ALVA

VETERANS ADVOCACY & BENEFITS REPORT

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

The American Latino Veterans Association (ALVA) monitors legislation, policy, benefits, services and opportunities affecting America's veterans, servicemembers and military families. This November report highlights consequential developments and practical information veterans can use.

THE BOTTOM LINE

- The House passed the stand-alone Major Richard Star Act (H.R. 2102) 392–18 on November 12. The Senate must still act; the offset has NOT changed.
- Congress enrolled H.R. 8552, the veterans compensation COLA measure, on November 13. An enrolled bill is not proof of presidential signature; final enactment should be checked before publication.
- VA plans to hire more than 2,000 benefits-claims processors in FY2027 after processing 3.1 million claims in FY2026. This is a hiring plan, not a guarantee of shorter wait times.
- Eligible Veterans' Group Life Insurance policyholders have a premium holiday November 2026–January 2027; qualifying coverage continues automatically.
- VA reported permanently housing 48,968 veterans in FY2026, fewer than the 51,936 in FY2025.
- ALVA issued a November 13 policy statement on TCAVA disability-compensation trade-offs, the stand-alone Major Richard Star Act, and SNAP-related food-security concerns.

WASHINGTON WATCH

Major Richard Star Act — H.R. 2102 / S. 1032 | HOUSE PASSED; NOT LAW

House passed H.R. 2102 on November 12 by 392–18. The proposal would allow certain combat-injured disability retirees to receive retirement pay and VA disability compensation without the current offset. Senate approval and presidential signature remain necessary.

Why it matters: Potentially consequential for medically retired combat-injured veterans; no new payment entitlement exists yet.

Official source / details

Take Care of America's Veterans Act — H.R. 9237 / S. 4744 | HOUSE PASSED; NOT LAW

The House approved the broad veterans package on November 11. It combines dozens of provisions affecting benefits, caregivers, education and VA operations; a modified concurrent-receipt provision and disputed funding offsets warrant careful scrutiny. Senate action remains outstanding.

Why it matters: Some provisions could expand support while other proposed offsets could affect future disability benefits. ALVA has previously expressed concern about disability-benefit trade-offs; that should not be mistaken for endorsement of the entire package.

Official source / details

ALVA ADVOCACY SPOTLIGHT — BENEFITS TRADE-OFFS AND FOOD SECURITY

On November 13, ALVA published "ALVA Raises Concerns Over Veterans Benefits Trade-Offs and Food Security." The statement recognizes constructive provisions in TCAVA but opposes financing improvements through proposed reductions in future disability compensation for sleep apnea and tinnitus. ALVA supports consideration of the full Major Richard Star Act as stand-alone legislation and raises concerns about separate SNAP eligibility changes that may affect veterans facing food insecurity.

Why it matters: This is ALVA's established public position—not a change in enacted benefits. The statement connects disability compensation, retirement benefits and food assistance to veterans' long-term economic security, including the well-being of Latino veterans and their families.

Read ALVA's November 13 policy statement

Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act — H.R. 8552 | ENROLLED; SIGNATURE NOT VERIFIED

The House passed the measure November 9 and Congress produced an enrolled bill dated November 13. It would adjust VA disability compensation, dependent allowances and certain survivor payments effective December 1, 2026, in line with the Social Security COLA. The final presidential-signature status must be checked.

Why it matters: Veterans should not assume the adjustment has become law solely because Congress enrolled the measure.

Official source / details

Sergeant First Class Jorge Otero Barreto Medal of Honor Act — H.R. 9595 | PENDING

The proposal would authorize a posthumous Medal of Honor for SFC Jorge Otero Barreto. No new committee action was verified in this reporting period. ALVA supports this recognition.

Why it matters: Recognition of a distinguished Puerto Rican soldier remains a specific ALVA advocacy priority.

Official source / details

FROM THE WHITE HOUSE

Veterans Day 2026 proclamation — November 10

The President proclaimed November 11 Veterans Day, recognizing veterans' service and describing administration priorities involving claims, access to care, homelessness and transition. This ceremonial proclamation does not itself change eligibility or create a new benefit.

Why it matters: The proclamation offers context for federal priorities, not a substitute for implemented VA policy.

Official source / details

ACROSS THE STATES

New York — A.6001-A / S.7784-A signed November 11 | SIGNED

New York enacted legislation permitting certain SUNY, CUNY and community-college campuses with membership programs to offer disabled veterans free or discounted fitness and aquatic-facility access. Availability will depend on participating institutions.

Why it matters: An actionable wellness benefit for eligible New York veterans, subject to campus participation.

Official source / details

California — veteran-focused research funding announced November 10

California announced funding for research into psychedelic-assisted treatment approaches for veterans. This is research funding, not a newly approved VA treatment or a guarantee of patient access.

Why it matters: Veterans should distinguish clinical research from established, available benefits.

Official source / details

VA BENEFITS & SERVICES

VGLI premium holiday — November 1, 2026 through January 31, 2027 | IN EFFECT

VGLI policies active on November 1 qualify for the full three-month holiday. No application is needed. Coverage remains in effect; past-due balances are not erased. Bank bill-pay users may need to stop and restart scheduled payments. This does not apply to SGLI or VALife.

Why it matters: Policyholders can avoid unnecessary payments and protect their coverage.

Official source / details

VA plans claims workforce expansion

VA announced October 29 that it plans to hire more than 2,000 employees in FY2027 to handle benefits claims; VA reported processing approximately 3.1 million compensation and pension claims in FY2026.

Why it matters: An operational development worth monitoring; veterans should still track their claims and respond promptly to evidence requests.

Official source / details

Permanent housing outcomes

On November 12, VA reported 48,968 veterans permanently housed during FY2026, compared with 51,936 in FY2025. Veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness can contact VA homeless programs for help.

Why it matters: Housing assistance remains an immediate practical need, regardless of year-over-year performance.

Official source / details

OPPORTUNITIES FOR VETERANS

VA claims-processing careers

VA's planned expansion may create federal employment opportunities in claims adjudication and related work. Positions, qualifications and application windows should be checked directly rather than assumed to be open.

Why it matters: Potential federal careers for veterans with relevant administrative, analytical or benefits experience.

Official source / details

TAKE ACTION

Contact your U.S. senators about the stand-alone Major Richard Star Act (S. 1032 / H.R. 2102). Explain why concurrent receipt matters to combat-injured disability retirees, and ask for consideration of the legislation on its merits. This is a voluntary constituent action, not a claim that the bill has become law.

Find your senators

LOOKING AHEAD — LATE NOVEMBER / DECEMBER

- Watch Senate consideration of the Major Richard Star Act and the Take Care of America's Veterans Act; do not assume either House-passed bill is enacted.
- Confirm whether H.R. 8552 receives presidential signature and check VA's published 2027 compensation tables before communicating specific benefit increases.
- The federal stopgap funding deadline of December 11 approaches; watch full-year appropriations and potential effects on federal operations.
- VGLI premium holiday continues through January 2027; eligible policyholders should review statements and ensure any past-due balance is addressed.
- Monitor implementation of VA claims hiring and any published vacancies or processing metrics.

STAY INFORMED. STAY ENGAGED.

ALVA's mission is to help Latino veterans thrive and recognize their indispensable contributions. This report covers issues affecting all veterans and families; ALVA positions are identified only when established. Information checked through November 15, 2026; bill statuses may change after publication.