

**Past President & Legislative Report
Jul 2022**

Past President:

Nothing to Report

Legislative Report:

The MVLC Leg Team has made contact with the Interim Military & Veterans Joint Committee and will be presenting on our legislative agenda for 2023 at their 14 July Hearing in ABQ.

NM MOAA will support the following legislation for 2023:

1. Updating provisions of HB163
(Military Retiree Tax Exemption 2022)
2. Veterans Property Tax Exemption
3. Veterans: Homeless & Mental Health

See attached draft presentation.

Thank you,

LTC Walter Paul (USA Ret)
Past President
Legislative Chair

MOAA National Three Topics/Legislative Priorities

- Major Richard Star Act
- Stop Copay Overpay Act
- Military Pay Raise

Major Richard Star Act

Combat Injured Concurrent Receipt:

Servicemembers injured in combat and forced to retire (before 20 years) face an offset where their retirement pay is reduced for every dollar of disability received from the VA. Some have their entire retirement pay "offset" Concurrent receipt may sound complicated, but it isn't

- DoD is responsible for retired pay for vested years of service (in the past)
- VA is responsible for disability for lifelong injury (in the future).
- These are two different payments for two different purposes
- Congress acknowledged this as an injustice in the 2004 NDAA and partially fixed it (but not for the combat injured)
- Reducing retirement pay due to a disability is an injustice

Key Bills: H.R. 1282; S. 344 – Close to a Tipping Point

~Others elected officials support the Star Act from your state!

Stop Copay Overpay Act

TRICARE copays for mental health visits have increased dramatically. Because mental health care often requires multiple visits, higher copays quickly add up and make treatment unaffordable for some military families. Why must Congress pass the Stop Copay Overpay Act?

TRICARE mental health copays are:

- Out of step with commercial plans.
- A financial barrier to access that undermines DoD efforts to reduce stigma.
- A fixable problem.
- Not aligned with congressional intent for MHS Reforms.

Key Bill: H.R. 4824 Would reduce TRICARE mental health copays by capping them at the level for primary care but would not reduce provider reimbursements. Risks to Medical Providers and Networks

We urge Congress to ensure:

- Support and resources for uniformed medical providers to maintain readiness
- Continued congressional oversight of MHS reforms

Military Pay Raise

Based on current Department of Labor assessments, and reflecting the rising costs of employment, the FY 2023 NDAA should include a pay raise of 4.6% Undercutting the pay raise negatively impacts several groups:

- Recruits. Individuals considering whether to join the military may see this as an omen of things to come. Why join if pay will not keep up with the civilian sector?
- Currently serving. Those prepared to go into harm's way may see this as a slight to their service and sacrifice. Why stay if we are not appreciated?
- Those about to retire. These servicemembers may decide to get out soonest, taking their 20-plus years of experience to go work for a government contractor or some other enterprise.

All of these issues compound the difficulties for recruiters and commanders who count on experienced leaders to accomplish the mission.

