



Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary
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The first year after discharge from military service can be a particularly challenging one for many veterans. The Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) reports on veteran suicides indicate that veterans are particularly vulnerable during this transition period when they may be struggling to reintegrate into civilian life, including readjusting to life with family members and finding meaningful employment. At the same time, they may also be coping with conditions resulting from their military service, including post-traumatic stress disorder or a traumatic brain injury.

Two identical bills, S. 1198 and H.R. 2819, the Solid Start Act of 2021 would strengthen and codify the Solid Start program, created by the VA in 2019. This program requires VA representatives to make calls to newly separated service members over the first-year post-transition period to help them navigate the process for accessing their VA benefits or any other resources they may need for a successful transition from military service. During these calls, VA representatives check on the veteran's overall transition experience, answer questions and direct veterans to needed resources, supportive services and programs.

The Solid Start Act of 2021, would strengthen this transition program by requiring VA to provide newly separated service members information about Vet Centers, state and local resources, as well as contact information for veterans' service organizations. It also directs the VA to focus these efforts on women veterans and veterans who accessed mental health services prior to separation from the military.

Please contact your Senators and Representative today to ask them to support this important legislation or thank them for their support.

On October 8, the President signed into law S. 189, the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2021, which authorizes a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for veterans receiving Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) disability compensation, clothing allowance, and survivors receiving dependency indemnity compensation (DIC) payments.

VA adjusts veterans' monthly disability compensation amounts based on the yearly change in the cost-of-living as determined by the Social Security Administration. The recently announced 5.9% COLA, will increase the amount paid to veterans and their survivors effective December 2021, and will be reflected in January 2022 compensation payments.

In the last two years, COLA increases have been less than 2%. This COLA increase of 5.9% for 2022 is the largest increase in nearly 40 years.

“Don't FUDGE on Care for Veterans” as we're “Soaring Above & Beyond”

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