



# JWV of the USA • 2017 Resolutions

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## **VETERANS' ACCESS TO CHILD CARE ACT**

WHEREAS, the House of Representatives has before it H.R. 95 that seeks to amend Title 38 by directing the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide child care assistance to veterans receiving certain medical services, and

WHEREAS, the proposed amendment would provide day care for children of an eligible veteran who is in need of certain medical services but cannot benefit from these services due to child care responsibilities, and

WHEREAS, health care under the amendment means regular mental health care, intensive mental health care or such other health care services as the Secretary determines to be needed by the veteran, and

WHEREAS, it is reasonable and proper that a veteran should not be required to choose between receiving health care services and duties as the primary care giver;

THEREFORE, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA goes on record in support of H.R. 95, and any companion bill passed in the Senate.

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## **VETERANS' COURTS**

WHEREAS, Veterans' Courts are being established in a growing number jurisdictions, and

WHEREAS, there needs to be incorporated within the enabling legislation such provisions that provide treatment in lieu of incarceration in those circumstances where the underlying cause of the veteran's involvement can be traced to the veteran's military experience, and

WHEREAS, the veterans' courts in numerous jurisdictions have found that veterans that successfully fulfill the rehabilitative aspects of the veterans' courts have a lower recidivism rate than other individuals that come before courts generally, and

WHEREAS, the essential component of the veterans' court programs needs to be treatment and rehabilitation rather retribution and incarceration, and

WHEREAS, most veterans enter into the judicial system at the local level and, thus, the veterans' courts need to be available at that level as well as at the level of the state courts, and

WHEREAS, upon the successful completion of a veterans' court diversionary program, the charges against the veteran are dismissed so that the veteran does not acquire a criminal record;

THEREFORE, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA strongly urges the various jurisdictions across the country develop and implement veterans' courts that emphasize treatment and rehabilitation in lieu of retribution and incarceration.

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## **MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR VETERANS' FAMILIES**

WHEREAS, the families of veterans are a very important component of the transition of an individual from warrior to civilian, and

WHEREAS, the families of the veterans frequently suffer the consequences of their family members' service to this country along with the veteran, and

WHEREAS, the use of mental health services, both in individual counseling and group sessions has proven helpful to the preservation of the family unit and the members of the family, which includes children as well as spouses or partners, and

WHEREAS, this service is available at some VA locations but is needed at all VA facilities;

THEREFORE, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA calls upon Congress to fully fund family counseling services at all VA facilities and calls upon the VA to implement family and individual counseling services through the Nation,

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## **ACCESS TO VA MEDICAL SERVICES**

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Choice Program provides for a veteran to be able to utilize the medical services of a local provider where there is no VA facility within 30 miles of the veteran's home, and

WHEREAS, the VA has interpreted that to mean that if there is a community based outpatient clinic (CBOC) center within 30 miles then the veteran must use the VA facility, and

WHEREAS, this may require the veteran to ride a VA bus to the facility, often meaning the veteran must be at the outreach center before the bus departs, regardless of when the appointment is scheduled and wait for the return trip, again, regardless of when the appointment is completed, and

WHEREAS, 6-8 hour days for travel are not uncommon for the veterans;

THEREFORE, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA asks the VA to permit veterans to obtain medical services locally through pre-approved providers where the site of the medical services to be provided are not within 30 miles of the veteran's home.

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## **ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORDS AT THE VA**

WHEREAS, the electronic medical records maintained by the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs are stored on non-compatible systems, and

WHEREAS, this incompatibility too often serves as a detriment to a veteran's receiving proper care, and

WHEREAS, this incompatibility has been known for years but nothing beyond the planning stage occurred because of the projected costs, and

WHEREAS, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. David Shulkin, MD, has announced that the VA will adopt the DoD system so that in the future, the DoD and the VA will be able to transfer data with each other to the benefit of the veteran;

THEREFORE, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA congratulates Dr. David Shulkin, on assisting the veteran receive timely medical services reflecting the military service of the veteran while saving the government billions of dollars on additional studies and computer program development by taking a common-sense approach to a long overdue solution.

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## **STATE PRICING OF VA-AVAILABLE DRUGS**

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs is the primary source of medications for many veterans, and

WHEREAS, the price of medications for the veterans depends, in large measure, upon the percent of disability of the veteran, and

WHEREAS, some veterans receive their medications at no cost and others have a very reasonable co-pay, and

WHEREAS, the price the veteran pays is a return for the veterans having given of themselves and offered their life to protect their Nation and place their lives on the line to protect America from those who would destroy us, and

WHEREAS, several states have sought to have their citizens be able to purchase medications at the same price as the veterans but without their citizens make the same sacrifices as the veterans, and

WHEREAS, should these efforts be successful, the price of medicines available to the veterans would more likely than not increase to cover the costs to the pharmaceutical companies for lost profits;

THEREFORE, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA goes on record opposing any states' efforts to tie the price they pay for medications for the benefit of their citizens to the costs veterans pay for their medicines.

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## **JWV SUPPORT OF H.R. 2327 “PUPPIES ASSISTING WOUNDED SERVICEMEMBERS ACT OF 2017” OR “PAWS ACT”**

WHEREAS, 20 veterans commit suicide every day, and

WHEREAS, mental health disorders, including depression and other mood disorders, have been associated with increased risk for suicide, and

WHEREAS, since 2001 the proportion of veterans with mental health or substance abuse disorders has increased from approximately 27% in 2001 to more than 40% in 2014,

WHEREAS, a pilot program and study of the pairing of service dogs with veterans suffering from mental health disorders has allowed the Department of Veterans Affairs to determine to efficacy of using service dogs as a nontraditional therapy to ensure the well-being of veterans;

THEREFORE, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA calls upon the Congress to pass H.R. 2327, the “Puppies Assisting Wounded Servicemembers Act of 2017” also known as the “PAWS Act.”

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## **STRENGTHENING THE GI BILL OF RIGHTS**

WHEREAS, the GI Bill of education has long been considered the avenue to a better education and a better life, and

WHEREAS, for many years the GI Bill had built in restrictions that limited its' availability due to the restrictions contained within the Law, and

WHEREAS, Congress recently loosened many of those restrictions, but not all, and

WHEREAS, a well-educated and well-trained population is necessary as the backbone of American growth and prosperity;

THEREFORE, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA encourages:

1. Effective individual initial counseling to assist veterans in selecting appropriate educational and vocational training paths that reflect their goals and abilities thus leading to productive careers, and
2. Effective counseling throughout the veteran's educational and/or training, assisting the veteran to transition from a war-fighter to a successful civilian student, and
3. Monitor for-profit training and educational institutions to assure that they are providing appropriate services and education to veterans and decertifying those that fail to meet established criteria, and
4. Provide appropriate avenues of redress to veterans where an institution fails to fulfill promises to the veterans and to provide additional veterans' benefits to those veterans where the institution is decertified for its' failures.

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## **JWV POSITION ON BURN PITS**

WHEREAS, burn pits are defined as open-air pits used to burn war chemicals, paint, medical and human waste, metal/aluminum cans, munitions and other unexploded ordnance, petroleum and lubricant products, plastics, rubber, wood, and discarded food, and

WHEREAS, there were 197 burn pits operating in Afghanistan as of 2011 and 63 operating in Iraq as of November, 2009, prior to new regulations being enacted for Iraq, and

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense estimates reveal that between 65,000 and 85,000 pounds of waste were disposed of each day at large bases (large being defined as over 1,000 military), and

WHEREAS, various peer review studies suggest an association between burn pit proximity and respiratory illness, and

WHEREAS, the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs maintain that any ill effects from exposure to burn pits is temporary and will pass once the military member is removed from the area, and

WHEREAS, the American Public Health Association has developed a series of recommendations including:

1. Working with the Afghan troops to end the use of burn pits and remediate the area surrounding them;
2. Studying, at independent universities and non-governmental organizations, the long-range effects of exposure at burn pits;
3. Requiring the VA to make the current airborne hazard and burn pits registry fully functional;
4. Requiring those now working near burn pits to wear protective gear and enter into long-term medical surveillance;

THEREFORE, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA calls upon both the Executive and Legislative branches to immediately implement the recommendation of the American Public Health Association.

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## **JWV SUPPORT FOR H.R. 3327-THE JACK ANDERSON TOXIC EXPOSURE DECLASSIFICATION ACT**

WHEREAS, the Jack Anderson Toxic Exposure Declassification Act, as a stand-alone bill, would require the Department of Defense to declassify documents related to any known incident where no less than 100 members of the Armed Forces were exposed to any toxic substance, and

WHEREAS, it has been over 50 years since members of the military were unwittingly and unwillingly exposed to secret chemical and biological warfare agents, and

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense continues to refuse to tell those exposed exactly what they had been exposed to, and

WHEREAS, among the tests under what was label as Project 112, was a test called The Shipboard Hazard and Decontamination Program that was conducted at various times between 1962 and 1970 and exposed service members to such chemical and biological agents as serin, VX, and Q Fever, and

WHEREAS, these former service members still cannot find out to what chemical and biological agents they were exposed;

THEREFORE, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA thanks Representative Mike Thompson (D-CA-5th) for offering this bill and to those members of the House who have signed on as co-sponsors. We support the bill in its current form and ask that a companion bill be passed by the Senate.

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## **JWV VEHEMENTLY DISAGREES WITH THE TESTIMONY OF JAMES SAMPSEL**

WHEREAS, James Sampsel, a lead analyst who testifies before the Department of Veterans Advisory Committee called concerns of the effects of Agent Orange “hype” and “hysteria” and not based on science, and

WHEREAS, Sampsel is a Vietnam veteran and is the Department of Veterans Affairs lead analyst for Agent Orange and Gulf War Syndrome within the DVA, and

WHEREAS, Sampsel alleges that Agent Orange contained “very, very small amounts” of dioxin, denies exposure to veterans who served outside of Vietnam, and criticized the Board of Veterans Appeals by saying, “BVA is, can do anything they want. I don’t know if everybody understands BVA. BVA has caused a lot of, what I would call misinformation about Agent Orange issues.”

THEREFORE, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA vehemently disagrees with the statements and testimony of James Sampsel and demands his removal from any position wherein his opinions and recommendations are given any credence whatsoever.

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## **DEVELOP A MANDATORY HOME OF RECORD SEPARATION POLICY FOR ONE TOUR SERVICE MEMBERS SIGNED AT TIME OF ENLISTMENT, TO MITIGATE HOMELESSNESS**

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WHEREAS, one tour service members separating from the service in sunbelt states tend to stay and add to the crowding of VA facilities, such that California, Florida, Texas make up almost half the homeless population, with California alone accounting for 24% of the veteran homeless population with 63.2% being unsheltered, despite having a low native enlistment rate of 4-5 people per thousand.

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WHEREAS, one tour service members have difficulty finding employment, and as such aldetaching service members must be mandated to attend a Transition Assistance Program (TAP) within 6 months prior to separation to prepare for civilian life,

WHEREAS, one tour service members comprise 95% of all homeless veterans in sunbelt states, of which 10% (and growing) include women and children living in the streets which is an increase of 140% between 2006 to 2010.

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WHEREAS, service members mandatorily discharged at Home of Record have a built in support system of friends and family to minimize homelessness and unemployment, WHEREAS, use of Home of Record Veterans Administration facilities will minimize crowding in sunbelt states, help equalize the workload across the VA system, improve wait time and access to care, WHEREAS, educational expenses afforded the service member under the GI Bill will be less expensive to the taxpayer due to instate tuition, allowing for expansion of programs with minimal budget increase,

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WHEREAS, waivers to this policy will be available at the discretion of the DOD as recommended by the Base Command from which the service member is separating and must be submitted by the service member within 6 months prior to separation,

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THEREFORE, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA ask the House of Representatives to establish such a requirement and support/urge a DOD directive, or develop legislation as appropriate in support of Mandatory Home of Record Separation for all one tour service members.

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## **THE JEWISH WAR VETERANS OF THE USA THANKS THE SECRETARY FOR ADDRESSING “BAD PAPER” DISCHARGES THAT LEAVE WOUNDED VETERANS WITHOUT MEDICAL BENEFITS**

WHEREAS, a GAO contracted Rand Institute study showed that 62% or 57,141 of the 91,764 servicemembers separated for misconduct from 2011 through 2015 had been diagnosed within two years prior to separation with PTSD, TBI or certain other conditions that could be associated with misconduct, e.g., adjustment and alcohol-related disorders, and

WHEREAS, of the 57,141 servicemembers, 23% or 13,284 received an “Other than honorable” characterization of service, potentially making them ineligible for health benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and

WHEREAS, the Brown University’s Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs found that, “Veterans with ‘Bad Paper’ in fact may be among those veterans with higher needs for postwar assistance, being over-represented in studies on veteran Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Traumatic Brain Injuries, suicide, drug and alcohol abuse, military sexual assault/trauma, and related problems of incarceration and homelessness.”, and

WHEREAS, in March 2017, Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Dr. David Shulkin, announced measures to address this problem specifically ordering VA medical facilities to provide emergency mental health services for this population, and

WHEREAS, the Secretary did not direct the VA to provide basic health care and other support like housing, job training and education, and

WHEREAS, the Secretary codified and emphasized existing VA policies but broke no new ground;

THEREFORE, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA thanks Secretary Shulkin for addressing the need for emergency mental health services and requests that he move to require the VA to provide basic medical services to all veterans with discharges under less than honorable conditions where any misconduct may have as its root causation service-connected PTSD, TBI, drug and alcohol abuse, military sexual assault/trauma, and related problem of incarceration and homelessness.

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## **PASS THE TAYLOR FORCE ACT OF 2017**

WHEREAS, the House and Senate have introduced the Taylor Force Act, which prohibits certain assistance under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 from being made available for the West Bank and Gaza unless the Department of State certifies that the Palestinian Authority:

- is taking steps to end acts of violence against U.S. and Israeli citizens perpetrated by individuals under its jurisdictional control, such as the March 2016 attack that killed former Army officer Taylor Force;
- is publicly condemning such acts of violence and is investigating, or cooperating in investigations of, such acts; and
- has terminated payments for acts of terrorism against U.S. and Israeli citizens to any individual who has been convicted and imprisoned for such acts, to any individual who died committing such acts, and to family members of such an individual, and

WHEREAS, Taylor Force, an Army Veteran and West Point graduate was using his GI Bill on a Vanderbilt Business School trip to Israel, and was stabbed to death by a Palestinian terrorist along with 10 others who were wounded. He was not Jewish or Israeli, and

WHEREAS, Taylor Force's 21 year old attacker's, Bashar Masalha, parents receive about \$800 to \$1,000 per month for their son's involvement in killing Taylor Force as a part of the Palestinian Martyr Fund. The fund consists of \$300 million annually, which is half of their annual foreign aid donations. The US pays the Palestinian Authority around \$300 million annually, which is funded by US taxpayers. As Lindsey Graham said, "It's got to hurt for Stuart and Robbi [Taylor's parents] to know that the taxes they pay go to a Palestinian Authority who rewards the killer of their son," and

THEREFORE, the Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A. supports the Passage of the Taylor Force Act of 2017 as well as other acts that fight policies that incentivizes killings of innocent victims, and

FURTHERMORE, the bipartisan bill has already passed the Senate (co-sponsored by Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC) and Senator Chuck Schumer (D-NY), and it will be taken up in the House in September when the House reconvenes. Representative Lamborn's office has been in contact with JWV National Headquarters concerning the bill, and

FURTHERMORE, organizations like American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and Christains United For Israel (CUFI) have already put out public statements in support the bipartisan bill.

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## **CONNECTICUT’S HATE CRIMES LAW**

WHEREAS, there has been an increase in hate crimes, and

WHEREAS, the amendments to the Connecticut hate crimes law have upgraded the intimidation of an individual person based on bigotry or bias to a felony rather than a misdemeanor, and

WHEREAS, the law increases the penalty for threatening a house of worship and a religiously-affiliated community or day-care center, and

WHEREAS, the law lowers the threshold for a first degree hate crime to inflicting “physical injury” rather than “serious injury.”;

THEREFORE, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA thanks the Connecticut Legislature and Governor for taking the lead in strengthening the State laws in the fight against all forms of bigotry and bias and encourages other states to follow Connecticut’s lead.

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## **ISRAELI-AMERICAN FLAG FOREVER STAMP**

WHEREAS, the bond of friendship between Israel and the United States have been tested since the founding of Israel in 1948 but remains as strong and healthy now as at any time in the past, and

WHEREAS, Israel will be celebrating its 70th Anniversary in 2018, and

WHEREAS, it would most fitting and appropriate to commemorate this occasion by the United States Postal Service issuing a forever stamp demonstrating that the bond of friendship between the United States and Israel will last forever;

THEREFORE, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA calls upon the United States Postal Service to issue a forever stamp featuring the crossed flags of the United States and Israel.

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