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WASHINGTON WEEKLY

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Senate VA Committee Discusses Education and Employment Bills

This week, the Senate Veterans Affairs' Committee held a hearing to discuss 18 pieces of legislation introduced over the last year. VFW submitted testimony and was particularly interested in three education bills introduced by Committee Chairman Patty Murray, D-WA.; original World War II G.I. Bill recipient Sen. Frank Lautenberg, D-NJ.; and Post-9/11 G.I. Bill champion Sen. Jim Webb, D-VA. VFW also voiced support for bills to improve financial and job protections for service members and clarifying state licensing procedures for veterans: To learn more about the hearing and to view the webcast, [click here](#).

VFW Opposes Retirement Commission; What do You Think?

As the Senate prepares to debate the annual National Defense Authorization Bill, the VFW has found troubling provisions that would potentially bring about serious changes to the military compensation and retirement systems. As written, this bill would create the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission—a body with the charge to “achieve fiscal sustainability” and with the authority to suggest reducing or restructuring benefits. The VFW opposes changes to the military retirement system. **What do you think?** To learn more about the commission and to take our quick poll, [click here](#).

Connect to Congress Today

VFW has testified over 25 times this Congressional cycle on an array of issues and legislation that affects veterans, service members and their families. Some of the topics included mental and behavioral health, employment rights, education benefits and oversight on the VA claims process. We also track how your members vote on those issues when they reach the floor of the House and Senate. As we begin to wind down the 112th Congress, take a look at some of the issues and bills we were asked to provide comments on and how your members voted when those bills were called up for a vote. To view both items, visit the [VFW website](#) and use the "Connect to Congress" box on the bottom right. [Read](#) our congressional testimony. [See](#) how your members voted.

Detroit Veterans Hiring Fair

More than 16,000 VA, federal and private-sector jobs across the country will be up for grabs at the free Veteran Hiring Fair, June 26-28, in Detroit, Mich. [Sign up online](#) and request a customized coaching session to help build a stronger resume and better prepare for interviews. You can also schedule interviews with employers who are looking to fill jobs immediately. [Signing up](#) also gets you a pass to the Veteran Open House, which is also free. [Click here](#) for more information.

Consumer Alert

A new email-based phishing scam is now targeting military members, retirees and DOD civilian employees. The email appears to come from the Defense Finance and Accounting Services and displays a “.mil” email address. The email states that those receiving VA disability compensation may be able to obtain additional funds from the IRS. Email recipients are then asked to send various VA and IRS documents containing their personal and financial information, such as copies of VA award letters or their income tax returns, to an address in Florida. **Don't do it!** This personal information is then used by the scammers to commit identity theft. For more information on phishing scams, [click here](#).

National POW/MIA Day Poster

The new 2012 National POW/MIA Recognition Day poster was unveiled yesterday at the 43rd annual meeting of the National League of POW/MIA Families in Arlington, Va. The VFW also participated on a veterans` panel to detail the tremendous support we have provided the Full Accounting Mission since last year's meeting. This includes successfully urging (then) Russian President Medvedev to appoint a new cochairmen and 31 commissioners to the U.S.-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIAs, easing access restrictions for American researchers to Chinese military archives in Beijing, and visiting Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command personnel at their headquarters in Hawaii and in the field in Thailand and Vietnam. [Request a copy](#) of the POW/MIA Day poster.

Three MIAs Identified

The Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office announced the identification of remains belonging to three airmen who had been missing in action from World War II and the Vietnam War. Returned home are:

- Marine Corps 2nd Lt. Dwight D. Ekstam, 21, of Moline, Ill. On April 22, 1944, Ekstam was a crewmember aboard a PBJ-1 aircraft that failed to return from a night training mission over the island of Espiritu Santo, in what is known today as Vanuatu. None of the crew were recovered.
- Navy Lt. William E. Swanson, 27, of Zimmerman, Minn. On April 11, 1965, Swanson was piloting an A-1H Skyraider when it crashed while on an armed reconnaissance mission over Khammouan Province, Laos. His aircraft was reportedly struck by enemy fire. No parachute was observed.
- Air Force Capt. Virgil K. Meroney III, 25, of Fayetteville, Ark. On March 1, 1969, Meroney was aboard an F-4D Phantom II aircraft that crashed while on night strike mission in Khammouan Province, Laos. His aircraft was reportedly hit by enemy fire. No parachutes were observed.

[Read more](#) about their individual recovery stories.

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