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August 8, 2025

WEEKLY GRASSROOTS NEWSLETTER

This week, we are asking Legionnaires to contact Congress to request support for the *SHIPS for America Act*! This legislation would improve the maritime security of the United States. This crucial domain has been overlooked for too long. Our members are clear in their belief that the US needs sustained investment in our national security to reduce the chances of armed conflict. *The American Legion supports this legislation, and we appreciate all the emails you have sent so far.*

Go to the [Action Center](#) to quickly email a letter of support to your members of Congress.

Have you had a recent meeting or phone call with your member of Congress? Report your contact today! Click [here](#) to register your Congressional contact and demonstrate the power of The American Legion advocacy in action.

NEED TO FIND YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS?

<https://www.votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/Address>

TOP GRASSROOTS DEPARTMENTS

Florida	150
Wisconsin	145
New York	138
Kansas	125
Ohio	116

These are the number of e-mail messages these Departments sent to Congress on the VoterVoice campaigns this past week.

Register more participants in your Department to increase the number of veteran voices advocating on the Hill!

<https://www.votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/Register>

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

The American Legion's 106th National Convention is from August 22-28 in Tampa Bay, Florida. To stay up to date on information, schedules, and more, go to the information page [here](#).

The Legislative Commission will meet Saturday August 23rd in Tampa Bay to hear updates from the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees and discuss best-practices for conducting meetings with your members of Congress.

There will be no Grassroots Newsletters on August 22 or August 29 due to National Convention.

VA OFFERS YEARLONG COMMUNITY CARE AUTHORIZATIONS FOR 30 SERVICES

This article's original publication can be found [here](#)

The Department of Veterans Affairs today announced it will improve Veterans' access to health care by extending the length of new VA community care authorizations to one year for 30 standardized types of care.

The change means Veterans referred by VA to community care for eligible standardized types of care will receive 12 full months of uninterrupted treatment at VA expense before having to obtain a VA reauthorization.

Veterans will benefit from uninterrupted access to essential specialty services, allowing them to focus more on their health and less on navigating administrative requirements. Community providers will be empowered to manage care with fewer administrative barriers and greater flexibility.

Prior to the change announced today, some VA community care specialty referrals were reevaluated every 90 to 180 days, increasing the likelihood of interrupted or delayed care.

"No Veteran should have their health care disrupted by red tape," said **VA Secretary Doug Collins**. "This change means better continuity of care, which leads to better health outcomes. It also improves convenience for Veterans and cuts administrative work for VA staff and community care partners."

With today's announcement, VA is now offering year-long community care authorizations for the following standardized types of care:

- Cardiology
- Dermatology
- Endocrinology
- Neurology and Otology
- Otolaryngology or ENT
- Gastroenterology
- Urogynecology
- Addiction Psychiatry Outpatient
- Family & Couples Psychotherapy Outpatient
- Mental Health Outpatient
- Nephrology
- Neurology
- Nutrition Intervention Services
- Oncology and Hematology
- Neuro-Ophthalmology
- Oculoplastic
- Eye Care Examination
- Optometry Routine
- Orthopedic Hand
- Orthopedic General
- Orthopedic Spine
- Pain Management
- Podiatry
- Podiatry DS
- Addiction Medicine Outpatient
- Pulmonary
- Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation (Physiatry)
- Rheumatology
- Sleep Medicine
- Urology

Veterans are encouraged to contact their local VA Medical Center Community Care Office for questions to see how these new updates may affect their care.

VA ANNOUNCES SAM BROWN AS NEW UNDER SECRETARY FOR MEMORIAL AFFAIRS

This article's original publication can be found [here](#)



VA, and the [National Cemetery Administration](#), welcome the Honorable Samuel B. Brown as the eighth Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs. He was confirmed by the United States Senate on July 29, and sworn in by Secretary Collins on July 31.

Born in Arkansas and a member of the Cherokee Nation, Brown graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York, earned a Master of Business Administration from Southern Methodist University and retired as a Captain from the Army. He served in the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division at Fort Hood, Texas, as an Airborne Ranger-qualified infantry officer.

In 2008, Brown deployed to Kandahar, Afghanistan, where he was wounded by a roadside bomb, resulting in burns to 30% of his body. He retired in 2011 and, in 2012, returned to Afghanistan to provide inspiration to U.S. troops.

During his Senate confirmation hearing, Brown said of his experience being wounded, “I was re-born when I heard the voice of my gunner scream out, ‘Sir, I’ve got you.’”

“His words gave me the miracle of hope,” Brown continued. “The message of hope that I received on the battlefield is one that the National Cemetery Administration delivers every day to the families and loved ones who are left wondering if they can go on with their lives after losing a cherished person who served this country. When that day arrives, NCA is there to tell these family members and loved ones, ‘We’ve got you.’”

Brown is married to former Army Captain Amy Brown, a critical care dietitian whom he met while in recovery at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas. The couple have three children.

Please read Under Secretary Brown's [compelling Senate testimony](#) to learn more about his amazing story.

LEGIONNAIRE OF THE WEEK

To recognize the weekly accomplishments of our Legionnaires, we will spotlight an individual every week. These individuals demonstrate exceptional grassroots activism by meeting with/contacting their Congressional Representative/Senator to advocate for veterans. Efforts like these truly make a difference and give veterans a voice in Congress.

Roy Santiago, California

Roy, thank you for your steadfast advocacy of Legion priorities; we are honored to name you Legionnaire of the Week!

Last week, Roy met with Representative Adam Gray at Merced Post 83. He discussed key legislation with the Congressman, such as the SAVES Act, SHIPS for America Act, and the Major Richard Star Act, among others.

Thank you, Roy, for your report and the time you have dedicated to the Legion's legislative priorities.

GRASSROOTS INFORMATION

Interested in what the Legion is advocating for in Congress? Check out our [information papers and Legislative priorities](#). This is a great starting point for a conversation with your elected officials!

As part of our ongoing Grassroots efforts, LegDiv staff is available to provide **Grassroots Training** tailored to the hosting Department's needs. If you are interested in hosting a Grassroots training event, please contact grassroots@legion.org or ejohnson@legion.org.

You can find relevant legislation and the Legion's stance on them in the [key legislation section of VoterVoice](#).

***Register for Action Alerts today at
<https://www.votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/Register>***



UPCOMING CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS

As of 8/8, there are no hearings scheduled. Congress will be in recess until September 2.

HVAC hearings can be viewed at: [Calendar Home | House Committee on Veterans Affairs](#)

SVAC hearings can be viewed at: [Hearings - U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs](#)

HASC hearings can be viewed at: [Hearings – House Armed Services Committee](#)

SASC hearings can be viewed at: [Hearings – U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services](#)

[View The American Legion Legislative Handbook Here](#)