Paralyzed Veterans of America 2021 Legislative Priorities

#PushingAccessForward

2021 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

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WHO IS PVA?

Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) is the only congressionally chartered veterans service organization dedicated solely for the benefit and representation of veterans with spinal cord injury or disease. With more than 70 offices and 33 chapters, PVA serves veterans, their families, and their caregivers in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

- We Champion important issues that protect the civil rights of all people with disabilities.
- We Connect veterans with our National Service Officers (NSOs) — who are located in 73 National Service Offices around the country — and legal services to help them secure benefits that they deserve from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). NSOs are accredited experts in VA benefits and legally represent veterans, dependents, and survivors before the VA and Board of Veterans Appeals. PVA also represents veterans before the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. In fiscal year 2020, PVA’s veterans benefits department secured almost $270M in new benefits for our clients.
- We Examine, monitor, and audit the quality of health care and related programs at all VA SCI/D Centers and health facilities, and advocate for vital improvements.
- We Fund research and education grants that change the lives of people living with spinal cord injury or disease. Since the inception of our Research Foundation in 1976, PVA has invested nearly $52M in grants.
- We Provide critical architectural support to help ensure that buildings, facilities, and sports complexes are ADA compliant.
- We Offer veterans employment support, including resume review, interview coaching, employer introductions, and networking opportunities for successful job placement. Since the start of PVA’s employment program, Veterans Career Program (formerly known as PAVE), we have helped more than 5,000 transitioning service members, veterans, military spouses, and caregivers in their search for meaningful employment.
- We Celebrate 75 years of helping veterans regain what they fought for: their freedom and independence. PVA was founded by a band of service members who returned home from World War II with spinal cord injuries and few to no solutions to the major challenges they faced. These wounded heroes decided not just to live, but to live with dignity as contributors to society and in 1946, they created PVA.

2021 POLICY PRIORITIES

Improve the VA Health Care System & Available Services

- Protect Access to VA’s Specialized Services
  Congress must preserve access to VA’s specialized services, including the spinal cord injury/disorder (SCI/D) system of care, and provide appropriate funding to ensure continued success. Congress must also ensure proper staffing of VA’s specialized services by providing competitive compensation and retention incentives to keep up with the private sector.
- Expand Access to VA’s Long-Term Services & Supports
  Congress must conduct oversight of VA’s implementation of the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers to ensure consistent eligibility determinations and a fair appeals process. Also, expedite Phase II of the caregiver program expansion to October 1. Furthermore, Congress must maintain a safe margin of community living center capacity by increasing funding for SCI/D-related construction projects.
- Increase Access to IVF
  Congress must repeal VA’s ban on IVF and make these services a regular part of the medical benefits package available to veterans and authorize VA to provide assisted reproductive technology, including IVF, surrogacy, and gamete donation at VA for any veterans enrolled in VA health care.
- Enhance Care for Women Veterans with SCI/D
  Congress must ensure VA properly serves women veterans with catastrophic disabilities by considering their unique needs in developing programs and services.

Improve VA Benefits

- Strengthen Benefits for Catastrophically Disabled Veterans
  Congress must improve their benefits by:
  • Increasing the number of times veterans can access theAutomotive Allowance Grant & ensure veterans receive Automotive Adaptive Equipment (AAE) reimbursement;
  • Allowing veterans with nonservice-connected catastrophic disabilities to receive the same type of AAE as veterans with service-connected disabilities; and
  • Raising the amount of VA’s Home Improvements and Structural Alterations grants.
- Enhance Benefits for Surviving Spouses of Catastrophically Disabled Veterans
  Congress must ensure survivors of veterans who die from ALS receive the full benefits they are due.

Improve & Protect Systems & Civil Rights that Support People with Disabilities

- Strengthen Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA)
  Congress must improve access for people with disabilities to air travel by requiring airlines to use airplanes that meet broad accessibility standards, strengthening the Department of Transportation’s enforcement of the ACA, and establishing a private right of action under the law.
- Promote Increased Compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
  Congress must support increased compliance with the ADA by increasing tax incentives that help businesses remove access barriers. We also support increased funding for the Department of Justice’s (DOJ) ADA mediation program, as well as increased DOJ enforcement of complaints.
- Preserve & Strengthen Social Security
  Congress must strengthen and enhance the Social Security system without harming beneficiaries by implementing a more realistic cost-of-living-adjustment reflective of typical expenses; reducing the tax burden on beneficiaries; making long overdue adjustments in the financing mechanisms for the system; eliminating the five-month waiting period for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI); and removing barriers to work for SSDI beneficiaries.
- Prioritize Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities
  Congress must protect and strengthen disability employment rights; increase tax incentives for employers to hire and retain persons with disabilities; enhance entrepreneurship opportunities for people with disabilities; and improve federal hiring and promotions under Schedule A, veterans preference, and other authorities targeting those with significant disabilities.

Paralyzed Veterans of America 2021 Legislative Priorities | 3
PVA IN YOUR BACKYARD

Education Grant Recipient Locations
Recent Locations of the National Veterans Wheelchair Games

PVA Chapter Locations
Research Grant Recipient Locations
Employment Program Client Locations

PVA Member Locations

The size of the star is relative to the number of members in the state
The size of the star is relative to the number of clients in the state

801 18th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006