

Eighth District Veterans Report

from U.S. Representative Bill Posey

Dear Friend,

No words can express our nation's sincere gratitude to our military service members, and their families, who have answered the call to serve our country. Since the Revolutionary War, which secured the independence of our great nation, over 1.3 million brave Americans have made the ultimate sacrifice to protect our freedom and ensure the survival of our nation.

As we celebrate Independence Day, let us also take some time to remember these heroes along with our brave men and women in uniform, and their families, currently making great personal sacrifices to defend our liberty. Without their dedication it would not be possible to hold on to our freedoms throughout the years.

Honoring America's commitment to our veterans and supporting our troops must be a top priority. If you know of any veteran in our community who is having trouble with VA services, please reach out to them and encourage them to contact my office in Brevard County at 321-632-1776 or Indian River County 772-226-1701. In fact, please call us if you are having trouble with any federal agency – the VA, the Social Security Administration, Medicare or even the IRS.

My staff and I are here to serve you.



Rep. Posey discusses veterans' issues at a recent Honor Flight.

Sincerely,



Bill Posey

"Honoring America's commitment to our veterans and supporting our troops must be a top priority." – Rep. Bill Posey

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POSEY'S LEGISLATIVE ACTION

VETERANS LEGISLATIVE ACTION CENTER

- ✓ **Improving the GI Bill** – Cosponsored the *Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act*, which removed time restrictions enabling future eligible recipients to use their GI Bill benefits for their entire lives. (Became Public Law 115-48)
- ✓ **Modernizing the Veterans Appeals Process** – Supported the *Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act*, which modernizes the appeals process at the Department of Veterans Affairs to allow for faster appeals decisions for veterans. (Became Public Law 115-55)
- ✓ **VA Accountability** – Supported the *Department of Veterans Affairs Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act*, which establishes protections for whistleblowers and increases the authority to remove bad employees and reward good employees for outstanding performance. (Became Public Law 115-41)
- ✓ **VA ID Card** – Cosponsored legislation signed into law enabling veterans to obtain identification cards from the Department of Veterans Affairs. (Became Public Law 114-31)
- ✓ **Transitioning to Civilian Jobs** – Voted for passage of the *Veterans Skills to Jobs Act*, requiring federal agencies to accept military training as sufficient to satisfy training/certification requirements for federal licenses. (Became Public Law 112-147)
- ✓ **Services for Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans** – Granting presumptive coverage for Agent Orange if serving within 12 miles offshore in Vietnam. (Cosponsored H.R. 299)
- ✓ **Meeting the Needs of Surviving Spouses** – Ending the practice of reducing Survivor Benefit Program benefits by the amount received in Dependence and Indemnity Compensation. (Cosponsored H.R. 846)
- ✓ **Combating Suicide** – Supported legislation (H.R. 4173) to require the VA to conduct a study on the outcomes and efficacy of the Veterans Crisis Line.
- ✓ **Helping Homeless Veterans** – Supported the *Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Programs Reauthorization Act* (H.R. 4451). This legislation has two goals: To assist veterans in achieving meaningful employment and to help fight homelessness among our nation's veterans.
- ✓ **Fighting Opioid Addiction** – Supported legislation (H.R. 3832) to require medical providers at the VA who prescribe controlled substances to coordinate with state programs that monitor prescription drug use.
- ✓ **Increasing Affordable Housing Options for Veterans** – Supported the *Vulnerable Veterans Housing Reform Act* (H.R. 1816), which makes important changes to exclude payments made by the VA to veterans' health-care providers from counting toward the veterans' gross income for purposes of determining eligibility for Section 8 voucher and public housing programs.
- ✓ **Increasing Veteran Employment Opportunities** – Supported H.R. 978, which gives preference to government contractors who employ veterans fulltime and disqualifies contractors who misrepresent their veteran status.
- ✓ **Veteran Employment** – Selected by the U.S. House to participate in the Wounded Warrior employee program to hire a post-9/11 wounded warrior.
- ✓ **Service Dogs** – Cosponsored the *PAWS Act* (Puppies Assisting Wounded Servicemembers Act) to create a pilot program that would provide service dogs to select veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).
- ✓ **Protecting 2nd Amendment Rights** – Supported H.R. 1181, the *Veterans 2nd Amendment Protection Act* to ensure that no veteran who utilizes a fiduciary will lose their Second Amendment rights without due process.



Rep. Posey recognizes Vietnam Veterans and discusses veterans' issues.

Read more about my record on other important issues.

AGENDA FOR VETERANS

Congress Passes New Law to Improve the VA Experience



With the support of Rep. Posey, Congress recently passed and President Trump signed into law the *VA Mission Act* which makes major reforms to the VA to ensure that veterans have timely access to the care and benefits they have earned. The goal is to ensure that the VA fulfills its mission to care for the men and women who have served our country.

- Consolidates and improves the VA's community care programs into a single system, removing barriers so veterans can receive care closer to their homes and encouraging more community care providers to participate.
- Appropriates \$5.2 billion to fund the VA Choice Program so veterans unhappy with the services provided by the VA can seek treatment outside the system.
- Establishes an Asset and Infrastructure Review process to make recommendations on how to modernize and realign the VA's medical facilities and infrastructure.
- Expands the VA Family Caregiver program to include pre-9/11 veterans.
- Improves and strengthens the VA workforce by offering scholarships to medical students in exchange for service to the VA and providing more educational and training opportunities.

Defense Bill Includes New Equipment and Pay Increase for Troops

With Rep. Posey's support, the House recently passed the *National Defense Authorization Act*, legislation that authorizes programs and spending levels for our military and national defense. The bill makes investments in modernizing our forces with new technology, replacing equipment for the Army and building up our Naval fleet. In total, \$11.3 billion has been authorized for military construction efforts.

Altogether the *National Defense Authorization Act* authorizes \$717 billion which also includes bonuses for military service members who work in high-demand fields and the largest pay increase our troops have seen in nine years. Posey said the bill provides important tools our military needs to protect and defend the nation and rewards our brave men and women for their service.



Rep. Posey discusses veterans' issues and presents Capt. Kibbey's family with his dog tags.

Ceremony Honors Deceased Military Heroes

The Department of the Air Force, 920th Rescue Squadron, honored the life and sacrifices of Captain Richard A. Kibbey, MIA, by presenting his dog tags to his surviving family at Patrick Air Force Base. Captain Kibbey was one of four aircrew members on a mission to rescue downed pilot Captain Lucius L. Heiskell.

On February 6, 1967, despite poor weather and limited visibility, Kibbey and his crew succeeded in picking up Captain Heiskell, but they were hit repeatedly by 37mm AAA fire. The burning HH-3E flew for about a mile before colliding head-on with a limestone cliff. Captain Kibbey's dog tags were recently discovered near the accident site by a local farmer and were transferred to the U.S. authorities.

Posey said that Captain Kibbey and his crew, including Captain Heiskell, laid their lives down on the altar of freedom for the benefit of our nation and our way of life.

House Passes Legislation to Assist Student Veterans

The House overwhelmingly approved bipartisan legislation cosponsored by Rep. Posey to assist student veterans attending colleges and universities under the G.I. Bill. The legislation (H.R. 4830) ensures that veterans will not be penalized if the VA sends late payments to their schools due to paperwork processing delays. Posey said the legislation strengthens G.I. benefits and reaffirms our commitment to our military veterans.

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Congress Passes Legislation to Reform Veteran Cemetery Benefits

With Rep. Posey's support Congress recently passed legislation to reform certain burial benefits offered to military veterans. The *Veterans Cemetery Benefit Correction Act* directs the Department of the Interior to provide outer burial receptacles, at no cost, for veterans to be buried in our national cemeteries managed by the National Parks Service. The legislation brings the National Parks Service's policy in line with the national cemeteries currently managed by the VA.

Congress also passed legislation to require the VA to provide a headstone or marker for certain eligible family members of veterans whose remains are unavailable who died on or after November 11, 1998. Over the years subsequent laws have extended this benefit to different family members, but eligibility dates have varied. The bill eliminates confusion and creates one consistent date for this benefit.



Rep. Posey speaks about veterans' issues at a recent Vietnam Veterans Memorial Ceremony at Cape Canaveral National Cemetery.

Bill Helps Children of Military Service Members Save for School

Rep. Posey recently cosponsored the *Education Savings Accounts for Military Families Act* (H.R. 5199), legislation to allow parents of eligible military dependent children to establish Military Education Savings Accounts to pay for education-related products and services such as personal tutors, online classes, or private school tuition for their children. Posey said the bill ensures that the dependent children of our military families have more options to meet their educational needs regardless of the unique and challenging circumstances they face.

Congressman Posey and his Staff are Here to **Serve Veterans**



"I would like to thank you on behalf of my son and myself for contacting the Department of Defense, helping resolve his issue. To be honest, I never expected a response and I am forever grateful." – Vero Beach Constituent

Rep. Posey and his staff are here to help veterans navigate federal agencies, to assist in obtaining medals and securing Defense Dept. records, and to help veterans address concerns with the VA.

If you know of any veteran in our community who is having trouble with VA services, please reach out to them and encourage them to contact our office in Viera 321-632-1776, Titusville 321-383-6090 or Vero Beach 772-226-1701.

"I would like to thank you and your staff for resolving the issue I was having with the Department of Veterans Affairs concerning payment related to emergency medical services provided to me... I have received notices from them that they have decided to pay for these services..." – Palm Bay Constituent