



League of United Latin American Citizens

AGIF Resolution 2023-1 – Veterans Benefits Improvement Act

WHEREAS, the American GI Forum of the United States (AGIF-US), our nation’s esteemed advocate for military personnel, veterans, and their families, whole-heartedly expresses its unwavering support; and

WHEREAS, Senate Bill 3388, the Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 2021, received unanimous approval in the US Senate during the last legislative session, whereas its counterpart House Bill 7556, the Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 2022, identical, regrettably did not pass the US House; and

WHEREAS, the Senate Bill received robust backing from the VA during a Committee hearing, underscoring its significance; and

WHEREAS, the Senate Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 2021 aims to fortify employee recruitment for the Board of Veterans' Appeals and enhance the VA's scheduling of veterans' medical disability exams by fostering increased communication among contractors, Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs), and attorneys assisting veterans with their claims; and

WHEREAS, the bipartisan bill seeks to streamline the process for individuals to obtain their VA benefits, reducing claims processing timelines, enhancing transparency, and alleviating backlogs within a system designed to efficiently serve those who have served our nation; and

WHEREAS, changes and improvements to the Veterans Benefits Administration and the Board of Veterans' Appeals would contribute to hiring and retaining quality staff, improving the veteran disability claims process, and increasing access to medical disability examinations for veterans residing abroad; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans Benefits Improvement Act encompasses key provisions:

- Mandating the Board of Veterans' Appeals to establish a competitive internship program to attract high-performing law students, and a competitive "honors program" to provide incentives for high-performing entry-level attorneys;
- Enhancing VA's Disability Benefits Questionnaires to facilitate veterans in saving time during the claims process by allowing them to fill out forms in advance;

- Requiring VA contractors to contact a veteran's representative, in addition to the veteran, when establishing contact to schedule an exam;
- Instructing VA to enhance the Department's outreach efforts and collaborate with veteran groups to educate veterans on how contract disability exams are scheduled; and
- Authorizing the Department to provide instant, electronic notification of claims decisions - allowing for quicker delivery of benefits, especially amidst COVID-related mail delays.

BE IT RESOLVED that the AGIF-US urgently request the Senate and House Veterans Affairs Committee to reintroduce the Veterans Benefits and Improvement Act and pass the legislative bill in both chambers.

Voted & approved by the National Assembly of the 2023 LULAC National Convention on August 5, 2023.

Domingo Garcia
LULAC National President