

Important Legislation Included in FY 2022 NDAA

Attention Action Corps Members: Due to your hard work and dedicated advocacy, many provisions supporting service members, veterans, and their families were passed in the [National Defense Authorization Act \(NDAA\) for Fiscal Year 2022](#). We want to highlight a few provisions that could affect you or many of those on whose behalf you advocate. The NDAA contains over 700 provisions, including several pieces of VFW-supported legislation added as amendments:

- **Military Pay Raise.** Service members received a 2.7 percent increase in basic pay for calendar year 2022. This raise is the product of the automatic annual statutory calculation that is aligned to the Employment Cost Index.
- **Military Justice Reform** (Subtitles D and E). Sexual assault and harassment in the military are pervasive issues affecting an alarming number of service members, past and present. Provisions within these subtitles represent substantive changes in how the military handles these cases, including sexual assault investigations that will now be fully independent of chains of command.
- The **National Global War on Terrorism Memorial** (Sec. 6605). This authorizes a Global War on Terrorism memorial to be constructed on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. The memorial for America's longest running war will be rightly placed among the war memorials of past generations so that future generations will always remember.
- **Updates and Preservation of Memorials to Chaplains at Arlington National Cemetery** (Sec. 584). This legislation authorizes needed updates and corrections to the Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish chaplain memorials located at Arlington National Cemetery. Updates will include the addition of chaplains who have died in service to our nation as far back as World War II.
- The **Alexander Lofgren Veterans in Parks (VIP) Act** (Sec. 641). This legislation will provide free lifetime access to national parks and public lands that honor service members, veterans, and Gold Star families. The National Park Service offered free access through their annual America the Beautiful pass, but this law now creates an enduring lifetime benefit.
- **Improvement of Postpartum Care for Members of the Military and Dependents** (Sec. 707). This will improve postpartum care by creating clinical practice guidelines for postpartum care in military medical treatment facilities. Pelvic health assessment and treatment, and screening for postpartum depression will be addressed.
- **Pilot Program on Assistance for Mental Health Appointment Scheduling at Military Medical Treatment Facilities** (Sec. 734). This establishes a pilot program to assist in scheduling mental health appointments to create a warm handoff and eliminate the barrier to gaps between appointments to ensure participants have continuity of mental health treatment.
- **Afghanistan War Commission Act of 2021** (Sec. 1094). This act establishes a commission charged with investigating all aspects of United States' activities in Afghanistan from June 1, 2001, through August 30,

2021. Points of emphasis will include but not be limited to United States policy objectives, efficacy of efforts, intelligence activities, and circumstances leading to the downfall of the Afghanistan National Defense Security Forces. The commission's final report will be released to the public.

- **Basic Needs Allowance for Members on Active Service in the Armed Forces** (Sec. 601). Food insecurity among military families is a critical issue impacting an estimated 160,000 troops. The newly created Basic Needs Allowance will bring relief to many active duty families by helping to ensure yearly gross household income is equivalent to 130 percent of the federal poverty guidelines as set by the Department of Health and Human Services.
- **Study on Employment of Military Spouses** (Sec. 567). Gainful employment for military spouses can be challenging for a variety of reasons including frequent relocations, licensure challenges, and child care access. This study directs a thorough evaluation of barriers leading to spouse unemployment and underemployment, as well as the identification of policy solutions.
- **Equal Incentive Pay for Members of the Reserve Components of the Armed Forces** (Sec. 602). Recent wars and contingencies have highlighted disparities between the entitlements and benefits received by members of the active and reserve components. This policy change ensures incentive pay parity between members of the National Guard and Reserve, and those on active duty.
- **Standardization of Department of Defense Definitions for Terms Related to Suicide** (Sec. 726). Consistent suicide-related definitions and data collection are key to fully understanding suicide within the ranks. This provision will ensure core definitions and related data collection methods are established and standardized across the Department of Defense (DOD).
- **GAO Biennial Study on Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record Program** (Sec. 741). This legislation directs regular studies and reporting by the Government Accountability Office on the Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record (ILER) program. As a vital component of DOD and Department of Veterans Affairs' efforts to align health care with individuals' unique exposures during service, these studies will help ensure the ILER program is functioning as intended.
- **Feasibility Study on Establishment of Housing History for Members of the Armed Forces** (Sec. 526). Veteran success after service is in part determined by having reliable housing. However, not all transitioning service members (TSMs) leave service with verifiable housing histories if they have lived only in government-provided housing. Born out of a VFW-SVA Legislative Fellow proposal, this study will determine the feasibility of providing TSMs with a housing history form that can demonstrate their reliability as tenants to prospective civilian landlords.