

Eighth District Veterans Report

from U.S. Representative Bill Posey

Dear Friend,

No words can express our nation's sincere gratitude to our military veterans, current service members, and their families, who have made great personal sacrifices and answered the call to serve our country. They have earned our utmost respect and deepest appreciation.

As we celebrate Independence Day, let us take some time to reflect on their service. Without their dedication it would not be possible to hold on to our freedoms throughout the years. As such, 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 at 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.

Sincerely,



Bill Posey



Rep. Posey is briefed on military issues by the 920th Rescue Wing.

Washington Office
2150 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515
Phone (202) 225-3671
Fax (202) 225-3516

District Office
2725 Judge Fran Jamleson Way
Building C
Melbourne, FL 32940
Phone (321) 632-1776
Fax (321) 639-8595

Satellite Offices
Titusville: (321) 383-6090
Vero Beach: (772) 226-1701

POSEY'S LEGISLATIVE A

VETERANS LEGISLATIVE ACTION CENTER

Increased Economic Opportunities for Veterans:

- ✓ **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. (*Public Law 115-48*)
- ✓ **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.
- ✓ **Veterans Employment** – Selected by U.S. House of Representatives to participate in the Wounded Warrior employee program to hire a post-9/11 wounded warrior.
- ✓ **Transitioning from Military Jobs 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 or certification requirements for federal licenses. (*Public Law 112-147*) Also voted for H.R. 2326 to further enhance transition from military to civilian life.



Rep. Posey discusses legislative issues with veterans during a recent Honor Flight.

Meeting Critical Medical Needs of Veterans:

- ✓ **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. 553)
- ✓ **Combating Veterans Suicide** – Supported legislation (H.R. 4173) to require the VA to conduct a study on the outcomes and efficacy of the Veterans Crisis Line. Voted for H.R. 2333 to improve suicide hotline staffing, and voted for H.R. 2340 to require notification to Congress of any suicide in a VA facility.
- ✓ **Fighting Opioid Addiction** – Supported H.R. 3832 to require VA medical providers who prescribe controlled substances to coordinate with state programs that monitor prescription drug use.
- ✓ **Service Dogs** – Cosponsored the *PAWS (Pupples Assisting Wounded Servicemembers) Act* to create a pilot program that would provide service dogs to select veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Improving the VA Experience and Protecting Veterans' Rights:

- ✓ **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. (*Public Law 115-55*)
- ✓ **VA Accountability** – Supported the *VA Accountability First Act*, which gives the VA Secretary increased flexibility to fire, demote, or suspend any VA employee for performance issues or misconduct.
- ✓ **VA ID Card** – Cosponsored legislation signed into law enabling veterans to obtain identification cards from the Department of Veterans Affairs. (*Public Law 114-31*)
- ✓ **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.

Read more about my record on other impor

AGENDA FOR VETERANS

Veteran Spotlight: Sergeant First Class Paul Smith

About nine months ago Linda Mannier of Melbourne came to our office hoping to find out more information about her late father, Paul Smith, and his military service to our nation. Army Sergeant First Class Paul Smith served in the U.S. Army for 22 years from 1949 to 1972 as an Army Aviation Senior Enlisted Advisor assigned to the 704th Ordinance Battalion. We were able to obtain for Ms. Mannier her father's service history along with the medals he earned for his service including: the Bronze Star, the Air Medal, the Army Commendation with 1 bronze oak leaf cluster, the Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal, the Expert Badge and the Army Aviator Senior Badge. Our nation is grateful for Paul Smith's distinguished service.



Poser Staffer Rob Medina and Linda Mannier with her father's service medals.

Posey Supports Legislation to Expand Agent Orange Exposure Benefits to More Vietnam War Veterans

With Rep. Posey's support, the House recently passed the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act to restore VA benefits to "Blue Water" Navy Vietnam veterans who served aboard aircraft carriers, destroyers, and other ships, and may have been exposed to Agent Orange, but had been determined ineligible for the same disability benefits as others who served on the ground and inland waterways. Rep. Posey has been fighting for Blue Water Navy Veterans for a decade.

Under current VA policy, a veteran who served along the coastline is presumed to have been exposed to Agent Orange and is eligible for disability benefits after a diagnosis of a qualifying presumptive illness, but a veteran who served at sea would have to provide proof that they were exposed to Agent Orange while on duty. Posey said the bill provides fundamental equity for all of those who served in country in the Vietnam Blue Water Navy.

Helping Homeless Veterans Get Back on Their Feet

We owe our nation's military veterans a great debt of gratitude, and we, as a nation, have an obligation to keep the promises made to our men and women in uniform. Rep. Posey believes that it is the responsibility of this country to make sure that our veterans are cared for while actively serving and after leaving their service. As such, Rep. Posey has supported legislation to help veterans who have fallen on hard times and are homeless:

- ✓ **Serving Homeless Veterans with Children** – Cosponsored the *Homeless Veteran Families Act*, (H.R. 95) bipartisan legislation to help homeless veterans with dependent minor children afford safe housing and have a shot at a stable living situation.
- ✓ **Helping Homeless Veterans Get Back on Their Feet** – Supported the *Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Programs Reauthorization Act* (H.R. 4451 – 115th Congress). This legislation has two goals: to assist veterans in achieving meaningful employment and to help fight homelessness among our nation's veterans.
- ✓ **Increasing Affordable Housing Options for Veterans** – Supported the *Vulnerable Veterans Housing Reform Act* (H.R. 1816 – 115th Congress), which makes important changes to exclude payments made by the VA to veterans' health-care providers from counting toward the veteran's gross income for purposes of determining eligibility for Section 8 voucher and public housing programs.



Rep. Posey discusses defense issues with volunteers at a USO event at the U.S. Capitol.

This mailing was prepared, published and mailed at taxpayer expense. It is provided as a service to 8th Congressional District constituents.

New Law Helps Veterans Acquire Discarded Federal Equipment for Their Small Businesses

Legislation signed into law by President Trump earlier this year allows veteran small business owners to acquire equipment that the federal government is no longer using. The *Veterans Small Business Enhancement Act* allows certain federal resources such as laptops, office furniture, construction equipment or farm tools that are no longer being used and collecting dust in storage to be obtained free of charge by veterans who own businesses. Rep. Posey, who supported the bill, said the new law will help save taxpayers storage costs and put good equipment back to work in the hands of military veterans who run small businesses.



Rep. Posey, House Chaplain Reverend Patrick Conroy and Chaplain Fussell talk issues before the House.

Local Air Force Major Invited to Serve as Guest Chaplain for the U.S. House

On the last day of legislative session before Memorial Day, Chaplain Thomas E. Fussell Jr. was invited by the House of Representatives at the request of Rep. Posey to serve as guest Chaplain. Chaplain Fussell, a major in the United States Air Force, is currently assigned to the 45th Space Wing. As Deputy Wing Chaplain to the 45th Space Wing, Chaplain Fussell advises commanders and first sergeants, ensures the free exercise of religion, and provides spiritual care, moral and ethical advice, and pastoral care and counseling to all military personnel and their families. Posey said he was thankful that Chaplain Fussell could visit Congress and offer a prayer in anticipation of Memorial Day.

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

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.



Rep. Posey's District Office Staff (R-L): Patricia Febro, David Jackson, Cheryl Moore, Rob Medina, Chelsea Greene and Patrick Gavin.

"I am writing to commend you on your choice of staff in the Viera office. The issue I am having is making life very difficult for me and my PTSD isn't helping. Patricia, and David somehow, and completely unbeknownst to me, through conversation, empathy, sympathy and experience, were able to calm me down and get started on the path to fix my issue." –Melbourne Constituent

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

–Vero Beach Constituent