

VFW to Deliver 2023 Priority Goals on Capitol Hill

National commander and delegates to amplify ‘Every Veteran Counts’ message to Congress

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WASHINGTON — More than 400 members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and its Auxiliary converge on the nation’s capital this week, for the annual four-day Legislative Conference March 5 - 8. Delegates from all 50 states will meet with their respective members of Congress to press upon them the need to support veterans, service members and military families.

“It is great to be back in D.C. for a full in-person legislative conference,” said VFW National Commander Tim Borland. “After years of pandemic restrictions, we are finally able to walk the halls of Congress and deliver our petitions face-to-face with our elected officials.”

Also returning to Washington, D.C., is the VFW’s Voice of Democracy Parade of Winners. Each year, nearly 25,000 ninth through 12th grade students from across the country enter a democratic and patriotic-themed essay to win their share of more than \$2 million in educational scholarships and incentives awarded through the program. The national first place winner receives a \$35,000 scholarship paid directly to the recipient’s American university, college or vocational/technical school.

“I look forward to seeing all of those bright, young Americans and hearing their expressions of patriotism,” Borland said. “They give me faith that the future of our country is great hands.”

One of the culminating events of the conference is the commander-in-chief’s testimony set for March 8 at 10 a.m. (EST) before a special joint hearing of the House and Senate Committees on Veterans’ Affairs held at the Cannon House Office Building.

“Advocating for veterans rights is the most important thing that a commander-in-chief will do during their term,” Borland said. “Last August, we helped push the PACT Act into law

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

406 W. 34th Street
Kansas City, MO 64111
Office 816.756.3390
Fax 816.968.1157

WASHINGTON OFFICE

200 Maryland Ave., N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002
Office 202.543.2239
Fax 202.543.6719

info@vfw.org
www.vfw.org

that will help more than 3.5 million veterans who were exposed to toxics during their service. This year, I will continue to press forward our priorities for the rights and benefits of our veterans, service members and their family members.”

Borland is prepared to discuss the VFW’s top priorities for 2023. These key legislative priorities include:

- Concurrent Receipt/Passing the Major Richard Star Act.
- Predatory Claims/Passing the Governing Unaccredited Representatives Defrauding VA Benefits Act, known as the GUARD VA Benefits Act.
- Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) increase for surviving dependents.
- Economic opportunity’s role in preventing suicide.
- Improved transition of service members to civilian life.
- Recognition of NATO defense for service members deployed to eastern Europe.

Many of the priorities have carried over from the VFW’s previous year’s agenda. However, some are a direct result of Borland’s travels since becoming the VFW’s national commander, to include visits with service members in Europe.

“We must not forget we still have troops deployed around the world,” Borland said. “I recently made a trip out to Poznan, Poland, and visited with the senior leadership of U.S. military forces deployed to NATO’s eastern flank. Asking Congress to recognize them for this crucial mission to defend our NATO allies and deter aggression is the least we can do for our brave service men and women.”

Led by Borland, the VFW has made a concerted recruiting effort to increase membership numbers and motivate members to continue participating in the type of grass roots advocacy, such as Action Corps, that proved successful with the passing of the PACT Act.

“We have pushed hard to recruit more members into our organization over the past seven months,” Borland said. “It is because of our numbers that our voice stays strong, ensuring Congress hears us loud and clear that ‘Every Veteran Counts.’”

Read the VFW’s complete list of 2023 Priority Goals [here](#).

The House Veterans’ Affairs Committee will livestream this year’s testimony on the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs YouTube channel [here](#). Visit vfw.org/VFWDC2023 for all legislative conference updates.