



Washington Update

Check out the [PVAAction Force](#) page to view legislative campaigns and a list of key legislation.

HVAC EXAMINES MORE THAN TWO DOZEN BILLS

On March 18, the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs (HVAC) held a legislative hearing to discuss 27 pending bills, including several pieces of legislation that would reauthorize specific policies and programs at the VA. Many of them have not been reauthorized by Congress in more than three decades. VA officials were the only witnesses requested for this single panel hearing which lasted slightly more than two hours. PVA submitted a statement for the record on bills of interest, like the Dental Care for Veterans Act (H.R. 210). Even though dental benefits are the bridge to health and wellness, VA closely rations these services. Currently, VA dental care is limited to those veterans who are 100 percent service connected or have a service-connected dental condition, former prisoners of war, and homeless veterans. Dental care may also be available if a dental condition is aggravating a service-connected condition or complicates its treatment. PVA believes VA should furnish dental care in the same manner as any other medical service.

Meanwhile, unaccredited claims consultants often skirt long-standing mandates of Congress and VA that require all who assist veterans with the preparation, presentation, or prosecution of VA claims and appeals to be accredited by the VA, subject to ongoing VA oversight, and compliant with laws regarding fees. Often, their technique of choice is to operate in the

shadows by assisting a veteran with claims preparation and then leaving the veteran to file his or her claim alone, thereby avoiding the appearance of "representing" the claimant. Furthermore, they routinely obtain medical opinions from affiliated medical providers, raising ethical concerns regarding the veracity of such opinions. In recent years, the unaccredited "claims consulting" industry has exploded and new guardrails are needed to protect veterans from individuals and entities seeking to surreptitiously take their hard-earned benefits. In our statement, we reiterated our strong support of the GUARD VA Benefits Act (H.R. 1732), which would reinstate criminal penalties for non-VA accredited persons charging veterans unauthorized fees relating to claims for benefits under the laws administered by VA.

Another PVA-supported bill reviewed by the committee was the Establishing the Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition Administration Act (H.R. 6843). This legislation seeks to create a new administration within VA to oversee the agency's education, training, employment, and other programs focused on helping veterans as they transition to civilian life. The new Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition Administration would be headed by an Under Secretary for Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition. Two of the programs that would transition to the new administration include VA's Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) program and the Specially Adapted



Housing (SAH) program. Although relatively small in terms of budget and numbers of veterans served, they are vitally important to veterans who have catastrophic disabilities because of their military service. Without them, these veterans would not be able to access independent living services or adapt their homes to meet their disability-related access needs.

PVA had mixed feelings about several of the reauthorization bills. For example, the VA Research Reform Act (H.R. 6583) is intended to strengthen VA research efforts by managing all the department's studies through a centralized research management system. The bill directs the VA to establish a tiered review process for research proposals. Lower-risk research projects could move through the approval process more quickly, while higher-risk projects would undergo a more comprehensive review. Additionally, the legislation would establish department-wide timelines for approving research proposals and creating clinical research hubs. The VA would also be required to report on the implementation and performance of the new research framework.

A centralized research data system could reduce information silos across the VA research enterprise and provide improved transparency into the status and performance of projects. Standardized review timelines could improve predictability for researchers and institutions seeking to partner with VA. Also, the bill's requirement for mandatory planning for how research outcomes translate into benefits for veterans, could strengthen accountability and ensure taxpayer resources are directed toward meaningful improvements in care.

However, the bill also provides an override authority that could allow senior VA leadership to undermine the integrity of existing review processes. Additionally, its emphasis on direct veteran impact may unintentionally discourage foundational research. Basic research, even when it lacks immediate clinical application, is often the precursor to breakthroughs that ultimately transform care for veterans. For veterans with spinal cord injuries and disorders (SCI/D), this concern is particularly significant. SCI/D research represents a relatively small subset of the VA's overall research portfolio. Under a

system focused heavily on broad or immediately measurable impact, research focused on smaller populations could be deprioritized. PVA believes the bill represents a positive first step toward improving the VA research pipeline, but careful oversight of the implementation process will be necessary. We look forward to further commenting on this bill and others when stakeholders take their turn at the table later this spring. A video of the hearing and all associated documents, including PVA's statement, can be viewed [here](#).

HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE CONSIDERS ADA NOTIFICATION LEGISLATION

On March 26, the House Judiciary Committee held a [full committee legislative markup](#) on seven pieces of legislation. One of the bills considered was the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) 30 Days to Comply Act (H.R. 6453). This legislation, introduced by Rep. Mike Lawler (R-NY) and Rep. Luis Correa (D-CA), would require a person with a disability to give detailed notice to a public accommodation of an architectural barrier under the ADA prior to being able to enforce his or her civil rights through the legal system. PVA has long opposed ADA notification requirements as we believe it would result in delayed ADA compliance and decreased access for disabled veterans and people with disabilities. The last time an ADA notification bill moved in the House was the 115th Congress's passage of H.R. 620, the ADA Education and Reform Act.

Under H.R. 6453, a person with a disability would have to provide a detailed notice of a barrier prior to filing a lawsuit and give the business 30 days to remove it or potentially up to 60 days to make "substantial progress" in doing so. "Substantial progress" is not clearly defined, and it would effectively eliminate the current requirement for providing access and replace it with something inferior.

During the markup, proponents of the legislation expressed concerns about the effect of lawsuits on small businesses. Opponents expressed concerns about the impact of notification requirements on people with disabilities and noted the role of state laws providing damages in increasing the number of lawsuits in those

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states. Title III (public accommodations) of the ADA only allows for injunctive relief (barrier removal) and attorney's fees in some situations.

The legislation was voted out of committee 16-8. Except for Rep. Correa, who voted in favor of the bill, the final tally was along party lines. Next steps for the bill are currently unclear.

O&I SUBCOMMITTEE HOLDS PENDING LEGISLATION HEARING

On March 25, the House Veterans' Affairs Committee Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations (O&I) held a pending legislation hearing. Staff from the VA made up the first panel of witnesses and the second panel included the American Legion, a representative from the University of Virginia Health System, a representative from the American Federation of Government Employees, and a witness from an economic policy think tank.

The O&I Subcommittee tends to evaluate legislation that focuses on management, budget, procurement, and other niche policy areas related to the VA. Legislation at this hearing covered topics like the VA's management of their software licensure, bonus and relocation recovery, requiring that VA health technicians carry certain sterile processing certifications, and the authorization of unions to reach collective bargaining agreements.

You can watch the hearing [here](#).

SVAC HOLDS LEGISLATIVE MARKUP

On March 18, the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee (SVAC) held a legislative markup on 23 pieces of legislation affecting veterans. Included in this hearing was the Automotive Support Services to Improve Safe Transportation Act of 2025 or the ASSIST Act (S. 1726). This PVA-supported bill would clarify the definition of certain medically necessary automobile adaptations available to disabled veterans who may require them due to illness or injury.

Another bill included in the markup was S. 2061, the Molly R. Loomis Research for Descendants of Toxic Exposed Veterans Act. This bill would establish a multiagency task force to conduct research on the diagnosis and treatment of health conditions of descendants of veterans exposed to toxic substances during their military service. Also addressed was S. 1657, the Review Every Veteran's Claim Act, which would limit the VA's authority to deny a veteran's benefit's claim solely based on the veteran's failure to appear for a medical examination associated with it.

SVAC favorably voted all 23 bills out of the Committee. PVA previously testified before the Senate on these pieces of legislation during a hearing in December. To view that hearing, click [here](#). To read our testimony from that hearing, click [here](#).

CONGRESSIONAL ROUNDTABLE ON IVF ACCESS AT THE VA

On March 17, the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Minority hosted a roundtable titled, "Protecting the Freedom to Build a Family: Fertility Care and IVF Access for Veterans." Associate Legislative Director Julie Howell represented PVA. Other participants included veterans organizations, community providers, and family building organizations.

PVA took the time to draw attention to priority legislation that would expand access to in vitro fertilization (IVF) for veterans and service members, while also highlighting the important work done by the working group that PVA is proud to help lead. Specifically, we have worked with other stakeholders to advocate for expanded access to assisted reproductive technologies and IVF through traditional legislative paths, as well as through the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

Based on the feedback of the diverse group of stakeholders in attendance, it was very clear that the VA needs to improve outreach, education, and understanding of its fertility treatment programs. Barriers still exist at almost every level of the VA when it comes to assistance with family planning. PVA will



continue to work with the VA, Congress, and other stakeholders to improve that access.

You can watch the roundtable [here](#).

VA ANNOUNCES NEW EFFORTS TO COMBAT FRAUD

The VA recently announced that they are developing a new tool to scan submitted Disability Benefits Questionnaires (DBQs) for “tell-tale signs” of fraud. According to the VA, this new system, which is not active yet and may be rolled out sometime in 2026, will help VA field staff detect suspicious patterns that may help identify when organized fraud rings are posing as legitimate medical providers to prey on veterans. They stress that this new system is not AI but relies on manual data entry and analysis. However, this announcement was not without its controversies.

A “[Stars and Stripes](#)” article initially reported that the VA had plans to “analyze one million old disability benefits questionnaires dating back to 2010 to identify possible signs of fraud using this tool. However, after backlash from the veterans community, the VA clarified that this new system is “forward-looking only... No Veteran’s claim or benefit will be reduced or denied because of this effort.”

AMTRAK ACCESSIBILITY UPDATES

Amtrak recently unveiled new trainsets that will provide increased accessibility for passengers with disabilities. The new Airo fleet includes additional accessibility features, such as more spacious and accessible restrooms and vestibules, accessible café cars, and wheelchair lifts. The trains also feature adjustable tables in the wheelchair accessible seating areas and new accessible elements. The trains will initially debut on the Amtrak Cascades in the Pacific Northwest corridor and then expand to other areas.

In addition, Amtrak is developing a new long-distance fleet. Initially, this fleet was expected to be a bi-level train. However, after further evaluations and considerations, the fleet will be transitioning to a

universal single-level fleet. The fleet will replace today’s mix of bi-level and single-level long-distance trainsets.

SUPERSHUTTLE SETTLES NATIONWIDE LAWSUIT TO PROVIDE WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE SERVICES

In May 2025, three defendants sued WHC Worldwide, LLC and WHC zShuttle, LLC for disability discrimination. These entities operate the airport transportation service called SuperShuttle. Specifically, the complaint alleged that SuperShuttle discriminated against mobility device users because they did not provide wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs). The complaint alleged that SuperShuttle did not have any working WAVs or contract with any third parties to provide wheelchair accessible airport transportation services. The complaint argued that failure to provide WAVs was in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act and California state disability discrimination laws.

On March 12, 2026, the plaintiffs and SuperShuttle filed a settlement agreement that would increase WAV services. Under the settlement, SuperShuttle agreed to provide WAVs at each of the airports that they service on their website. In addition, WAVs must be available at all hours in which customers can book non-WAV services, for every service category of non-WAV services, at the same cost, and with no more than 72-hours’ advanced notice. Within two months of the effective date, SuperShuttle must provide WAVs at the Bay Area, California, airports that it services. Within six months, SuperShuttle must provide WAV services at every airport and point to point service that can be booked on its website.

DOJ FILES COMPLAINT AGAINST SEAWORLD FOR TITLE III VIOLATIONS

On March 26, the Department of Justice’s (DOJ) Civil Rights Division and the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Middle District of Florida (collectively, the “Department”) [announced](#) that they filed a [lawsuit](#) against United Parks & Resorts Inc., (UPR) the company who operates SeaWorld, Busch Gardens, Discovery Cove, Sesame Place, Water Country USA, Adventure





Island, and Aquatica over allegations of violations of Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Title III requires equal access for people with disabilities in places of public accommodation, like theme parks. The lawsuit alleges that in November 2025, UPR enforced a policy that prohibits the use of wheeled walkers with seats by guests with disabilities who attend its parks. The parks offered alternative options for wheelchairs and Electric Convenience Vehicles, ranging from \$37 to \$115.

According to the complaint, Seaworld Orlando prohibited two veterans from using their VA-provided rollators with seats. One veteran was forced to use a wheelchair provided by the park against his physician's medical guidance. The other veteran was unable to attend the park because it was impractical for his wife to push him around in a wheelchair. The veteran and his wife decided to cancel their annual passes as a result of the wheeled walker ban.

The Department alleges that UPR's policy violates Title III and requests the court to require UPR to modify its policy, provide ADA training for its employees, and provide monetary damages to those affected. In response to the lawsuit, UPR released a statement disagreeing with the claims, stating that the policy was issued for safety reasons and is consistent with ADA requirements, and reflects UPR's commitment to providing a safe and inclusive experience. PVA will continue to track this lawsuit.

NEWS OF NOTE

PVA Participates in Annual NOVA Legislative Seminar

On March 20, PVA National Legislative Director Morgan Brown and Associate Legislative Director Jennifer Hunt attended a gathering hosted by the Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs (NOVA). NOVA is a professional organization for nurses employed by VA that works to ensure nurses have what they need to provide the best care to veterans. This year's event brought together representatives from more than two dozen like-minded organizations from around the country, plus VA and congressional staff to discuss issues impacting the VA

health care system. PVA briefed attendees on some of our key legislative priorities for 2026, which include ensuring the department is properly resourced (funding, staffing, etc.) and critical elements like the SCI/D system of care are preserved.

NHTSA Hosts AV Safety Forum

On March 10, Senior Advocacy Attorney Danica Gonzalves attended the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's safety forum on autonomous vehicles (AV). The speakers spoke on needs to expand the AV industry, including the manufacturing of additional vehicles and extending services to more cities. Many of the conversations included the need for testing and performance indicators and how AVs can be safely deployed nationwide. In addition, the forum featured current AVs including Waymo, Zoox, Tesla, Holon, and Lucid vehicles. PVA is working with stakeholders to advocate for access for wheelchair users to AVs as they are being positioned as the ridesharing vehicles of the future. AVs are already on streets servicing passengers in select cities across the nation.

SURVEYS AND COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

FAA Survey for People with Disabilities About Aircraft Evacuation

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has launched a survey to gather feedback from passengers with disabilities regarding aircraft evacuations. The lack of research into the evacuation process for passengers with disabilities in air travel is a source of significant concern. Please provide FAA with your feedback [here](#).

Veterans' Committee Activities

Please visit the [House](#) and [Senate](#) Veterans' Affairs Committee webpages for information on previous and upcoming hearings and markups.

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