

VFW Ramps Up Efforts to Combat 'Claim Sharks'

Predatory Claim Shark companies are engaging in illegal activities and there is no gray area here, no matter how much money they want to throw at it

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A message from the VFW National Commander Duane Sarmiento:

For more than a century, your VFW has been on the forefront of advocating for veterans and their earned benefits. In the last year alone, **more than 550,000** veterans received **more than \$13 billion** in benefits from VA through the diligence and professionalism of the VFW's global network of VA-accredited service officers. Not a penny of this \$13 billion went to line the pockets of the VFW. It all went to the veterans, as the law requires.

The VFW has been a vocal opponent of [predatory "Claim Sharks"](#) – companies who charge veterans illegal fees for sub-par VA benefit claims assistance. Make no mistake, the proliferation of these illicit organizations is a threat, not only to the VFW's cornerstone **National Veterans Service** (NVS) program, but an even greater threat to the VA benefits system as we know it.

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Since their emergence, the VFW has ratcheted up the pressure on these companies by passing legislation to crack down on their practices at the state level and are working to help veterans bring litigation against them. We have trained our more than 2,300 VFW Accredited Service Officers on how to handle Claim Sharks, and we continue to seek out veterans who need help getting out of these predatory contracts.

Now these Claim Sharks are trying to normalize and legitimize their financial exploitation of our nation's disabled veterans – they even [named VSOs like the VFW](#) as their “threats.” While we should be flattered that they recognize the threat we pose, now is the time to decisively defeat this scourge.

The Bottom line is: Predatory Claim Shark companies are engaging in illegal activities. There is no gray area here, no matter how much money they want to throw at it. Their latest collusion is a desperate attempt to avoid accountability.

Your VFW has aggressively pursued this issue in all corners of government, solidifying the veteran community's stance on this issue. You will see more from the VFW in the coming weeks, asking you to take action with your Congressional representatives, your state legislatures and your communities. We encourage you to read up on the facts and familiarize yourself with this issue, and to help we have produced a [VFW Claim Shark Fact Sheet](#) for you to use and distribute widely to veterans. (Download a printer-friendly version [here](#).)

Like the VFW said [last year before Congress](#), “Any group that fails to adhere to VA's well-established standards of accreditation and fee arrangements should be greeted at the door by Capitol Police, not offered a seat at the same table as VA-accredited representatives who are held to certain professional and ethical standards.”

This fight may get a little messy in the coming weeks, but the VFW is determined to stop predatory Claim Sharks and we are eager to serve alongside you in this fight.