

National Legislative Division Weekly

SUPPORT OUR DISABLED VETERANS BY PASSING THE MAJOR RICHARD STAR ACT

Right now, VA deducts the retirement pay of veterans with a disability rating of less than 50%. These veterans who have been forced into medical retirement are being penalized for their injuries, and there is no excuse for it. Disability compensation and retirement pay are two different payments, and should be treated as such. DoD awards retirement pay for honorable service, while the VA is responsible for disability compensation. Conflating the two and forcing deductions in retirement pay is an injustice.

The American Legion stands with disabled veterans and urges Congress not to continue this denial of retirement benefits. The Major Richard Star Act would repeal this draconian offset for those veterans who are medically retired due to injuries sustained in combat and allow them to receive both their retirement pay without forfeiting their disability compensation.

TAKE ACTION NOW!

CONGRESS

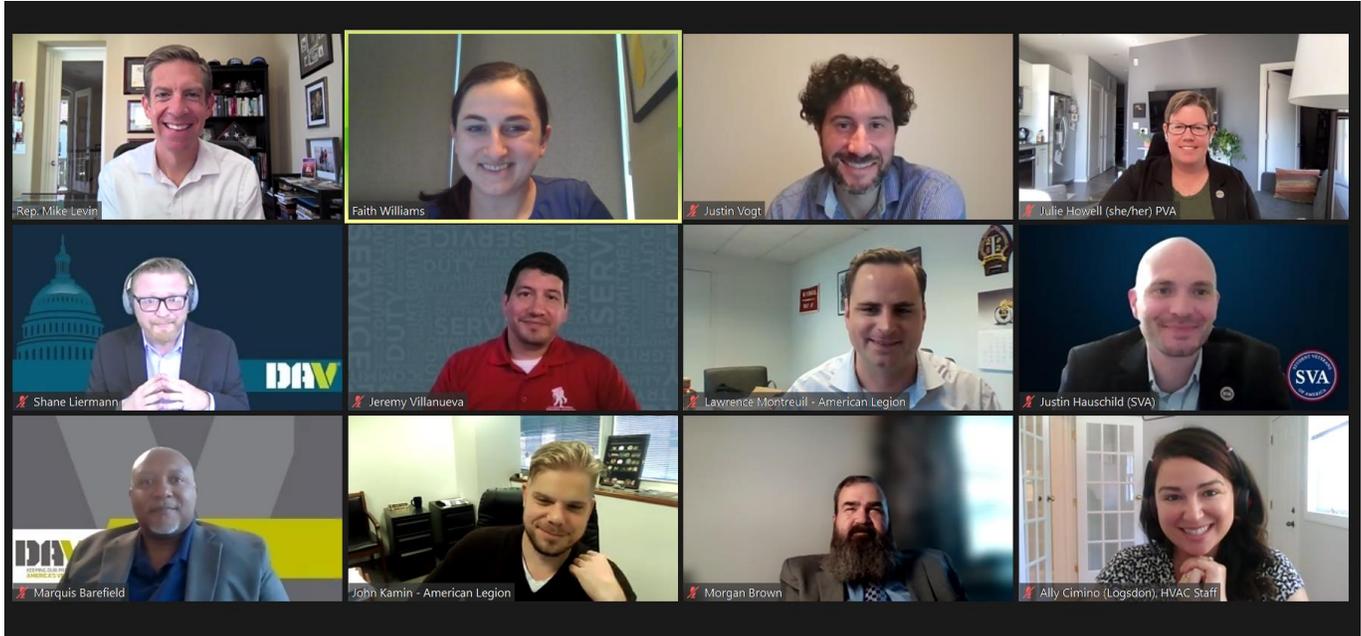
Both the House and the Senate were out this week. The House does not plan to return until after the November elections. The Senate, however, could come back in some session as early as next week to start discussing the FY23 National Defense Authorization Act. Regardless, no votes will occur before November 14, according to Majority Leader Schumer (D-NY).

When they return, lawmakers will need to craft an FY23 omnibus spending bill before the mid-December expiration of the continuing resolution. That could be complicated by the Treasury Department's report on Tuesday that the national debt is \$31.1 trillion, a record high. Higher interest rates could drive this number even higher, on a faster trajectory than previously predicted. Both Medicare and Social Security face insolvency in the foreseeable future. In addition, health care expenditures in Medicare, Medicaid, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and other federal programs are rising so quickly they could soon crowd out all other federal spending. There have been no credible efforts at Congressional reform of major social net programs in the past decade.

THE AMERICAN LEGION PARTICIPATES IN A ROUNDTABLE WITH CHAIRMAN LEVIN

On Friday, October 7, The American Legion participated in a roundtable with Chairman Levin (D-CA) of the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity and other VSOs to discuss legislative priorities, including economic opportunity amendments that could be included in this year's NDAA.

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Legislative Director Lawrence Montreuil, and Legislative Associate John Kamin, participate in an economic opportunity roundtable with Chairman Levin (D-CA).

THE AMERICA LEGION ATTENDS TAIWAN’S NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATION



Figure 1 American Legion National Vice Commander Paul Kennedy, DC Executive Director Chanin Nuntavong, Legislative Associate Jeff Steele, and National Security Director, Mario Marquez, attend the 2022 Taiwan National Day.

On Wednesday, October 5, NLD Staff accompanied Legion National Vice-Commander Paul Kennedy (PA), DC Executive Director Chanin Nuntavong, and National Security Director Mario Marquez at the 2022 Taiwan National Day celebration hosted by the Taiwanese Embassy. Bi-khim Hsiao, Taiwan's ambassador to the U.S., expressed her gratitude for President Biden's defense commitment to Taiwan and the ever-stronger backing from the U.S. Congress. According to her, a total of seven congressional trips involving 28 members have paid visits to the country this year. Vice-Commander Kennedy reiterated his gratitude to Ambassador Hsiao for Taiwan's donation of 250,000 masks to The American Legion in 2020.

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THE APPLICATION FOR THE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL IS NOW OPEN

With the midterm elections a month away, The American Legion is beginning the process of rebuilding its National Legislative Council for the 118th Congress. Interested candidates may submit their applications [at this webpage](#) for their departments' consideration. Legionnaires are encouraged to submit their applications before the Nov. 8 election.

The National Legislative Council (NLC) is a 535-member group designated to serve as direct liaisons to every member of the U.S. Congress. Approved in Resolution 45 by the National Executive Committee in 1975, the council's aim is to "propagate an interest in a furtherance of the legislative goals of The American Legion and to serve as a medium for disseminating information and developing an understanding with our elected representatives." Learn more about the council [in this story](#).

Members of the NLC are relied on to reinforce The American Legion's overall legislative efforts, particularly at times when immediate and personal contact with lawmakers is necessary – typically referred to as “grassroots contact.”

They routinely email, write, and/or call lawmakers and their staff regarding veterans legislation. Members should strive to visit the lawmaker's local office at least once per month to discuss issues that will directly impact The American Legion's legislative goals.

Members work to:

- Promote an interest in and a furtherance of The American Legion's legislative goals.
- Serve as a liaison for disseminating information to elected lawmakers and staff.
- Develop and maintain strong working relationships with elected lawmakers and staff.
- Disseminate information on proposed and adopted veterans legislation to posts and members of the Legion within the congressional district.

Position requirements include:

- Current member of The American Legion
- Experience working with public relations and/or elected officials is a plus.
- Excellent verbal and written communications skills are necessary.
- Comfortable speaking and making presentations to larger groups.
- Ability to use social media.
- Ability to represent The American Legion and veterans to various groups and organizations.
- Ownership of an email account and internet access is required.
- Personal relationship with the member of Congress to whom they are assigned, senior staffers in their office, or willingness and ability to establish relationships with them.

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QUARTERLY LEGISLATIVE CHAIRMEN MEETING

The Legislative Commission Chairman Daniel Seehafer convened his final quarterly meeting with members of the Commission and Vice Chairs of the National Legislative Council before the Fall National Executive Committee meeting next week. Chairman Seehafer thanked the commission for their advocacy this year, and briefed them on the rollout for the National Legislative Council rebuild for the 118th Congress. He was joined by National Legislative Council Chairwoman Liz Hartman, who shared that legislative advocacy is a valuable component of the recruitment pitch to young and prospective American Legion members.

UPCOMING HEARINGS

Congress is out of session next week; there will be no hearings.