of Japan to reclaim their dignity and attain full justice from the government of Japan and those Japanese private companies that enslaved them; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV insists the government of Japan provide and publicize an official transcript in English and Japanese of the government's 2009 apology to the American POWs; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV insists Congress and the Administration work with all parties involved to ensure the continuation of the POW visitation program to Japan, that it be expanded to include family members and descendants, and funds be provided for a dedicated program of research, documentation, exchange and education; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV will work with all parties involved to persuade the private Japanese companies that benefited from POW slave labor during World War II, especially those companies now doing business in the United States, to follow the Japanese government's lead in acknowledging their use and abuse of American POW labor, and join with the Japanese government to create a fund for remembrance, research, documentation, exchange and education on the POW experience in the Pacific and its lessons for war and peace.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 043
SUPPORT RENEWED PRISONER-OF-WAR/MISSING-IN-ACTION DISCUSSIONS

WHEREAS, DAV has long been and is now deeply committed to accounting as fully as possible for United States personnel previously listed as prisoners, missing and unaccounted for from all of our nation's past wars; and

WHEREAS, DAV recognizes the utility and importance of bilateral discussions, separate from those held on strategic issues, but fully integrated with broader policy and national security priorities in an effort to reach agreement for proceeding on a humanitarian basis with prisoner-of-war/missing-in-action accounting cooperation; and

WHEREAS, DAV also recognizes the lead time required between renewing bilateral discussions to reach humanitarian agreements and restoring and increasing unilateral, bilateral and, as needed, multilateral field recovery operations; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports renewing and expanding direct bilateral humanitarian efforts for the purpose of restoring and improving US agreements and processes with counterpart nations required to account as fully as possible for unreturned American military personnel.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 129

PROVIDE WEEKEND BURIALS AT NATIONAL CEMETERIES

WHEREAS, scheduling a weekend burial at a National Cemetery is not current policy; and
WHEREAS, Public Law 114–315 requires the National Cemetery Administration (NCA) to study the feasibility of weekend burials; and

WHEREAS, NCA operates 135 national cemeteries; and

WHEREAS, available cemetery benefits include a gravesite in any national cemetery with available space, opening and closing of the grave, perpetual care, a government headstone or marker, a burial flag, and a Presidential Memorial certificate, at no cost to the family; and

WHEREAS, the NCA works to continuously improve customer satisfaction, meeting the wishes of veterans and their loved ones; and

WHEREAS, providing weekend burial at a National Cemetery eases scheduling and lightens the burden on veterans' survivors, many of whom may need to travel great distances to pay their final respects and honor their loved one as he or she is laid to rest; and

WHEREAS, DAV and other veterans service organizations often provide volunteers who conduct military honors at funeral service burials; and

WHEREAS, weekend burial at National Cemeteries will allow more volunteers an opportunity to participate in military honor guard at funeral services due to scheduling; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, seeks legislation that would authorize weekend burials for service-connected veterans at cemeteries operated by the NCA.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 130

EXTEND MILITARY COMMISSARY AND EXCHANGE PRIVILEGES AND SPACE-AVAILABLE AIR TRAVEL TO CERTAIN SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABLED VETERANS

WHEREAS, disabled active-duty personnel who were discharged from military service prior to October 1, 1949—the effective date of the Career Compensation Act—are not entitled to disability retirement from the armed forces; and

WHEREAS, many service-connected disabled veterans have been deprived of the various benefits which all other disabled retired military personnel have enjoyed; and

WHEREAS, due to inflation, service-connected disabled veterans receiving Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) compensation as a sole source of income are experiencing difficulties in keeping pace with the increased cost of living; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports legislation that would extend military commissary and exchange privileges, as well as space-available air travel aboard military aircraft, to enlisted personnel who were discharged from active military service prior to October 1, 1949, for a service-incurred injury or disease rated by the VA as 30% or more disabling and who retained at least a 30% evaluation for a period of five years from the date of separation from active duty.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 131

ENCOURAGE ALL DISABLED VETERANS TO BECOME REGISTERED VOTERS AND VOTE

WHEREAS, members of DAV served their country during time of war in order to preserve the rights and privileges of life in this land of the free; and

WHEREAS, one of the most precious of those rights is the right to vote; and

WHEREAS, the United States Congress and the Administration have failed to fulfill their obligation to our nation's disabled veterans, providing inadequate funding for veterans' benefits and health care; and

WHEREAS, the United States Congress and the Administration have targeted veterans programs for unwarranted spending cuts and reductions under the mistaken and misguided theory that veterans do not base their votes on veterans' issues; and

WHEREAS, the failure of disabled veterans to register and vote will result in the perpetuation of this theory; and

WHEREAS, because of their disabilities, disabled veterans have more difficulty than their nondisabled peers in complying with some of the stricter requirements in voter registration laws; and
WHEREAS, veterans, their families and all Americans concerned about veterans' issues need to make their voices heard by becoming registered voters and exercising their votes in local, state and federal elections; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, encourages all DAV members to register to vote and thereby strengthen our organization's ability to preserve and improve our system of veterans' benefits and services; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all DAV departments and chapters initiate and operate voter registration drives targeted at increasing voter registration among veterans and their families; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all DAV departments, chapters and members are encouraged to ensure that all veterans and their family members are able to access polling places to vote.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 132 SUPPORT THE CONTINUED GROWTH OF VETERANS TREATMENT COURTS FOR JUSTICE-INVOLVED VETERANS

WHEREAS, many military service members and veterans return from today's overseas combat engagements with signature wounds of polytrauma, traumatic brain injury (TBI), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other mental health and repatriation challenges; and, veterans from earlier eras have absorbed their own signature disabilities, including PTSD; and

WHEREAS, some veterans resort to overuse of substances in their attempts to cope with their chronic physical and mental health challenges, other barriers and obstacles, and pain; and

WHEREAS, as a consequence of chronic substance-use disorder or lasting residuals of combat exposure, a minority of veterans display antisocial and even criminal behaviors, and thus become involved with law enforcement and justice systems; and

WHEREAS, veterans treatment courts evolved from a proven national model of diversionary drug courts and mental health courts, to address the specific situations of veterans, and to maximize efficiency of available resources while making use of the distinct military culture to which veterans are accustomed; and

WHEREAS, in a 2016 report, the Government Accountability Office found large increases in workloads and heard reports from justice-involved veterans indicating that there is a need to add staff and resources to the Veterans Justice Outreach Program, in addition to improving effectiveness by developing and monitoring goals for its coordinators;

WHEREAS, many justice-involved veterans are eligible for the financial benefits, social supports and health care services available through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and through other national, state and local veterans programs; and

WHEREAS, grouping troubled veterans together within specific court dockets expedites access to helpful resources and promotes the camaraderie and mutual support found among veterans; and

WHEREAS, veterans in general deeply value their military experiences and share an inimitable bond with their peers, and the veterans courts build upon this bond by enabling veterans to proceed through the treatment court process with people who are similarly situated, and by pairing together veterans and mentors; and

WHEREAS, years of experience from the veterans treatment courts now in existence nationwide has produced a statistically significant reduction of recidivism rates in veterans compared to persons in other treatment courts and individuals not involved in any sort of alternative or diversionary court; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports the continued growth of the veterans treatment courts throughout our nation and urges adequate support for the increasing resource needs of the VA program in addition to identification of appropriate goals and metrics to determine the programs' effectiveness; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all DAV departments and chapters are encouraged to support additional veterans courts and work with local VA officials and law enforcement to build support for the establishment of these courts; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV calls on departments and chapters to work in support of state legislation where necessary to authorize veterans' courts.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 219

CONDEMN PUBLIC DESECRATION OF THE FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES

WHEREAS, the United States Supreme Court, by a 5–4 decision, ruled that public desecration of the American flag, as a form of free speech and expression, is legal and permissible; and

WHEREAS, the American flag—Old Glory—is our national ensign, the proud and beautiful symbol of our country’s precious, free heritage; and

WHEREAS, this symbol, in the form of our irreplaceable Stars and Stripes, has been carried and defended in battle, revered and cherished by citizens, and viewed as a beacon of hope and fulfillment by all the world since it was first unfurled at the birth of our nation; and

WHEREAS, the first amendment to the United States Constitution guarantees freedom of speech, and was not intended by our founding fathers to enable individuals—who enjoy unfettered freedom to express their views, no matter how abhorrent, in both oral and written form—to publicly and contemptuously desecrate our beloved flag; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, condemns any individual or group who at any time publicly and willfully desecrates the flag of the United States.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 220

SUPPORT THE CONSTRUCTION OF A COURTHOUSE FOR THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR VETERANS CLAIMS

WHEREAS, veterans and other persons claiming benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs have benefited substantially and materially from the jurisprudence of the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (Court); and

WHEREAS, the Court has existed for 31 years; and

WHEREAS, the courtroom, chambers and other space are inadequate to meet the current and future needs of the Court and those it serves; and

WHEREAS, it is in the interest of veterans and their dependents that the Court be accorded the same appurtenances enjoyed by other appellate courts of the United States; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, shall take such actions as may be necessary or advisable in support of legislation to authorize and fund the construction of a suitable and appropriate courthouse for the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 221

OPPOSE ANY AUTHORIZATION OF USE OF MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES FOR HUMAN EXPERIMENTATION WITHOUT THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMED CONSENT

WHEREAS, those who serve in our nation’s armed forces make personal sacrifices to maintain our national security; and

WHEREAS, members of the armed forces should be accorded respect and the gratitude of the nation; and

WHEREAS, their willingness to sacrifice and relinquish their liberty while serving does not surrender their natural right to determine what shall be done with their own bodies and their right to personal dignity; and

WHEREAS, it is a violation of the ethical principle of the right of self-determination to use service members for human experimentation without their knowledge and informed consent; and

WHEREAS, our government has in the past used military members as “guinea pigs” to test the effects of harmful and injurious substances on the human body; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, opposes any rule or provision that would authorize human experimentation on service members without their knowledge and informed consent.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 247
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO GUARANTEE UNITED STATES
CITIZENSHIP TO HONORABLY DISCHARGED SERVICE-DISABLED
NONCITIZEN VETERANS AT TIME OF DISCHARGE

WHEREAS, noncitizen service members have played an important role in the United States military since the Revolutionary War and thousands continue to serve honorably today; and

WHEREAS, persons with noncitizen status, who are permanent residents of the United States have permission to work in the United States and those who have obtained a high school diploma and speak English are eligible to enlist in the United States military; and

WHEREAS, current law allows noncitizen veterans to apply for expedited citizenship if they meet age and length of service requirements, and demonstrate English proficiency and knowledge of the history and government of the United States—however, meeting these criteria does not guarantee citizenship will be awarded; and

WHEREAS, honorably discharged veterans with: disabilities due to military service; service-related disabilities pending awards of service connection; or disabilities incurred during or as a result of military service but not awarded service connection should be guaranteed citizenship for their honorable service; and

WHEREAS, these veterans should have the opportunity to live without fear of deportation from the country they fought for; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports the enactment of legislation to provide honorably discharged veterans with disabilities as a result of their military service, regardless if service connection has been established for such conditions, guaranteed citizenship.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 252
EXPAND THE TRAVEL AREA THAT SERVICE-CONNECTED VETERANS HAVING
A PERMANENT DISABILITY RATED 100% MAY TRAVEL FROM CONTINENTAL
UNITED STATES TO CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES AND OVERSEAS

WHEREAS, the 2019 National Defense Authorization Act allows totally disabled service-connected veterans to travel space-available aboard military aircraft; and

WHEREAS, the military has interpreted the language in the act to authorize disabled veterans to travel in the Continental United States (CONUS) or directly between the CONUS and Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, and American Samoa (Guam and American Samoa travelers may transit Hawaii or Alaska), or traveling within Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, or the U.S. Virgin Islands on flights operated by Air Mobility Command; and

WHEREAS, totally disabled service-connected veterans have sacrificed greatly in terms of their impairments and loss of earning capacity; and

WHEREAS, more than any other living group of Americans, such veterans should be eligible for all benefits and privileges that Congress may provide; and

WHEREAS, such totally disabled veterans should be extended the same privileges as other personnel currently authorized to utilize space-available military air travel; and

WHEREAS, the extension of such travel to totally disabled service-connected veterans would not place any additional burden upon the administration of this program; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, seeks the enactment of legislation that would extend the travel area for space-available travel that service-connected veterans having a permanent disability rated 100% to and from CONUS and overseas.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 253
EXTEND SPACE-AVAILABLE AIR TRAVEL TO CAREGIVERS
AND DEPENDENTS OF ELIGIBLE VETERANS

WHEREAS, the 2019 National Defense Authorization Act allows totally disabled service-connected veterans to travel space available on military aircraft; and

WHEREAS, this benefit does not include a veteran's caregiver or dependent; and

WHEREAS, active military and retirees are authorized to travel via space available travel with their dependents; and

WHEREAS, veterans that are eligible are severely disabled and often need the aid or assistance of a caregiver or family member to deal with the rigors of travel; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports legislation to authorize air travel for caregivers or dependents traveling with eligible veterans on a space available basis in order to provide aid or assistance as well as to provide parity with Department of Defense eligibility for military retirees.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 275
SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO PROTECT HONORABLY
DISCHARGED NONCITIZEN VETERANS FROM DEPORTATION
WHILE APPLYING FOR CITIZENSHIP

WHEREAS, current law allows documented noncitizens the opportunity to serve in the United States military; and

WHEREAS, the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 (INA) allows noncitizen service members to apply for naturalization during peacetime after one year of honorable service and allows noncitizen service members to apply for naturalization during periods of hostility after one day of honorable service; and

WHEREAS, noncitizen recruits often receive incorrect or incomplete information regarding their options to become U.S. citizens through military service and less than half (43.8%) of noncitizen service members naturalize while on active duty; and

WHEREAS, noncitizen veterans arrested for crimes that may be due to underlying and untreated conditions incurred in military service are subject to immediate deportation; and

WHEREAS, current law does not provide any special protection for wartime service-disabled veterans who may become subject to deportation post-service; and

WHEREAS, wartime service-disabled noncitizen veterans who get deported effectively lose access to Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care services and access to VA benefits; and

WHEREAS, Veteran Treatment Courts allow wartime veterans arrested for service-related, nonviolent non-felony crimes to address their service-related mental health or substance abuse issues which may result in removing charges upon successful completion; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports the enactment of legislation to protect honorably discharged wartime noncitizen veterans with service-related disabilities, from deportation without due process and the opportunity to participate in any VA program, including the Veterans Treatment Court; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that DAV supports the enactment of legislation to protect honorably discharged war-time noncitizen veterans with service-related disabilities, from deportation while filing and awaiting a decision on their application for U.S. citizenship.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 509
SUPPORT FEDERAL LAWS, REGULATIONS, PROGRAMS AND POLICIES
THAT ENHANCE, AND OPPOSE THOSE THAT DIMINISH, DAV'S
ABILITY TO FULFILL ITS MISSION OF ASSISTING SERVICE-DISABLED
VETERANS, THEIR FAMILIES AND SURVIVORS

WHEREAS, DAV was founded by Judge Robert Marx and several hundred other fellow veterans on September 25, 1920 in Cincinnati, Ohio in order to rally their collective voice in the halls of Congress and help their fellow disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, DAV was chartered by Congress on June 17, 1932 as a nonprofit war veterans organization to advance the interests, and work for the betterment, of all wounded, injured, and disabled American veterans; and

WHEREAS, DAV is recognized by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) as a congressionally chartered veterans service organization for the purpose of preparation, presentation, and prosecution of claims for VA benefits; and

WHEREAS, DAV is a tax-exempt veterans organization under section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code, and is recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a charitable war veterans organization eligible to receive tax deductible contributions; and

WHEREAS, DAV has a National Headquarters in Kentucky, a National Service and Legislative Headquarters in Washington, D.C. and hundreds of service officers working inside VA offices and on military bases across the country to support veterans and their families seeking benefits and services earned through their service; and

WHEREAS, DAV has 52 departments, over 1,200 chapters and approximately 1 million members who provide their time, talents and resources to help fulfill DAV's mission of empowering veterans to lead high-quality lives with dignity and respect; and

WHEREAS, DAV provides meaningful support free of charge to more than 1 million veterans and family members every year through its service, volunteer, transportation, employment, legislative, communications and charitable programs; and

WHEREAS, changes to federal laws, regulations, programs and policies can enhance or diminish DAV's ability to fulfill its mission as a federally chartered, nonprofit charitable veterans service organization and its members ability to support that mission; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31–August 3, 2021, supports federal laws, regulations, programs and policies that enhance, and will oppose those that diminish, DAV's ability as a non-profit veterans organization to assist ill and injured veterans, their families and survivors.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 520
APPRECIATION TO ALL WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE
SUCCESS OF THE 99TH NATIONAL CONVENTION

WHEREAS, the success of the 99th DAV National Convention convened in Tampa, Florida, July 31-August 3, 2021, depends on the total cooperation, collaboration and unselfish devotion of the state, county, and local officials; and

WHEREAS, the success of this National Convention is also attributed to the Department and local Chapters and Units of the DAV and DAVA, particularly to Convention Chairman, Mr. Dennis Joyner; and

WHEREAS, we wish to commend all the news media for their encouragement and assistance at all of our Convention activities; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31-August 3, 2021, expresses its sincere appreciation to all groups and/or agencies whose dedication to our principles has made our Convention a successful one; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we wish to extend to the citizens of Tampa, Florida, our deepest gratitude for their personal interest in our great organization; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we wish to extend our appreciation to all of the distinguished guests who participated in our convention and support the ideals and principles of our great organization; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we extend our gratitude to Convention Chairman Mr. Dennis Joyner, and his entire Committee for providing personalized assistance to our friends and delegates during our Convention stay.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 521
APPRECIATION TO JW MARRIOT TAMPA WATER STREET FOR
THE SUCCESS OF THE 99TH NATIONAL CONVENTION

WHEREAS, the excellent service and ambience of the JW Marriot Tampa Water Street contributed greatly to the success of the 99th National Convention of the DAV convened in Tampa, Florida; and

WHEREAS, the courteous team members of the hotel staff ensured the comfort and satisfaction of the DAV officers, delegates and guests; and

WHEREAS, the classic setting, friendly environment, and numerous amenities helped make the 99th National Convention a truly memorable experience; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31-August 3, 2021, expresses its deepest appreciation for the JW Marriot Tampa Water Street and to its entire staff for their friendly, personalized attention which helped make the 99th National Convention a resounding success.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 522

EXPRESSING APPRECIATION TO NATIONAL CHAPLAIN MICHAEL P. DOVER

WHEREAS, DAV National Chaplain Michael P. Dover, of Ellerslie, Georgia, joined the United States Army as an infantryman in 1981 and honorably served for the next 20 years; and

WHEREAS, Chaplain Dover retired as a master sergeant and a service-connected disabled veteran in 2001; and

WHEREAS, he received both his Associate and Bachelor of Theology degrees from the Christian Life School of Theology in Columbus, Georgia, and his Bachelor of Science degree in business management from Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia; and

WHEREAS, he has more than 34 years of ministry experience, with the last 19 years as an ordained minister; and

WHEREAS, Chaplain Dover joined DAV in 2005 and in 2006 he served as commander of the DAV Department of Georgia; and

WHEREAS, he received his chaplain certification through the International Federation of Christian Chaplains and spent time in service as a Southern Baptist Convention Disaster Relief chaplain and Prison Fellowship International chaplain; and

WHEREAS, he served as president of South Atlantic Center for Veterans Education and Training Incorporated, which has, since its inception in 2006, assisted more than 10,000 homeless veterans; and

WHEREAS, the membership of DAV unanimously elected Chaplain Dover as national chaplain for the more than 1 million-member organization during the 2014 DAV National Convention in Las Vegas, Nevada; and

WHEREAS, since 2014, he has served to foster spiritual resilience and strength throughout DAV's members, their families and survivors; and

WHEREAS, in 2016, he was deservingly inducted into the Georgia Veterans Hall of Fame, and in 2019, he was appointed by then-Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert Wilkie to serve on the VA's Advisory Committee on Cemeteries and Memorials; and

WHEREAS, he has volunteered his time as chaplain at the Crossroads Men's Addiction Recovery Program at the Harris County Jail in Hamilton, Georgia, where he conducts chapel services and mentors individuals dealing with life-controlling issues; and

WHEREAS, he also volunteers as part of the Homeless Veterans and Veterans Stand Down Initiative in Columbus, Georgia, where he has assisted more than 3,000 homeless veterans since its inception; and

WHEREAS, for his work and dedication to helping others, Chaplain Dover was twice appointed Lieutenant Colonel, Aide-De-Camp, Governor's Staff, in Georgia, the ceremonial title recognizing the selfless work of an individual striving to improve the lives of those around them; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31-August 3, 2021, expresses its members' heartfelt appreciation and profound gratitude to Chaplain Dover for his sacrifices, selfless service, professionalism and dedication to his fellow wounded, ill and injured veterans, their families, survivors and DAV during his remarkable seven-year tenure as DAV's national chaplain; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV also salutes and extends our sincere appreciation to Chaplain Dover's wife, Latrelle, for her steadfast support and sacrifices during his years as DAV's national chaplain.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 523

EXPRESSING APPRECIATION TO NATIONAL COMMANDER STEPHEN "BUTCH" WHITEHEAD

WHEREAS, DAV National Commander Stephen "Butch" Whitehead, of Rosemount, Minnesota, joined the Minnesota National Guard in 1991 and honorably served in the Guard for the next 29 years; and

WHEREAS, Commander Whitehead's military career included active service with the U.S. Army on two deployments, one of which was to Iraq in March 2006, where his unit came under fire from mortar attacks in February 2007; and

WHEREAS, his unit suffered multiple casualties, including Commander Whitehead, who received a serious concussion and was later diagnosed with a traumatic brain injury; and

WHEREAS, Commander Whitehead received numerous military honors, including the Bronze Star in 2007 for combat service in Iraq, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal with four bronze oak leaf clusters, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Medal and Humanitarian Service Medal; and

WHEREAS, in 2012, he was awarded the Veterans Voices Award by then-Gov. Mark Dayton of Minnesota, which celebrates veterans who are creating, leading and building their communities beyond their military service; and

WHEREAS, his dedication to service was exemplified when, in November 2019, Commander Whitehead rejoined the military, assuming responsibility as the command sergeant major of the Army National Guard's 34th "Red Bull" Infantry Division, which provides training and readiness oversight for nine National Guard brigades with more than 23,000 soldiers across Minnesota and 11 other states; and

WHEREAS, he has devoted more than 30 years of his life to our nation's military and our nation's ill and injured veterans, including as executive director of the Disabled American Veterans of Minnesota Foundation, adjutant for the DAV Department of Minnesota and chair for multiple department-level committees, and he was also appointed to the Minneapolis Veterans Affairs Medical Center Consumer Advisory Board; and

WHEREAS, the membership of DAV unanimously elected him the first post-9/11 veteran to lead the more than 1 million-member organization during the 2019 DAV National Convention in Orlando, Florida; and

WHEREAS, he was tasked with the unforeseen challenge of steering DAV through a pandemic and, due to these circumstances, became the second national commander in DAV's history to serve two terms in office; and

WHEREAS, he oversaw the effective transition of DAV services to meet the COVID-19 public health safety requirements and helped ensure DAV was able to maintain its critical assistance and services to veterans and their families during the extraordinary period; and

WHEREAS, at the onset of the COVID-19 outbreak, Commander Whitehead and his family purchased materials and made hundreds of face masks by hand that he personally delivered to veterans staying at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center when personal protective equipment was scarce; and

WHEREAS, his dedication and commitment to the importance of mental health helped get signed into law the Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act of 2019, comprehensive legislation to help increase outreach and services to veterans at risk for suicide and to improve VA mental health services; and

WHEREAS, Commander Whitehead served as an ambassador for the President's Roadmap to Empower Veterans and End a National Tragedy of Suicide (PREVENTS) to build awareness about mental health and connect veterans to critical, lifesaving resources; and

WHEREAS, he continued to be a fierce advocate for his fellow veterans exposed to toxic substances from burn pits, pushing hard for the passage of the Veterans Burn Pits Exposure Recognition Act of 2020, which was conceptualized by DAV; and

WHEREAS, he has shown compassion and outstanding leadership during his two years as national commander, delivering DAV's message before a joint session of Congress, all while advancing DAV's mission; and

WHEREAS, Commander Whitehead has advocated passionately on behalf of all veterans to ensure a properly funded VA so that veterans receive the health care and benefits that they earned along with proper recognition of their military service and sacrifices made by their family members and survivors; and

WHEREAS, Commander Whitehead has been a vocal and outspoken leader on women veterans issues, fighting for passage of the Deborah Sampson Act and spreading awareness about the need to end sexual harassment and assault at VA medical centers; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that DAV in National Convention assembled in Tampa, Florida, July 31-August 3, 2021, expresses its members' heartfelt appreciation and profound gratitude to Commander Whitehead for his sacrifices, selfless service, professionalism and dedication to his fellow veterans forever changed in service, their families, survivors and DAV during his historic two-year term as DAV national commander; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DAV also salutes and extends our sincere appreciation to Commander Whitehead's wife, Kim, for her steadfast support and sacrifices during his years as DAV national commander.

* * *

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Good job.

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL RESOLUTIONS AND MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN PARKER: Practice, practice. (Laughter)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Good job.

(Whereupon, the Committee on General Resolutions and Membership Chair withdrew from the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: You have heard the motion. May I have a second?

MR. JEFF (INDISTINGUISHABLE): Jeff (Indistinguishable), Department of Ohio, executive committee member, seconds this motion.

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: In accordance with Rule 9, now is the time for any rejected resolution to be read. Are there any rejected resolutions you wish to read? Hearing none, all those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered.

(Whereupon, the Committee on General Resolutions and Membership Chair withdrew from the stage.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: I'd like to call upon Chairman Rob Reynolds for the final report on the Committee on Constitution and Bylaws. Rob.

MR. PAUL KOMINSKY: Commander, Mic 1.

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Mic 1.

MR. KOMINSKY: Paul Kominsky, delegate, commander of the National Blind Chapter. During the first reading it was noted that the Blind Chapter is being removed from all Committees.

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Mic 1. Mic 1, you are out of order. In accordance with Convention Rule 9 no resolution can be discussed by the Convention until the same has been reported by the appropriate committee and following a motion to discharge the Committee has been made but prior to being acted upon. So we have to hear the report.

(Whereupon, the Constitution and Bylaws Committee Chair advanced to the podium.)

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER ROBERT REYNOLDS: Thank you, Commander. Comrade Commander and delegates, good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER REYNOLDS: I will now proceed with the second reading of the proposed changes to the Constitution and Bylaws which are recommended for adoption. In the interest of time, again, I will read only the number and purpose of the resolutions.

Resolution Number 510, include DAV's Statement of Policy as Article II, Section 2.1, of the National Bylaws and renumber the current section 2.1 as 2.2; Resolution Number 511, amend Article III, Section 3.10, Convention Rule 8A to remove the national blind chapter from having a delegate and alternate on each of the seven convention committees;

Resolution Number 512, amend Article VI, Section 6.4, Paragraph 4 of the Bylaws to place members of a revoked chapter into the chapter nearest to their home rather than placing their membership into the department-at-large chapter;

Resolution Number 513, amend Article VII, Section 7.4, Paragraph 3 of the Bylaws to remove the geographical locations of the national headquarters and the national service and legislative headquarters;

Resolution Number 514, delete Article VII, Section 7.8 in its entirety and renumber Section 7.9, 7.10 and 7.11 accordingly; Section 7.8 is redundant as the national adjutant already has the authority to oversee and direct all activities of the national organization as outlined in 7.4, Paragraph 1;

Resolution Number 515, amend Article XI, Section 11.3, Paragraph 3 of the Bylaws to allow the national organization to pass on the continued eligibility of membership of any member;

Resolution Number 516, amend Article XI, Section 11.5 to remove the reference to amputee veterans as a national amputee chapter surrendered their charter due to non-participation and no longer exists;

Resolution Number 517, amend the language related to membership transfers in Article XI, Section 11.8, Paragraph 1 of the Bylaws to coincide with the proposed change identified in the Resolution Number 512;

Resolution Number 518, amend the language of Article XVII, Section 17.2, Paragraph 1, of the Bylaws to remove the geographical location of the national headquarters.

Comrade Commander, on behalf of the Committee I move that the Committee recommendations be accepted, that the resolutions be adopted and that the Committee be discharged with the thanks of the National Convention.

(Whereupon, the Constitution and Bylaws Committee Chair withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: You have heard the motion. May I have a second?

MR. JAMES SHUEY: Mic 2.

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Mic 2.

MR. SHUEY: Jim Shuey, delegate, Chapter 7, Lincoln, Nebraska, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: In accordance with Rule 9, now is the time for any rejected resolutions to be read. Are there any rejected resolutions you wish read? All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. The motion is carried.

(Whereupon, the Constitution and Bylaws Chair withdrew from the stage.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Marc, do you have any announcements at this time?

(Whereupon, Adjutant Burgess advanced to the podium.)

ADJUTANT BURGESS: This afternoon's final business session will begin promptly at 1:30. We will start off with the important business of nominations and elections of officers. And please be on time.

Pick up your tickets for the Line Officer Dinner between sessions right outside the exit of this ballroom. This new method is designed to alleviate waiting in line. Tickets will be available until just before doors open at 6 p.m.

Again, we are giving away three \$50 gift certificates that can be redeemed at the DAV store online or here during national convention. You must be present to win. If I call your name and you are in the hall, please see Membership Director Doug Wells up here by the stage as soon as we adjourn.

And the first winner is Donald Moore; the second is H.F. Hanson; and third is Michael Varga.

(Whereupon, Adjutant Burgess withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Thank you, Marc. I will now ask Reverend Edwards will you please come and lead us in prayer.

(Whereupon, the Chaplain advanced to the podium.)

REVEREND EDWARDS: Our God, we realize that our efforts are insufficient without your help. Our achievements are incomplete without your blessings. And we thank you for all of the opportunities and challenges of life that help us to develop character, courage and conviction.

And now may the strength of God sustain us. May the power of God preserve us. May the hand of God protect us. May the shield of God defend us. And may God bless all of the men and women of the Disabled American Veterans. In God we trust. Amen.

(Response of "Amen." Whereupon, the Chaplain withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Thank you, Chaplain. The Convention stands in recess until 1:30 this afternoon.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed at 10:46 o'clock, a.m. on Tuesday, August 3, 2021.)

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FINAL BUSINESS SESSION

August 3, 2021

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The Final Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans 99th National Convention convened in the Tampa Bay Ballroom of the J.W. Marriott Tampa, Tampa, Florida, Tuesday afternoon, August 3, 2021, and was called to order at 1:33 o'clock, p.m., by National Commander Stephen "Butch" Whitehead.

COMMANDER STEPHEN "BUTCH" WHITEHEAD: The Convention will please come to order. As a reminder, I would like to ask everyone to please silence your cell phone and portable devices. Please join me in the Pledge of Allegiance. (Three raps of the gavel.)

(Whereupon, the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Two. I will now ask Reverend Edwards to come forward.

(Whereupon, the Chaplain advanced to the podium.)

REVEREND CHARLES EDWARDS: None of us work alone. We are part of a great team. We need each other. Gracious Heavenly Father, we offer our thanks to you for the gift of life and for the service rendered by members of the Disabled American Veterans.

Father, we ask you to continue your blessings on all of the people gathered here, at this convention, who so graciously give of their time and talents in serving others. Grant that those here, today, may fully receive as they have fully given. And may feelings of worth and accomplishments continue to be theirs. And may they all remember that what is given in love is retained in eternity.

Bless and protect us as we continue to keep our promise to America's veterans. Bless our veteran for we realize that is has been through their given efforts, their given dedication and commitment to duty that our country has continued to remain free. In God we trust. Amen.

(Response of "Amen;" whereupon, the Chaplain withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: (One rap of the gavel.) As a reminder, in order for a delegate to be heard at this Convention you must be recognized by the Chair. Only those delegates at the microphone will be recognized. Upon being recognized, the delegate must state their name, chapter number, and the state they represent.

I would like to remind everyone that the registration of delegates is now closed. I will call upon Chairperson Brenda Reed for the final report of the Credentials Committee.

(Whereupon, the Credentials Committee Chair advanced to the podium.)

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE CHAIR BRENDA REED: Good afternoon.

(Response of "Good afternoon.")

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE CHAIR REED: I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the Committee for electing me to be your chairperson this year and allowing me to be your voice. And I would also like to thank Burl Jimmerson who was elected and has served as secretary of this wonderful Committee and all of the members who have given their time and have served. Thank you all so much.

Comrade Commander and delegates, this is the final report of the Credentials Committee and reflects the total registration as of 10:00 a.m., August 3, 2021.

There are 941 delegates and 59 alternates registered, representing 42 departments and 349 chapters. There are 8 national line officers, 18 National Executive Committee members, and 2 past national commanders registered for a total of 28 national officers. The vote total count is 7,897. At this time I would like to extend my thanks to the Committee members and the advisors.

Commander, that completes the final report of the Credentials Committee. I move for its adoption.

(Whereupon, the Credentials Committee Chair withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: You have heard the motion. May I have a second?

MR. THOMAS AYALLA: Second. Thomas Ayalla, Chapter 1, Jacksonville, seconds.

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered.

(Whereupon, the Credentials Committee Chair withdrew from the stage.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Now I will call on Dan Stack, the Chairman of the Nominating Committee, for his report. Dan.

(Whereupon, the Nominating Committee Chair advanced to the podium.)

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN DANIEL P. STACK: Thank you, Commander. Comrade Commander and delegates, the National Convention Committee on Nominations for National Officers

was called to order for its first business session on July 31, 2021, by Committee advisors Joseph Johnston and Al Church.

The first order of business was the election of a convention committee chairperson and secretary. Dan Stack was elected as chairperson and Joseph Kaufman was elected as secretary.

The Committee on Nominations of National Officers met on Saturday, July 31, at 4:15 p.m. and Sunday, August 1st, at 1:00 p.m., and again, today, at 11 a.m. The Nominating Committee recommends and nominates the following individuals for national office:

For Commander, Andrew Marshall from Florida; (Standing Ovation) for the office of National Senior Vice-Commander Joseph Parsetich from Montana; (Applause) for the office of National First Junior Vice-Commander, Nancy Espinosa of Utah; (Applause)

for the office of National Second Junior Vice-Commander, Daniel Contreras from California; (Applause) for the office of National Third Junior Vice-Commander, Coleman Nee from Massachusetts; (Applause) and for the office of National Fourth Junior Vice-Commander, John Donovan from Arkansas; (Applause)

for the office of National Chaplain, Debra Varner from Alabama; (Applause) and one we almost as the Committee even forgot to consider, for the office of National Judge Advocate, Michael Dobmeier of North Dakota. (Applause)

Comrade Commander, this completes the report of the Committee on Nominations of National Officers. On behalf of the Committee I move the adoption of this report. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Nominating Committee Chair withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Thank you, Dan, for that report. I will now call for a second that the report of the Committee on Nominations of National Officers be adopted and the Committee be discharged.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Mic 1.

MR. BRIAN MABRY: Mic 4.

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Mic 4.

MR. MABRY: Brian Mabry, junior vice commander for the State of Connecticut, Chapter Number 2, second it, please. I'm sorry. (Laughter) And correction, junior vice commander.

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Nominating Committee Chair withdrew from the stage.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: You have heard the report of the Committee on Nominations of National Officers and they have nominated Andrew Marshall for National Commander. (Applause) Here to second the nomination is Past National Commander Dennis Joyner. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Mr. Joyner advanced to the podium.)

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER DENNIS JOYNER: Thank you, Commander. It's truly a privilege to be on this stage once again to endorse the election of a courageous soldier, dedicated veterans' advocate, and longtime DAV leader.

Andrew Marshall resides in Palm Harbor, Florida, with his wife, Susan. He is a life member of Chapter 4 here in Tampa where he has been a member since 1975.

Andy is a Vietnam War veteran who was an airborne infantryman serving with the Americal Division in the Khe Sanh Valley in December 1970. He was first injured as a result of friendly fire while engaged in combat against the enemy. After two weeks of recovery, he was transferred to the 173rd Airborne Brigade.

Later, in January 1971, while on patrol, he stepped on an improvised booby trap. The explosive injured his lower extremities, resulting in the amputation of two toes and extensive damage to his left leg.

Due to his injuries, Andy was medically retired from the Army after receiving the Bronze Star, Purple Heart with oak leaf cluster in lieu of a second award, and Army Commendation Medal with "V" device.

After his military service, he continued to serve veterans and their families by becoming a DAV national service officer. Andy, who retired as a supervisor of our office in St. Petersburg, Florida, was one of the DAV's first national area supervisors. He has held multiple leadership positions during his 41 years with the organization, including judge advocate for the Department of Maryland.

As supervisor of DAV's national service office in Bay Pines, Florida, Andy initiated a claim on behalf of a veteran that ultimately resulted in a change to the Department of Veteran Affairs policy by allotting multiple clothing allowances for amputees and other severely-disabled veterans. The important change will continue to make a difference for veterans today and into the future.

Andy also served for three years on the Florida Veterans Advisory Committee and was assigned to the DAV Judicial Appeals Office in Washington, D.C.

As if that weren't enough, he has also been very active with DAV at the chapter, department, and national levels. He is a past department commander for the DAV Department of Florida, and currently serves as the state's adjutant and executive director.

Friends, family, fellow veterans, it is an honor to second the nomination of my friend and fellow Army veteran, Andy Marshall, as our national commander.

He has spent his entire life fighting for the men and women who served, and their families. He has shown, repeatedly, his willingness to overcome life's challenges and rise up in the face of adversity to continue his service to his country.

As our organization enters a new century, his leadership will guide our path and inspire our advocacy. It is with great honor that I nominate your next national commander for 2021-2022, Andy Marshall. Thank you. (Standing Ovation)

(Whereupon, Mr. Joyner withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: The Chair will now call for any further nominations for the office of national commander. Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations?

If there are no further nominations, I close the nominations and declare Andrew Marshall elected as national commander and instruct the National Adjutant to cast one unanimous ballot for his election. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Adjutant Burgess advanced to the podium.)

ADJUTANT BURGESS: I, Marc Burgess, National Adjutant of DAV, hereby cast one unanimous ballot for Andy Marshall, for the office of national commander. (Standing Ovation)

(Whereupon, Adjutant Burgess withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: The Nominating Committee has nominated Joe Parsetch for the office of national senior vice-commander. Are there further nominations? Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations? If there are no further nominations, I close the nominations and declare Joe Parsetch elected as national senior vice-commander. (Applause)

The Nominating Committee has nominated Nancy Espinosa for the office of national first junior vice-commander. Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations? If there are no other nominations, I will close the nominations and declare Nancy Espinosa elected as your national first junior vice-commander. (Applause)

The Nominating Committee has nominated Dan Contreras for the office of national second junior vice-commander. Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations? If there are no further nominations, I will close the nominations and declare Dan Contreras elected national second junior vice-commander. (Applause)

The Nominating Committee has nominated Coleman Nee for the office of national third junior vice-commander. Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations? If there are no further nominations, I close the nominations and declare Coleman Nee elected national third junior vice-commander. (Applause)

The Nominating Committee has nominated John Donovan for the office of national fourth junior vice-commander. Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations? If there are no further nominations I will close the nominations and declare John Donovan elected as national fourth junior vice-commander.

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: The Nominating Committee has nominated Mike Dover—Dobmeier, Mike Dobmeier for the office of national judge advocate. (Laughter) Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations? If there are no further nominations, I close the nominations and declare Mike Dobmeier elected as national judge advocate. (Applause)

The Nominating Committee has nominated Debra Varner for the office of national chaplain. Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations? Are there any further nominations? If there are no further nominations, I close the nominations and declare Debra Varner elected as national chaplain. (Applause)

And I will now ask the National Adjutant to cast one unanimous ballot for these offices.

(Whereupon, Adjutant Burgess advanced to the podium.)

ADJUTANT BURGESS: I, Marc Burgess, National Adjutant of DAV, cast one unanimous ballot for Joe Parsetch for national senior vice-commander; Nancy Espinosa for national first junior vice-commander;

Dan Contreras for national second junior vice-commander; Coleman Nee for national third junior vice-commander; John Donovan for national fourth junior vice-commander; Michael Dobmeier for national judge advocate; and Debra Varner for national chaplain. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Adjutant Burgess withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: I would like to ask that the newly-elected officers and their spouses be escorted to the stage, please.

(Whereupon, the newly-elected officers and their spouses advanced to the stage to be seated.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: It is now my great pleasure to call on National Commander-Elect Andrew Marshall for remarks. (Standing Ovation)

(Whereupon, Commander-Elect Marshall advanced to the podium.)

COMMANDER-ELECT ANDREW MARSHALL: Good afternoon.

(Response of "Good afternoon.")

COMMANDER-ELECT MARSHALL: Go Army.

(Response of "Go Army.")

COMMANDER-ELECT MARSHALL: There's a couple of things that happened in my life why I'm here today, important things. One, my marriage to my wife, Susan, (Applause) who I met while a national service officer when I was transferred to Hartford, Connecticut. Had I not been transferred to Hartford, Connecticut, I wouldn't be this fortunate to have such a loving and caring wife. (Applause)

The second is the birth of my daughter, Brittany, in 1975, Dr. Brittany Butts, PhD. (Applause) And this may sound strange, but something that happened was me being wounded. If I had not been wounded in Vietnam, I would not be here today, so. It's a pleasure to be here.

Butch, it has truly been an honor watching you maneuver the challenging last two years with the grace and poise of a true leader. DAV could not have hoped for a more capable soldier during such uncertain times. (Applause)

I am thrilled to follow in your footsteps, and feel privileged to call you a friend. Thank you for your leadership and advocacy over your tenure. DAV, the veteran community, and our families are better off for it.

In 1970 I was a young man serving his country in Vietnam who was about to learn a few things about life. The first was that "friendly fire" is no friend of mine. (Laughter) I mean it hurts, probably more so because, in my case, it was our own artillery. Luckily, I was able to walk away from the wounds I sustained rather quickly.

The second Purple Heart I received was a result of a Viet Cong booby trap that put me in the hospital much longer.

I learned early-on that DAV was there for wounded veterans. While I was rehabilitating at Walter Reed, I was awarded a free one-year membership in the DAV.

Again, my life was forever changed, but it wasn't just my life that was changed.

On my floor, alone, there were four other Army veterans who were rehabbing from their injuries who went on to serve as DAV national service officers. They were Mike Walsh, Billy Nix, Paul Nelson and Bob Jack. Soon, we met many more veterans who shared our mission.

DAV showed me that there were others who had been in my shoes, and through their help and camaraderie disabled veterans, like myself, were able to lead lives that gave a true sense of purpose.

I became a full life member and dedicated my life to DAV. I am a proud member of Chapter 4 and the Department of Florida. Where are you, Florida?

(Whereupon, the members of the delegation from the Department of Florida were recognized with a round of applause.)

COMMANDER-ELECT MARSHALL: Yes. I can't thank all of you enough for your support over the years. It has meant so much to me and my family.

It was my greatest honor to help veterans get the benefits they have earned for more than 40 years. It gave me the chance to serve and repay DAV for all our organization did for me.

Serving the disabled veteran community is a sacred obligation, one I don't take lightly.

As we begin our journey of healing as a nation from the COVID-19 pandemic and the long wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, I can't help but to think about the early years of our cause.

In 1920 the nation was beginning to recover from the one-two punch of the Great War and the influenza pandemic. Today, we are relearning that there is a lonely road that we hope to return to normalcy and healing.

Our legislative advocacy efforts through the past year have strengthened the quality of life for many.

The Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D., Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020 was the culmination of two years of bipartisan work to address a number of DAV's critical policy goals.

It is going to positively impact veterans' education, housing, and survivors' benefits. It also included elements of the Deborah Sampson Act to strengthen health care and benefits programs for women veterans. (Applause)

Can we get a shout-out to our women veterans here today? (Applause) Sisters, I want you to know your brothers at the DAV are here for you. We are going to continue to support you and are grateful for your service. (Applause)

There is still much more to be done. And, as always, we need your help. I know most of you are signed up for the DAV Commander's Action Network already, but we need to be proud and loud. Encourage your fellow members and supporters to join, as well. There is strength in numbers and a unified, amplified voice.

DAV can be proud to be the voice that brought the issue of burn pits to light.

After years of advocating on behalf of veterans exposed to harmful burn pits we just learned yesterday that VA will begin to recognize presumptives for certain veterans with asthma, rhinitis, and cellulitis. (Applause)

It's a nice start but we still have a long way to go. And these issues are not going away.

Toxic exposure for our troops has been synonymous with service for DAV more than 100 years and DAV has been there to help all along the way. As a Vietnam veteran, all of you in this room before me have seen it up close. As an organization we know how to get this done because we have done it before.

We cannot accept veterans suffering prolonged delays in getting the care and benefits they have earned.

DAV has and will continue to fight for what is the right thing to do by those who have sacrificed so much.

Another issue brought into focus due to the pandemic has been the clear and disproportionate impact on racial and ethnic minorities in the United States.

While the Veterans Health Administration has evolved over time to meet the needs of its increasingly diverse patient population, gaps remain in access, usage rates, and health outcomes among women and minority veterans.

We need to continually look at the programs and methods used to deliver services to the underrepresented and underserved. To ensure better outcomes the VA must collect and analyze data to identify trends, access issues, outcomes, and patient experiences for women and minority veterans. (Applause)

We must also investigate cultural differences that create barriers to care for certain veterans subpopulations and develop ways to improve outreach to the underserved.

Each and every one of you in this room has critically important roles to fill to help ensure our success for the next century.

I look forward to working with all of you this year. It's an honor and a privilege to serve as your national commander. I pledge to work tirelessly to ensure your voices are heard as we continue our 100-year mission of service.

May God continue to bless DAV, the men and women who serve our great nation, and the United States of America. Thank you. (Applause) Thank you, all.

(Whereupon, Commander-Elect Marshall saluted the membership, then Commander Whitehead placed the commander's cap on the Commander-Elect, at which time an official photograph was taken, then the Commander-Elect returned to his seat and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: I would now like to call on National Senior Vice-Commander-Elect Joe Parsetich. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Senior Vice-Commander-Elect advanced to the podium.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER-ELECT JOSEPH PARSETICH: What do you say following such an eloquent speech? (Laughter) Other than thank you. The last few years have been truly an honor representing each and every one of you.

I thank you for the trust that you have placed in me to be your voice and your image and the DAV national image. We have moved far and forward and continue to move forward over many, many difficult times. And if we can survive the last year and a half we can survive anything. (Applause)

But, first and foremost I want to thank the Lord because if wasn't for him giving me the health and the ability and the wisdom to know what to do, what to say and how to say it, I would have been lost.

But, second, I want to thank the person who really makes this possible because if she ever wanted to pull the plug, sorry, guys, you would lose because without her selfless sacrifice of my hours and the things I do for my brothers and sisters it would be totally impossible. Meg, stand up and be recognized, my lovely wife, Meg.

(Whereupon, Mrs. Parsetich stood and was recognized with a round of applause.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER-ELECT PARSETICH: But, you know, without all of the support I receive from my district, from all the volunteers, from so many different states, it wouldn't also be possible.

So District 14, my lovely surrogate daughter, Shannon who has done so much, Danny Oliver has been the greatest coach and supporter that I've had, but each and every one of you, thank you for continuing to trust me to be your voice and your image every place I go.

God bless each and every one. And have a great rest of the convention and an outstanding 2021-2022 year. Thank you all. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Senior Vice-Commander-Elect withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Your National First Junior Vice-elect Nancy Espinosa. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the First Junior Vice-Commander-Elect advanced to the podium.)

FIRST JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER-ELECT NANCY ESPINOSA: Thank you, everyone. Commander Whitehead, it's been an honor to serve with you and I so appreciate all the work you've done over the past two years. Thank you very much.

Commander Marshall, I look very forward to working with you on the line this year. And thank you very much for all you have done for veterans and your service.

I'd like to thank Chapter 14 from Layton, Utah, Chapter (sic) 17 from Utah and New Mexico, Colorado, and Wyoming. Thank you all for your support. And everyone here, thank you so much for your trust in me and for allowing me to serve you over the next year.

Safe travels home. Thank you very much. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the First Junior Vice-Commander-Elect withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Your National Second Junior Vice-Commander-elect Danny Contreras. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Second Junior Vice-Commander-Elect advanced to the podium.)

SECOND JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER-ELECT DANIEL CONTRERAS: Well, thank you so much. Thank you because I'm so humbled by the confidence that you have in me. And I'm also very grateful for this opportunity to continue to serve you and to be a voice for all of you.

California, you are amazing. (Applause) I would not be standing here right now if it wasn't for you so thank you all so very much.

I want to say thank you to my wife who, unfortunately, could not be here today because without her encouragement and her inspiration I wouldn't be here, as well.

And to my fellow line officers, it's been an honor to serve with you and I look forward to serving with you again. And I know, Commander-Elect Marshall, you are going to do great things for this organization.

Thank you, everyone. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Second Junior Vice-Commander-Elect withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: And your National Third Junior Vice-Commander-elect, Coleman Nee. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Third Junior Vice-Commander-Elect advanced to the podium.)

THIRD JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER-ELECT COLEMAN NEE: Thank you so much, Commander Whitehead. It's an honor to be here today and congratulations, Commander Marshall, and all my fellow line officers, including John. It's great to come on with you today. Thank you so much.

I just, I'm going to be brief and be seated but I think the one thing I do want to get across to you is to thank all of you for your faith and confidence in me. And I promise to wake up every day and realize that's a big bar to hit and I will not let you down.

And I look forward to learning a lot from a lot of the folks that are up here today as well as all of you, working with all of you. And I just couldn't have really done this or even come this far without the amazing support and mentorship of people like Past National Commander Alan Bowers and all the good folks from Massachusetts that are out there.

Where are the Massachusetts folks?

(Whereupon, the members from Massachusetts stood and were recognized with a round of applause.)

THIRD JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER-ELECT NEE: All right. Thank you. You guys are amazing and I appreciate your confidence and faith in me, as well, too. So looking forward to building a great foundation for another strong 100 years. Looking forward to getting in the trenches and serving with you even more. And have a great rest of the convention and safe travels home. Thank you. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Third Junior Vice-Commander-Elect withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: And your National Fourth Junior Vice-Commander-Elect, John Donovan. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Fourth Junior Vice-Commander-Elect advanced to the podium.)

FOURTH JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER-ELECT JOHN DONOVAN: Thank you all very much for the honor of working with you and serving with you as the fourth national junior-vice. I couldn't be more happy, more excited, more anxious than you can even imagine.

I want to thank District 21, Arkansas and Oklahoma for their continued support. Thank you. (Applause)

And I would really like to thank my own veteran, my wife of 34 years, a Navy veteran, for her support behind this, as well. (Applause)

And I want to just thank Commander Whitehead for your inspiration along the way. Commander-Elect Marshall, thank you very much for your inspiration, as well.

I will get off the podium. Let's have a great rest of the convention, a good new year, and let's move forward with DAV's mission. Thank you. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Fourth Junior Vice-Commander-Elect withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Not much of an introduction needed for this person but your National Judge Advocate Mike Dobmeier. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Judge Advocate-Elect advanced to the podium.)

JUDGE ADVOCATE-ELECT MICHAEL E. DOBMEIER: Thank you, Commander Butch. Hell of a job for the last two years.

I'd like to thank my wife, Sandy, who doesn't stand behind me, she stands beside me. (Applause)

I'd like to thank the folks of the 14th District for your continued support. (Applause)

And I thank each and every one of you for the trust that you continue to place in me. And I'll do my best to earn it. And Commander Marshall, I think I speak for everybody on the stage that we've got your back. Thank you. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Judge Advocate-Elect withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: And your National Chaplain-Elect Debra Varner.

(Whereupon, the Chaplain-Elect advanced to the podium.)

CHAPLAIN-ELECT DEBRA VARNER: Well, good afternoon.

(Response of "Good afternoon.")

CHAPLAIN-ELECT VARNER: So, to our great DAV national organization, to our commander, to our adjutant, to the Nominating Committee, and to the great MALKT, (Cheers) Mississippi, Alabama, Kentucky and Tennessee, it's with much gratitude that I stand before you today as humble as I know how for a great opportunity, not only to continue to make us great but greater than we have ever been before.

I agree with what has been said before. If we made it through 2020, 2021-'22 don't stand a chance. (Laughter) And God has sent forth a light for us to continue to be a beacon of light.

And to my dearest walk-around faith, Deb Walker who kept saying, "You can do it. Go ahead. You can do it," I just want to thank all of you for your confidence and we will not let you down. Thank you, again.

And the people said, amen.

(Response of "Amen," followed by a round of applause; whereupon, the Chaplain-Elect withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: At this time I will entertain a motion to discharge the Credentials Committee. Do I hear a motion? MR. JOHN RAYBURN: Number 2.

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Mic 2.

MR. RAYBURN: Department of Florida Commander John Rayburn makes the motion.

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: May I have a second.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Mic 4 second it.

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Mic 4. All those in favor signify by saying aye; opposed. So ordered. National Adjutant Burgess, would you please read the list of the newly-elected National Executive Committee members.

(Whereupon, Adjutant Burgess advanced to the podium.)

ADJUTANT BURGESS: The following members have been elected to the National Executive Committee for the two-year term 2021 to 2023: NEC First District James Follis; NEC Second District Thomas Ingram; NEC Third District Robert Guldner; NEC Fourth District, Ronald Werlich;

NEC Fifth District Philip Arnold; NEC Sixth District Michael Dawson; NEC Seventh District Frank Chicollo; NEC Eighth District William Baker; (Applause) NEC Ninth District Gregory Keesee; (Applause) NEC Eleventh District Michael Stith; (Applause)

NEC Twelfth District Eric Huckaby; NEC Thirteenth District George Hall; (Applause) NEC Fourteenth District Robert Hill; (Applause) NEC Fifteenth District Karin Hansen; (Applause) NEC Sixteenth District Clyde Maddox;

NEC Seventeenth District Floyd Watson; (Applause) NEC Eighteenth District Glenn Hohman; NEC Nineteenth District JoAnn Gavin; (Applause) NEC Twentieth District Charles Edwards; and NEC Twenty-First District Danny Oliver. (Applause) And apparently I skipped District 10, sorry, James Dempsey, NEC Tenth District, James Dempsey. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Adjutant Burgess withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Believe it or not, that concludes today's agenda. Marc, do you have any announcements? (Laughter)

(Whereupon, Adjutant Burgess advanced to the podium.)

ADJUTANT BURGESS: Someone lost a cell phone from the 19th District, turned it in, so it was around that district. So if you lost a cell phone, come to the side of the stage. We have it.

As a reminder to all of the newly-elected officers, all of the NEC, immediately following adjournment of the convention, in just a few minutes, in the HB Plant Ballrooms E and F located on the second floor of the J.W. we will have our NEC meeting and immediately following that a Board of Directors meeting. And at the NEC meeting we will have a swearing-in of the new officers.

The presentation of the national officers will begin at 6:30 this evening right here in the Tampa Bay Ballroom, followed by dinner. You cannot enter without a ticket so please be sure to bring your tickets.

Come and enjoy an evening filled with ceremony, food, friends, music, and entertainment.

Commander. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Adjutant Burgess withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: I'm going to go off script here a little bit and take an opportunity to take this time and thank each and every one in this room for all the hard work you've done the last two years while I've been your national commander.

You have made the DAV so much stronger underneath my watch. And I can't be so proud of all the work you've done. District 14, Department of Minnesota, thank you for always supporting me, being there for me. I could not have done this without all of you in this room so thank you all. (Applause)

Reverend Edwards, will you please lead us in a closing prayer.

(Whereupon, the Chaplain advanced to the podium.)

CHAPLAIN EDWARDS: Eternal Father, we render to you acknowledgement of your supreme dimension over all of us and gratitude for your watchfulness as we come to the close of this, the 99th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans.

As we come to the end of this wonderful experience, we ask that you refresh and renew and send us on courageously as we go to serve America's disabled veterans.

Be merciful to our honored dead, the memory of their lives because of the courage which inspires us to noble actions, and to the eternal preservation of our priceless liberty.

Be with those still unaccounted for, prisoners of war and missing in action. In your mercy may we, the members of the Disabled American Veterans, find your peace and grant us from above this day the challenge of a high endeavor, the beauty of a humble spirit, the strong courage and will to advance the interests and work for the betterment of all disabled American veterans.

Keep us safe as we journey to our various destinations. In God we trust. Amen.

(Response of "Amen;" whereupon, the Chaplain withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Thank you, Chaplain.

Retire the Colors.

(Whereupon, the Colors were retired by the MacDill Air Force Base Honor Guard followed by a round of applause.)

COMMANDER WHITEHEAD: Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in thanking the MacDill Air Force Base Honor Guard for their great service. (Applause)

Ladies and gentlemen, the 99th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans is now adjourned. We will see you next year in Orlando. (Applause)

(Whereupon the meeting adjourned on August 3, 2021, at 2:23 o'clock, p.m.)

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**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY
98TH NATIONAL CONVENTION
TAMPA MARRIOTT WATER STREET HOTEL
TAMPA, FLORIDA**

July 31, 2021

First Business Session

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The First Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary convened in the Grand Ballroom E—F on the Second Floor of the Tampa Marriott Water Street Hotel, Tampa Florida, on Saturday afternoon, July 31, 2021, and was called to order at 2:04 o'clock, p.m., by National Adjutant Patricia S. Kemper.

ADJUTANT PATRICIA S. KEMPER: National Sergeant-at-Arms please present National Commander Diane Franz to the platform. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Commander was escorted to the platform.)

ADJUTANT KEMPER: National Sergeant-at-Arms, please see that National Chaplain Aura-Lee Nicodemus is escorted. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Chaplain was escorted to the platform.)

ADJUTANT KEMPER: National Sergeant-at-Arms, please see that National Judge Advocate and Past National Commander Paula Raymond is escorted to the platform, please. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Judge Advocate was escorted to the platform.)

ADJUTANT KEMPER: National Sergeant-at-Arms, please see that National Fourth Junior Vice-Commander Linda Gerke is escorted forward, please. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Fourth Junior Vice-Commander was escorted to the platform.)

ADJUTANT KEMPER: National Sergeant-at-Arms, please see that National Third Junior Vice-Commander Ann Marie Hurley is escorted forward. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Third Junior Vice-Commander was escorted to the platform.)

ADJUTANT KEMPER: National Sergeant-at-Arms, please see that National Second Junior Vice-Commander Julie Weissman-Steinbaugh is escorted forward. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Second Junior Vice-Commander was escorted to the platform.)

ADJUTANT KEMPER: National Sergeant-at-Arms, please see that National First Junior Vice-Commander Darlene Spence is escorted forward, please. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the First Junior Vice-Commander was escorted to the platform.)

ADJUTANT KEMPER: National Sergeant-at-Arms, please see that National Senior Vice-Commander Lynn Helms Prosser is escorted to the platform. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Senior Vice-Commander was escorted to the platform.)

ADJUTANT KEMPER: National Sergeant-at-Arms, please have Immediate Past National Commander Ellen Timmerman escorted forward. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Immediate Past National Commander was escorted forward.)

ADJUTANT KEMPER: And National Sergeant-at-Arms, we now ask that you have State Department of Florida Auxiliary Commander Claudia Parker escorted forward. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Convention Committee Chairman was escorted to the platform.)

ADJUTANT KEMPER: National Sergeant-at-Arms, please present and post the State Department Colors of Florida.

(Whereupon, the Colors for the state were presented and posted.)

ADJUTANT KEMPER: National Sergeant-at-Arms, present the National Colors.

(Whereupon, the National Colors were presented.)

ADJUTANT KEMPER: National Sergeant-at-Arms, post the National Colors.

(Whereupon, the National Colors were posted.)

ADJUTANT KEMPER: National Sergeant-at-Arms, you are to dismiss the Color Bearers.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS TERRY GRABOWSKI: Dismissed.

ADJUTANT KEMPER: And we will now have a prayer by National Chaplain Aura-Lee Nicodemus.

(Whereupon, the Chaplain advanced to the podium.)

CHAPLAIN AURA-LEE NICODEMUS: Dear Heavenly Father, we give thanks for the privilege to gather here today. We give thanks for our leaders of this past year who fought so many hardships for the past two year to keep our organization not only growing but thriving.

We ask a special blessing today upon Baby Everlee Claire, whose mom is Anissa Rader. Everlee Claire decided to come to the convention a bit early, at 32 weeks and 4 pounds and 11 ounces. She was born and she is in the Intensive Care Unit and doing well and we ask a special blessing upon both the mom and her as she is our newest Auxiliary member. (Laughter)

We ask a special blessing upon Tilly Alvarez, who is DAV Past National Commander Alvarez's wife, also Alicia and Geneva. We ask a special blessing upon Michael Dover and his family, his wife, that you will care for her. Guide them and protect them. We ask that you will hold them in your hands.

We ask a special blessing today upon Ashley Johniken. She had surgery this week. And we pray that you will help her recover quickly.

We also ask a special blessing upon Ashlyn Jensen. She is a little eight-month-old who needs our prayers. And 17 year old Cody, the grandson of Meg and Joe Parsetich.

We also ask a special blessing upon the DAVA South Carolina Commander's spouse. He's currently at the hospital being evaluated for his heart and we ask that you will take care of them.

We ask that you will hold us in the palm of your hands for this meeting. Guide us. Protect us. Help us to listen attentively to all the speakers. Help us to learn and then take the information we learn back to share.

We pray for the leaders of our nation. We pray for all of our Auxiliary members today, both here and at home. In your name. Amen.

(Response of "Amen," after which the Chaplain withdrew from and Adjutant Kemper returned to the podium.)

ADJUTANT KEMPER: The Pledge of Allegiance will be led by National Americanism Chairman Ann Marie Hurley.

THIRD JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER AND NATIONAL AMERICANISM CHAIRMAN Ann Marie Hurley: Please stand at attention. Place your right hand over your heart and repeat with me.

(Whereupon, the Third Junior Vice-Commander and Americanism Chairman led the Pledge of Allegiance.)

ADJUTANT KEMPER: You may be seated.

The Constitution and Bylaws of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary state that the supreme legislative powers of this organization shall be vested in the Annual National Convention composed of the National Officers and representatives of the state departments and units.

In accordance with these directives I, Patricia S. Kemper, National Auxiliary Adjutant, declare the 98th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary be convened in Tampa, Florida.

Consideration and disposition of business brought before this Convention shall be conducted in accordance with the National Constitution and Bylaws now in force. To all present, take due notice thereof and govern yourselves accordingly.

It is now my honor and distinct pleasure to introduce someone who has given much time, much greater time than usual for a national commander. She has done it with grace and dignity.

And she never backed down. She faced everything that came her way, our way, with professionalism and concern. And I can't say enough about her because she was pretty amazing considering she had an extra year tacked onto her term.

So it is my honor, again, and pleasure to introduce our National Commander Diane Franz. (Standing Ovation)

(Whereupon, the Commander advanced to the podium.)

COMMANDER DIANE FRANZ: Thank you. Be seated. So right now I'm going to introduce a woman that stepped forward at the last minute and she has given so much to this organization already.

And to bring welcoming news, ideas, I'd like to present the Florida State Department Auxiliary State Commander Claudia Parker.

(Whereupon, Ms. Parker advanced to the podium, amid a round of applause.)

MRS. CLAUDIA PARKER: Good afternoon, DAV Auxiliary members.

(Response of "Good afternoon.")

MRS. PARKER: And guests, too. Thank you for being here. On behalf of the State Department of Florida, all of our Auxiliary units, and each individual member of those unit—many of whom are right there—it is my distinct pleasure to welcome you to the Sunshine State and our beautiful City of Tampa. Thank you, again, for being here.

We hope that while you are here you will meet a few individual with whom you will become new friends and that you will get to know better acquaintances whom you've met before, and that you will also have the opportunity to spend some time getting to know some of our awesome Florida veterans.

As you may have noted, there is a little wiggle room in your schedule to enjoy this area of Florida. So, if you get the chance to explore the Tampa Bay area at any time during or after the conference, which, incidentally, is chucker-block with interesting seminars, presentations, and exhibits, you might find that there are endless possibilities for entertainment here in the Tampa Bay area.

Now, if you haven't already picked up your Tampa Bay Official Destination Guide, get a copy. These are all kinds of wonderful places to see. And I know that this morning Dennis Joyner gave you a few really good places to go. But, you know, I've got the inside scoop. (Laughter)

I'm going to give you some interesting facts about some of them. Now, Busch Gardens Tampa Bay, it's always a crowd favorite not only because it's one of America's largest zoological institutions, but also it has rides and attractions that rival those more famous Florida theme parks. Okay.

And not that I know this, but, I'm told that they still have those hospitality houses that pass out free samples of Anheuser-Bush products. (Laughter) Okay.

Zoo Tampa at Lowry Park, if you go to no other Zoo in this United States, go there. It is among the top ten in the United States as family-friendly. If you have a family, if you brought your family, go there at some point.

Here in downtown Florida, Dennis Joyner already told you about the Florida Aquarium; however, he didn't tell you that there are 7,000, more than 7,000 aquatic species and plants there and that the Florida Aquarium also is a world leader in conservation, and in education programs for wildlife.

Now, if you're a foodie, like some of us, go to Ybor City for the best Cuban food north of Havana. For those of you who are still looking for a big payoff, I guess, because you, I guess you were "banking" on Reno. (Laughter), hey, no puns intended, hopefully you will find that your thirst will be satiated at the Hard Rock, Seminole Hard Rock Casino not too far from here.

And there is always the option to walk along one of the world's most beautiful beaches and to get a great Florida suntan. But watch out because we Floridians have a saying and that is, "People who come to Florida oftentimes get sand in their shoes." In other words, you will want to stay.

So whatever you do or whatever you don't do, as your hosts, we hope that you learn while you are here, you take what you learn back to your units and implement those things, that you enjoy your downtime here at the convention, and that you return home renewed, refreshed, and ready to make a difference in the lives of disabled American veterans and their families. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Ms. Parker withdrew from and Commander Franz returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: Thank you, Claudia. We all know about Florida. (Laughter) And keep that in mind because we're back here next year, fingers crossed.

Okay, now I'd like to introduce some very special ladies. We don't have, naturally, our male counterpart any more. But I'd like to introduce some of the Past National Commanders, if you could please stand:

Jane Troutman; (Applause) Paula Raymond; (Applause) Linda Trulio; (Applause) Judy Steinhouse; (Applause) Susan Henry; (Applause) LeeAnn Karg; (Applause) and Ellen Timmerman. (Applause) (Whereupon, as their names were called each Past National Commander stood or raised her/his hand and acknowledged the audience.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: If you get a chance, Sandy Dobmeier is here. Oh, there she is. (Applause) Okay. I was going to say make sure you search her out. There is somebody else, Susan Miller. Is Susan here? She didn't make it? Okay.

Okay, now I'd like to acknowledge the State Delegates. As I call your name, please stand and be recognized.

Alabama, Frederick Green; (Applause) Arizona, Carol Rundell; (Applause) Arkansas, Rhonda Bauer; (Applause) California, June McJunkin; (Applause) Colorado, Leslie Mestas; (Applause)

Delaware, Juliette Velez; (Applause) Florida, Claudia Parker; (Applause) Illinois, Karen Eccles; (Applause) Indiana, Tana Penland; (Applause) Iowa, Patty Johnson (Applause)—Kathy Weatherly; (Applause)

Kentucky, Deborah Reese; (Applause) Louisiana—I'm going to murder your last name; Marlene Comeaux; (Applause) Maine, Leanne Fournier; (Applause) Maryland, Margaret Mills; (Applause)

Massachusetts, Mary Ficociello; (Applause) Michigan, Barbara McComb; (Applause) Minnesota, Linda Engesether; (Applause) thank you; Mississippi, Darlene McNair; (Applause)

Missouri, Peggy Roberts; (Applause) Montana, Helen Parsetich; (Applause) and New Hampshire, Jeryllyn Maynard; (Applause) New Jersey, Kathleen Walker; (Applause) New Mexico, Karen Roybal; (Applause) New York, Cheryl Connors; (Applause)

North Carolina, Karen Stephenson; (Applause) North Dakota, Sandy Dobmeier; (Applause) Ohio, Traci Kimmel; (Applause) Oklahoma, Kristy Chisum; (Applause) Oregon, Kathy Clampitt; (Applause)

Pennsylvania, Loretta Nosko; (Applause) Rhode Island, Linda Folcarelli; (Applause) South Carolina, Jacqueline Tate Gray; (Applause) South Dakota, Karen Volton; (Applause) Tennessee, Jeff Jungkans; (Applause) thank you;

Texas, Evelyn Cupit; (Applause) Utah, June Schow; (Applause) Vermont, Karen Rediker; (Applause) Virginia, Sarah St.-Firmin de Rodriguez; (Applause) Wisconsin, Julie Hert; (Applause) Wyoming, Nancy Coffey; (Applause) and Puerto Rico, Anna Lozano Pagan. (Applause) (Whereupon, as the representatives' names were called they waved to the membership.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: I now call upon Past National Commander Susan Henry to bring her greetings.

(Whereupon, the Past National Commander advanced to the podium.)

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER SUSAN HENRY: Good afternoon.

(Response of "Good afternoon.")

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER HENRY: Commander Franz officers, members and guests. It is my pleasure to bring greetings from the Past National Commanders Club. We welcome you to a hopefully active and productive convention.

And we would like to present our gift to the National Commander for the past two years. Extraordinary service, as was said. And here it is.

(Whereupon, the Commander opened the gift presented.)

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER HENRY: And while she is looking at that, if you have any questions, look for people with this little badge. They will be happy to help answer any questions you have.

COMMANDER FRANZ: Good thing I drove. (Laughter) It's heavy. Oh, that's gorgeous. It's a crystal paperweight. (Applause) Gorgeous. Thank you. Thank you.

(Whereupon, the Past National Commander withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: Okay, I'd like to ask any first-time attendees to please stand and be recognized.

(Whereupon, first-time attendees stood and were recognized with a round of applause.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: And while you're standing (Applause) and please remain standing so the pages can pass out the "first time attendee" badges to put onto your credential.

(Whereupon, all first-time attendees were handed badges, after which they sat down.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: While they are finishing up on that I'd like to recognize another very, very outstanding person. You heard a lot about her at the Joint Opening Session this morning. And it's our DAV Auxiliary Outstanding Member of the Year recipient Bonita Mitchell of Missouri. Are you in here, Bonita?

(Whereupon, Ms. Mitchell was recognized with a round of applause.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: Eighty-nine years young. (Applause) And still going strong. And although she couldn't be with us this year, I'd like to personally acknowledge last year's Outstanding Member of the Year Clarissa Brown of South Carolina. (Applause)

And there is a request that anybody on the Nominating Committee, there will be a 30-minute meeting at the close—the Nominating Committee will convene 30 minutes after the close of this meeting at the Grand Ballroom Room G.

It's on the second floor. It's on this floor in this hotel. Everybody got that? Thirty-minute after the convening of this meeting to meet, the Nominating Committee to meet in Grand Ballroom G, as in "goodness." Thanks. The second floor, this hotel.

I also would like to ask anyone making or seconding a motion must go to the microphone and state their name, unit and state department or they may not be recognized since our reporter hears this information through his headphones.

There is a microphone up here. And there are a couple handheld ones so one of the pages will get it to you. They're moving the microphone to the center table over here.

We will now have the Credentials Chairman Maria Holloway please come forward to give a preliminary report for the Credentials Committee?

(Whereupon, the Convention Credentials Committee Chairman advanced to the podium.)

CONVENTION CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN MARIA HOLLOWAY: Good afternoon.

(Response of "Good afternoon.")

CONVENTION CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN HOLLOWAY: National Commander, national officers, delegates and guests, the Credentials report is as follows.

Total units registered, 113; total departments registered, 36; national officers registered, 6; past national commanders registered, 6; total guests registered, 182; total delegates, 242; total alternates, 21; total vote count, 871. Also, the total registered, 457.

I move that we accept the Credentials report.

(Whereupon, the Convention Credentials Chairman withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: We have a motion to accept the preliminary report of the Credentials Committee. Is there a second?

MS. KATHY DUNHAM: Kathy Dunham, Unit 22, Texas, I second the motion.

COMMANDER FRANZ: A motion has been made and seconded to accept the preliminary report of the Credentials Committee. All in favor; any opposed, nay. The Credentials report is accepted. (Whereupon, the Convention Credentials Chairman withdrew from the stage.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: The first order of business is to adopt the National Convention Rules. Printed copies of the Convention Rules have been furnished to all registered delegates. The Chair will now entertain a motion for adoption of these rules.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER HENRY: Susan Henry, Past National Commander, so moves.

COMMANDER FRANZ: Do I have a second?

MS. MELISSA PIERCE: Melissa Pierce, Unit 20, Iowa, seconds.

COMMANDER FRANZ: We have a motion and a second to accept the adoption of the national convention rules. All in favor; any opposed. Carried.

May I have a motion to accept the agenda subject to changes?

MS. ELIZABETH BUTTERS: Liz Butters, Marshfield Memorial 35, I motion that we accept the changes.

COMMANDER FRANZ: May I have a second?

MS. REGINA PRUDHOMME: Regina Prudhomme, Unit 109, Florida, second this.

COMMANDER FRANZ: We have a motion and a second to accept the agenda subject to change. All in favor; any opposed. Carried.

I will now call upon the Finance Committee Chairman Carolyn Harris for the National Finance Committee report and the budget review.

(Whereupon, the Finance Committee Chairman advanced to the podium.)

FINANCE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN CAROLYN HARRIS: National Commander Diane Franz, national officers, past national commanders, delegates, family and friends, good afternoon.

(Response of "Good afternoon.")

FINANCE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN HARRIS: The National Finance Committee meeting was held April 7, 2021, at 9:30 a.m. by GoToMeeting online platform.

The voting members of the Committee present were Diane Franz, national commander; Clarissa Brown, District 9, NEC; Regina Fortner, District 10, NEC; Denise Proffitt, District 11, NEC; and myself, Carolyn Harris, District 8, NEC.

Those present without a vote were National Senior Vice-Commander Lynn Holmes Prosser; National Adjutant Pat Kemper; and National Assistant Adjutant Bunny Clos.

The purpose of the meeting was to set up and adopt a budget for the 2022 year.

At this time I would like to thank the Committee and the staff for all of their help. The budget was included in your registration packets. And at this time I move for adoption of the budget.

(Whereupon, the Finance Committee Chairman withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: There is a motion on the floor by National Finance Committee Chairman Carolyn Harris to accept the budget. Is there a second?

MS. DENISE PROFFITT: Denise Proffitt, Alliance 50, Ohio, I second that.

COMMANDER FRANZ: There is a motion and it has been made and seconded. May I have the call—is there any discussion on this? All in favor of the proposed budget presented to you; any opposed. The budget carried.

(Whereupon, the Finance Committee Chairman withdrew from the stage.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: I ask that the Senior Vice-Commander take the chair.

(Whereupon, the Senior Vice-Commander advanced to the podium.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER LYNN HELMS PROSSER: I will now ask present National Commander Diane Franz for the purpose of reading of her report.

(Whereupon, the Senior Vice-Commander withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: It's going to be relatively short because I didn't get to do much. (Laughter) This is actually going to start out 2019-2020.

Now, the reward, in part, of being your National Commander and having the privilege of attending a few events during the past two membership years, again, 2019-2020, the membership year started off with the first of many cancellations.

I had to cancel because of the hurricane threat in Florida the trip to Pittsburgh, PA, for the Caring and Sharing boat cruise. And I was really looking forward to that event.

The next event that was scheduled was the TEE Tournament in September. Luckily, no bad weather that week. I had the opportunity to meet with some of the caregivers while their veterans were enjoying their sports of choice.

There were outings and events for the companions that kept everyone busy for the week. The Auxiliary also participated in the Health and Information Fair on Wednesday evening. It was a privilege to meet and talk to the veterans and their caregivers.

The National Fall Conference was fun and very informative. The chairmen presented so much information to the attendees. The attendance was awesome and it shows that we have very interested members in learning a way to help our disabled veterans and their families.

The next trip was to Birmingham, Alabama for the Veterans Day celebrations and parade in November. It was an experience that was so memorable.

Even though the weather was a bit windy and chilly, riding on the cannon with National Senior-Vice Donald Day during the parade the weather did not deter the attendance of spectators, even the little ones waiving the U. S. flag or saluting as we went by.

Another memorable item was the final banquet. I actually was seated next to Miss Alabama. And she was in the top ten in the Miss America pageant. Carolyn Harris did a remarkable job in hosting the national commander. Thank you, Carolyn, for your hospitality.

The remainder of November and the month of December were quiet weeks leading up to the holidays. Being the national commander I attended the DAV/DAVA Mid-Winter Conference in Lake Mary, Florida, as the invited guest. The shortest trip I ever had to make. (Laughter)

This state invites the DAV national commander to attend the conference. What can I say? It was so much fun.

In February it was off to Washington, D.C., for the DAV Mid-Winter Conference. Bunny Clos and I had the honor of placing a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington Cemetery. It was something that I will hold dear in my heart for a lifetime.

The weather was perfect, even for February in the north. Many seminars were held during the week and on Tuesday, February 25th, we met with our representatives from our home state.

Then it was off to the Dirksen Senate Office Building for the presentation of the DAV 2020 Legislative Program. DAV National Commander Stephen Whitehead and the national staff presented concerns of the veterans and their needs.

And then it happened, COVID-19, everything being cancelled and/or closed: state conventions, winter sports clinic, VA hospitals, CLCs, veteran nursing homes, and domiciliaries.

Our opportunities to volunteer was diminished and other ways to help and be safe had to evolve. I was so looking forward to attending the state conventions, sharing ideas, learning new ideas, and meeting friends. It has been a unique year, to say the least.

Because of the cancellation of the national convention I will still have the opportunity to attend the events and conventions in the following membership year. Hopefully this will all be history and not happen again.

Twenty-twenty-one, well, the quarantine still had everyone hibernating at home until the spring of 2021. I started traveling again in the month of May to the DAV Commander's Testimonial in Minneapolis.

It was so rewarding to be able to see and physically be with members and renewing friendships. It was an awesome event.

In June I had the honor of attending Maryland's state convention. Many thanks to the line officers and members for their warm welcome. The national commander was treated like royalty.

Fabulous food. Good conversations, and memories that will last a lifetime. I didn't get a chance to go to the beach, but the ocean view from my room was spectacular.

Unfortunately, I had to cancel the trip to the Great State of Wisconsin to attend the services for Past National Commander James Sursely.

Jim was a strong supporter of the Auxiliary, being a member of Central Florida Unit 16. I was looking forward to attending Wisconsin's state convention which I was told was near the Green Bay Packer's stadium. I'm a big football fan.

At the end of June I was invited to attend the Commander and Adjutant's Orientation at the DAV National Headquarters, another great opportunity to learn different areas of the workings and programs of the DAV.

There was a virtual tour of the new headquarters' building. It was very modern and is a very high-visible location.

I am looking forward to attending North Carolina's state convention in early July. It will be wonderful to be with the members attending the convention. I really enjoy the opportunity to share comradeship with all.

Okay, since I had to write this before I went to North Carolina, again, it was awesome. North Carolina, again, treated me with anything that I needed were there for everything that I might need, treated me excellent. Took me out for dinners. Good food. Good companionship. And it was a wonderful time. And I thank North Carolina for hosting your commander. Thank you.

Your national commander thanks—(Applause) not quite then. Just a little bit more. (Laughter) Your national commander thanks each and every one of you giving the support and opportunity to meet so many fantastic members and to serve you, the members of our great organization, the DAV Auxiliary.

I must also give a special thank you to Pat, Bunny, Ann and all the staff. I had the good fortune of their wisdom and guidance. We have survived some trying times in the past 15 to 18 months. But we were able to still serve the dear veterans and their families in some unique ways.

And so, our mission continues. I'm done. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Commander withdrew from and the Senior Vice-Commander returned to the podium.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER PROSSER: Thank you, Commander. I will now entertain a motion to accept the national commander's report as read.

MS. REGINA FORTNER: Regina Fortner, Michigan, Unit 130, I so move.

MS. CHARLENE PARKER: Charlene Parker, Unit 3, Waco, Texas, I second.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER PROSSER: A motion has been made and seconded. All in favor say aye; any opposed. Thank you. Thank you, Diane.

(Whereupon, the Senior Vice-Commander withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: I will now call on National Adjutant Kemper for announcements.

(Whereupon, Adjutant Kemper advanced to the microphone.)

ADJUTANT PATRICIA KEMPER: Convention Committee meetings convene tomorrow morning. If you are serving on a Committee, check the program schedule for the rooms and times.

And if you have been selected or volun-told to attend a Committee, (Laughter) please show up. We don't want to come looking for you.

National chairmen are to pick up their respective committee folders tomorrow morning in the Auxiliary office in the Gasparilla Room, Second Floor, J.W. Marriott.

There will be no Auxiliary Business Session tomorrow and I encourage everyone to attend as many of the DAV seminars as they can. Take advantage of the opportunity.

As a reminder, the Memorial Service is at 7:30 a.m. Sunday morning. Business attire is appropriate. I want all of you to please check in with Bunny when you arrive, the participants, the NECs, national senior vice-commander, national commander.

Bunny will also have programs. We had three volunteers the other night to pass out the programs so please see Bunny for those programs. You can pass them out.

The Forget-Me-Not Luncheon is at 12:30 on Monday. And please show your tickets when you enter the door.

And just as a reminder, to repeat what Diane had said earlier, the Nominating Committee will convene 30 minutes following the close of this meeting and they will get started.

When you attend any function you have to wear your credential so they will let you in. If you do not, there is a verification process you will have to go through and I doubt you want to do that.

And if you have not already stopped to secure your seating for the National Officer Dinner, please do that. It's outside the Ybor Ballroom right now on the Second Floor of the J.W.

Also, a DAVA sweater was found on the 15th Floor of this hotel. Do we know—did anybody lose that?

(Whereupon, there were responses from the floor.)

ADJUTANT KEMPER: What?

(Whereupon, there were responses from the floor.)

ADJUTANT KEMPER: Oh, it was found in the other? I wrote J.W. Okay, not in the J.W. It was found in the Marriott, 15th Floor. So if it belongs –

(Whereupon, there were response from the floor.)

ADJUTANT KEMPER: What am I saying?

(Whereupon, there were more responses from the floor.)

ADJUTANT KEMPER: Well, if anybody lost a red sweater. (Laughter) And we know it's not Claudia Parker's. (Laughter)

Okay, and what we've decided, this meeting went pretty quickly so if you would like to hang around, unless you are serving on the Nominating Committee, sorry, if you'd like to stay for an informal Q&A session, if you have questions, if you have some burning questions that you want to ask of us, hang around and we will be happy to answer those, after the door prizes.

And we would like to remind all junior members, any junior members in this room, at the adjournment of this meeting will you please come up to the stage. National Junior Activities Chairman Darlene Hanneman will be passing out some goodies so please come up here when we are all done with the door prizes.

And, again, don't forget the little Q&A. This is sort of an impromptu thing since we have the time. We have a photographer in the room today and I told him that we have him for two hours so I said, "Well, gee, I'm going to talk really fast so we can get through this meeting and keep you the whole time." (Laughter)

So maybe we talked faster than normal. I don't know. But you don't have to hang around for the Q&A, Steve. We appreciate you. Thank you. Thank you.

And I guess that's it. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Adjutant Kemper withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: We will now have our closing prayer.

(Whereupon, the Chaplain advanced to the podium.)

CHAPLAIN NICODEMUS: Please join me in prayer. Dear Heavenly Father, we give thanks for the dedication of our office staff—Pat, Bunny and her staff—who diligently served throughout the COVID time, oftentimes even working from their own homes.

We give thanks for Bonita Mitchell at 89 years old who is still serving and being an inspiration to each of us.

We give thanks for our past national commanders who mentor all of the officers and members and help to assure that we have a future organization that's strong, not only in the fundamental principles but in our traditions.

We thank you for all of our officers who served for the past two years. Their dedication and commitment and helping not only officers younger than them but also officers throughout all the states throughout the nation, whether by phone or in person.

We thank you for their commitment to our organization.

We thank you for our members that served, no matter where they served. We ask a special blessing upon Jean Sursely and her family. Be with her and the girls and protect all their needs.

We ask that you will take care of our members at home, those that are involved in natural disasters from flooding and fires.

We pray for our firefighters who are traveling from around the United States to all the major fires in the country. We pray that you will protect and care for each of them.

We pray for our troops in harm's way. Amen.

(Response of "Amen," after which the Chaplain withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: The Convention stands in recess and will reconvene at 9:00 a.m. Monday morning. And don't forget about the door prizes.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed at 2:58 o'clock, p.m., on Saturday, July 31, 2021.)

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**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY
98TH NATIONAL CONVENTION
TAMPA MARRIOTT WATER STREET HOTEL
TAMPA, FLORIDA**

August 2, 2021

Second Business Session

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The Second Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary convened in the Grand Ballroom E—F on the Second Floor of the Tampa Marriott Water Street Hotel, Tampa Florida, on Monday morning, August 2, 2021, and was called to order at 9:07 o'clock, a.m., by National Commander Diane Franz.

COMMANDER DIANE FRANZ: This is Monday, August 2nd, 2021. We're in the second session. I'd like to remind everybody to make sure your cell phones are off or on silent. And make sure that the aisles do not have any obstructions in them.

And another reminder, conversations, we are Facebook livestreaming. And extraneous conversations are being picked up by the microphone. If you have to have a conversation, please step outside. Thank you. (Applause)

It's very muffled back there?

(Response of "Yes.")

COMMANDER FRANZ: Is it still?

(Response of "That's better.")

COMMANDER FRANZ: That's better? Okay, I'll speak up. Maybe that will help.

(Response of "There you go.")

COMMANDER FRANZ: Okay, we are livestreaming on Facebook. Okay? So any conversations that you're having are being picked up by the microphone. So please if you have to have a conversation, please step outside.

And a reminder, make sure your cell phones are either off or on vibrate and silent. And make sure that there is no obstructions in the aisles.

We will now have a prayer by Aura-Lee Nicodemus. (Three gavel raps.)

(Whereupon, the Chaplain advanced to the podium.)

CHAPLAIN NICODEMUS: Please join me in prayer. Dear Heavenly Father, we come before you this morning with thankful hearts. We're thankful for each and every member that is here today. We ask that you will bless and keep them.

We pray for our members that are at home. Be with each and every one and help to fill all their needs.

We ask a special blessing upon the little baby, Everlee, that you will bless her, keep her, and help her to grow and thrive in the hospital.

We ask a blessing on Brenda Patterson. Her family has asked for prayers for her as she goes through surgeries and recovery. Be with her and her family.

We ask a blessing upon Past National Commander Alvarez as he and his family grieve the loss of his wife. Be with them. Care for them and protect them.

We ask a blessing upon the Stancel family. Be with each and every one.

We also ask a blessing upon the DAV members that were asked for prayers yesterday, the two brothers and another friend. Care for each and every one of them.

We pray for our troops in harm's way today. Guide and care for each of them.

And we pray for our Olympians as they put themselves in harm's way in another nation. Be with them, protect them, and care for them physically, spiritually, and emotionally. Meet all their needs.

We pray for the leaders of our nation and we pray for the leaders of our organization as you go through. We ask that you will help us work in peace and harmony and help us to be thoughtful and kind to each other. In your name. Amen.

(Response of "Amen" after which the Chaplain withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: I now call on Ann Marie Hurley to lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

THIRD JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER AND NATIONAL AMERICANISM CHAIRMAN ANN MARIE HURLEY: Rest your hands. Stand at attention, if able. Place your right hand over your heart or render the appropriate salute and join in the Pledge of Allegiance to our flag.

(Whereupon, the Third Junior Vice-Commander and Americanism Chairman led the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by one gavel rap.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: Will the Credentials Chairman please come forward to give an updated report of the Credentials Committee.

(Whereupon, the Convention Credentials Committee Chairman advanced to the podium.)

CONVENTION CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN MARIA HOLLOWAY: Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

CONVENTION CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN HOLLOWAY: National Commander, national officers, delegates and guests. The Credentials report is as follows:

Total Units registered, 117, total departments registered, 36; national officers registered, 6; past national commanders registered, 6; total guests registered, 180; total delegates, 249; total alternates, 19; total vote count, 886; total registered, 460.

I move that we accept the Credentials report.

(Whereupon, the Convention Credentials Committee Chairman withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: We have a motion to accept the preliminary report of the Credentials Committee. Is there a second?

MS. CAROL RUNDELL: Carol Rundell, State of Arizona, seconds.

COMMANDER FRANZ: Okay, we have a motion to accept the preliminary report of the Credentials Committee and a second. All in favor; any opposed. The ayes carry it.

(Whereupon, the Convention Credentials Committee Chairman withdrew from the stage.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: The Constitution and Bylaw Committee will reconvene to meet in the Grand Ballroom G, which is right next door to this room, right now.

(Whereupon, members of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee members withdrew from the ballroom.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: I would now like to ask National Caregiver Initiative Program Chairman Melissa Pierce to give her report.

(Whereupon, the Caregiver Initiative Program Chairman advanced to the podium.)

CAREGIVER INITIATIVE PROGRAM CHAIRMAN MELISSA PIERCE: Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

CAREGIVER INITIATIVE PROGRAM CHAIRMAN PIERCE: Greetings. National Commander Diane, national officers, National Adjutant Pat, delegates, members and guests.

As with most everything else, 2020 didn't see a lot of movement within the Caregiver Initiative Program. The 2020 National Disabled Veterans TEE Tournament was cancelled due to COVID.

In 2019 the National Caregiver Initiative Program once again supported the National Disabled Veterans TEE Tournament in Riverside, Iowa.

Our National Commander Diane Franz and National Assistant Adjutant Bunny Clos were able to attend the TEE Tournament and spend time with the caregivers during their activities.

Our Committee members met in 2019 through conference calls and emails to discuss other possibilities to grow the Caregiver Program.

We did reach an agreement to recommend expanding the program beyond the support of caregiver activities at the VA adaptive events. One option discussed was sponsoring caregiver attendance at retreats specifically designed for caregivers of disabled veterans.

If funds are available we feel that easing the financial burden to attend a retreat would greatly benefit these unsung heroes. And I would hope that the members of our organization would agree.

The DAV Auxiliary mission is to help veterans and their families so I ask you, what can we do to help those families, especially the caregivers?

As Auxiliary members we know that we need to support all caregivers. We need to support the caregivers in our local units. We need to support the caregivers we encounter at our local VA.

All around us there are husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, sons and daughters caring for veterans that need our support.

We need to continue the fight in the legislature to pass caregiver support funding. There has been progress made but we have a long way to go. If we don't stand up for our veteran caregivers, who will?

When the Commander's Action Network sends out requests for support, we make sure you and your members are contacting your Senate and House members and urging them to support the acts and bills.

Let's work together to seek opportunities to make an impact with our caregivers. I would like to see us seek opportunities to make a difference in the lives of these caregivers.

It is my hope that the Caregiver Initiative Program can extend beyond the adaptive programs and into our communities. We need to make a concerted effort to be a part of the solution.

I, Melissa Pierce, Caregiver Initiative Program Chair, and Unit 20, De Moines, Iowa, delegate, move that our organization expand the Caregiver Initiative Program beyond support of caregiver activities at VA adaptive events to other caregiver activities, including but not limited to, sponsorship of our caregivers of disabled veterans at retreats specifically designed for veteran caregivers.

(Whereupon, the Caregiver Initiative Program Chairman withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: There is a motion on the floor by National Caregiver Initiative Program Chairman Melissa Pierce, delegate from Iowa, for the DAV Auxiliary to expand the Caregiver Initiative Program beyond support of caregiver activities at VA adaptive events to other caregiver activities, including but not limited to, sponsorship of our caregivers of disabled veterans at retreats specifically designed for veteran caregivers. Is there a second?

MS. KATHY DUNHAM: I second, Kathy Dunham, Unit 22, Texas.

COMMANDER FRANZ: Is there any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor; any opposed. The motion carried.

(Whereupon, the Caregiver Initiative Program Chairman withdrew from the stage.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: I now call on Education and Program Chairman, Ellen Timmerman, for a report. For those wishing to make donations for our national programs, they will be accepted upon completion of the Education report.

(Whereupon, the Education Scholarship Convention Chairman and Past National Commander advanced to the podium.)

EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP FUND COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER ELLEN TIMMERMAN: Good morning, everyone.

(Response of "Good morning.")

EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP FUND COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER TIMMERMAN: The Education Committee consisted of: Commander Diane Franz; Senior Vice-Commander Lynn Helms Prosser; and myself.

I would like to thank the Committee for all the time they spent reading and judging applications because it does take several days to complete all of them.

This year we had 76 applications for the Education Scholarship. Out of those, 25 were awarded funds. We had one applicant that was disqualified because they used the wrong application.

The Committee voted last year to increase the highest amount award to the students, would be \$2,500. Ten applications received the highest amount awarded. Six received the next amount; and nine received the final amount.

The applications showed the greatest amount of help and respect to disabled veterans. And their personal career life aspirations showed a great deal of thought and planning.

If you know someone that plans to apply for the scholarship, please make sure they follow the instructions. They must always use the current application because the application is subject to change every year.

The Vocational Training Assistance Program is meant to serve ill and injured veterans and their immediate family members seeking education opportunities through educational facilities and other accredited college and universities.

Those eligible for this program are disabled veterans, their spouse, or child. They must apply before starting the program to be considered for reimbursement.

We had four applications at the time I wrote this report. We ended up with five. Only two of them qualified for the program.

All of the information on the Scholarship Program and the Vocational Training Program is available on the Auxiliary website under "Programs."

I would like to encourage if you know anyone that wants to use the scholarship or the reimbursement program, please encourage them to do so. We are here to help. Thank you. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Education Scholarship Convention Chairman and Past National Commander withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: Thank you, Ellen. Donations may be presented at this time for Education Scholarship, Service Program, Caregiver Initiative, and any other donations.

For those planning to present donations, make sure your checks are signed and that the state and unit checks have two signatures, proper signatures.

Form a line in the center aisle and one-by-one you can present your donation.

Announce your name, state, and/or unit and donation amount at the microphone and please step forward.

(Whereupon, the Commander withdrew to the front of the dais and the Adjutant returned to the podium.)

MS. KAREN REDIKER: Can I do this? All right. One-hundred-twenty-five dollar check from the State of Vermont. Karen Rediker for the Education Loan. (Applause)

MS. JUNE SCHOW: June Schow, I'm from Utah and this, I have two checks. They are for Camp Corral. One is \$50 from the Department of Utah and \$50 from one of our members, Beth Vaughn. (Applause)

MS. EVELYN CUPIT: Commander Evelyn Cupit, Department of Texas, we have a donation of \$750 for the General Fund and \$750 for the Caregiver Program. (Applause)

MS. CLAUDIA PARKER: Claudia Parker from the State Department of Florida, we are pleased to present \$1,000 to the National Educational Fund and \$500 to the National Vocational Training Assistance Program. (Applause)

MS. DEBORA REESE: Debora Reese from Kentucky State Department, and I have \$50 for the National DAVA Scholarship Fund and \$50 for the Service Fund. (Applause)

MS. TAMMY SIGMAN: Tammy Sigman, immediate past department commander, State of Ohio, I have \$300 for the Service Support Fund and \$300 for the Scholarship Fund. (Applause)

SECOND JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER JULIE WEISSMAN-STEINBAUGH: Julie Weissman-Steinbaugh, I have \$1,000 for the Caregiver Initiative.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It's a thousand dollars towards the Caregivers Initiative. (Applause)

MS. EDYTH BRADFORD: Edie Bradford, Unit 18, Manatee County, we have \$183 for the National Caregivers Foundation. (Applause)

MS. CHERYL CONNORS: Cheryl Connors, on behalf of New York I'd like to donate a thousand dollars to Camp Corral. (Applause)

MS. DARLENE McNAIR: Darlene McNair, the Department of Mississippi, we have \$200 for the Educational program; we have \$200 for the Camp Corral; and we have a \$200 donation for the Winter Sports Clinic; and, last, we have \$200 Service Support Program donation. (Applause)

MRS. D. NIXON: Maxine Nixon, Texas, our juniors from their donating and fundraising efforts have \$3,000 for the Caregivers Initiative. (Applause)

MS. KAREN REDIKER: Karen Rediker from Vermont, I have \$125 for the National Service Program and from Unit 3 \$100 for the National Service Program. (Applause)

MS. BARBARA FISHER: Barb Fisher from Unit 23, I have \$60 for the widows' fund, for the fund to help the—(Applause)

ADJUTANT PATRICIA KEMPER: Thank you, Barbara.

MS. SHIRLEY HEAL: Shirley Heal, State of North Carolina, I donate \$100 to the National Caregivers. (Applause)

MR. BARRY COLEMAN: Barry Coleman from Florida, Unit 101, Gulf Coast, we have \$500 donation for the Education Fund. (Applause)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Good morning. Texas, Unit 169, Victoria, Texas, wants to give \$500 to the Caregivers Program. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: I'd like to personally thank you for your generous donations to our national programs. Your support is greatly appreciated.

(Whereupon, the Commander withdrew to the front of the dais and the Adjutant returned to the podium.)

ADJUTANT KEMPER: We will now go into our Committee and awards presentations. Looks like the Bylaws Committee is still in session over there so we will just proceed.

When called upon, the Convention Committee chairman will approach the podium and announce the winners. I ask the Committee advisors to step to the awards table to the right of the podium for award presentation and photo ops.

As winners are announced, please step forward to the awards table to receive the awards. And if needed, if it gets backed up, just form a line and the awards will be distributed and you can take all the photos you need.

We will start with the Americanism program.

(Whereupon, the Americanism Convention Committee Chairman advanced to the podium.)
AMERICANISM CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN SHIRLEY HILL: Good morning, everyone.

(Response of "Good morning.")

AMERICANISM CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN HILL: National commander, national adjutant, national officers, past national commanders, delegates and guests of this 99th National Auxiliary Convention.

The National Americanism Convention Committee met in the Florida Ballroom, Salon 5, at 9 a.m. August the 1st. Our advisor was Ann Marie Hurley. I, Shirley Hill, served as Committee Chairman and Traci Kimmel was the secretary.

The following units were judged to be the best in their category for the National Americanism Awards. Group 1, 10 to 50, sorry, yes, 10 to 50, Craven County 40, (Indistinguishable), North Carolina. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award, followed by a round of applause.)

AMERICANISM CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN HILL: In Group 2, 51 to 100 members, Unit, (Indistinguishable), I'm sorry if I'm pronouncing it wrong, Kentucky, Unit 158. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award, followed by a round of applause.)

AMERICANISM CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN HILL: Group 3, 101 to 200, was Hutchinson Area, Hutchinson, Minnesota, Unit 37. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award, followed by a round of applause.)

AMERICANISM CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN HILL: And Group Number 4, 201 members or over, was Danny Bruce, Michigan City, Indiana, Unit 23. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

AMERICANISM CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN HILL: And Special Americanism awards: In Group 1 is 10 to 200 is Juan B. Doyle, Unit 32, from Brownsville, Kentucky. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

AMERICANISM CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN HILL: And Group 2, 201 members or over, was Wescott-Halton (sic)—if I'm pronouncing this wrong, please forgive me—in North Attleboro, Maine, Wescott-Houlton (sic)—oh, Massachusetts, sorry, Massachusetts, Unit 56. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

AMERICANISM CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN HILL: The Committee submitted the following recommendations: Please be sure to follow the guidelines for the Americanism award.

We found that a lot of Americanism reports that were turned in was a lot of Community Service, not Americanism. So you have to follow what the guidelines are for filling out your Americanism report or you will be disqualified.

Please write legibly. Some of the reports we could not read. We couldn't tell what had been said or what had been done. If you could write legibly, if you can't type or if you don't like to type it out, write legibly. If you have to write bigger and space, do it on a second page and attach it.

We also—we felt, too, that some of the answers were duplicative. For example, this may not be the exact number but say in Number 3 you put you did something well then you went down to Number 8 and you put the same identical thing, try not to duplicate the answers because you're not going to get points for the same answer, even though you are filling in the spaces.

They also recommended on Special Americanism report they noticed that the media got 50 points where the actual activity got less points. They recommended that national change it to where the activity gets more points and the media coverage gets less points.

Also, we're recommending that or we're asking that if national could put on the bottom of the reports the date. So, for example, revised at the bottom for 2022 because the best thing to do is your state adjutant mails you the reports that national has sent them. Please use those reports. If you go online, make sure they're new.

Reports change every year or possibly change every year. So if you're pulling one from last year, and you decide, oh, I'm going to use this, it's the same report; no, we found one that had a change.

Someone used an old report. We had to disqualify it because they did not use the correct report. So it's important if you go online and use national's report make sure they are the year's report that you need to be using.

So that's what we're recommending. We hope that everyone next year turns in more, we get more unit's reports. And congratulations to all the winners. Thank you. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Americanism Convention Committee Chairman withdrew from and Adjutant Kemper returned to the podium.)

ADJUTANT KEMPER: Thank you, Shirley. Now it is time for Community Service. Will the chairman of the Community Service Committee please step forward? Linda Bratcher. Oh, okay, I'm sorry, Linda. (Whereupon, the Community Service Convention Committee Chairman advanced to the podium.)

COMMUNITY SERVICE CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN LINDA BRATCHER: Good morning, everyone.

(Response of "Good morning.")

COMMUNITY SERVICE CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN BRATCHER: Okay, the National Community Service Convention Committee met in Florida Ballroom, Salon 6, at 9 a.m. on August the 1st, 2021.

Our advisor was Linda Gerke and I, Linda Sue Bratcher, served as Committee chairman and Shanda Alexander was elected as secretary.

The following Units were judged to be the best in their category for the National Community Service awards. Group 1, 0 to 50 members, was Northern Hills, Number 11, Piedmont, South Dakota. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

COMMUNITY SERVICE CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN BRATCHER: Group Number 2, 51 to 100 members, was Simpson-Turner, Number 27, Russellville, Arkansas. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

COMMUNITY SERVICE CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN BRATCHER: Group 3, 101 to 201 members, was Louis Levy, Number 11, Yuma, Arizona. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

COMMUNITY SERVICE CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN BRATCHER: I would like to thank the ladies that served on the Committee: Sharon, Margaret, Marty, Marilyn, Karen, Tammy, Shanda, myself, Janette, Willa, and Eleanor, Holly, Kathelee, and Joyce. Would you ladies please all stand.

(Whereupon, the Committee members stood and were recognized with a round of applause.)

COMMUNITY SERVICE CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN BRATCHER: Thank you very much for your assistance. The Committee submitted the following recommendations. They would like to see a workshop on completing the reports.

You need to read all the changes and break down in detail what each item was for. It would help us in the judging.

I want to congratulate all of the winners today and enjoy the convention. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Community Service Convention Committee Chairman withdrew from the podium and the Americanism Chairman returned to the podium.)

ADJUTANT KEMPER: Thank you, Linda. And now we will have Junior Activities.

Shirley Hill, the Community Service (sic) Chairman would like to introduce her Committee.

(Whereupon, the Americanism Convention Committee Chairman advanced to the podium.)

AMERICANISM CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN HILL: On the Committee was Nancy Hoey; Anita Ingram; Linda Folcarelli; Kathleen Walker; Sarah—if I pronounce your name wrong, please forgive me—Sarah St.-Firmen De Rodriguez;

Vicki Johnston; Marlene Comeaux; me, Shirley Hill; Linda Walters; Traci Kimmel; Shelly Sontag; Aundra Lett-Jackson; LeeAnn Karg; Gracie Caldwell; Lisa Thompson; D. Nixon; and Kristy Chisum.

Thank you all for helping, ladies. And you gave great suggestions. Sorry I didn't do it a while ago. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Americanism Convention Committee Chairman withdrew from the podium and the Junior Activities Convention Committee Chairman advanced to the podium.)

JUNIOR ACTIVITIES CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN REGINA PRUDHOMME: Good morning, everybody.

(Response of "Good morning.")

JUNIOR ACTIVITIES CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN PRUDHOMME: I think we've all said good morning enough. I think we're all good with it. Pretty soon it will be lunch. (Laughter)

Okay, I am—the National Junior Activities Convention Committee met at the Grand Ballroom 1 at 9 a.m. on August 1st, 2021.

Our advisor was Darlene Hanneman. I, Regina Prudhomme, served as Committee chairman and Tara Dahle was elected/appointed secretary.

The following units were judged to be the best in their category for the National Junior Activities Award.

Group 1 was 1 to 25 members, William A. Smith Unit 2 in Michigan. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

JUNIOR ACTIVITIES CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN PRUDHOMME: Group 2, 26 to 50 members was Braintree Unit 29 in Massachusetts. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

JUNIOR ACTIVITIES CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN PRUDHOMME: Group 3, 51 to 100 members, Ocean Memorial Unit 15 in Indiana. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

JUNIOR ACTIVITIES CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN PRUDHOMME: Group 4, 101 and over, there were none. Junior Activities Book, there were none. National Junior Award, 15 to 17, was Abigail Joyner from Virginia. (Applause)

National Junior Award, 11 to 14, was Eric Escobar from Virginia.

National Junior Award, 7 to 10, was Isabella Stirgil from Virginia. (Applause)

We had recommendations. I don't know where they went.

All right, I would just like to have our Committee members stand, if they are able, to be recognized. From District 1 we had Genevieve Downey; District 2 was Terri Grabowski;

District 3 was Paula Borrazas; District 9 (sic), Yvette Williams; District 7, myself; District 8, Darlene McNair; District 9, Tara (Indistinguishable) Dahle; District 11, Judy Uetterling;

District 12, Karen Eccles; District 13, Ethan Kingsley; District 14, Linda Engesether; District 15, Kathy Weatherly; and District 17, Karen Roybal; District 20, Elaine Moreland; and District 21, Mike Simmons.

(Whereupon, the members stood and were recognized with a round of applause.)

JUNIOR ACTIVITIES CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN PRUDHOMME: I'd like to thank you all. I don't know what happened to the recommendations.

(Whereupon, the Junior Activities Chairman withdrew from and the Adjutant returned to the podium.)

ADJUTANT KEMPER: So she, Regina, is saying that there were some recommendations so does the secretary of the Committee have those recommendations?

MS. TARA DAHLE: The recommendation of the Committee was to follow what the guidelines say, specific instructions, like an example was for a candidate for outstanding junior member was handwritten note, a handwritten resume about that person.

We had some submitted that was typed. Now, I do understand that there was one that had a disability but it would have been nice to know the reason why it wasn't handwritten. So if there is a way the guidelines say something like that, specify why you can't follow the guidelines.

ADJUTANT KEMPER: You say the reason why it wasn't handwritten?

MS. DAHLE: Handwritten.

ADJUTANT KEMPER: Not handwritten.

MS. DAHLE: Exactly.

ADJUTANT KEMPER: Okay.

MS. DAHLE: So just specify a reason if you can't follow the proper guidelines.

ADJUTANT KEMPER: Thank you. (Applause) Okay, Virginia, is there someone from Virginia who can come up and pick up the awards, the junior awards? Step over to the table. Anyone from Virginia? (Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

ADJUTANT KEMPER: Well, you're zipping along pretty well if you ask me. (Laughter) Head right over there. The Commander is waiting for you. (Applause) We're going to backtrack just a bit and Linda Bratcher, rather than making you step all the way back up here again I'm going to announce a category that you overlooked, unless you would rather come up? Okay.

So for Community Service, Group 3, 101 to 200 members, the winning unit is J.W. Cantrell from Texas Unit 63 in Palestine, Texas. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

ADJUTANT KEMPER: So now we will have the Legislative report. Will the Legislative Chairman, Committee Chairman step forward?

And while she's coming up here I have to brag a little about Ethan Kingsley. He's from my state of Kentucky. Not only did he serve on the Junior Activities Committee, he is the recipient of how many junior awards, Ethan?

MR. ETHAN KINGSLEY: Three.

ADJUTANT KEMPER: All three. He's a triple crown. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Legislative Convention Committee Chairman advanced to a microphone.)

LEGISLATIVE CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN KATHY DUNHAM: Okay, good morning. (Response of "Good morning.")

LEGISLATIVE CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN DUNHAM: The National Legislative Convention Committee met at the Grand Ballroom, Suite J, all the way down at the very end at 9:00 o'clock on August 1st, 2021.

Our advisor was Julie Weissman-Steinbaugh. And I served as the Committee chair. Linda Peek was our secretary.

The following units were judged to be the best in their category for the National Legislative Awards. Group 1, 10 to 50 members, Unit 11, Northern Hills, South Dakota.

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

LEGISLATIVE CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN DUNHAM: Group 2 was 51 to 100 members, Unit 134, Pikeville, Kentucky. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

LEGISLATIVE CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN DUNHAM: Group 3, Marshville Memorial Unit 35 of Marshville, Maine—Mass. I'm so sorry. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

LEGISLATIVE CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN DUNHAM: And Group 4, 201 members and over, Westcott-Haughton Unit 56 of Maine—Massachusetts. I'm sorry. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

LEGISLATIVE CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN DUNHAM: So the following recommendations were made: make sure to fill in all of the blanks on the form. There were many forms that were blank.

And coming from the state sent to national they recommended do not write on the reports except pertinent information. There was some that had quite a bit of writing on them.

And because you have to have a copy sent or a copy for your unit and a copy for state and a copy for national, make sure your printer has enough ink in it. There were some that you couldn't read because it was so, the ink was so thin.

And make sure it's legible. A lot of it had handwritten that you couldn't make out what it said.

And so I'd like everyone to stand that was on the Committee. From District 1 it was Allison Devine; Cheryl Connors; Jackie DuBose; Katharine Haines, that was District 7;

District 8, Sheila Stephens; District 11, Judith Lenhart; District 12, Barbara Helgeson; District 13, Linda Peek, and thank you again, Linda; District 14, Nancy Berndt;

District 15, Danny Pierce; District 17, June Schow; District 18, Lee Driver; I was District 20; and District 21, Christopher Easley.

(Whereupon, the Committee members stood and were recognized with a round of applause.)

LEGISLATIVE CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN DUNHAM: Thank you very much. You all did a great job. (Applause) Thank you.

(Whereupon, the Legislative Convention Committee Chairman withdrew from and Adjutant Kemper returned to the podium.)

ADJUTANT KEMPER: And now we will move on to VAVS. Will the chairman please step forward?

(Whereupon, the VAVS Convention Committee Chairman advanced to the podium.)

VAVS CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN ELIZABETH BUTTERS: Good morning, all. (Response of "Good morning.")

VAVS CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN BUTTERS: National Commander, national adjutant, national officers, past national commanders, delegates, and guests of this 98th National Auxiliary Convention.

The National VAVS Convention Committee met in the Grand Ballroom, Room H, at 9 a.m. on August 1st, 2021. Our advisor was Melissa Pierce. I, Elizabeth Butters, served as the committee chairman. And Laurie A. Pekarik was the secretary.

The following units were judged to be the best in their category for the National VAVS Awards.

Group 1, 10 to 50 members, Charlottesville, Number 33, Virginia. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

VAVS CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN BUTTERS: Group 2, 51 to 100 members, Simpson-Turner Unit 27, Arkansas. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

VAVS CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN BUTTERS: Group Number 3, 101 to 200 members, De Moines Unit Number 20, Iowa. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

VAVS CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN BUTTERS: Group Number 4, 201 members or over, William A. Smith Jr. Unit Number 2, Michigan. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

VAVS CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN BUTTERS: The Committee submitted these recommendations. Don't forget to itemize. It really helps us understand the line item that you're filling in and how you achieved it.

And we also ask if possible to itemize on one page, not just several pages in the back for each item.

Please make sure that you enter your correct unit name, not DAVA Unit so-and-so, the proper unit name. We had to disqualify a report because they didn't use their proper unit name.

And we recognize that due to COVID many units were not able to contribute as much as they would have liked to this year but we appreciate all the work that all the units did filling in those reports. And it was nice to see so many still active during the pandemic.

I would ask that my Committee members please stand when I call your name. District 1 was myself; District 2, excuse me, was Janice Bailey, New York; District 3, Donna Folcarelli, Rhode Island;

District 4, Linda Applegate, New Jersey; District 6, Grace James, Virginia; District 7, Edyth Bradford, Florida; District 8, Kathleen Wenthe, Louisiana; District 9, Mary Ann Jensen, South Carolina;

District 10, Regina Fortner, Michigan; District 11, Shirley P. because I know I'll annihilate your last name; (Laughter) she's a delegate from Ohio; District 12, Julie Hert, Wisconsin;

District 13, Tawnya Kingsley, Kentucky; District 14, Laurie Pekarik, Minnesota; District 15, Robin Ballhagen, Missouri; District 17, Victoria Salazar, New Mexico; District 18, Carol Rundell, Arizona;

District 20, Joyce Humes, Texas; and District 21, Ronda Bauer, Arkansas. (Whereupon, the Committee members stood as their names were called and were recognized with a round of applause.)

VAVS CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN BUTTERS: Thank you, ladies. It was a pleasure to serve with you all. Thank you. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the VAVS Convention Committee Chairman withdrew from and Adjutant Kemper returned to the podium.)

ADJUTANT KEMPER: Thank you. Grace James, are you still in the room? Would you mind zipping over to the table there and picking up a junior award for Virginia?

(Whereupon, Ms. James went to pick up the award.)

ADJUTANT KEMPER: Thank you. Now it is time for Mae Holmes.

(Whereupon, the Mae Holmes Convention Committee Chairman advanced to the podium.)

MAE HOLMES CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN CAROL PARKER-PARK: Good morning. (Response of "Good morning.")

MAE HOLMES CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN PARKER-PARK: National commander, national adjutant, national officers, past national commanders, delegates and guests of this 98th National Auxiliary Convention.

The National Mae Holmes Convention Committee met in Room Number 5 at 9 a.m. on August 1st, 2021. Our advisor was Lynn Helms Prosser and myself, Carol Parker-Park, served as the Committee chairman. And Barbara McComb was elected/appointed secretary.

The following units were judged to be the best in their category for National Mae Holmes. Group 1, 10 to 50 members, Craven County Number 40, Craven County, New Bern, North Carolina. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

MAE HOLMES CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN PARKER-PARK: Group 2, 51 to 100 members, Kokomo Number 28, Kokomo, Indiana. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

MAE HOLMES CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN PARKER-PARK: Group 3, 101 to 200 J.W. Cantrell Number 63, from Palestine, Texas. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

MAE HOLMES CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN PARKER-PARK: And Group 4, Westcott-Haughton, Number 56, North Attleboro, Massachusetts. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

MAE HOLMES CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN PARKER-PARK: The Committee submitted the following recommendations. Reports had evidence of staple marks but attachments were not included by state adjutant or page was lost in transit.

Also on the note of Article VI, capitalize report and drop it down so it reads, "reports form only, no attachments."

And I'd like my members to stand that helped with the Committee. District 1, Diane Sullivan; District 3, Jerilyn Maynard; District 6, Francina Garry; District 7, Amie Raber; District 8, Jeff Jungkans;

District 9, Melanie Rust; District 10, Barbara McComb; District 11, that would be myself; District 12, Bonnie Peterson; District 13, Tana Penland; District 14, Karen Bolton;

District 15, Claudia Silva; District 17, Heidemarie Green; District 18, Katherine McCoy; District 20, Gwendolyn Sewell; and District 21, Jennifer Hammons.

(Whereupon, the Committee members stood as their names were called and were recognized with a round of applause.)

MAE HOLMES CONVENTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN PARKER-PARK: Thank you so much. Couldn't have done it without you. (Applause) Have a blessed day.

(Whereupon, the Mae Holmes Convention Committee Secretary withdrew from and Adjutant Kemper returned to the podium.)

ADJUTANT KEMPER: And now National Membership Chairman, Darlene Spence, would you please step forward.

(Whereupon, the First Junior Vice-Commander and National Membership Committee Chairman advanced to the podium.)

FIRST JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER AND NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN DARLENE SPENCE: Thank you. Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

FIRST JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER AND NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN SPENCE: First, I'd like to thank you all for your efforts in Membership. I know it's been a hard time with the virus and everything but you guys still hung in there and met quota.

I'd like to thank a special thanks to the state departments and those units who made quota. I appreciate that. Thank you.

This is 2020-2021 membership awards. The first category is 10 to 50 and the winner is Wheeler-Brown-Hendricks Unit 11, Alabama. (Applause) They were ten over quota.

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

FIRST JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER AND NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN SPENCE: The second category, 51 to 100 members, that's James McNamy Unit 5, Connecticut. They were 31 over quota. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

FIRST JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER AND NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN SPENCE: Third category, 101 to 200, Carlton County Unit 18, Minnesota, 21 over quota. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

FIRST JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER AND NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN SPENCE: Twenty-one, 21 over quota. Fourth category is 201 members and over and it goes to Vince Gulf Unit 101, sorry, Florida. And they were 89 over quota. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

FIRST JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER AND NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN SPENCE: Okay, the next category is a New Unit with the Most Members. And it goes to Lee Harold Unit 25, Connecticut. And they were 16 members. (Applause)

Okay, and Category 6, state with the largest number increase, Indiana and they were 65 over quota. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

FIRST JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER AND NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN SPENCE: And the last category is state with the largest percentage increase was Indiana and their percentage was 101.69. (Applause)

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award; whereupon, the First Junior Vice-Commander and National Membership Committee Chairman withdrew from the podium as the Adjutant advanced to resume the podium.)

ADJUTANT KEMPER: So right now, while they're wrapping up over there with the photos, I would like to ask National Sergeant-at-Arms to see that the National Constitution and Bylaw amendments are distributed to the delegates.

(Whereupon, the Constitution and Bylaw amendments were distributed.)

ADJUTANT KEMPER: Is there anyone here from Connecticut, by any chance, to pick up that award?

(Whereupon, a representative came forward to accept the award.)

ADJUTANT KEMPER: Okay. Is there anyone who needs a copy? Please raise your hand.

(Whereupon, Adjutant Kemper withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: Just checking again, everybody have a copy? The Constitution and Bylaws Committee Chairman will come forward for the first reading of the proposed Constitution and Bylaw amendments. Please hold all questions and comments for the second reading.

(Whereupon, the Constitution and Bylaws Committee Chairman and Past National Commander advanced to the podium.)

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER
JUDITH STEINHOUSE: Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER
STEINHOUSE: Plans change on the fly, so. These are the proposed Bylaw amendments for 2021. As the National Commander has commented, there will be no comments or no voting on any of these at this time. That will happen when we re-read these in the second reading.

Number 1. Page N-15, ARTICLE III, DUTIES OF NATIONAL OFFICERS, Section 1: National Commander, Third Paragraph. Delete the entire paragraph and replace with the following:

"The National Commander shall appoint a National Junior Activities Chairman, National VAVS Representative, a National Deputy VAVS Representative who shall be an employee of the Auxiliary National Headquarters, and a National Interim Constitution and Bylaws Committee."

Rationale: The organization no longer judges state department history books at the national convention. The bylaws currently provide for a National Commander to make appointments as deemed necessary with the approval of the National Executive Committee giving them the opportunity to appoint a National Commander History Book Coordinator. Eliminating second Deputy VAVS Representative to save travel expenses.

Number 2. Page N-15, ARTICLE III, DUTIES OF NATIONAL OFFICERS, Section 2: National Vice Commanders, First Paragraph. Change "Mae Holmes Program" to "Mae Holmes Outstanding Unit Award Program". The first paragraph would then read:

"The National Senior Vice-Commander shall be responsible for the Mae Holmes Outstanding Unit Award Program and shall serve on the National Auxiliary Education Program Committee and preside in the absence of the National Commander."

Rationale: "Housekeeping" issue to correct the title of the Mae Holmes Outstanding Unit Award Program.

Number 3. Page N-24, ARTICLE V, NATIONAL COMMITTEES AND CHAIRMEN, Section 4: National VAVS Representative, Second Paragraph. Delete first and second paragraphs and insert new paragraph.

"The National VAVS Representative shall act as advisor in matters pertaining to and relating to the VAVS Program."

Rationale: This information has been moved to page N-15 in Amendment Number 1.

Number 4. Page N-28, ARTICLE VII, MEMBERSHIP, Section 6: Membership Classification, Number A. Life Membership, Third Paragraph and Fourth Paragraphs. Delete third and fourth paragraphs and replace with the following:

"A Life membership may be secured on a payment plan and shall continue only as long as there are sufficient funds to make annual distributions. Life membership fee shall be \$250 for Ages 18-79. Age 80 and over shall be complimentary. Minimum down payment is \$20. Birth date must be indicated on the membership application."

Rationale: To clarify life membership status and requirements.

Page 8—excuse me, Number 5. Number 5. Page N-38, ARTICLE IX, STATE DEPARTMENTS, Section 4: State Conventions. Replace the first sentence with the following:

"Each State Department shall hold an annual convention at the time and place selected by its respective DAV state department."

The rationale: To change DAV state department title.

Number 6. Page S-11, ARTICLE VI, STATE COMMITTEES AND CHAIRMEN, Section 1: State Executive Committee, Fourth Paragraph. Replace the word "mail" with "written". The new paragraph will read:

"The State Executive Committee shall have full administrative power between State Conventions. Business of the State Department requiring consideration of the State Executive Committee between designated or called meetings shall be transacted through the office of the State Adjutant by means of written ballots. A majority of replies to the written ballots received by the designated date shall constitute the decision of said committee."

The rationale is to agree with the National Executive Committee policy pertaining to written ballots on page N-21.

Number 6. Page S-17, ARTICLE VIII, FINANCES, Section 4: State Fund Raising Project(s). Replace the entire section.

“Section 4: State Fundraising Project(s)

“Any State Department conducting fundraising activities shall solicit only its membership or within its state geographical boundaries.”

“All fundraising projects or activities for the State Department must be approved by the DAV state department.

Rationale: To align with DAV terminology, adopt common use of the fundraising term and correct DAV Department title.

Number 8. Page U-3, ARTICLE VIII, INSTALLATION OF UNIT OFFICERS, Section 1, Line 2. After the word “installed”, insert “at a regular unit business meeting.” The paragraph will then read as follows:

“Section 1: The Unit Commander and Unit Officers shall be installed at a regular unit business meeting by an Auxiliary Past National Commander, an elected National Officer, the National Adjutant, the National Assistant Adjutant, an elected state officer, a past state commander, or a past unit commander. The incoming Unit Commander selects the installing officer.”

Rationale: This provides for more unified installations and avoids any interruption in conducting unit business.

Number 9. Pages U-14 and U-15, ARTICLE XV, UNIT FINANCE AND DUES, Section 3: Fund Raising Project(s). In the Section title, change “Fund Raising”—two words—to “Fundraising”—one word. Throughout the remainder of the section, change “fund raising” to “fundraising”.

Rationale: “Housekeeping” to align with DAV terminology and adopt common use of the term.

Page 10 or Number 10. Page U-15, ARTICLE XV, UNIT FINANCE AND DUES, Section 3: Fund Raising Project(s), replace Section 3 with the following:

“All money obtained from any source, by or through any person or persons acting for or in the name of the auxiliary unit, or under its direction or authority, shall be considered unit funds and shall be delivered to the treasurer who shall issue an official receipt therefor.

“Auxiliary Units desiring to engage in fundraising projects involving contracts are required to obtain prior approval from their respective Disabled American Veterans Chapter and State Department, and in addition, the prior approval of the National Executive Committee of the DAV. Contracts are to be submitted to the National Executive Committee of the DAV for approval at least sixty days prior to the proposed commencement of the contract.

“No local unit of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary shall conduct any fundraising activity that would involve general public solicitation without prior written approval of the Chapter with which it is affiliated and, when required, written approval by the DAV state department. When there is no Chapter, written approval must be obtained from the DAV state department. If there is no DAV state department, written approval must be obtained from the DAV National Executive Committee.

“Where no commissions are to be paid and solicitation of funds shall be only by personal contact of members, or friends of members, no prior approval shall be required from the Chapter or DAV Department Executive Committee when the gross receipts will be less than \$5,000 with advance written notice of thirty, (30) days to the DAV state department on all such fundraising projects. (Such fundraising must be in compliance with federal, state and local laws.)

“No Auxiliary Unit shall conduct any fundraising project or fundraising activity in the territory of any other Chapter or Unit before asking for the required approval and giving written notice of its intentions with full information about the proposed drive or activity to all Chapters and Units within such territory, not less than two weeks before seeking approval.

Rationale: Clarifies fundraising, DAV department title, and activity regarding general public solicitations.

Number 11. Page U-16, ARTICLE XV, UNIT FINANCE AND DUES, Section 4: Forget-Me-Not Drives, First Paragraph. Delete entire first paragraph and substitute the following:

“Auxiliary Units, with its Chapter’s prior consent, may conduct an annual Forget-Me-Not Drive, involving solely the offering of Forget-Me-Not flowers purchased through the DAV National Headquarters, and where a paid promoter is not involved. Each DAV Auxiliary unit shall advise the DAV state department of the dates planned, which shall not exceed seven total days throughout the membership year.”

Rationale: To clarify the number of days a Forget-Me-Not Drive may be held within a membership year and to provide for DAV state department notification in accordance with DAV National bylaws.

National Commander, national adjutant, national officers, past national commanders, delegates and guests of this 98th National Auxiliary Convention.

The National Constitution and Bylaws Convention Committee met in the Meeting Room Number 1 at 9 a.m. on August 1st, 2021. Our advisor was Paula Raymond. I, Judy Steinhouse, served as the Committee chair and Susan Henry was elected or appointed secretary.

Will the members from each district that served on this Committee please stand, if able, to be recognized. I'm going to murder some of these names. I'm sorry. I apologize in advance.

District Number 1, Mary A.—Ficociello; District Number 2, Helen Mazza; District Number 3, Erin O'Brien. I'll go to the second page where they're typed up. District Number 4, Sarah Kashner; District Number 5, Loretta Nosko; District Number 6, Amy Bowser; District Number 7, Delores Roussey—see, I murdered your name, Delores, I know you really, really well; (Laughter)

Number 8, Susan Henry; Number 9, Ann Wilner; Number 10, Kimberly Olinger; Number 11, Denise Proffitt; Number 12, Patricia Davis; Number 13, Michelle Ellison; I'm from District 14;

Number 15, Peggy Roberts; Number 16, Mary Lou Caldwell; Number 17, Nancy Coffey; Number 18, Sharon Linton; Number 20, Fannie Lowe; and Number 21, Vera Hendrickson.

(Whereupon, the Committee members stood and were recognized with a round of applause.)

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE:

Thank you, ladies. In addition to this, as you heard this morning, we were called back in session to make a few adjustments to the Bylaws because of the fact that we changed a few things that we had voted on in the Committee meeting.

We had to go back and change a couple of things around so we reconvened for a little session to make sure that everybody was on the same page with the changes that we had made.

We did come up with a couple of recommendations. It would be really nice to have a copy of the DAV Bylaws in our Committee room, at least, if not given to the Interim Constitution and Bylaws Committee, beg, borrow, steal, whatever.

We would also, the recommendation is also to use, to place in the Constitution and Bylaw book an acronym page. That would help out a great deal for things like "DAVA and DAV and SEC and NECs and all of this other kind of good stuff.

So those are the recommendations that we have for our Committee. Thank you. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Constitution and Bylaws Chairman and Past National Commander withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: So to put a question out to everybody, we do have time to caucus and do the second reading before Forget-Me-Not Luncheon. The luncheon is 12:30. It is now 10:30. Should we go for it? Do you want to caucus and then have the second reading? We'll have the vote on the amendments first thing tomorrow morning.

(Whereupon, Adjutant Kemper made a comment to the Commander.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: Oh, no, we're going to do it today. We'll have the vote on it today, on the amendments. All in favor; anybody want to wait? Okay.

(Whereupon, the Commander withdrew from and the Adjutant returned to the podium.)

ADJUTANT KEMPER: Okay, so some of you may not have been here in the NEC meeting on Thursday evening. You will notice there are no district signs. We did that due to the current social distancing and we wanted people to be comfortable where they sat. So there are no district signs today.

So what we're going to do is ask the NECs from each district to come up here and then they can individually take the members of their district to the area of their choice to caucus.

And we have the whole big area out there if they want to. Larger districts, there is a room next—

(Whereupon, members started to converse and move about.)

ADJUTANT KEMPER: Wait, wait, wait. Hold on. Shhh. Let's listen. We're going to have the NECs come up here for your district. And let's kind of line up in order so that those who may not be familiar with who their NEC is.

(Whereupon, the NECs advanced to the front of the room.)

ADJUTANT KEMPER: NECs, while you're getting in position you pick where you want to go. If there is a very large district and you're sure you have a large district here, there is an empty room next door that we have until noon so if you want to go over there.

So District 1—and if the NEC is not here, the alternate must come forward, so District 1 right here. So where are you going? Where do you want to go?

(Whereupon, the NEC answered "the pool.")

ADJUTANT KEMPER: Where? Well, she's going to the pool. (Laughter) So follow her. Okay. So you go wherever you want to go and—15 minutes. Let's try to do 15 to 20 minutes, please.

District 2. Okay, there's Helen. So follow Helen.

(Whereupon, the NEC made a comment.)

ADJUTANT KEMPER: You're not going to the pool? You're not going to the pool? Okay, Helen, follow Helen.

District 3, okay, follow her. District 4. District 5. District 6. District 7. District 8. Okay, we'll take a pause here. District 9. District 10. District 11. I think we have organized chaos but it's working.

District 12. District 13. District 14. Here's Sandy. Follow her. District 15. District 15, Melissa Pierce. District 16, over here. Sixteen is over here.

District 17, way back there is District 17. Where's the NEC? District 18. District 19. District 20. District 21.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed to caucus, at 10:34 o'clock, a.m.; and the meeting reconvened at 10:50 o'clock, a.m. on August 1, 2021.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: (Three raps of the gavel) Everybody take their seats, please. Thank you. Okay, are we ready? Everybody please take their seats. And I'd like to call on Judy Steinhouse, chairman, to come forward with the second reading of the proposed Constitution and amendments.

(Whereupon, the Constitution and Bylaws Chairman and Past National Commander advanced to the podium.)

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: Everybody ready? Here we go.

Number 1. Page N-15, ARTICLE III, DUTIES OF NATIONAL OFFICERS, Section 1: National Commander, Third Paragraph. Delete the entire paragraph and replace with the following:

"The National Commander shall appoint a National Junior Activities Chairman, National VAVS Representative, a National Deputy VAVS Representative who shall be an employee of the Auxiliary National Headquarters, and a National Interim Constitution and Bylaws Committee."

Rationale: The organization no longer judges state department history books at the national convention. The bylaws currently provide for a National Commander to make appointments as deemed necessary with the approval of the National Executive Committee giving them the opportunity to appoint a National Commander History Book Coordinator. Eliminating second Deputy VAVS Representative to save travel expenses.

Madam Commander, I move for the approval of this proposed amendment.

(Whereupon, the Constitution and Bylaws Committee Chairman and Past National Commander withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

MS. DELORES ROUSSEY: Delores Roussey, Seventh District, seconds.

COMMANDER FRANZ: Thank you. We have a motion and a second.

MS. ROUSSEY: She says I have to say my unit and state, 101, Florida.

COMMANDER FRANZ: We have a motion and a second for the Number 1 proposed bylaw amendment. Any discussion? All in favor; any opposed. Approved. Thank you.

(Whereupon, the Commander withdrew from and the Constitution and Bylaws Committee Chairman and Past National Commander returned to the podium.)

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: Number 2. Page N-15, ARTICLE III, DUTIES OF NATIONAL OFFICERS, Section 2: National Vice Commanders, First Paragraph. Change "Mae Holmes Program" to "Mae Holmes Outstanding Unit Award Program". The first paragraph would then read:

"The National Senior Vice-Commander shall be responsible for the Mae Holmes Outstanding Unit Award Program and shall serve on the National Auxiliary Education Program Committee and preside in the absence of the National Commander."

Rationale: "Housekeeping" issue to correct the title of the Mae Holmes Outstanding Unit Award Program. This change was forgotten when we actually changed all the rest of them. This one was forgotten.

Madam Commander, I move for the approval of this proposed amendment.

(Whereupon, the Constitution and Bylaws Committee Chairman and Past National Commander withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

MS. ANN WILNER: Ann Wilner, Unit 44, South Carolina, seconds that motion.

COMMANDER FRANZ: We have a motion to accept and seconded for the amendment of Number 2. Any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor; opposed. Carried.

(Whereupon, the Commander withdrew from and the Constitution and Bylaws Committee Chairman and Past National Commander returned to the podium.)

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: Number 3. Page N-24, ARTICLE V, NATIONAL COMMITTEES AND CHAIRMEN, Section 4: National

VAVS Representative, Second Paragraph. Delete the first and second paragraphs and insert new paragraph.

"The National VAVS Representative shall act as advisor in matters pertaining to and relating to the VAVS Program."

Rationale: This information has been moved to page N-15 in Amendment Number 1.

Madam Commander, I move for the approval of this proposed amendment.

(Whereupon, the Constitution and Bylaws Committee Chairman and Past National Commander withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: May I have a second?

MR. JEFF JUNGKANS: Jeff Jungkans, Department of Tennessee, second.

COMMANDER FRANZ: We have a motion and a second to accept the Amendment Number 3. Any discussion? All in favor; any opposed. The motion carried.

(Whereupon, the Commander withdrew from and the Constitution and Bylaws Committee Chairman and Past National Commander returned to the podium.)

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: Number 4. Page N-28, ARTICLE VII, MEMBERSHIP, Section 6: Membership Classification, A. Life Membership, Third Paragraph and Fourth Paragraphs. Delete third and fourth paragraphs and replace with the following:

"A Life membership may be secured on a payment plan and shall continue only as long as there are sufficient funds to make annual distributions. Life membership fee shall be \$250 for Ages 18 through 79. Age 80 and over shall be complimentary. Minimum down payment is \$20. Birth date must be indicated on the membership application."

Rationale: To clarify life membership status and requirements.

Madam Commander, I move for the approval of this proposed amendment.

(Whereupon, the Constitution and Bylaws Committee Chairman and Past National Commander withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: We have a motion, may I have a second.

MS. AMY BOWSER: I second it, Amy Bowser, Unit 48, Virginia.

COMMANDER FRANZ: We have a motion and a second to accept Amendment Number 4. Any discussion?

MS. MARY FICOCCIELLO: Mary Ficocciello from District 1, our district would like to make a motion to the proposed amendment to just insert the word "units" after "sufficient" so it would now read:

"A life membership may be secured on a payment plan and shall continue only as long as there are sufficient unit funds to make annual distributions."

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: Excuse me, this is a national distribution. This is the national bylaws that we're changing. This is the national distribution, not the unit.

MS. FICOCCIELLO: Thanks, District 1. (Laughter)

CHAPLAIN NICODEMUS: Aura-Lee Nicodemus, Byron Morin Unit 3, I do have a question.

Intermittently on the website for membership they offer specials where you can, you are saying that a \$20 down payment; however, on the website they offer specials where you can do \$10 down and sign up for it to come automatically out of your checking account, \$10 a month until they are paid in full.

So what they're doing would be a violation of that if we're—and it makes it really easy, especially if you are signing up a junior member or what have you because they take every month \$10 out. I'm still paying on several that way, where they take \$10 a month until you pay the whole thing in full.

COMMANDER FRANZ: I know when I signed up they took the \$20 out right away. I don't know if that's changed.

CHAPLAIN NICODEMUS: It's part of the online membership system where you actually sign up online. And you put your credit card in and it says, "Do you want to make \$10 per month equal payments until it's complete?"

COMMANDER FRANZ: I believe when I first used that system—this was back, well, Wyatt was five so this was five years ago—they took the \$20 out right away but it was \$10 a month that they took out.

CHAPLAIN NICODEMUS: Well, mine's been \$10 since the beginning on several.

COMMANDER FRANZ: When you first initially signed up?

CHAPLAIN NICODEMUS: Yes.

COMMANDER FRANZ: Because, like I said, five years ago they took the \$20 out immediately and then the following month it was the \$10. We'll try to fix the web.

CHAPLAIN NICODEMUS: Okay.

COMMANDER FRANZ: Any other further discussion? Yes.

MS. SHIRLEY HILL: Shirley Hill, Unit 37, North Carolina.

COMMANDER FRANZ: They can't hear you.

MS. HILL: Shirley Hill, Unit 37, North Carolina, but you're talking about if you go on the membership website and put your credit card in.

But what about people that want to just write, couldn't this \$20 down payment apply to people that just want to write a check as long as they funds are in there to carry them then they send more money maybe a year later, two years later, how long this carries it? Everyone doesn't go on the website and pay.

COMMANDER FRANZ: Right.

MS. HILL: So I'm trying to find out, is this still \$20 down payment going to be?

COMMANDER FRANZ: Yes.

MRS. HILL: Okay. Okay. Thank you.

COMMANDER FRANZ: Any further discussion? Hearing none, all in favor; any opposed. The motion carries.

(Whereupon, the Commander withdrew from and the Constitution and Bylaws Committee Chairman and Past National Commander returned to the podium.)

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: Number 5. Page N-38, ARTICLE IX, STATE DEPARTMENTS, Section 4: State Conventions. Replace the first sentence with the following:

"Each State Department shall hold an annual convention at the time and place selected by its respective DAV state department."

The rationale is to change DAV state department title—upper case to lower case.

Madam Commander, I move for the approval of this proposed amendment.

(Whereupon, the Constitution and Bylaws Committee Chairman and Past National Commander withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: We have a motion to accept it, may I have a second?

MS. ROUSSEY: Delores Roussey, Unit 101, Florida, seconds.

COMMANDER FRANZ: Any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor; any opposed. The motion carries.

(Whereupon, the Commander withdrew from and the Constitution and Bylaws Committee Chairman and Past National Commander returned to the podium.)

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: Number 6. Page S-11, ARTICLE VI, STATE COMMITTEES AND CHAIRMEN, Section 1: State Executive Committee, Fourth Paragraph. Replace the word "mail" with "written". The new paragraph will read:

"The State Executive Committee shall have full administrative power between State Conventions. Business of the State Department requiring consideration of the State Executive Committee between designated or called meetings shall be transacted through the office of the State Adjutant by means of written ballots. A majority of replies to the written ballots received by the designated date shall constitute the decision of said committee."

The rationale is to agree with the National Executive Committee policy pertaining to written ballots on page N-21.

Madam Commander, I move for the approval of this proposed amendment.

(Whereupon, the Constitution and Bylaws Committee Chairman and Past National Commander withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: We have a first, may I have a second?

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER SUSAN HENRY: Susan Henry, Past National Commander, seconds.

COMMANDER FRANZ: Any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor; any opposed. The motion carries.

(Whereupon, the Commander withdrew from and the Constitution and Bylaws Committee Chairman and Past National Commander returned to the podium.)

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: Number 7. Page S-17, ARTICLE VIII, FINANCES, Section 4: State Fund Raising Project(s). Replace the entire section.

"Section 4: State Fundraising Project(s)

"Any State Department conducting fundraising activities shall solicit only its membership or within its state geographical boundaries."

"All fundraising projects or activities for the State Department must be approved by the DAV state department.

Rationale: To align with DAV terminology, adopt common use of the fundraising term and correct DAV Department title—we're taking fundraising from two words down to one.

Madam Commander, I move for the approval of this proposed amendment.

(Whereupon, the Constitution and Bylaws Committee Chairman and Past National Commander withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: I have a motion to accept this amendment. May I have a second?

MS. LORETTA NOSKO: Loretta Nosko, Unit 73, Erie, Pennsylvania, I second the motion.

COMMANDER FRANZ: We have a seconded motion on this. Any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor; opposed. The motion carried.

(Whereupon, the Commander withdrew from and the Constitution and Bylaws Committee Chairman and Past National Commander returned to the podium.)

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: I lost my place. Number 8. Page U-3, ARTICLE VIII, INSTALLATION OF UNIT OFFICERS, Section 1, Line 2. After the word "installed", insert "at a regular unit business meeting." This paragraph will then read as follows:

"Section 1: The Unit Commander and Unit Officers shall be installed at a regular unit business meeting by an Auxiliary Past National Commander, an elected National Officer, the National Adjutant, the National Assistant Adjutant, an elected state officer, a past state commander, or a past unit commander. The incoming Unit Commander selects the installing officer."

Rationale: This provides for more unified installation and avoids any interruption in conducting unit business.

Madam Commander, I move for the approval of this proposed amendment.

(Whereupon, the Constitution and Bylaws Committee Chairman and Past National Commander withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: We have a motion to accept, may I have a second.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Madam Commander, Tara (Indistinguishable), Concord Unit 27, North Carolina, I second it.

COMMANDER FRANZ: We have a second. Any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor; opposed. The motion carried.

(Whereupon, the Commander withdrew from and the Constitution and Bylaws Committee Chairman and Past National Commander returned to the podium.)

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: Number 9. Pages U-14 and U-15, ARTICLE XV, UNIT FINANCES AND DUES, Section 3: Fund Raising Project(s). In the Section title, change "Fund Raising"—two words—to "Fundraising"—one word. Throughout the remainder of the section, change "fund raising" to "fundraising".

Rationale: "Housekeeping" to align with DAV terminology and adopt common use of the term.

Madam Commander, I move for the approval of this proposed amendment.

(Whereupon, the Constitution and Bylaws Committee Chairman and Past National Commander withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: We have a motion to accept, may I have a second.

MS. ANN WILNER: Ann Wilner, Unit 44, South Carolina, second the motion.

COMMANDER FRANZ: We have a second. Any discussion? Hearing none, all in favor; opposed. The motion carried.

(Whereupon, the Commander withdrew from and the Constitution and Bylaws Committee Chairman and Past National Commander returned to the podium.)

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: Number 10. Page U-15, ARTICLE XV, UNIT FINANCE AND DUES, Section 3: Fund Raising Project(s), replace Section 3 with the following:

"All money obtained from any source, by or through any person or persons acting for or in the name of the auxiliary unit, or under its direction or authority, shall be considered unit funds and shall be delivered to the treasurer who shall issue an official receipt therefor.

"Auxiliary Units desiring to engage in fundraising projects involving contracts are required to obtain prior approval from their respective Disabled American Veterans Chapter and State Department, and in addition, the prior approval of the National Executive Committee of the DAV. Contracts are to be submitted to the National Executive Committee of the DAV for approval at least sixty days prior to the proposed commencement of the contract.

"No local unit of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary shall conduct any fundraising activity that would involve general public solicitation without prior written approval of the Chapter with which it is affiliated and, when required, written approval by the DAV state department. When there is no Chapter, written approval must be obtained from the DAV state department. If there is no DAV state department, written approval must be obtained from the DAV National Executive Committee.

"Where no commissions are to be paid and solicitation of funds shall be only by personal contact of members, or friends of members, no prior approval shall be required from the Chapter or DAV Department Executive Committee when the gross receipts will be less than \$5,000 with advance written notice of thirty, (30) days to the DAV state department on all such fundraising projects. (Such fundraising must be in compliance with federal, state and local laws.)

"No Auxiliary Unit shall conduct any fundraising project or fundraising activity in the territory of any other Chapter or Unit before asking for the required approval and giving written notice of its intentions with full information about the proposed drive or activity to all Chapters and Units within such territory, not less than two weeks before seeking approval.

Rationale: Clarifies fundraising, DAV department title, and activity regarding general public solicitations.

Madam Commander, I move for the approval of this proposed amendment.

(Whereupon, the Constitution and Bylaws Committee Chairman and Past National Commander withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: We have a motion to approve, may I have a second.

MS. AMY BOWSER: Amy Bowser, Unit 48, Virginia, I second.

COMMANDER FRANZ: We have a motion and a second to approve the amendment of Number 10.

Any discussion?

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER HENRY: Madam Commander, Susan Henry, PNC, I make a motion we amend the following items: in the second paragraph starting after the word "respective" on the second line where it says "Disabled American Veterans Chapter and State Department" I make a motion we amend it to read, "DAV chapter" with a lower-case "c" and "state" with a lower-case "s", "department" with a lower-case "d".

In the same paragraph the last sentence, after the word "sixty" place open-parenthesis, numeric 60, closed-parenthesis.

You've already discussed that the zero-point should not be there.

In the next paragraph replace the word "chapter" with an upper-case "C" with a lower-case "c".

You've got them all?

COMMANDER FRANZ: I think.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER HENRY: Okay.

(Whereupon, a cell phone rang.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: Reminder, again, turn your cell phones off or silent, please. Okay, I need a second to amend the amendment to, changing the upper-case to the lower-case.

MS. NOSKO: Loretta Nosko, Unit 73, Erie, Pennsylvania, I make a second that we do the amendments.

COMMANDER FRANZ: Do the changes?

MS. NOSKO: Do the changes.

COMMANDER FRANZ: Of the upper to lower-case.

MS. NOSKO: Yes.

COMMANDER FRANZ: Any discussion on that?

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: And the numeric.

COMMANDER FRANZ: And the numeric sixty.

MS. NOSKO: And the numeric 60.

COMMANDER FRANZ: Yes. Okay, we've got a motion and second to amend the amendment to the lower-case on that and then the 60 in parenthesis. Any discussion on that? Okay, Terri, the 60.

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: And that includes the DAV.

COMMANDER FRANZ: Yes, on the second paragraph. And the 60 in parenthesis.

MS. THERESA BREWER: Theresa Brewer, delegate with Unit 40 out of North Carolina, PNC Henry, there are more capital chapters and units in the paragraphs below but you didn't mention them. Are you proposing that those also be changed?

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER HENRY: No. The capitalization changes are based on specifically whether it is referring to a chapter in general or your specific chapter. If it's your specific chapter, we're leaving it capitalized.

If it's in general, it's going to lower-case to help people understand what is going on when they are reading these because you get very lost in chapter, unit, state department, state departments. And so we're trying to make it easier to understand by keeping one case process.

COMMANDER FRANZ: Any further discussion on this amended amendment?

MS. PEGGY ROBERTS: Peggy Roberts, Unit 62, Buffalo, Missouri.

COMMANDER FRANZ: Is this on the capitalization?

MS. ROBERTS: No, it's not on that. It's a question regarding the whole thing.

COMMANDER FRANZ: Okay, it's going to have to wait. It's been moved and seconded for these changes to amend the amendment with the capital letters and the parenthesis 60 days and the DAV capitalization. All in favor; any opposed. The motion carries on that. Now, discussion.

MS. ROBERTS: Okay, earlier –

COMMANDER FRANZ: Your name again.

MS. ROBERTS: Oh, Peggy Roberts, Unit 62, Buffalo, Missouri, District 15. Earlier in there it said under state they could solicit only its membership. The question that the district has is this says personal contact.

Okay, if we want to contact, say by mailing, our members in our unit but they don't live in our boundaries, do we have to get permission from every chapter and unit of where they live to solicit them to help with any fundraising?

COMMANDER FRANZ: They're in your unit. Are you asking that if you live in Florida and you have members in Pennsylvania do you have to get a unit approval or okay to solicit your members that happen to live in another state?

MS. ROBERTS: Yes.

COMMANDER FRANZ: That's what you're asking?

MS. ROBERTS: Pretty much, yes, because the way it reads is that you know personal contact.

COMMANDER FRANZ: Which paragraph are you referring to, the third?

MS. ROBERTS: The last one.

"No unit shall conduct any fundraising project or fundraising activity in the territory of any other chapter or unit before asking for the required approval and giving written notice of its intention with full information about the proposed drive or activity to all chapters and units within such territory not less than two weeks before seeking approval."

But, like I said, and I come back, again, to the state department conducting fundraising activity shall solicit only its membership. And I guess my question is, again, can we solicit our members if they're in another territory or another state without having to get approval?

COMMANDER FRANZ: No, we can't do fundraising by mail so that might put a little kink in it.

MS. ROBERTS: I'm sorry, I didn't –

COMMANDER FRANZ: You can't do fundraising by mail. You cannot do it by mail.

MS. ROBERTS: That's a personal contact.

COMMANDER FRANZ: No, calling is a personal contact.

(Whereupon, Adjutant Kemper advanced to the podium.)

ADJUTANT KEMPER: You can send a letter talking about a fundraiser but you cannot send a direct solicitation by mail because that is a federal law. So that is not our rule, that's federal.

And to further explain, when you do solicitations into another state, such as when we do a national headquarters solicitation, we have an attorney, we pay a law firm to file in each of those states so that we can actually solicit the members in those states.

So it's a whole legal process. So there is no direct solicitation by mail permitted but you can send a newsletter. You can send a flyer. You can call. You can email. But, again, you can't directly say, "send this money." You can advertise the event.

(Whereupon, Adjutant Kemper withdrew from the podium.)

MS. ROBERTS: Okay.

COMMANDER FRANZ: Name.

MS. REGINA FORTNER: Regina Fortner, State of Michigan, District 10, Unit 130. I'm just looking for a little bit of clarification. All right?

Okay, it says no prior approval shall be required from the chapter or the DAV executive committee when the gross receipts will be less than \$5,000 with a thirty day—that's not what I was looking for.

Hold on. Sorry. I'm sorry, I lost my spot. I lost it. It was basically written approval, if we get permission—I lost it.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER HENRY: Past National Commander Susan Henry, Regina, I'm not sure this is what your question was but the change basically says when there is no commissions paid and you are doing your personal contact solicitation you have to notify but you do not have to have written approval.

So it's a notification only. It is not a request for permission. That is the change, yes.

MS. FORTNER: Yes, that's what I wanted.

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER HENRY: And so, yes, that is the change. It makes us all very happy, right?

MS. FORTNER: Yes. Exactly. Thank you.

COMMANDER FRANZ: Thank you, Susan. Okay, we're ready to vote on the proposed Amendment Number 10 as amended with the changes with the capitalizations and the 60. Any further discussion? Hearing none, all in favor; any opposed. The motion carries.

(Whereupon, the Commander withdrew from and the Constitution and Bylaws Committee Chairman and Past National Commander returned to the podium.)

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: Number 11. Page U-16, ARTICLE XV, UNIT FINANCE AND DUES, Section 4: Forget-Me-Not Drives, First Paragraph. Delete entire first paragraph and substitute the following:

"Auxiliary Units, with its Chapter's prior consent, may conduct an annual Forget-Me-Not Drive, involving solely the offering of Forget-Me-Not flowers purchased through the DAV National Headquarters, and where a paid promoter is not involved. Each DAV Auxiliary unit shall advise the DAV state department of the dates planned, which shall not exceed seven total days throughout the membership year."

Rationale: To clarify the number of days a Forget-Me-Not Drive may be held within a membership year and to provide for DAV state department notification in accordance with DAV National bylaws.

Madam Commander, I move for the approval of this proposed amendment.

(Whereupon, the Constitution and Bylaws Committee Chairman and Past National Commander withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: We have a motion to accept this amendment, may I get a second?

MS. JACQUELINE DUBOSE: Jacqueline DuBose, Unit 13, Glen Bernie, Maryland, District 6, I move to second.

COMMANDER FRANZ: We have a motion and a second to accept the proposed Amendment Number 11. Any discussion?

MS. BOWSER: Amy Bowser, Unit 48, Virginia, I propose that we insert "parenthesis 7, the number seven, closed parenthesis" after seven for seven total days. We're trying to keep it consistent.

COMMANDER FRANZ: We have a motion to insert "parenthesis 7 closed-parenthesis" after seven total days in the last line, after the word seven. May I have a second, please?

MS. ROUSSEY: Delores Roussey, Unit 101, Florida, seconds.

COMMANDER FRANZ: Any discussion? All in favor of the amended amendment, proposed amendment to insert the Number 7 after seven, all in favor; any opposed. The motion carried on that.

Okay, we have a motion to accept the proposed Amendment Number 11, any further discussion? May I have a second—we've got a second already. Okay. All in favor; any opposed. The motion carries.

(Whereupon, the Commander withdrew from and the Constitution and Bylaws Committee Chairman and Past National Commander returned to the podium.)

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER STEINHOUSE: Thank you. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Constitution and Bylaws Committee Chairman and Past National Commander withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: Yes.

MS. JEANETTE JUNGKANS: Jeanette Jungkans, Unit 6, California, I do have a question. There were recommendations about an acronym page. Do we need a motion for that or is that going to happen automatically?

COMMANDER FRANZ: You don't need a motion on that.

MS. JUNGKANS: Okay.

COMMANDER FRANZ: Okay, when the Constitution and Bylaws Committee was meeting in the other room there were some members there that wanted to make donations and, of course, we had it

while they were doing it so any of them that missed it, if you want to come back up and right here in front between the two tables.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Madam Commander, the Department of Pennsylvania has a check for \$300 and it is for the Education Fund, Camp Corral, and the General Fund. (Applause)

MS. SARAH KASHNER: The Kashner family is donating \$50 in memory of Lelia White, our past state commander for Service Support. (Applause)

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER HENRY: Millington Unit 116 in Tennessee has donations for the Support Fund, Camp Corral, Education Scholarship Fund and Winter Sports Clinic. (Applause)
(Whereupon, Adjutant Kemper advanced to the podium.)

ADJUTANT KEMPER: Is Loretta (Indistinguishable) in the room? Loretta (Indistinguishable)? Jackie DuBose?

(Whereupon, Ms. DuBose responded from the floor.)

ADJUTANT KEMPER: I have your luncheon ticket here. And does anyone know if Loretta (Indistinguishable) is here?

(Whereupon, someone responded from the floor.)

ADJUTANT KEMPER: She is not here? Linda Jimmerson, are you still interested in purchasing a luncheon ticket?

MS. LINDA JIMMERSON: Yes.

ADJUTANT KEMPER: Okay, so after this meeting you can see Bunny.

(Whereupon, Adjutant Kemper withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: At this time I'd like to call on National Adjutant Pat for announcements.
(Whereupon, the Adjutant returned to the podium.)

ADJUTANT KEMPER: And if anybody is wondering why I asked Linda Jimmerson if she was wanting to purchase that, we do have an ongoing list to be fair to all.

Okay, the Forget-Me-Not Luncheon is today at 12:30 in the Florida Ballroom, Salon 1 through 5. And that is in this, well, on this floor, on this side. Be sure to show your ticket at the door. You can keep it with you as proof of purchase of your ticket, but show it at the door.

And then districts will caucus immediately following this meeting to discuss the report of the Nominating Committee. You will meet in this room and just seek out your NEC and the representative who served on the Nominating Committee.

At the Forget-Me-Not Luncheon national officers and NECs will not have reserved seating and are welcome to sit with their states. Past national commanders will have a reserved table near the front of the room.

Registration badges will be needed to enter Fun Night tonight and then also the Introduction of National Officers and the Dinner tomorrow night. Those without a badge will have to go through a verification process before being admitted.

And all attendees must be registered in order to attend the event. And if you have not done so already, please stop by the Ybor Ballroom pre-function area on the Second Floor of the J.W. Marriott for table reservations for the Introduction of the National Officers and Dinner.

So I believe that's all the announcements I have.

(Whereupon, the Adjutant withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: Thank you. There being no further business we will now have our closing prayer. Please stand.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: If we don't have a ticket for the Forget-Me-Not Luncheon, what time do we caucus back here?

COMMANDER FRANZ: In here.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I know, but what time?

COMMANDER FRANZ: Joyce, when we close this meeting. Anything else?

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER HENRY: Are door prizes before?

COMMANDER FRANZ: Pardon?

PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER HENRY: Are door prizes before or after the caucus is the question.

COMMANDER FRANZ: Before. Okay, we're going to do this again. There being no further business, we will now have our closing prayer. (Three raps of the gavel.) Please stand.

(Whereupon, the Chaplain Nicodemus advanced to the podium.)

CHAPLAIN NICODEMUS: Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you for helping us to complete the mission of this meeting. We thank you for your guidance. And we thank you for the level of cooperation between each and every member here.

As we go to our district caucuses, help us to be kind to those people who were not selected for this year's officers for the Nominating Committee has done an exceptional job in meeting with such difficult challenges.

We thank you for blessing each and every one of us. We pray for our members at home. We pray for the leaders of our nation. And we ask an ongoing blessing on the members of the DAV and DAVA, wherever they may be, especially those in current harm's way of the natural disasters.

Bless us and keep us as we enjoy one of the greatest gifts of our organization, a time of camaraderie at the Forget-Me-Not Luncheon.

Bless our paths until we meet again. Amen.

(Response of "Amen", after which the Chaplain withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: This convention stands in recess and will reconvene at 9:00 a.m. Tuesday morning.

(Whereupon, the meeting was recessed at 11:35 o'clock, a.m., on Monday, August 2, 2021.)

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**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY
98TH NATIONAL CONVENTION
TAMPA MARRIOTT WATER STREET HOTEL
TAMPA, FLORIDA**

August 3, 2021

Final Business Session

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The Final Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary convened in the Grand Ballroom E—F on the Second Floor of the Tampa Marriott Water Street Hotel, Tampa Florida, on Tuesday morning, August 3, 2021, and was called to order at 9:07 o'clock, a.m., by National Commander Diane Franz.

COMMANDER DIANE FRANZ: Everybody please take your seats. I would like to remind everybody to make sure their cell phones are either on silent or vibrate. And make sure that there is no obstruction in the aisles. I do see one in the main aisle. Could the walker be put someplace? Thank you.

I now call on National Chaplain Aura-Lee Nicodemus for prayer. (Three gavel raps.)

(Whereupon, the Chaplain advanced to the podium.)

CHAPLAIN NICODEMUS: Please join me in prayer. Dear Heavenly Father, we come before you today on this very special day for our organization. We ask that you will inspire us to make good decisions today. Help us to be kind to each other, no matter what the decision.

We pray for all the members today, wherever they may be. We pray a special blessing on Baby Evelyn and her mama in the hospital. Take care of them and help them to thrive.

We pray a special blessing on Chaplain Dover and his wife. Please care for his wife and give her comfort today. We pray a special blessing on Terri Young's husband Dave that you will be with him as he is in the hospital again. Take care of him and protect him.

And, also, we ask a special blessing upon Gary Sinise's son who is seriously and so, thus, he couldn't be with us. Bless and keep them. Bless and keep our members at home. Bless and keep our troops in harm's way, the leaders of our nation.

And we ask a special blessing upon the DAV and Auxiliary today as we make pivotal decisions to shape our future. In your name. Amen.

(Response of "Amen," whereupon, the Chaplain withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: I will now call upon Americanism Chairman Ann Marie Hurley to lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

THIRD JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER AND AMERICANISM CHAIRMAN ANN MARIE HURLEY: Free your hands. Stand at attention. Place your right hand over your heart or render the appropriate salute and join me in the Pledge of Allegiance to our flag.

(Whereupon, the Third Junior Vice-Commander and Americanism Chairman led the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by one gavel rap by the Commander.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: Please be seated. Okay, some good news, the donations that were received, General Fund, \$850; (Applause) Caregiver Project, \$5,533; (Applause) Camp Corral, \$1,475; (Applause) Education Program Fund, \$2,975; (Applause) Service Program Fund, \$860; (Applause) Winter Sports Clinic, \$250; (Applause) for a total of \$11,943. (Applause)

Will the Credentials Chairman, Maria Holloway, please come forward to give the final Credentials report?

(Whereupon, the Convention Credentials Committee Chairman advanced to the podium.)

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN MARIA HOLLOWAY: Good morning.

(Response of "Good morning.")

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN HOLLOWAY: The Credentials report is as follows: total units registered, 117; total departments registered, 36; national officers registered, 6; past national commanders registered, 6; total guests registered, 180; total delegates, 249; total alternates, 19; total vote count, 886; total registered, 460. Commander, I move that we accept the Credential report.

(Whereupon, the Convention Credentials Chairman withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: We have a motion to accept the report of the Credentials Committee as read. Is there a second?

MS. REGINA FORTNER: Regina Fortner, State of Michigan, District 10, Unit 130, I second it.
COMMANDER FRANZ: The Credentials report has been seconded. Thank you, Maria, wherever you went.

COMMANDER FRANZ: The National Adjutant will now call the roll of the newly-elected National Executive Committee members and alternates. As your name is called please come forward for the purpose of installation.

(Whereupon, Adjutant Kemper advanced to the podium and the newly-elected National Executive Committee members and alternates advanced to the front of the room as the National Adjutant called their names.)

ADJUTANT KEMPER: So I will read the NECs first and the alternates following. District 1 NEC, Diane Sullivan; District 2 NEC, Linda Trulio; District 3, Karen Rediker; District 4 Linda Applegate; District 5, Laurie Stopyra; District 6, Amy Bowser;

District 7, Maria Holloway; District 8, Kathleen Wenthe; and we will need you to move to your right, please; District 9, Shirley Hill—District 9, Shirley Hill; District 10, Christina Alexander; District 11, Judy Davis;

District 12, Evelyn Couture; District 13, Tawnya Kingsley; District 14, Karen Bolton—District 14, Karen Bolton; okay; District 15, Robin Ballhagen; District 16, June McJunkin; District 17, Nancy Coffey; okay, we have District 16 and District 17, so are you Nancy Coffey?

(Response of "Yes.")

ADJUTANT KEMPER: Okay. District 18, Sharon Linton; District 19, Kathy Clampitt; District 20, Sharon Thornton; District 21, Jennifer Hammons.

Let the record show that all NECs are present.

Now if you could step forward a little bit, now I'm going to call the alternates.

District 1, Janet Pratt; District 2—and if you don't mind, announce your presence, yes, just say "present." Okay. District 2, Janice Bailey. District 2, Janice Bailey. Janice Bailey is absent. District 3, Erin O'Brien.

DISTRICT 3 NEC ALTERNATE ERIN O'BRIEN: Present.

ADJUTANT KEMPER: District 4, Juliette Velez.

DISTRICT 4 NEC ALTERNATE JULIETTE VELEZ: Present.

ADJUTANT KEMPER: There is no alternate for District 5. District 6, Jackie DuBose.

DISTRICT 6 NEC ALTERNATE JACKIE DuBOSE: Present.

ADJUTANT KEMPER: District 7, Amy Raber.

DISTRICT 7 NEC ALTERNATE AMY RABER: Present.

ADJUTANT KEMPER: District 8, Sheila Stephens.

DISTRICT 8 NEC ALTERNATE SHEILA STEPHENS: Present.

ADJUTANT KEMPER: District 9, Theresa Brewer.

DISTRICT 9 NEC ALTERNATE THERESA BREWER: Present.

ADJUTANT KEMPER: District 10, Linda Walters.

DISTRICT 10 NEC ALTERNATE LINDA WALTERS: Present.

ADJUTANT KEMPER: District 11, Carol Parker-Park.

DISTRICT 11 NEC ALTERNATE CAROL PARKER-PARK: Present.

ADJUTANT KEMPER: District 12, Bonnie Wilkins.

(Whereupon, someone said "Not here.")

ADJUTANT KEMPER: Did someone say she's not here?

(Response of "Yes.")

ADJUTANT KEMPER: Did she leave the convention?

(Response of "Yes.")

ADJUTANT KEMPER: Okay. District 13, Ethan Kingsley.

DISTRICT 13 NEC ALTERNATE ETHAN KINGSLEY: Present.

ADJUTANT KEMPER: District 14, LeeAnn Karg.

DISTRICT 14 NEC ALTERNATE LeeANN KARG: Present.

ADJUTANT KEMPER: District 15, Danny Pierce.

DISTRICT 15 NEC ALTERNATE DANNY PIERCE: Present.

ADJUTANT KEMPER: District 16, Mary Lou Caldwell.

DISTRICT 16 NEC ALTERNATE MARY LOU CALDWELL: Present.

ADJUTANT KEMPER: District 17, June Schow.

DISTRICT 17 NEC ALTERNATE JUNE SCHOW: Here.

ADJUTANT KEMPER: District 18, Holly Mulnix.

DISTRICT 18 NEC ALTERNATE HOLLY MULNIX: Here.

ADJUTANT KEMPER: No alternate elected for District 19. District 20, Kathy Dunham.

DISTRICT 20 NEC ALTERNATE KATHY DUNHAM: Present.

ADJUTANT KEMPER: Linda Oliver, District 21.

DISTRICT 21 NEC ALTERNATE LINDA OLIVER: Present.

(Whereupon, Adjutant Kemper withdrew from and Commander Franz returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: You are requested to remain silent during the ceremony of installation.

The fact that you have been selected by the members of this Auxiliary for your respective offices shows that they have confidence in your ability and that they feel assured you will strictly and impartially discharge all duties incumbent upon you.

They confide the welfare of this Auxiliary to your keeping. And they are expected at all times to respect your position.

Let their confidence, therefore, be fully justified by your fidelity. Let us all remember gratefully the heroism of the veterans whose names we proudly bear.

Realizing fully these responsibilities, are you willing to assume the obligation of your office?

(Response of "I am.")

COMMANDER FRANZ: (Three raps of the gavel). Members, please stand. Place your right hand over your heart, pronounce your name and repeat after me the obligation of your respective office.

"I, Diane Franz, having been selected as an officer of this Auxiliary, do most solemnly pledge myself to faithfully and impartially perform in letter and spirit all duties of the office I am about to enter.

"I promise to obey the lawful orders of my superior officers and exact the obedience of others thereto to the best of my ability and means.

"When my successor has been duly selected and installed I promise to surrender properties of the organization in my possession, all of which I now affirm."

You may lower your hands. (One gavel rap.) Members be seated. Members of the Auxiliary, I now present to you the officers of your choice. I trust you will aid them in the performance of their duties. With your help their term of office will be highly successful. You may return to your seats now. Thank you. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the newly-elected NEC members returned to their seats.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: Will the chairman of the Nominating Committee please come forward to give the Committee report.

(Whereupon, the Nominating Committee Chairman advanced to the podium to give the report.)

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER LINDA TRULIO:

Good morning, everyone.

(Response of "Good morning.")

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER TRULIO: Madam Commander Diane, Madam Adjutant Pat, national officers, delegates, and guests of our Auxiliary.

The Nominating Committee of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary had their first meeting on July 31, 2021. We are pleased to submit the following slate for your consideration to serve as the 21-22 officers.

For the office of Commander, Lynn Helms Prosser; for the office of First Junior Vice-Commander, Darlene Spence; for the office of Second Junior Vice-Commander Ann Marie Hurley; for the office of Third Junior Vice-Commander, Chris Easley; for the office of—did I miss somebody?

(Response of "senior vice.")

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER TRULIO: All right, excuse me very much. I'm going to start over because the lines aren't lined up with the things.

Okay, for Commander, Lynn Helms Prosser; for the office of Senior Vice-Commander, Darlene Spence; for the office of First Junior Vice-Commander, Ann Marie Hurley; for the office of Second Junior Vice-Commander, Chris Easley; for the office of Third Junior Vice-Commander, Melissa Pierce; and for the office of Fourth Junior Vice-Commander, Linda Gerke; for the office of Judge Advocate, Paula Raymond. (Applause)

The secretary who served on the Committee was Karla Schwartz. The advisor was Ellen Timmerman. These are the following members of the districts who served on the Nominating Committee.

Will you all please stand to be recognized and remain standing until the last name is called: District 1, Karla Schwartz; District 2, Linda Oliver; District 3, Evelyn Couture;

District 4, Helen Parsech; District 5, Velma Steinman; District 6, June McJunkin; District 7, Leslie Mestas; District 8, Cathrine Price; District 9, Kathy Clampitt; District 10, Evelyn Cupitt;

District 11, Linda Oliver; District 12, Janet Pratt; District 13, Linda Trulio; District 14—first of all, these aren't the districts, these are just the names, I'm sorry;

Number 14, Karen Rediker; Number 15, Juliette Velez; Number 16, Laurie Stopyra; Number 17, Carol Simmons; Number 18, Debbera McLaughlin; Number 19, Linda Steadman; Number 20, Jane Troutman; and Number 21, Christina Alexander. Stand everyone. And thank you so very much for your service.

(Whereupon, the Committee members stood as their names were called and were recognized with a round of applause.)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Ma'am.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER TRULIO: Evidently when our secretary was transferring the names of the people—we have a sign-in sheet and everything and I think it was just transferred literally over to here so some of the names that I read—yes, Karla.

So what happened is not understanding like who was belonging to who and what we did, also, every day we met or every time we rotated.

We didn't just stay seated next to the same person or whatever so we were constantly moving around so she just put the 21 people who attended. So my apologies if there was any confusion.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Ma'am.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER TRULIO: Yes.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes, for District 11 it's Joyce Hutchinson.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER TRULIO: Joyce Hutchinson was not on our Nominating Committee.

(Response of "She was.")

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes, she was.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER TRULIO: She was? Was she on here?

ADJUTANT KEMPER: Okay, for clarification purposes, I'm going to call the names of the members on that Nominating Committee so we can have it for our records who served from which district.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER TRULIO: All right, so in other words call the first district—okay, when I call your name would you please announce your district. Karla Schwartz.

MS. KARLA SCHWARTZ: District 13.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER TRULIO: Karla Schwartz, District 13. Linda Oliver.

MS. LINDA OLIVER: District 21.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER TRULIO: Linda Oliver, District 21. Evelyn Couture.

MS. EVELYN COUTURE: Evelyn Couture, District 12.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER TRULIO: Evelyn Couture, District 12. Helen Parsetich.

MS. HELEN PARSETICH: Helen Parsetich, District 14.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER TRULIO: Helen Parsetich, District 14. Excuse me? Okay. Velma Steinman.

MS. VELMA STEINMAN: Velma Steinman, District 15.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER TRULIO: Velma Steinman, District 15. June McJunkin.

MS. JUNE McJUNKIN: District 16.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER TRULIO: June McJunkin, District 16. Leslie Mestas.

MS. LESLIE MESTAS: Leslie Mestas, District 17.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER TRULIO: Leslie Mestas, District 17. Catherine Price.

MS. CATHERINE PRICE: District 18.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER TRULIO: Catherine Price, District 18. Kathy Clampitt.

MS. KATHY CLAMPITT: District 19.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER TRULIO: Kathy Clampitt, District 19. Evelyn Cupit.

MS. EVELYN CUPIT: Evelyn Cupit, District 20.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER TRULIO: Evelyn Cupit, District 20. Linda Oliver.

MS. OLIVER: Linda Oliver, District 21.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER TRULIO: She already announced. What was your district, Linda?

MS. OLIVER: Twenty-one.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER TRULIO: Twenty-one. Okay. Okay, now Janet Pratt.

MS. JANET PRATT: District 1.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER TRULIO: District 1. Linda Trulio, District 2. Karen Rediker.

MS. KAREN REDIKER: District 3.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER TRULIO: District 3, Karen Rediker. Juliette Velez.

MS. JULIETTE VELEZ: District 4.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER TRULIO: Juliette Velez, District 4. Laurie Stopyra.

MS. LAURIE STOPYRA: District 5.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER TRULIO: Laurie Stopyra, District 5. Carol Simmons.

MS. CAROL SIMMONS: District 6.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER TRULIO: Carol Simmons, District 6. Debbie McLaughlin.

MS. DEBBERA McLAUGHLIN: District 7.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER TRULIO: Debbie McLaughlin, District 7. Linda Steadman.

MS. LINDA STEADMAN: District 8.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER TRULIO: District 8. Jane Troutman.

MS. JANE TROUTMAN: District 9.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER TRULIO: Jane Troutman, District 9. And Christina Alexander.

MS. CHRISTINA ALEXANDER: Christina Alexander, District 10.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN AND PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER TRULIO: Christina Alexander, District 10. And Joyce Hutchinson, District 11. (Applause)

We have little bumps along the way sometimes and difficulties but all-in-all the rights are corrected and successfully corrected. We have done it. Thank god.

So, now, the Nominating Committee's recommendations, the Nominating Committee recommends the following considerations, that members and candidates need to speak up over the group that's there.

When we interviewed our people they were at the end of the room and after they left we thought it would be possible to bring them forward, more towards the front; therefore, they didn't have to project all the way up. It became just like a little of bit difficulty in hearing them.

And the candidates need to be available so we can call you when you are ready for your interview.

And we had some problems like where we were meeting. So next year we will try, whoever is on the Nominating Committee, to make an available timeslot so that the people can, everybody can flow a little bit better.

And I also want to just add one more recommendation that when the folders come to the Nominating Committee—I know I, as chairman, you get the list of the candidates that are in your NEC meeting.

That list of candidates, if you are going to go on the Nominating Committee take that list like with you at least so you have them. And then, at the end of the meeting you can, and everything is all accomplished, you can put down what offices they hold.

And then with the permission of the chairman and the advisor you can take that list so that yesterday when we were all up here and some of us are wondering, who is it, you know, who is on the slate, right? This way everything will be exactly available for everyone else. Okay?

Is there any other questions? Okay, thank you very much. It was my honor and privilege to serve and best of luck to all of the officers. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the Nominating Committee Chairman withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: When two or more candidates are nominated for any one office roll calls shall be continued until completed unless a candidate or candidates withdraws. The person receiving the majority of the roll call vote shall be elected.

I wish to thank the members of the Nominating Committee for their time and efforts. I am now discharging the Nominating Committee and all other Convention committees.

I now ask all the officers please leave the podium and go to your respective Districts for the purpose of nomination and election. NECs, please join your District.

(Whereupon, the officers and NECs withdrew to their respective districts.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: I have appointed three tellers. Carolyn Harris, Sandy Dobmeier, and Ann Glende. And the tellers will set where Ann is at, to the right.

(Whereupon, the tellers advanced to the table at the front of the room.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: Quiet, please. You have heard the report of the committee on nominations. Lynn Helms Prosser has been nominated by the Committee for the office of National Commander. Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare the nomination closed for the office of National Commander.

All those in favor of Lynn Helms Prosser for the office of National Commander signify by saying aye; those opposed. The ayes have it and Lynn Helms Prosser has been elected to the office of National Commander. (Standing Ovation)

Darlene Spence has been nominated by the Committee for the office of National Senior Vice-Commander. Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the National Senior Vice-Commander. (Applause) Wait. Wait. Wait. Wait. Wait. (Laughter)

All those in favor of Darlene Spence for the office of National Senior Vice-Commander signify by saying aye; those opposed. The ayes have it and Darlene Spence has been elected to the office of National Senior Vice-Commander. (Applause)

Ann Marie Hurley has been nominated by the Committee for the office of National First Junior Vice-Commander. Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the office of National First Junior Vice-Commander.

All those in favor of Ann Marie Hurley for the office of National First Junior Vice-Commander signify by saying aye; those opposed. The ayes have it and Ann Marie Hurley has been elected to the office of National First Junior Vice-Commander. (Applause)

Chris Easley has been nominated by the Committee for the office of National Second Junior Vice-Commander. Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the office of National Second Junior Vice-Commander.

All those in favor of Chris Easley for the office of National Second Junior Vice-Commander signify by saying aye; those opposed. The ayes have it and Chris Easley has been elected to the office of National Second Junior Vice-Commander. (Applause)

Melissa Pierce has been nominated by the Committee for the office of National Third Junior Vice-Commander. Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the office of National Third Junior Vice-Commander.

All those in favor of Melissa Pierce for the office of National Third Junior Vice-Commander signify by saying aye; those opposed. The ayes have it and Melissa Pierce has been elected to the office of National Third Junior Vice-Commander. (Applause)

Linda Gerke has been nominated by the Committee for the office of National Fourth Junior Vice-Commander. Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the office of National Fourth Junior Vice-Commander.

All those in favor of Linda Gerke for the office of National Fourth Junior Vice-Commander signify by saying aye; those opposed. The ayes have it and Linda Gerke has been elected to the office of National Fourth Junior Vice-Commander. (Applause)

Paula Raymond has been nominated by the Committee for the office of National Judge Advocate. Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the office of National Judge Advocate.

All those in favor of Paula Raymond for the office of National Judge Advocate signify by saying aye; those opposed. The ayes have it and Paula Raymond has been elected to the office of National Junior Vice-Commander. (sic) (Applause)

National Commander Lynn Helms Prosser; Senior Vice-Commander Darlene Spence; First Junior Vice-Commander Ann Marie Hurley; Second Junior Vice-Commander Chris Easley;

Third Junior Vice-Commander Melissa Pierce; Fourth Junior Vice-Commander Linda Gerke; National Judge Advocate Paula Raymond. I would like to dismiss the tellers now. Thank you. (Applause)

(Whereupon, the tellers returned to their seats.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: Will the current National Officers please return to your seats at the head table.

(Whereupon, the National Officers returned to their stations.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: The election having been completed, I now ask for the National Sergeant-at-Arms to come forward for the purpose of acknowledging those members who have served as Convention Pages.

(Whereupon, the National Sergeant-at-Arms advanced to the podium.)

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS GRABOWSKI: Okay, can all my pages that helped—I don't have my list so I'd like you each to recite your name. Can you all come on up here?

COMMANDER FRANZ: All the pages come to the front, please.

(Whereupon, the pages and juniors advanced to the front of the podium.)

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS GRABOWSKI: They have worked extra hard. It's been—come on over here, guys. Get your acknowledgement. Okay, you can turn around and you can start there and tell everybody your name.

MS. SHARON DUFALD: My name is Sharon Dufault, District 1, Massachusetts. (Applause)

MS. VICTORIA SALIZAR: Victoria Salizar, District 17.

(Whereupon, a member commented.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: Could you please wait until everybody has been introduced. Thank you.

MS. DONNA FOLCARELLI: Donna Folcarelli, Rhode Island, District 3. (Applause)

COMMANDER FRANZ: Please hold your applause until we are done.

MS. VELMA STEINMAN: Velma Steinman, District 15, Missouri.

MR. JOSHUA DRAPER: Joshua Draper, San Antonio, Texas.

MR. ATTIKUS WOODFORK: Attikus Woodfork, San Antonio, Texas, representing Unit 17,

Commander Darlene Spence. (Applause)

MS. LAURIE STOPYRA: Laurie Stopyra, District 5, Pennsylvania.

MS. MARIA HOLLOWAY: Maria Holloway, District 7, Florida.

MS. DENISE PROFFITT: Denise Proffitt, District 11, Ohio.

MS. MELISSA PIERCE: Melissa Pierce, District 15, Iowa.

MS. TERRI YOUNG: Terri Young, Indiana, District 13. (Applause)

NATIONAL SERGEANT-AT-ARMS GRABOWSKI: They have been amazing. Anything I have asked for they have done. They have gone out of their way so I want to thank them. (Applause)

COMMANDER FRANZ: Wait. Wait. Wait. Wait. Pictures. Pictures. We like pictures.

(Whereupon, official photographs were taken, after which the sergeant-at-arms and pages withdrew from the stage.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: I'd like to acknowledge the National Color Bearers and State Color Bearers. The national: Debbie McLaughlin and Gloria Bouters; state, Marty Feidler and Evelyn Caperna. Thank you. (Applause)

I'd also like to thank the National Sergeant-at-Arms Terri Grabowski for doing a commendable job. (Applause)

All pages are now dismissed.

The National Adjutant, do you have any announcements?

(Whereupon, the Adjutant advanced to the podium.)

ADJUTANT KEMPER: I really don't have any announcements. I just want to make a few acknowledgements and to acknowledge a few people. I want to thank Chris Easley for doing the fabulous livestreaming so the people at home can join us. (Applause)

And, again, thanking Terri Grabowski for her role as National Sergeant-at-Arms and always being one of the first who offers her assistance at any event we have. She is always willing to help us out.

I want to thank those who volunteered to help our Convention Headquarters Office. We have a limited staff and we sent out a plea to our national officers, NECs, and appointees asking for volunteers to come and help us in the office. To those who came and volunteered their time, thank you.

To the delegates, alternates, members and guests, a special thank you for your patience these past few months with us. We have been experiencing some system upgrades and issues, working through them.

We had to move our National Headquarters. It involved a lot of packing and preparation. And then we also had this little thing called a National Convention to prepare for. So some things had to go on the back burner and there were some delays. So we apologize for that.

To Bunny Clos and Ann Glende for their unwavering support and dedication—(Applause)

MS. BUNNY CLOS: She can stop now. We all feel the same about her. And if it wasn't for her, everything wouldn't get done. So we just work together and we thank Pat Kemper, as well.

I mean you will see here, they will be standing in line waiting to talk to her, she can't even eat lunch and dinner. (Laughter) So I'm always like, can we find a corner, please?

And then I always try to sit on the other side so they can't see her just so she can eat. So I think Pat really needs to have the thank you. (Standing Ovation)

ADJUTANT KEMPER: Thank you. Thank you, and I apologize. I didn't see those tears coming. (Laughter) But they consistently go far above and beyond what is expected of them. I got it in. (Laughter)

Okay, and to National Commander Diane Franz who handled her extended term like a true professional, she has been a treasure to work with and I thank you, Diane. That's all I have. (Applause) (Whereupon, the Adjutant withdrew from and the Commander returned to the podium.)

COMMANDER FRANZ: It's been an honor to work with these people and to work with all of you. It's not just family that you're blood related to. It's family out here.

And I thank you for all treating each other that way and for welcoming not only me but all the line officers or past national commanders that have come to visit with you in the past years. You're to be commended on your hospitality and your warm friendship. Thank you all. (Applause)

Is there any other further business to come before this Convention? Hearing none, I now declare the 98th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary hereby adjourned.

We will immediately go into the post-Convention National Executive Committee meeting which I will now call to order.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned at 9:53 o'clock, a.m., on Tuesday, August 3, 2021.)

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Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary National Headquarters

Financial Statements as of and for the
Year Ended December 31, 2020, and
Independent Auditors' Report

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

To the National Finance Committee of
Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary National Headquarters:

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary National Headquarters (the "Auxiliary"), which comprise the statement of financial position as of December 31, 2020, and the related statements of activities, functional expenses, and cash flows for the year then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; this includes the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditors' Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the Auxiliary's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Auxiliary's internal control. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Opinion

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Auxiliary as of December 31, 2020, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Deloitte & Touche LLP

April 12, 2021

**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
AUXILIARY NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS**

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2020**

ASSETS		LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	
CASH	\$ 554,063	LIABILITIES:	
ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE	8,035	Accounts payable and other liabilities	\$ 236,581
LOANS RECEIVABLE (less reserve of \$10,422)	13,439	Payable to Life Membership Fund	2,008,758
INVENTORY	5,695	Contributions distributable to state departments	394,927
INVESTMENTS	11,707,699	Life Membership-reserve for future distribution of life membership dues	<u>6,731,142</u>
ACCRUED INTEREST RECEIVABLE	15,045	Total liabilities	<u>9,371,408</u>
PREPAID EXPENSES	7,061	NET ASSETS:	
OFFICE EQUIPMENT—Net	791	Without donor restrictions	8,139,190
LIFE MEMBERSHIP ASSETS:		With donor restrictions:	
Investments	4,716,331	Service program	399,450
Accrued interest receivable	6,053	Disaster relief program	55,036
Receivable from general fund	<u>2,008,758</u>	Education loan/scholarship program	1,077,886
TOTAL	<u>\$19,042,970</u>	Total net assets	<u>9,671,562</u>
		TOTAL	<u>\$19,042,970</u>

See notes to the financial statements.

FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2020

	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions			Total
		Service Program	Disaster Relief/Other Programs	Education Loan/ Scholarship Program	
SUPPORT AND REVENUE:					
Membership fees and mandates	\$ -	\$ 644	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 644
Life membership distributions	474,408				474,408
Contributions	142,946	2,790	7,541	8,575	161,852
Contributed facilities	8,106				8,106
National convention	644				644
Net investment return	1,174,556				1,174,556
Net assets released from restrictions	44,200	(5,000)		(39,200)	-
Other	160				160
Total support and revenue	1,845,020	(1,566)	7,541	(30,625)	1,820,370
EXPENSES:					
Program services	466,420				466,420
Fundraising costs	50,993				50,993
General and administrative	220,862				220,862
Total expenses	738,275	-	-	-	738,275
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	1,106,745	(1,566)	7,541	(30,625)	1,082,095
NET ASSETS—Beginning of year	7,032,445	401,016	47,495	1,108,511	8,589,467
NET ASSETS—End of year	\$ 8,139,190	\$ 399,450	\$ 55,036	\$ 1,077,886	\$ 9,671,562

See notes to the financial statements.

**STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2020**

	Program Services	Fund Raising Costs	General and Administrative	Total Expenses
Salaries and wages	\$ 187,790	\$ 20,955	\$ 108,772	\$ 317,517
Employee benefits	62,197	5,733	27,626	95,556
Distributions to state departments	84,949			84,949
Professional fees	940	720	40,489	42,149
Scholarship program benefits	39,200			39,200
Printing, stationery, and office supplies	25,438		10,845	36,283
Conferences and meetings	22,789			22,789
Fundraising expenses		21,460		21,460
Payroll taxes	12,674	1,343	7,230	21,247
Expenses of national convention	13,981			13,981
Contributed facilities	4,795	534	2,777	8,106
Service program benefits	5,000			5,000
Expenses of national commander and officers	3,949			3,949
Postage			2,879	2,879
Travel	1,490			1,490
Other	<u>1,228</u>	<u>248</u>	<u>20,244</u>	<u>21,720</u>
Total	<u>\$ 466,420</u>	<u>\$ 50,993</u>	<u>\$ 220,862</u>	<u>\$ 738,275</u>

See notes to the financial statements.

**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2020**

CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:	
Change in net assets	\$ 1,082,095
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash used in operating activities:	
Change in appreciation in investments	(994,805)
Realized investment gains	(10,452)
Depreciation	1,205
Changes in assets and liabilities:	
Accrued interest receivable	579
Inventory	7,686
Accounts receivable	1,067
Prepaid expenses	(1,577)
Accounts payable and other liabilities	32,492
Contributions distributable to state departments	5,375
Reserve for future distribution of life membership dues	<u>93,426</u>
Net cash provided by operating activities	<u>217,091</u>
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:	
Purchases of investments	(5,530,147)
Proceeds from sale of investments	4,986,281
Collections from repayment of education loans	<u>5,115</u>
Net cash used in investing activities	<u>(538,751)</u>
NET DECREASE IN CASH	(321,660)
CASH:	
Beginning of year	<u>875,723</u>
End of year	<u>\$ 554,063</u>

See notes to the financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AS OF AND FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2020

1. ORGANIZATION

Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary National Headquarters (DAVA) is a not-for-profit membership and service organization formed under the provisions of the National Constitution of Disabled American Veterans (DAV). DAVA and its membership are organized for the betterment and improvement of the nation's disabled veterans and their families and for cooperation with all patriotic organizations and public agencies devoted to this purpose through volunteer work at veterans' hospitals, community service, educational assistance, legislative action, and encouraging good citizenship and patriotism.

During the year ended December 31, 2020, there was a global outbreak of a new strain of coronavirus, COVID-19, which continues to adversely impact global and domestic commercial activity. The full extent of the impact of COVID-19 on DAVA will depend on various future developments, particularly the duration and depth of the pandemic, which may be influenced by emerging medical treatments and applicable health and safety regulations.

2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Financial Statements—The accompanying financial statements have been prepared on the accrual basis of accounting in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAP).

New Accounting Standards—In June 2016, the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) issued Accounting Standards Update (ASU) No. 2016-13, *Financial Instruments—Credit Losses*, which is included in ASC Topic 326, *Measurement of Credit Losses on Financial Instruments*. The new standard revises the accounting requirements related to the measurement of credit losses and will require organizations to measure all expected credit losses for financial assets based on historical experience, current conditions, and reasonable and supportable forecasts about collectability. Assets must be presented in the financial statements at the net amount expected to be collected. This standard will be effective for the annual financial statements beginning January 1, 2023. A modified retrospective approach is to be used for certain parts of this standard, while other parts are to be applied using a prospective approach. Management has not yet evaluated the impact of ASU No. 2016-13 on the financial statements.

In September 2020, the FASB issued ASU No. 2020-07, *Not-for-Profit Entities (Topic 958): Presentation and Disclosures by Not-for-Profit Entities for Contributed Nonfinancial Assets*. The amendments require not-for-profit entities to present contributed nonfinancial assets as a separate line item in the statement of activities, apart from contributions of cash and other financial contributions. The standard also requires additional disclosure related to contributed nonfinancial assets. The amendment, which requires retrospective application, is effective for annual periods beginning after June 15, 2021. Management is in the process of evaluating the impact on the financial statements.

Newly Adopted Accounting Principles—In August 2018, FASB issued ASU No. 2018-13, *Fair Value Measurement (Topic 820): Disclosure Framework—Changes to the Disclosure Requirements for Fair Value Measurement*. The amendments in this Update modify the disclosure requirements on fair value measurements in Topic 820, *Fair Value Measurement*, based on the concepts in the concepts statement, including the consideration of costs and benefits. The adoption did not have an impact on the financial statements.

Cash—DAVA maintains its cash in bank deposit accounts, which, at times, exceed federally insured limits. DAVA has not experienced any losses in such accounts.

Education Loan Receivable—Students who receive education loans are required to begin repayment six months after completion of their educational programs. DAVA maintains a reserve for uncollectible loans.

Investments—Investments are recorded at fair value. The fair value of DAVA’s investments is determined based on the quoted market prices of the related securities or quoted prices in active markets for instruments that are similar, or model-derived valuations in which all significant inputs and significant value drivers are observable in active markets. Gains and losses on the sale of investment securities are recognized based upon the specific identification method and are reflected as a separate component of revenue for the investments. DAVA’s policy is to report cash equivalents, which includes money market funds, within its trust accounts as investments.

Contributions—Contributions received are recorded at their fair value and are classified as without donor restrictions or with donor restrictions for purpose. All contributions are considered without donor restrictions, unless specifically restricted by the donor. Support that is restricted by the donor is reported as an increase in net assets with donor restrictions.

Accounts Receivable—Amounts recorded as accounts receivable are reduced to their net realizable value, as appropriate.

Allocation of Expenses—The financial statements report certain categories of expenses that are attributable to one or more program or supporting services of the DAVA. Those expenses include salaries and wages, employee benefits, payroll taxes, contributed facilities, professional fees and other. These expenses are allocated between program, fundraising, and administrative based on the percentage of time spent by DAVA staff members on tasks related to each function.

Liquidity and Availability of Financial Assets—The DAVA’s working capital and cash flows are attributable to the contributions received from general donations throughout the year.

The following reflects DAVA’s financial assets at December 31, 2020, reduced by the amount not available for general use within one year of the statement of financial position date due to donor restrictions.

Total assets, excluding nonfinancial assets	\$ 19,029,423
Subtract: Life Membership Fund	(6,731,142)
Subtract: With donor restrictions for specific purposes	<u>(1,532,372)</u>
Financial assets available to meet cash needs for general expenditures within one year	<u>\$ 10,765,909</u>

The DAVA has a policy to structure its financial assets to be available as its general expenditures, liabilities, and other obligations come due. In addition, as part of its liquidity management, the DAVA invests cash in excess of daily requirements in various long-term investments. The DAVA's long-term investments, such as common stocks, index funds, Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs), and actively managed mutual funds, are invested with the intent on providing a safe return on investments for the general fund use.

Income Taxes—As a not-for-profit service organization, DAVA has received a determination from the Internal Revenue Service that it is exempt from federal income taxes as a 501(c)(4) organization. Contributions made to DAVA are tax deductible by the contributor as provided in Section 170 of the Internal Revenue Code.

Use of Estimates—The preparation of the financial statements in accordance with GAAP requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosures of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the reporting period. Actual amounts could differ from those estimates.

3. LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Under the bylaws of DAVA, any eligible person may become a life member. Amounts paid for membership are placed in separate life membership accounts and invested; the only withdrawals permitted from these accounts are amounts required to pay local units, state departments, and National Headquarters (DAVA) per capita dues for services to be provided to the life members. Generally, life membership assets for National Headquarters per capita dues are transferred to the general assets of DAVA at the beginning of the membership year (July 1) and recognized as revenue in the statement of activities. The per capita chapter and department dues are distributed at the beginning of the membership year. The reserve for future distribution of membership dues represents the liability for the future life membership distributions to DAVA, departments, and units to assist with providing member services.

The changes during 2020 in the reserve for future distribution of life membership dues are as follows:

Balance—January 1, 2020	<u>\$6,637,716</u>
Additions:	
Membership dues received	256,798
Net investment return	<u>382,500</u>
Total additions	<u>639,298</u>
Deductions:	
Dues to National Headquarters	474,408
Dues to local units	22,330
Dues to state departments	39,593
Other expense	<u>9,541</u>
Total deductions	<u>545,872</u>
Balance—December 31, 2020	<u>\$6,731,142</u>

4. FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENTS

Accounting Standards Codification 820, *Fair Value Measurements and Disclosures*, provides a framework for measuring fair value. That framework provides a fair value hierarchy that prioritizes the inputs to valuation techniques used to measure fair value, as follows: Level 1, which refers to securities valued using unadjusted quoted prices from active markets for identical assets; Level 2, which refers to securities not traded on an active market but for which observable market inputs are readily available; and Level 3, which refers to securities valued based on significant unobservable inputs. Assets are classified in their entirety based on the lowest level of input that is significant to the fair value measurement.

The DAVA did not hold any financial assets requiring the use of inputs that are unobservable and significant to the overall fair value measurement (Level 3) during 2020.

The DAVA's policy is to recognize transfers between levels at the actual date of the event. There were no transfers between Level 1, Level 2, or Level 3 during 2020.

Asset Valuation Techniques—Valuation techniques used maximize the use of observable inputs and minimize the use of unobservable inputs. The following is a description of the valuation methodologies used for assets recorded at fair value. There has been no change in the methodologies used at December 31, 2020.

Cash equivalents, composed of money market funds, are categorized as Level 1. Such investments are valued at cost, which approximates fair value. The money market fund represents DAVA's shares in a registered investment company's fund.

Common stocks, categorized as Level 1, are valued at the closing price reported in the active market in which the individual security is traded.

Shares of registered investment companies (mutual funds) are categorized as Level 1. They are valued at quoted market prices that represent the net asset value of shares held at year-end.

The major categories of financial assets measured at fair value on a recurring basis as of December 31, 2020, are as follows:

Asset Category	Fair Value Measurements Using		
	Quoted Prices in Active Markets for Identical Assets (Level 1)	Significant Observable Inputs (Level 2)	Total
General fund:			
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 143,546	\$ -	\$ 143,546
Common stocks	1,118,311	-	1,118,311
Mutual funds/ETFs:			
Domestic fixed income funds	3,680,201		3,680,201
International fixed income funds	267,651		267,651
Domestic equity funds	4,766,710		4,766,710
International equity funds	1,731,280		1,731,280
Total mutual funds/ETFs	10,445,842	-	10,445,842
Total	\$ 11,707,699	\$ -	\$ 11,707,699
Life membership:			
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 93,920	\$ -	\$ 93,920
Mutual funds/ETFs:			
Domestic fixed income funds	3,730,078		3,730,078
International fixed-income funds	178,422		178,422
Domestic equity funds	595,634		595,634
International equity funds	118,277		118,277
Total mutual funds/ETFs	4,622,411	-	4,622,411
Total	\$ 4,716,331	\$ -	\$ 4,716,331

5. NET ASSETS RELEASED FROM DONOR RESTRICTIONS

Net assets were released from donor restrictions by incurring expenses satisfying the restricted purposes or by occurrence of the passage of time or other events specified by donors. The net assets released from restrictions are as follows:

	2020
Subject to expenditure for specified purpose:	
Service program	\$ 5,000
Education loan/scholarship program	39,200
	<u>\$ 44,200</u>

Service Program—Donations from individuals and amounts received from each unit as a mandate for the service program are recorded as net assets with donor restrictions, which are used for persons eligible for DAVA who are in need of temporary financial assistance in accordance with the bylaws of DAVA. The total amount of assistance is limited to \$1,000 per individual and in the aggregate is limited to total net assets with purpose restrictions. Benefits are paid directly to the service provider and not to the individual.

Disaster Relief/Other Programs—Donations from units and individuals for disaster relief are recorded as net assets with donor restrictions, which are used for members of DAV and DAVA who are in need of temporary financial assistance due to natural disaster, such as flood or earthquake. Donations from this fund are made to DAV and benefits are paid by DAV directly to the individual. Additionally, included in the net assets with donor restrictions are donations from units and individuals that are to be used for the DAVA Caregiver Initiative, as well as Camp Corral and Winter Sports Clinic.

Education Program—Donations from individuals and amounts received from each unit as a mandate for scholarships are recorded as net assets with donor restrictions from which scholarships are awarded to students in accordance with the bylaws of DAVA. Scholarships are paid directly to the educational institution and not to the student. In 2020, there were 38 scholarships in amounts ranging from \$500 to \$1,500 issued to selected DAVA member applicants for a total of \$39,200. The existing education loans are still required to be repaid in accordance with the terms of the original loan agreements, which includes full repayment within seven years of graduation or withdrawal from school. At December 31, 2020, the total amount of loans outstanding was \$13,439, net of reserve.

6. EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Certain employees of DAVA are covered by the Disabled American Veterans Retirement Plan, a defined benefit pension plan. The benefits are based on years of service and the employee's compensation. Contributions are intended to provide not only for benefits attributed to service to-date, but also for those expected in the future. In 2020, DAV charged DAVA \$95,556 for its share of the retirement plan cost, as well as other benefits for employees, including health and life insurance and contributions to a defined contribution plan.

DAV provides certain health care and life insurance benefits for its retired employees and their spouses. All employees of DAVA may become eligible for these benefits if they reach normal retirement age while working for DAVA. In 2020, DAV did not charge DAVA for these benefits. Such amounts are immaterial.

7. RELATED-PARTY TRANSACTIONS

DAV provides services to the DAVA, which puts DAV in the position to influence operating policies of DAVA.

DAVA occupies space in the DAV National Headquarters' building and also uses certain office equipment owned by DAV. No fees are charged for such usage. The value of these contributed facilities is estimated to be \$8,106 in 2020 and is included as revenue and expense in the accompanying statement of activities.

Certain costs are paid by DAV National Headquarters on behalf of DAVA. Such costs are reimbursed by DAVA. As of December 31, 2020, DAVA owed approximately \$112,572 for such costs, which is included in accounts payable and other liabilities in the accompanying statement of financial position.

DAV National Headquarters also processes membership dues on behalf of DAVA. The amounts collected are remitted to DAVA. As of December 31, 2020, there was no amount due to DAVA.

8. SUBSEQUENT EVENTS

No events have occurred after December 31, 2020, but before April 12, 2021, the date the financial statements were available to be issued, that require consideration as adjustments to, or disclosures in, the financial statements.

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