

ALVA

VETERANS ADVOCACY & BENEFITS REPORT

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Policy. Benefits. Opportunities. What veterans need to know.

The American Latino Veterans Association (ALVA) monitors public policy, legislation, executive actions, benefits, services and opportunities affecting America's veterans, servicemembers and military families. This monthly report highlights consequential developments since the prior edition and practical information veterans can use.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The White House issued Executive Order 14426 directing faster, ongoing sharing of military personnel and medical records with VA and new digital tools intended to speed benefits and connect separating servicemembers with employment and training. Congress and the President enacted a stopgap funding law, H.R. 6500 / Public Law 119-103, keeping federal agencies funded through December 11, 2026 and extending authorities for veteran programs while FY2027 appropriations remain unfinished. The Major Richard Star Act remains unresolved despite overwhelming bipartisan support; the House discharge petition was reported one signature short of the 218 needed to force further House action in early September. VA announced a record \$1.17 billion in FY2027 homelessness grants to 680 organizations nationwide, with awards beginning October 1, and VET TEC 2.0 still had 2,325 participant openings as of September 8. State activity this month includes final approval of Pennsylvania's updated state-veterans-benefits regulations and new Texas grants supporting local veteran-service organizations.

WASHINGTON WATCH

PRIORITY / ACTION

Take Care of America's Veterans Act: H.R. 9237 / S. 4744 | Priority | Pending in Congress

The broad package of more than 60 veterans measures remains pending. It would address disability and survivor benefits, caregivers, education, transition assistance, community care and VA operations, but disagreement continues over provisions that would finance benefit expansions through changes affecting future disability ratings and other veteran costs.

Why it matters: The package could reshape multiple VA programs at once, but the unresolved financing dispute remains a major obstacle.

ALVA position: Monitoring.

What changed: No final compromise emerged by September 15. The central question remains whether congressional leaders can preserve broadly supported veterans provisions while resolving objections to the offsets.

[Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee - Take Care of America's Veterans Act](#)

Sergeant First Class Jorge Otero Barreto Medal of Honor Act: H.R. 9595 | Priority / Action | House Armed Services Committee

H.R. 9595 would authorize a posthumous Medal of Honor for Sergeant First Class Jorge Otero Barreto for acts of valor during the Vietnam War. The bill remains referred to the House Armed Services Committee.

Why it matters: Otero Barreto's extraordinary service is part of the broader history of Latino contributions to U.S. national defense and remains a particular ALVA advocacy priority.

ALVA position: Supports.

What changed: No committee action was identified since the August edition. ALVA will continue watching for additional cosponsors and movement in the House Armed Services Committee.

[Official bill record - H.R. 9595](#)

Major Richard Star Act: H.R. 2102 / S. 1032 | Priority / Action | Discharge petition nearing threshold

The stand-alone Major Richard Star Act would allow certain combat-injured, medically retired veterans to receive both full military retirement pay and VA disability compensation without the current dollar-for-dollar offset.

Why it matters: The proposal addresses a longstanding disparity for servicemembers whose military careers were cut short by combat-related injuries.

ALVA position: Monitoring.

What changed: In early September, House Discharge Petition No. 22 was reported at 217 signatures - one short of the 218 needed to trigger the discharge process. The policy is also included, in modified form, in the Take Care package.

[Major Richard Star Act - congressional information](#)

MOVING

Veterans Flight Training Responsibility Act of 2026: H.R. 5634 | Moving | Reported by House Veterans Affairs Committee

The House Veterans Affairs Committee reported an amended H.R. 5634 on September 8 and placed it on the Union Calendar. The bill would impose a lifetime limit, indexed for inflation, on certain Post-9/11 GI Bill payments for flight training at public institutions.

Why it matters: The proposal could reduce future GI Bill support for a small number of veterans pursuing high-cost flight-training programs. It is a proposal, not current law.

[Official reported bill - H.R. 5634](#)

Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2027: H.R. 6500 / Public Law 119-103 | Enacted September 2

The President signed H.R. 6500 on September 2. The law funds federal agencies at generally current levels through December 11, 2026 and extends authorities for a range of programs, including veteran programs, while Congress continues work on full-year FY2027 appropriations.

Why it matters: VA and other federal services avoid a September 30 shutdown, but longer-term FY2027 funding decisions remain unresolved.

[White House - H.R. 6500 signed into law](#)

WATCH

Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2026: H.R. 8552 / S. 4487 | Watch

The bipartisan proposal would increase VA disability compensation and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation effective December 1, 2026 in line with the Social Security cost-of-living adjustment. It remains pending and is not yet law.

[Official bill text - H.R. 8552](#)

Sharri Briley and Eric Edmundson Veterans Benefits Expansion Act: H.R. 6047 | Watch | Passed House

The House-passed bill would increase benefits for certain catastrophically disabled veterans and qualifying survivors and broaden VA home-loan eligibility for some Guard and Reserve members. It remains pending in the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee.

[Congressional Budget Office - H.R. 6047](#)

FROM THE WHITE HOUSE

Accelerating Access to Veterans' Benefits and Employment Opportunities: Executive Order 14426 | September 8, 2026

Executive Order 14426 directs the Departments of War and Veterans Affairs to modernize records sharing so VA can receive Official Military Personnel Files and Service Treatment Records throughout a servicemember's career. It also directs development of new digital tools, including appropriate use of AI, to streamline access to benefits and employment resources.

Why it matters: Missing or delayed military and medical records can slow disability claims, health-care access and other benefits during transition.

What to know / watch: The order sets a 30-day requirement for immediate record sharing at discharge, 120 days for review of relevant IT contracts, and 180 days for updated systems, digital tools and transition/employment changes. Implementation - not the order alone - will determine the practical effect for veterans.

[Executive Order 14426 - The White House](#)

ACROSS THE STATES

Pennsylvania: State Veterans' Benefits Regulation 13-6 | Approved August 20, 2026 | Final publication pending

Pennsylvania's Independent Regulatory Review Commission approved DMVA Regulation 13-6 after both legislative veterans committees deemed it approved on August 19. The regulation extensively updates and clarifies application, adjudication, appeal and administrative procedures across state veterans programs, including the disabled-veterans real-estate-tax exemption and state pension programs.

Why it matters: This is a broad administrative modernization of how Pennsylvania veterans apply for and appeal decisions involving state benefits. Veterans should watch for final publication and the effective date.

[Pennsylvania DMVA - State Veterans Benefits regulatory initiative](#)

Texas: Funds for Veterans' Assistance Grants | September awards underway

Texas continued its Grants Across Texas awards in September. On September 1, the state announced \$1.106 million for five Panhandle organizations expected to serve about 836 veterans; on September 3, it announced \$1.7 million for six West Texas organizations expected to serve about 1,800 veterans.

Why it matters: The state-administered grants support community organizations delivering direct services to veterans and demonstrate a scalable state model for funding local veteran assistance.

[Texas Governor - Panhandle veterans grants](#)

Pennsylvania: Plan. Pause. Protect. Veteran Suicide-Prevention Campaign | Implementation underway

Pennsylvania launched its first Plan. Pause. Protect. event in August and is continuing suicide-prevention outreach during September. The campaign connects veterans with mental-health and community resources and includes education on safe firearm storage and lethal-means safety.

Why it matters: September is Suicide Prevention Month, and state-level prevention efforts that combine community connection, mental-health resources and lethal-means safety are directly relevant to veteran wellness.

[Pennsylvania DMVA - Plan. Pause. Protect.](#)

VA BENEFITS & SERVICES

\$1.17 Billion in Grants to Fight Veteran Homelessness | Announced September 14, 2026 | Awards begin October 1

VA announced a record \$1.17 billion in grants to 680 organizations nationwide for veterans who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. About \$855 million will support one-year Supportive Services for Veteran Families grants, while \$318 million will support three-year Grant and Per Diem awards.

Why it matters: The funding supports homelessness prevention, rapid rehousing, transitional housing and specialized housing for women veterans and veterans with complex needs.

What to know / watch: The awards begin October 1, 2026. Veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness should contact VA homeless programs or local grantees for available assistance.

[VA - \\$1.17 billion homelessness grants](#)

More Than 250,000 New Veterans Enrolled in VA Health Care in 2026 | Announced September 1

VA reported that more than 250,000 veterans have newly enrolled in VA health care so far in 2026, generating more than 1.4 million completed or scheduled medical appointments, including more than 300,000 mental-health appointments.

Why it matters: The enrollment surge reinforces the August Choose VA outreach message: veterans who previously assumed they were ineligible should recheck their current eligibility.

What to know / watch: The postcard campaign has ended, but VA health-care enrollment remains open for eligible veterans.

[VA - 250,000 new health-care enrollees](#)

Education Benefit Rates Change October 1, 2026 | MGIB and DEA

New 2026-27 rates for the Montgomery GI Bill Active Duty, Montgomery GI Bill Selected Reserve and Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance take effect October 1. For example, the MGIB-SR full-time monthly rate will be \$508, and the Chapter 35 full-time monthly rate will be \$1,621.

Why it matters: Veterans, Guard and Reserve members, and eligible dependents using these programs should expect payment amounts to change for enrollment after October 1.

[VA - MGIB Selected Reserve future rates](#)

OPPORTUNITIES FOR VETERANS

VET TEC 2.0: High-Tech Career Training | 2,325 openings available as of September 8

VET TEC 2.0 provides eligible veterans and certain transitioning servicemembers with approved non-degree high-tech training in areas such as software, cybersecurity, data processing and information sciences. VA reported 2,325 participant openings remaining as of September 8 out of a 4,000-participant annual limit.

Why it matters: The program can cover tuition and fees, provide a housing allowance and up to \$1,000 for books and supplies, making it a significant current workforce-development opportunity.

What to know / watch: Eligible veterans generally must be under age 62 and have at least 36 months of active-duty service. Applications are open now, and the annual participant cap makes timing relevant.

[VA - VET TEC 2.0 eligibility and application information](#)

TAKE ACTION

SUPPORT RECOGNITION FOR SFC JORGE OTERO BARRETO

H.R. 9595 remains before the House Armed Services Committee. Veterans and supporters who wish to advocate for the measure can contact their U.S. representative and ask them to support or cosponsor the Sergeant First Class Jorge Otero Barreto Medal of Honor Act.

ACTION: Contact your U.S. representative and ask them to support H.R. 9595.

[Find your U.S. representative](#)

CHECK IN WITH A VETERAN DURING SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

September is Suicide Prevention Month. A simple check-in can help strengthen connection and make it easier for someone who is struggling to seek support.

ACTION: Reach out to at least one veteran, servicemember or military family member this month. If someone is in crisis, call 988 and press 1, text 838255, or use the Veterans Crisis Line chat.

[Veterans Crisis Line](#)

LOOKING AHEAD

Implementation deadlines under Executive Order 14426: immediate discharge-record sharing is due in early October, with additional IT and transition milestones due later this year and in early 2027.

Possible House action on the Major Richard Star Act if Discharge Petition No. 22 reaches the 218-signature threshold, plus any movement on H.R. 9237 / S. 4744 and H.R. 9595.

Full-year FY2027 VA appropriations remain unfinished even though H.R. 6500 keeps agencies funded through December 11; negotiations will continue this fall.

New Montgomery GI Bill and Chapter 35 education rates take effect October 1, along with the FY2027 VA homelessness grants announced September 14.

Pennsylvania's final publication/effective date for Regulation 13-6 and continued state-level veterans policy, grants and suicide-prevention initiatives.

STAY INFORMED. STAY ENGAGED.

The ALVA Veterans Advocacy & Benefits Report is a regular publication of the American Latino Veterans Association highlighting consequential public policy, legislation, executive actions, benefits, services and opportunities affecting America's veterans and their families. alvavets.org | @alvavets

ALVA's mission is to help Latino veterans thrive and recognize their indispensable contributions.

Information current as of September 15, 2026. This report is provided for informational and advocacy purposes. Veterans should consult VA or the appropriate government agency regarding individual eligibility for benefits. ALVA's inclusion of legislation or policy does not constitute support or opposition unless expressly stated.