



# JWV 2016 Resolutions

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## **MAINTAIN THE VA SYSTEM INTACT**

WHEREAS, the Commission on Care, a body created by 2014 legislation to study and recommend changes in the Department of Veterans Affairs methods of delivering services to the veterans' community and the use of VA facilities, has presented its report to the President; and

WHEREAS, the Commission is recommending that the VA health care system set up community networks staffed, in part, by independent providers that are credentialed by the VA; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has also recommended that the VA identify facilities for closing that would be sold or used for other purposes; and

WHEREAS, there is evidence that the VA system is a top performer in terms of medical outcomes and once a veteran gets into the system and receives care, the care tends to be rated as very good care; and

WHEREAS, the VA has been in the forefront of measuring key quality metrics such as the avoiding bloodstream infections from intravenous lines; and

WHEREAS, any action that might be taken pursuant to the recommendation of the Commission would seriously impact and weaken the VA medical system and compromise the professionalism and level of care provided the veterans' community by the VA; and

WHEREAS, the untoward delays now witnessed in the intake processing of new veterans can be cured without rending apart the VA medical system,

THEREFORE, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA calls upon Congress to strengthen the VA Medical Health Care System rather than privatize or dismantle it, and

FURTHERMORE, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA reminds all parties involved that the VA Health Care System is a leader in the research and development of treatments for military-specific injuries that are readily transferable to non-military individuals; and

FURTHERMORE, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA reminds all that the reason the VA Medical Health Care exists is to serve American's veterans, rather than as a for-profit corporation with highly paid employees, shareholders, and profit and loss statements that must show sizable earnings to satisfy non-veterans at the annual stockholders meeting.

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## **GRANT BROADER AUTHORITY OVER VA EMPLOYEE REVIEW & ACCOUNTABILITY PROCESSES**

WHEREAS, the bureaucracy entrenched within the Department of Veterans Affairs has successfully thwarted every effort to provide services to our veterans in a timely and efficient manner; and

WHEREAS, the problems within the VA has created an environment wherein mediocracy is accepted as the norm; and

WHEREAS, too many managers who underperform and/or are guilty of misfeasance, malfeasance or nonfeasance are permitted to retire with full benefits, including bonuses, or are transferred to other positions or stations without any consequences; and

WHEREAS, many of these situations are permitted or actually encouraged because of a mentality that “it’s the easiest avenue available,” due to union contracts and Civil Services regulations and rules,

THEREFORE, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA calls upon Congress to provide the Department of Veterans Affairs with the tools to investigate and take effective measures against poorly performing employees regardless of union contracts or Civil Service rules and regulations and, when and where appropriate, to recoup bonuses wrongfully given due to misrepresentations and outright lies by the employee.

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## **GRANT BROADER AUTHORITY OVER VA TERMINATION PROCESSES**

WHEREAS, the Secretary of Veterans' Affairs is now faced with serious difficulties when seeking to terminate underperforming career employees; and

WHEREAS, any employee alleged to be underperforming needs to be protected where any such allegations are based more on personal vendetta or political reasons; and

WHEREAS, there needs to be a careful balance established between the needs of the Department for dedicated caring employees and the rights of employees to unbiased evaluations and appeals and;

WHEREAS, the current system has proven itself to be out of balance,

THEREFORE, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA calls upon Congress to pass a single-issue accountability law that provides for broader firing authority consistent with a condensed appeals process.

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## **VA WAITING TIMES REMAIN UNACCEPTABLE**

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans' Affairs announced that a newly enrolled veteran will be seen by a primary care provider within 21 days; and

WHEREAS, a study by the Government Accountability Office found it could take months for a newly enrolled veteran to be seen by a primary care provider; and

WHEREAS, the GAO study of the 180 randomly selected veterans at six different medical centers, 60 had yet to be contacted by the end of the study and the other 120 waited considerably longer than the VA reported; and

WHEREAS, in one case, the veteran waited 76 days but the VA said he waited only two days; and

WHEREAS, the difference appears to lie in the method of the tolling of the delay, i.e., the VA counts days from the day the scheduler calls the veteran to the date of the appointment rather than from the day the veteran makes the initial contact to the date of the appointment; and

WHEREAS, it is not uncommon for a VA scheduler to contact a veteran only to inform the veteran that there are no appointments available rather than to schedule such an appointment,

THEREFORE, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA calls upon the Department of Veterans' Affairs to ensure that veterans requesting appointments are contacted to schedule such an appointment within the industry accepted norm, i.e., fourteen calendar days, and scheduled one week after such call, and

FURTHERMORE, the VA shall adjust its' counting of days to coincide with the date of initial contact with the veteran.

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## **20 VETERAN SUICIDES PER DAY MUST END**

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs reports that 20 veterans kill themselves each and every day; and

WHEREAS, most veterans who commit suicide did not fight in Iraq or Afghanistan; and

WHEREAS, this number reflects a record-high number of men recently separated from the military and a growing number of women; and

WHEREAS, according to the VA the worst pattern of suicide is among male veterans between the ages of 18-29 or 86 per 100,000 people as compared to 13 per 100,000 among the general population; and

WHEREAS, this number represents four times the number of suicides among active-duty personnel; and

WHEREAS, the rate of suicides among the identical female cohort was 33 per 100,000 or double the rate for women who did not serve in the military; and

WHEREAS, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA has long advocated a more proactive stance by the VA,

THEREFORE, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA calls upon the VA to immediately add more and better trained professional staff to the crisis hotline for veterans, and

FURTHERMORE, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA calls for an increase in the number of highly trained mental health counselors, and

FURTHERMORE, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA demands that there be the establishment of a Nation-wide uniform in-depth program of training for all staff, and

FURTHERMORE, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA calls for expanded mental health intervention and therapy programs, and

FURTHERMORE, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA demands the development and implementation of gender-specific interventions to meet the requirements of veterans that, when and where appropriate, will address those issues that arise out of sexual harassment and military sexual trauma.

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## **EXPAND WOMEN’S HEALTH COVERAGE AND IMPROVE REFERRAL AND TREATMENT PROCESS FOR MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA**

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WHEREAS, our all veterans deserve outstanding medical services including gender-specific care; and

WHEREAS, every VA medical facility should employ specifically trained professionals whose primary responsibility is to conduct screenings and treatment referrals; and

WHEREAS, now many of the professionals doing the screenings and referrals are doing so as an additional duty beyond their other duties which may take precedence over their screening and referral duties; and

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WHEREAS, many of the screeners and referrers have not received sensitivity training to properly screen and refer former service members who had suffered military sexual trauma (MST) while in the military (this includes male and female veterans); and

WHEREAS, the VA must improve the adjudication process so that the MST claims are uniformly decided regardless of regional office or the gender of the victim,

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THEREFORE, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA calls upon Congress to provide the funding necessary to provide skilled, empathetic, and well-trained professionals to perform screenings, treatment referrals, and gender-specific care.

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## **END VETERAN HOMELESSNESS**

WHEREAS, the National government has made significant strides to reduce the number of homeless veterans living in the streets, under bridges and homeless tent cities; and

WHEREAS, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA recognizes the success of the VA's prevention initiative, the Supportive Services for Veterans and Families program as well as the Housing and Urban Development-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing vouchers and the Department of Labor's Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program; and

WHEREAS, it is obvious that these various programs and projects have made tremendous progress toward the ultimate goal of having no homeless veterans anywhere within the United States; and

WHEREAS, much of this success can be credited to the careful crafting of initiatives and the wise investment of significant funds; and

WHEREAS, greater efforts must be developed to locate and assist our homeless veterans regardless of their location, and

WHEREAS, even one homeless veteran is simply one too many,

THEREFORE, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA strongly urges Congress to continue to fund these successful programs and projects and to continue to support the development of new and fresh concepts to expand this level of success in achieving the ideal and ultimate goal of no homeless veterans anywhere within the United States of America.

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## **EXTEND TIMEFRAME TO APPLY FOR SURVIVOR BENEFITS**

WHEREAS, the surviving relatives of a service member who died as a result of injury or disease incurred in or aggravated by combat has two years from the service member's death to petition for immigration benefits; and

WHEREAS, the marriage between the parties had been recognized by an appropriate military authority; and

WHEREAS, there is no obvious rationale for establishing this time limit; and

WHEREAS, there may be extraordinary situations or exigencies that preclude a timely filing of any such petition for immigration benefits,

THEREFORE, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA calls upon Congress to incorporate within the application process sufficient flexibility to permit an untimely application for immigration benefits where the applicant cannot meet the mandated time limits through no fault of his/her own doing.

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## **UPDATE AND PASS AGENT ORANGE EXTENSION ACT OF 2015**

WHEREAS, there remains a need to extend the Agent Orange Act of 1991, as amended, to an additional two years so that the Department of Veterans Affairs can enter into an agreement with the National Academy of Sciences to evaluate the scientific evidence studying the exposure to Agent Orange and other herbicides and a cluster of illnesses and disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the Vietnam veterans and their progeny are still suffering from the effects of the toxins used in the Republic of Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, the veterans and their families have an absolute right to know how the toxins to which they were exposed as a result of their service to this nation will affect them now and for future generations,

WHEREAS, without the passage of this bill, such needed studies cannot be developed and protocols effectuated; and

THEREFORE, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA supports the passage of the Agent Orange Extension Act of 2015 as well as other Acts that will address concerns and questions that have arisen as to the long-term effects of the veterans' exposure to toxins during the course of their military service.

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## **CLOSE GAP IN LAWS INTENDED TO TREAT CAMP LEJEUNE VETERANS**

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs is mandated to provide health care to veterans who served at Camp Lejeune for at least 30 days during the period beginning January 1, 1957 and ending on December 31, 1987; and

WHEREAS, this responsibility was given to the VA in two separate Laws, one known as the Honoring American's Veterans and Caring for Camp Lejeune Families Act of 2012 and the other the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act of 2015; and

WHEREAS, the earlier Act required the VA to reimburse the affected veteran for co-pays the VA charged them for treatments received for illnesses arising out of their presence at Camp Lejeune, the 2015 Act did not contain identical language, thus the VA has taken the position that it will not reimburse those who were ill during the period August 1, 1953 through January 1, 1957; and

THEREFORE, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA calls upon Congress to reconcile the language contained within the two pieces of enabling legislation and to add a mandate that the legislation is remedial in nature and must be read liberally and in a fashion most favorable to the veteran.

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## **PASS THE BLUE WATER NAVY VIETNAM VETERANS ACT OF 2017**

WHEREAS, the House of Representatives has passed a bill requiring the Department of Veterans Affairs to grant presumptive benefits to Blue Water Navy sailors that were exposed to herbicides during their service to this Nation; and

WHEREAS, this legislation became necessary as a result of the Department of Veterans Affairs successful law suit denying members of the Blue Water Navy who served off the coast of Vietnam presumptive benefits for illnesses arising out of their exposure to toxic herbicides; and

WHEREAS, the general tenor of opposition to the granting of presumptive benefits to these sailors is the projected cost; and

WHEREAS, proposed legislation is moving forward as an Amendment to the Military Construction and VA Appropriations Act of 2017,

THEREFORE, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA thanks the House of Representatives for enacting this measure and calls upon the Senate to concur with the passage of this important piece of legislation.

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## **IMPROVE VETERAN EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT**

WHEREAS, many members of the military delayed their civilian education and/or employment so as to serve their country as a member of the military; and

WHEREAS, many of these same individuals return to the civilian world with physical disabilities and/or personal problems that inhibit their full integration into the civilian world; and

WHEREAS, there remains a need to help veterans find rewarding employment, launch their own business and/or advance their education; and

WHEREAS, more than 400,000 veterans are unemployed, and many more find difficulties matching their skills, training, experience and financial needs as they transition into their civilian life,

THEREFORE, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA calls upon the federal government to fully and earnestly embrace the Veterans Preference Hiring provisions by awarding contracts to service-disabled veterans and ,

FURTHERMORE, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA calls upon all government echelons to recognize the military training and experience of veterans and to grant them specialized licensing and credentialing commensurate with their military skills and training, and

FURTHERMORE, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA calls upon Congress to strengthen and fully fund governmental agencies that exist to assist veterans, such as, the Department of Labor's Veterans Employment and Training Service, Work Opportunity Tax Credits under the VOW Act of 2011, the Small Business Administration's Veterans Business Development programs and the Department of Housing and Urban Development efforts to alleviate the needs of the homeless veterans.

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## **PRECLUDING FORCED ARBITRATION IN USERRA CASES**

WHEREAS, the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (“USERRA”) was signed into law on October 13, 1994 and is designed to protect the employment and reemployment rights of service members who are reservists as they transition between their dual roles as civilian employees and members of the reserve components (National Guard and Reserve); and

WHEREAS, USERRA explicitly provides that the law shall supersede any contract or agreement that contradicts its benefits and protections against discrimination in hiring, reemployment after service or promotions; and

WHEREAS, numerous employers now make as a condition of employment or continued employment a waiver of the right to take a dispute arising out of the employment relationship to arbitration rather than before a judicial tribunal; and

WHEREAS, in several matters that have come before two federal circuits, those circuits have agreed with employers that the service member waived the right to take a dispute before a federal judicial forum writing that had Congress wished to have the federal judicial forum as the only available forum, it would have so mandated.

THEREFORE, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA supports the efforts of Senator Richard Blumenthal to pass the “Justice for Servicemembers Act of 2016, that would preclude forced arbitration of disputes arising under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act.

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## **INVEST IN NATIONAL SECURITY AND OVERTURN SEQUESTRATION CUTS TO DOD BUDGET**

WHEREAS, the United States is fielding a smaller Army than at the time since the 9/11 attack; and

WHEREAS, the Navy has fewer ships afloat at any time since before World War I; and

WHEREAS, the United States Marine Corps is deactivating one Division; and

WHEREAS, the Air Force is the smallest it has been since 1947, and, due to sequestration, is due to lose another 500 planes from its inventory; and

WHEREAS, there continue to be threats to the security of the United States from China, Iran, North Korea, Russia, and any number of other rogue nations and organizations; and

WHEREAS, the number of terrorist organizations continues to grow and the number of lone wolf home grown extremists is, also, increasing; and

WHEREAS, while the terrorists continue to be successful in finding individuals to radicalize and to commit horrendous and heinous acts of mass murder,

THEREFORE, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA calls upon Congress to stop depleting America's military forces and start rebuilding our military so as to maintain the United States as the world's greatest super-power, and

FURTHERMORE, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA calls upon the government to out-source only to foreign countries closely aligned with the best interests of the United States for the development of missile engines and other vital electronics upon which this country relies for its defense.

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## **FIGHTING BACK AGAINST THE BOYCOTT OF ISRAEL**

WHEREAS, the boycott, divest and sanction movement continues to seek to delegitimize Israel by pressuring corporations and universities to divest holdings in Israeli corporations; and  
WHEREAS, this same movement seeks to boycott the products of Israel; and

WHEREAS, this movement falsely accuses Israel of racism and worse and alleges the Palestine Authority is serving its citizens in a fair and democratic fashion; and

WHEREAS, several corporations and governmental entities now have taken the position that they will not do business with those corporations that have submitted to the movement's pressure; and

WHEREAS, several governmental entities have threatened or have actually defunded those educational institutions that have capitulated to the movement's pressure,

THEREFORE, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA fully supports and thanks the corporations that have pushed back regardless of the movement's sometimes intense lobbying and economic threats and have refused to comply with any of their demands, and

FURTHERMORE, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA strongly urges that all governmental entities follow the strong position taken by several of their colleagues and defund those educational institutions that have taken the easy route and have complied with the movement to delegitimize Israel demands.

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## **MOVING THE AMERICAN EMBASSY TO JERUSALEM- THE ETERNAL CAPITAL OF ISRAEL**

WHEREAS, Jerusalem has been and remains the Eternal Capital of Israel; and

WHEREAS, Congress, for many years, has said that the United States Embassy should be transferred to Jerusalem from its current location unless the President of the United States directs that it not be moved as against the best interests of the United States; and

WHEREAS, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA has long advocated the recognition by the United States that Jerusalem is the Capital of Israel and the location of the United States Embassy in any other city is a creation of politically driven fiction; and

WHEREAS, we are now engaged in the presidential election cycle; and

WHEREAS, whoever is elected as President should recognize the fact that Jerusalem is and will remain the Capital of Israel; and

WHEREAS, the next President should be willing to face the ire and threats of many of the Muslim and/or Arab countries,

THEREFORE, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA calls upon all candidates for the office of President to immediately vow, upon Inauguration to authorize the transfer of the Embassy of the United States to Jerusalem, and

FURTHERMORE, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA calls upon the next President of the United States, upon election, to fulfill that vow.

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