Legislative Victories

The VFW played an instrumental role in virtually every significant piece of veterans’ legislation passed in the 20th century, as well as bills enacted in the 21st century. Note: In each case, this is the year an act was passed or an institution established.

For more information, contact the VFW National Legislative Service at vfwac@vfw.org.

1917 War Risk Insurance Act Amendments
1918 Vocational Rehabilitation Act (P.L. 178)
1919 Census Act Rider on Veterans Preference Discharge Allowance
1920 Widows and Orphans Pension Act (Spanish-American War)
1921 Veterans Bureau Act
1923 Veterans Preference Point System
1924 House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs
   World War Adjusted Compensation Act
1925 Senate Subcommittee on Veterans’ Affairs
1926 Spanish-American War benefits
   New Johnson Act (WWI benefits)
1930 Veterans Administration (VA) World War Service Disability Pension Act (P.L. 522)
1931 Bacharach Amendment (P.L. 743) allows borrowing on WWI bonus certificates
1933 Wagner-Peyser Act: Veterans Employment Service
1934 Pension for widows of WWI vets
1936 VFW congressional charter signed by President Roosevelt
   Bonus bonds ($2.4 billion) to WWI vets redeemable
1938 Armistice Day (Nov. 11) legal holiday
1940 National Service Life Insurance
1943 Benefits to WWII veterans (P.L. 10)
   Disabled Veterans Rehabilitation Act
1944 GI Bill of Rights (P.L. 346)
   Veterans Preference Act
1946 Veteran Emergency Housing Act
1947 Bureau of Veterans Re-employment Rights (BVRR)
1950 Vocational Rehabilitation Act
1951 Servicemen’s Indemnity & Insurance
1952 Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act (Korean War GI Bill)
1954 Veterans Compensation Act
   Nov. 11 declared as Veterans Day (P.L. 380)
1962 Veterans Benefits Act (Cold War GI Bill)
1966 Veterans Readjustment Benefits Act (P.L. 89-358) (Vietnam War GI Bill)
1970 Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs
1972 Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act
1973  Federal court agrees veterans preference applies to state jobs
1974  Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act (vocational rehabilitation)
1976  Veterans Education & Employment Assistance Act
1977  Post-Vietnam Era Veterans Educational Assistance Act
1978  Veterans preference preserved
   Veterans & Survivors Pension Improvement Act
   Veterans Day returned to Nov. 11
1979  Vietnam Veterans Outreach Program (creates Vet Centers)
1980  VFW calls for Agent Orange study
   Veterans Rehabilitation & Education Amendments
1981  Former POW Benefits Act
   Veterans Health Care, Training & Small Business Loan Act
1982  Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS)
   Vietnam Veterans Memorial dedicated
1983  Emergency Veterans Job-Training Act
1984  Montgomery GI Bill Veterans Dioxin & Radiation Exposure Compensation Standards Act
   (P.L. 98-542): Agent Orange & Atomic Exposure
1987  New GI Bill Continuation Act
1988  Radiation-Exposed Veterans Compensation Act
   Department of Veterans Affairs Act
   Veterans Judicial Review Act
1989  VA becomes a Cabinet department Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims
1990  Agent Orange service-connection
1991  Agent Orange Act (P.L. 102-4)
   Persian Gulf War Veterans Assistance Act (P.L. 102-25)
1992  Veterans Health Care Act
1996  Veterans Health Care Eligibility Reform Act
1999  Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits Act
2003  Concurrent receipt for military retirees rated 50% disabled or more
2004  Full concurrent receipt for military retirees rated 100% disabled
   Traumatic Injury Insurance supplemental created
2005  Protestors banned from military funerals
   Stolen Valor Act signed into law
2006  VFW calls for VA/military health care system review after Walter Reed outpatient debacle
2008  Record VA discretionary budget approved
   GI Bill for the 21st Century signed into law
2009  Advance Appropriations for VA becomes law
2010  Family Caregiver Legislation signed into law
   Ensured all VA and DOD health care programs met minimum health care coverage standards
2011  VOW to Hire Heroes Act
   VFW stopped TRICARE premiums from increasing annually
2012  Honoring America’s Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act
   Extended USERRA protections to veterans working for TSA
2013  Reinstated military Tuition Assistance programs
   New Stolen Valor Act signed into law
   Stopped Creation of Distinguished Warfare Medal (Drone Medal)
2014  Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act of 2014
   In-State Tuition for Post-9/11 GI Bill eligible veterans
   Advance Appropriations for VA Benefits
2015  Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans (SAV) Act
   Eliminated 1 percent COLA reduction penalty on future military retirees
   Created government match to military Thrift Savings Plan accounts
2016  Toxic Exposure Research Act to evaluate impact on descendants  
      Enhanced fertility treatment and adoption services  
2017  Forever GI Bill gives veterans a lifetime to use GI Bill benefits  
      Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017  
      VA Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act  
      Global War on Terrorism Memorial  
      Improved VA hiring and retention authorities  
      Veterans Choice Program improvements and expansion  
      Declassifying toxic exposure documents  
      Prevented significant copayment increases for TRICARE  
2018  Expanded caregiver benefits to veterans of all eras  
      Consolidated community care into one improved program  
      Established a process to evaluate and improve VA facilities to better serve veterans  
      Defeated proposed cuts to Individual Unemployability  
2019  Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act  
      Elimination of the Widow’s Tax  
2020  Added bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, and parkinsonism to VA’s list of presumptive  
      conditions associated with exposure to Agent Orange  
      Changed the statutory definition of Vietnam veterans to include individuals who served in the  
      Republic of Vietnam from Nov. 1, 1955, to Feb. 27, 1961  
      Deborah Sampson Act  
      Elimination of the 12-year limit on using Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) benefits  
2021  Expanded maternity care options from community providers  
      PAWS for Veterans Therapy Act  
2022  Honoring our PACT Act  
      Dr. Kate Hendricks Thomas SERVICE Act  
      Global War on Terrorism Memorial Location Act  
      UCMJ reform on sexual assault and harassment

Updated 1/2024