



**Paralyzed Veterans  
of America**

New England Chapter

# CORDWORD

The Monthly News Magazine of the New England Chapter, Paralyzed Veterans of America

## PVA'S 2020 Public Policy Priorities



### INSIDE THIS EDITION



#### NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER OFFICES

SERVICE OFFICER DIRECTORY	3
PVA'S PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES	5
VIRTUAL EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE	6
PVA WASHINGTON UPDATE	10-11
75TH ANNIVERSARY OF IWO JIMA	13
PVA SPORTS CALENDAR	19

### 2020 VA IMPROVEMENTS



#### VA Secretary Robert Wilkie: Veterans to See Continued Improvements in 2020.

Veterans will continue to see improvements in VA services, VA Secretary Robert Wilkie said at "State of the VA" speech Feb. 5 at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

These improvements for Veterans include increased innovation—including the VA's first 5G hospital—along with decreased wait times for appointments and better overall care. *...continued on page 4.*

### SERVICE ANIMALS



**WASHINGTON (January 23, 2020)** — PVA Associate Executive Director of Government Relations Heather Ansley issued the following statement regarding the U.S. Department of Transportation seeking public comment on proposed amendments to its Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA) regulation on transporting service animals on aircraft. Once officially published, the public has 60 days to provide comments on the proposed changes to the DOT: *....continued on page 4.*



# Out Front

Michael G. Negrete, President

As I write this, our Chapter delegation and I are preparing to attend the 2020 PVA Annual Advocacy and Legislative Seminar held in Washington, DC.. This is an opportunity for us to meet face-to-face on Capital Hill with our New England Congressional Legislators to 1.) convey and impress upon them both the issues and challenges faced by our members and the disabled community and 2.) how they can legislatively support the solutions and initiatives put forth by PVA. To learn more about the policies we will be focusing on during these meeting, please turn to page 5 and read “PVA’S 2020 Public Policy Priorities for the 116th Congress—2nd Session”. Our advocacy doesn’t stop alone in D.C. either, as we carry these same message to each Legislator back here in their home states. If you have an interest in advocacy and government policy and would like to learn more about how you can participate in supporting the Chapter’s local Program get in touch with me. We’re always looking for volunteers to attend various activities.

Moving on to other significant events, February 19th marks the 75th anniversary of the Marine’s Battle of Iwo Jima. Most notably known for the Marines iconic flag raising on Mount Suribachi, this was a milestone battle won in the Marines’ “island-hopping” campaign throughout the Pacific theater. This Japanese held island’s small but invaluable airstrip was key to winning the war in the Pacific. This hard-fought battle marked a generation of Marines with “Uncommon Valor was a Common Virtue” which is prominently displayed on the Marine Corps memorial near Arlington national cemetery. To learn a little bit more, please turn to page 13 for an article and pictures from the National Museum of the Marine Corps.

Finally, reflecting on President’s day, you’ve seen me quote this before and frequently, “Do what you can, with what you have, where you are.” by President Theodore Roosevelt. This message is uniquely applicable to each of us, as we all have the Individual capacity to make a positive difference where we are, with what we have. No matter large or small, every effort makes a difference, whether you may realize it or not.

Michael G. Negrete  
President and Paralyzed Veteran

# From the Director’s Desk

Mark Murphy, Executive Director



It has been quite an eventful few months since I came on board as Executive Director in early December. I have had the opportunity to visit the West Roxbury VA and Brockton VA several times for Christmas parties, meetings and to visit with some of our members. Over my 9 years of service in the Massachusetts Army National Guard I would often visit both locations in my work, so it has been nice to get re-connected there now on behalf of New England PVA.

In mid-January I flew down to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania for a few days of Executive Director training with Joe Dornbrock, who is the Keystone Chapter ED. Joe has served in that role for 15 years, so he had a lot of advice and experience to share with me as I have settled into this position here in New England. I also had the opportunity to attend their Chapter Board of Directors meeting, which is very similar to the shape and flow of our own board meetings. Joe offered me some great advice, but what perhaps stood out to me the most was when he said, “Always stay focused on the mission.” Simple yet profound professional and life advice indeed!

Looking ahead, during the first week of March I will be attending, along with other NEPVA representatives, the 2020 PVA Advocacy/Legislation Seminar in Washington, D.C. We already have many meetings scheduled with congressional leaders and their staffs from across New England. The theme for this year’s seminar is Pushing Access Forward. I think this is a very fitting and appropriate theme because while we will be advocating on a whole range of legislative priorities, our over-arching purpose in these visits is to partner with Capitol Hill to push access forward by ensuring that the needs of veterans, particularly those with catastrophic disabilities, their families and all people with disabilities are properly addressed. I look forward to reporting back on how things go at the Seminar.

Mark Murphy  
Executive Director

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### PROGRAM DIRECTORS

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# VA Secretary Robert Wilkie: Veterans to See Continued Improvements in 2020

By Adam Stump via Vantage Point



Veterans will continue to see improvements in VA services, VA Secretary Robert Wilkie said at “State of the VA” speech Feb. 5 at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

These improvements for Veterans include increased innovation—including the VA’s first 5G hospital—along with decreased wait times for appointments and better overall care.

## Increased innovation

The secretary pointed to several programs designed to provide better Veteran care.

The VA hospital in Palo Alto, California, is about to become one of the first 5G enabled health facilities in the world, with portions becoming operational this week. The secretary said will deliver is richer, more detailed three-dimensional images of patients’ anatomy. He added the

resolution is so clear and consistent that it will give VA a reliable means of delivering telesurgery services to Veterans.

“That means we will have the capacity to allow VA’s best physicians to consult during surgery even if they’re not in the same room and are halfway across the country,” he said.

Wilkie also pointed to VA’s work on exoskeletons, which do the work patients can’t do on their own. The VA currently has a pilot program to develop exoskeletons that stimulate the spinal cord.

“Instead of the exoskeleton moving the patient around, the patient can increasingly control the exoskeleton as their own muscles are reactivated,” he said. With further research at VA, we are hoping to turn the exoskeleton from a mobility device into something that trains injured people to walk again under their own power.”

## Other innovation

The secretary also pointed to a VA partnership to help Veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder and pain management.

The partnership is with the University of Southern California, a non-profit called Soldier Strong, and AppliedVR. Veterans with PTSD use virtual reality relive and reimagine traumatic events in a controlled setting, under the care of a clinician. The program gives Veterans a chance to process these emotions, which can be an effective treatment for PTSD. He said virtual reality can also help block pain signals from reaching the brain, and thus is a drug-free supplement to traditional pain therapies.

# PVA Statement on U.S. Department of Transportation’s Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for Air Travelers with Service Animals

via PVA.org



WASHINGTON (January 23, 2020) — PVA Associate Executive Director of Government Relations Heather Ansley issued the following statement regarding the U.S. Department of Transportation seeking public comment on

proposed amendments to its Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA) regulation on transporting service animals on aircraft. Once officially published, the public has 60 days to provide comments on the proposed changes to the DOT:

“The proposed rule would mean big changes for all service animal users. Under the proposed rule, airlines would be able to request that passengers with disabilities complete DOT forms attesting to their service

animal’s good behavior, health, and training. The recommended changes would also allow airlines to require travelers with service animals to check-in early for their flight. If implemented, these measures would create a new burden for catastrophically disabled veterans who already have to deal with damaged wheelchairs, lack of accessible lavatories, and bodily harm caused from being transferred on and off the aircraft. The proposed rule would also allow airlines to prohibit transport of emotional support animals unless the individual complies will rules and fees for transporting pets. We do not support treating emotional support animals like pets. Instead, we believe there needs to be a balance between enacting requirements to prevent travelers from taking advantage of access rules when flying with animals and limiting access for people with disabilities. Catastrophically disabled veterans already have more than enough access limits in air travel.”

# PVA'S 2020 Public Policy Priorities for the 116th Congress—2nd Session



Veterans must have access to high quality, comprehensive, and veteran-centric health care as well as timely and accurate delivery of all earned benefits.

## Strengthen and Improve the VA Health Care System and Services

1. **Protect Access to VA's Specialized Services**  
Congress must protect access to specialized services within VA, including the spinal cord injury/disorder (SCI/D) system of care, to ensure that it remains strong and effective. Congress must also ensure that VA's health care system is able to effectively meet its staffing requirements.
2. **Improve Access to VA's Long-Term Services and Supports**  
Congress must provide oversight of VA's expansion of its Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) to ensure it is executed in a fair and timely manner and expand eligibility for the PCAFC to include veterans with serious illnesses like ALS and MS. Congress must also maintain a safe margin of community living center capacity for veterans with SCI/D.
3. **Access to IVF**  
Congress must make in-vitro fertilization (IVF) a permanent part of VA's medical care package.
4. **Care for Women Veterans with SCI/D**  
Congress must ensure that VA is able to fully meet the needs of women veterans with catastrophic disabilities, including considering their needs in any decisions involving VA's delivery of gender-specific health care.

## Strengthen VA Benefits

1. **Benefits Improvement for Catastrophically Disabled Veterans**  
Congress must improve benefits for veterans with the most severe disabilities by:
  - Increasing the Automobile Allowance Grant and ensuring that veterans receive appropriate Automotive Adaptive Equipment reimbursement;
  - Addressing the transportation needs of non-service-connected veterans to help restore, promote and preserve the highest state of health possible; and
  - Prioritizing claims for Specially Adapted Housing for veterans with ALS and increasing the amount and usability of the grant for all

catastrophically disabled veterans.

2. **Benefits for the Surviving Spouses of Catastrophically Disabled Veterans**  
Congress must ensure survivors of veterans who die from ALS receive the full benefits they are due.

**Veterans with disabilities must have equity in access to the opportunities and freedoms available to all Americans to allow them to live, work, travel, and fully participate in society.**

## Strengthen and Protect the Systems and Civil Rights that Support People with Disabilities

1. **Improve Access to Air Travel for Passengers with Disabilities**  
Congress must improve access to air travel by requiring airlines to ensure that airplanes meet broad accessibility standards and strengthening Air Carrier Access Act enforcement through referral of certain complaints to the U.S. Attorney General and a private right of action.
2. **Protect and Increase Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**  
Congress must continue to protect the rights of people with disabilities to seek immediate redress of discriminatory barriers in public accommodations under the ADA and increase and expand the tax incentives available to assist businesses with ADA compliance.
3. **Preserve and Strengthen Financial and Health Security for People with Disabilities**  
Congress must strengthen and enhance the Social Security system and protect Medicare, while rejecting efforts to undermine these earned benefits programs that represent an economic safety net for millions of Americans.
4. **Disaster Response and Recovery that Meets the Needs of People with Disabilities**  
Congress must address current gaps in the ability of the emergency response and recovery system to address the needs of people with disabilities and ensure disability inclusive disaster management policies and practices.

# New Virtual Employment Service Provides Support for Disabled Veterans Anywhere, Anytime!

via [PVA.org](http://PVA.org)



WASHINGTON (January 28, 2020) — Paralyzed Veterans of America announces a new virtual engagement initiative from its employment program, PAVE (Paving Access for Veterans Employment), that specializes in helping veterans with disabilities find meaningful employment. PAVE Connect bridges a critical gap, reaching those who do not have the time, means, or ability to attend traditional employment or educational events.

In recent years, PVA has observed that traditional hiring and employment fairs are ineffective for many PAVE clients — the overlooked and undervalued veteran workforce. Veterans with disabilities, especially those who are significantly injured or ill, are less likely to attend large public events with crowds or in locations that are not easily accessible.

Through PAVE Connect, members of the veteran community can:

Interact with PAVE employment experts through virtual meetings.

Meet employers eager to hire from the military and veteran community.

Access an online library of timely, relevant career information — on their schedule and from any device.

View recorded presentations and access other tools and resources on demand.

Discover a wide range of meaningful education, volunteer, and employment opportunities.

“I am thrilled to add PAVE Connect to our list of services,” said Lauren Lobrano, PVA’s director of PAVE. “Virtual technology provides yet another meaningful way to reach and serve our clients. If a veteran is underemployed, they can’t take the time away from their current job to pursue a better one. If a veteran has a significant disability, yet is capable and employable, big events can be a deterrent. PAVE Connect helps level that playing field and maintains our proven one-on-one, high-touch approach.”

PAVE employment analysts and vocational rehabilitation counselors work with clients to overcome barriers to employment at all stages of their life. The unique, no-cost program offers assistance not only to veterans across the country, but also to transitioning service members, spouses, and caregivers and specializes in assisting those with barriers to employment.

“Employment is a vital part of feeling independent, especially if you’ve been injured or have a disability,” said Hack Albertson, national vice president of PVA and a U.S. Marine Corps veteran. “I was introduced to

Paralyzed Veterans of America through the PAVE program. The support I received made such an impact, I committed my career to giving back and helping other veterans like myself. Now with PAVE Connect, our reach extends further to meet those who need us most.”

PAVE Connect sessions, led by employment experts, cover topics such as transitioning from military to civilian employment, interview preparation, requesting accommodations in the workplace, effective resume tips, and more. PVA’s employment and educational partners will also participate

in select sessions, offering exceptional networking opportunities and insight into the opportunities available within their organizations. The first several PAVE Connect pilot sessions provided clients with informative dialogue and useful resources as they work toward finding meaningful employment.

Watch past PAVE Connect sessions, view the upcoming schedule, and register to participate in a session for free at [pva.org/pave](http://pva.org/pave).

# VA Secretary Robert Wilkie: Veterans to See Continued Improvements in 2020

*Continued from page 4*

Veterans also see improved care through innovations such as telehealth, a new technology to identify potential diabetic foot ulcers and the precision oncology program. All these innovations help increase Veteran care, he said.

The secretary said this innovation carries on VA’s previous innovation, which includes inventing the cardiac pacemaker, inventing the nicotine patch, performing the first liver transplant and introducing a powered ankle-foot prosthesis. He said all these innovations have a direct impact on Veterans’ well being.

## Better Veteran care

Veteran wait time is shorter at VA than compared to private sector. This decreased wait time is for primary care and two of three specialty areas. Wilkie said that’s coupled with a record-high 59.9 million Veteran visits in fiscal year 2019. That’s 1.7 million more appointments for Veterans than ever before. He added 90 percent of Veterans surveyed trust the care they get at VA.

When Wilkie took over, only 25% women vets were enrolled in VA care. Now, he said 41% receive VA care.

Overall Veteran care is improving, Wilkie said. He said VA will implement a provision of the MISSION Act in 2020. This will extend Caregiver benefits to Veterans who served before 1975.

Veterans also receive better mental health care, Wilkie said. This includes same-day mental health care and a universal screening process to identify Veterans who may be at risk. Since late 2018, VA screened more than 4 million Veterans. He said the Veterans Crisis Line is taking more than 1,700 calls each day, and VA takes emergency action on about 100 of those calls.

“I believe that Veterans can show the country the way on how to deal with this terrible problem,” Wilkie said. “

## Different approaches

Wilkie said the President’s Roadmap to Empower Veterans and End the National Tragedy of Suicide, or PREVENTS, task force is weeks away from releasing recommendations. The task force will include a community integration and collaboration proposal, a national research strategy and an implementation strategy. Wilkie said he will recommend that VA opens up financial support. This includes charities, local governments and non-governmental organizations to help Veterans.

Overall, the MISSION Act gives Veterans choice, Wilkie said. In the first six months, VA approved nearly 2.8 million referrals to private sector care for 1.5 million Veterans. Wilkie said just like the MISSION Act rollout, he expects the upcoming Electronic Health Records Modernization will improve Veteran care.

Veterans also see changes in how VA uses Whole Health, setting a standard for care. Wilkie said programs like yoga, aqua therapy, music therapy and art therapy were unheard of decades ago. Now, he said VA uses a Whole Health approach to develop a personalized health plan.

Wilkie also addressed Veterans stationed at Karshi-Khanabad base in Uzbekistan, better known as K2. U.S. forces occupied the old Soviet base shortly after 9/11. Wilkie had candid advice for any Veteran who served there.

“I want all Veterans who have been there and who feel they need to see us to come forward,” he said. He added all Veterans should seek out VA to use the benefits they’ve earned.

“Come see us. File the claims. Come speak to us. This is not your grandfather’s VA where the paperwork is going to take 10 years.”

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*Adam Stump is a public affairs specialist with VA’s Digital Media Engagement team. He is a retired Air Force Veteran who served 20 years, including two deployments to Afghanistan for detention operations and special operations.*



# February is National Recreation Therapy Month

VA Boston Healthcare System via Facebook



## It's Rec Therapy Month!

It's time to recognize the importance of Recreation Therapy and the Creative Arts Therapies (Art, Dance, Drama, and Music) in the rehabilitation and overall improvement of health and wellness for millions of Veterans nationwide.

February is National Recreation Therapy Month, a perfect time to honor those who not only improve Veterans quality of life and vital life skills, but employ a unique, personalized and holistic approach to health care.

VA is the largest employer of Recreation Therapists and Creative Arts Therapists in the United States. Over 900 Recreation Therapists and Creative Arts Therapists across the VA system work with Veterans every day building confidence and self-esteem by focusing on strengths and diminishing the focus on a disability.

## **NEW ENGLAND PVA NEEDS YOUR HELP!**

Volunteers do invaluable work that makes a real difference to Veterans, their communities and the Chapter. Volunteering can change your life, too! Your talents and time are invaluable and always welcome.

We are looking for Volunteers to help out in the office, attend local awareness events, and assist with event planning. Everyone can help somehow and in some way, at any place and during any time. If you might be too busy or can't get out, think about a financial donation. Even if its only \$5 or \$10, every little bit helps. To learn more about Volunteer opportunities and how you can help please contact the Chapter office at 800-660-1181 or email [info@newenglandpva.org](mailto:info@newenglandpva.org).





# Making a **DIFFERENCE.**

Making a difference in the lives of Veterans and the Disabled Community throughout New England since 1947.

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Paralyzed Veterans of America is the only non-profit Veterans' Service Organization chartered by the U.S. Congress to support and advocate for the benefits and medical care of our country's armed forces Veterans who have experienced a spinal cord injury or dysfunction spanning conflicts from WWII thru Iraq and Afghanistan.

PVA has developed a unique expertise, on a wide variety of issues,

involving the special needs of our catastrophically injured members. PVA uses this expertise to be the leading advocate and supporter for:

- Quality health care for our members.
- Research and education.
- Benefits available, because of our members' military service.
- Civil rights that maximize the independence of our members.

 @NEPVA1947  
[www.newenglandpva.org](http://www.newenglandpva.org)



**Paralyzed Veterans  
of America**

New England Chapter

# PVA WASHINGTON UPDATE

PVA Washington Update Volume 26, Number 2

## *DOT Releases Service Animal In Air Travel Regulations*

On January 22, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) released its proposed amendments to the Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA) regulation on transporting service animals on aircraft. Once officially published, the public has 60 days to provide comments on the proposed changes to DOT. The proposed rule would mean big changes for all service animal users. Under the proposed rule, airlines would be able to request that any passenger traveling with a service animal complete DOT forms attesting to their service animal's good behavior, health, and training. The recommended changes would also allow airlines to require travelers

with service animals to check-in early for their flight. The proposed rule would also allow airlines to prohibit transport of emotional support animals unless the individual complies with rules and fees for transporting pets. The proposed rule is available here: <https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/docs/resources/individuals/aviation-consumer-protection/359646/traveling-air-service-animals-nprm.pdf>.

PVA has concerns with many parts of the proposed rule and will provide comments to DOT.

## *Study on the Feasibility of In-Cabin Wheelchair Restraints Moves Forward*

PVA is pleased with the launch of the U.S. Access Board's study to assess the feasibility of equipping aircraft with restraint systems so that passengers who use wheelchairs can remain in them while in-flight. The Board announced in October 2019 that it would conduct a study. The U.S. Access Board is carrying out this study through the National Academy of Sciences' Transportation Research Board (TRB). TRB organized a team of experts to serve on the committee on the Feasibility of Wheelchair

Restraint Systems in Passenger Aircraft for the study's evaluation. PVA members Peter W. Axelson and Dr. Rory A. Cooper were both appointed to serve on the committee. The first meeting of the committee will be on February 5-6. To register to view the meeting remotely, please visit: <http://www.trb.org/Main/Blurbs/180140.aspx>.

## *PVA Supports Common Sense Legislation on Social Security Statements*

PVA has endorsed a bipartisan legislation (H.R. 5306 and S. 2989) to require the Social Security Administration to resume mailing every American age 25 and older a statement explaining the benefits he or she can expect to receive. Introduced late last year, the Know Your Social Security Act was sponsored by House Ways and Means Social Security Subcommittee Chairman John Larson (D-CT), Ways and Means member, Vern Buchanan (R-FL), Senate Finance Committee member Ron Wyden (D-OR) and fellow Finance Committee member, Bill Cassidy (R-LA).

The Social Security Administration used to send out earnings and benefits statements to almost all workers and beneficiaries but stopped doing so

in 2011 in order to save money. The agency assumed that people could always check their benefits any time online. The agency in 2010 mailed over 150 million statements, for example, but in 2018, that dropped to about 10 million people age 60 or older who haven't claimed benefits or checked on what they can expect online. A similar number of people checked online on their own, meaning about 125 million fewer people are getting the information than were a decade ago.

## *Health Still Ranks as Top Concern for Newly Separated Veterans*

A [survey of nearly 10,000 veterans](#) newly separated from military service found most were satisfied with their work and social well-being, but more than half reported chronic physical health problems, and a third reported chronic mental health conditions. The most commonly reported health conditions were chronic pain, sleep problems, anxiety, and depression. Slightly more than half of participants said they had reduced satisfaction with their health between when they first left the military and a few months later.

Researchers say their findings have implications not only for VA but for the wide spectrum of organizations nationwide—more than 40,000 in all—that provide programs, services, and support for veterans making their transition back to civilian life. Support provided to veterans leaving the military in recent years has focused on employment and educational assistance and informing veterans of their benefits. The findings from this study suggest that meeting the health care needs of separating members must be given even greater priority.

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## Accessible Voting Act of 2020 Introduced in the Senate

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On January 16, U.S. Senators Bob Casey (D-PA), and Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), introduced S.3206, the Accessible Voting Act, which would support state and local efforts to improve voter accessibility and remove barriers to voting. In the 2016 general election, 16 million votes, representing 11.5 percent of the total votes, were cast by people with disabilities. Despite federal laws requiring fully accessible voting places, barriers to vote for people with disabilities still exist. In 2016, only 40 percent of polling places were architecturally accessible and only 45 percent of voting booths were accessible. Combining these deficiencies of physical and voting booth access a GAO study found that only 17 percent of the polling places it examined during the 2016 election were fully accessible.

PVA has had a long-standing commitment to ensuring that voting is accessible. The integrity of our democracy is based on the right to vote of all eligible voters who are registered. Over the years PVA helped expand access to voting with the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA requires polling places to be accessible to people with disabilities (ADA Checklist for Polling Places). Furthermore, the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) made it easier to register at your local Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) ensured the ballot was accessible entering the age of electronic voting and established the Election Assistance Commission (EAC).

The Accessible Voting Act would:

- Establish the Office of Accessibility within the EAC to support and oversee state efforts to expand voter accessibility and serve as a resource for advocates and voters;
- Provide up-to-date voting information and resources, through accessible websites, to ensure voters know how to register to vote, cast an absentee ballot and find help if their right to vote is challenged;
- Expand the number of options to cast a ballot in federal elections so voters with disabilities can utilize the voting option most accessible for them;
- Create a national resource center on accessible voting to conduct cultural competency trainings for election officials and poll workers to create truly accessible voting systems; and
- Increase grants to states to improve accessibility when registering to vote, voting by absentee ballot, and casting a ballot in person.

U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), is also an original cosponsor of the Accessible Voting Act. The bill has been referred to the Senate Committee on Rules.

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## VHA Announces Realignment of Central Office

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On January 16, Lawrence Connell, the Veterans Health Administration's (VHA) Chief of Staff, held an informal conference call with PVA and other veterans and military service organizations to brief them about a proposed realignment of VA Central Office. According to VA, the reorganization will ensure VHA programs, staff and resources are best aligned to advance VHA's transformation into an integrated high reliability health care organization. VA emphasized that this is not a reduction in force and no

employee will be terminated as a result of this organization change. The call was held in response to an earlier press release from VA about the reorganization that triggered numerous concerns. PVA is continuing to evaluate the impact of these changes on the SCI system of care.

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## Legislation Authorizing More than One Vehicle Grant Introduced

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In direct response to PVA's advocacy, on February 6, Representatives Dan Meuser (R-PA) and Anthony Brindisi (D-NY) introduced H.R. 5761, the "Advancing Uniform Transportation Opportunities (AUTO) for Veterans Act," which would allow eligible veterans to receive more than one automobile grant to purchase a vehicle. Present law restricts veterans to one grant in their lifetime so they often bear the full cost of a replacement vehicle. As written, H.R. 5761 would authorize an eligible veteran to receive a new grant every 10 years, if they need it.

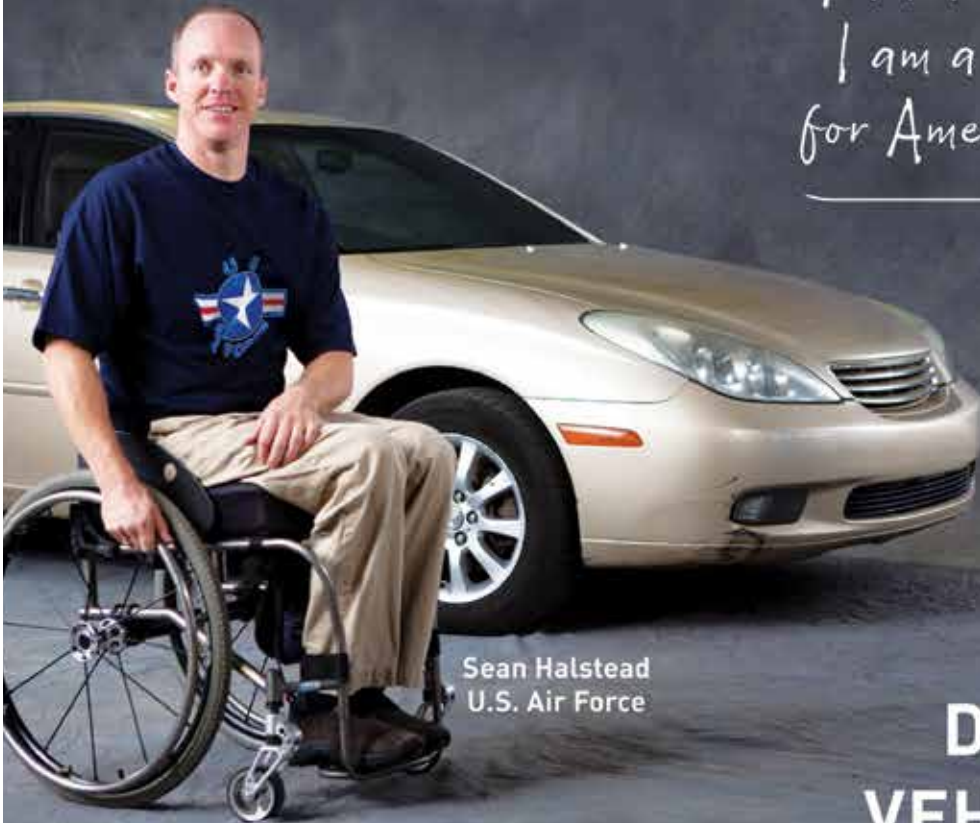
This bill's prospects for movement in the House are favorable. The bill has

bipartisan support. Also, both members serve on the House Veterans' Affairs Economic Subcommittee (HVAC EO), which has oversight of the grant program.

Proposed auto grant legislation received much focus during a February 6 HVAC EO hearing looking at more than a dozen bills. PVA's National Legislative Director Morgan Brown testified at the hearing and spent much of his time advocating for this legislation. The hearing is available for viewing here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D-Su2JasWrM>.



*"I am a donated vehicle.  
I am a new beginning  
for America's Veterans."*



Sean Halstead  
U.S. Air Force

**DONATE YOUR  
VEHICLE TODAY!**



**Paralyzed Veterans  
of America**

**WHEELS HELPING  
WARRIORS**

Regardless of the condition, all vehicles have value and are sold at auction. Proceeds from the sale help provide jobs, care and benefits for severely injured veterans and their families. Scheduling a pickup is free and easy, and you may be eligible for a tax deduction, too! There's no better way to give back to those who have given so much.



**WheelsHelpingWarriors.org / 866-204-4548**

# 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Iwo Jima

via National Museum of the Marine Corps - [www.usmcmuseum.com](http://www.usmcmuseum.com)



*“Victory was never in doubt. Its cost was. What was in doubt, in our minds, was whether...the last Marine would die knocking out the last Japanese gunner.”* - MGen Graves Erskine, commanding general, 3d Marine Division, Iwo Jima

75 years ago, a battle raged in the Pacific Theater of World War II.

Located roughly half way between Saipan and Tokyo, and directly under the flight path of B-29 Superfortress bombers headed to Japan, the island of Iwo Jima was a Japanese stronghold of crucial strategic importance and could not be bypassed. Not only would Iwo Jima make an excellent base for Allied fighters escorting B-29 raids, but it would also project the flank of the forthcoming invasion of Okinawa.

Three Marine divisions, more than 80,000 men, were assigned the task of taking the island, which was barely 10 square miles in area and dominated by 556 foot Mount Suribachi. The assault began on 19 Feb. 1945 following a terrific naval bombardment which Japanese LtGen

Kuribayashi described as “far beyond description.” The first wave of Marines had more trouble with the terrain than enemy fire, but the Japanese responded quickly from their dug in positions and swept the beaches with concentrated fire. Iwo Jima would be a very tough fight.

On 23 Feb. 1945, the Marines took control of Mount Suribachi. Onlookers cheered as the assault platoon fought to the summit and raised a small flag. Later that day, different troops raised a larger flag while others respectfully lowered the original. Several combat photographers captured these stirring events on film, but Joe Rosenthal’s snapshot of the men struggling to raise the second flag in a stiff wind became an enduring symbol of American resolve.

The battle for control of Iwo Jima lasted 36 days. The final death toll among Marines was 5,931 killed in action, died of wounds or missing in action and presumed dead — more than twice as many Marines than had been killed in all of World War One. An additional 209 deaths occurred among the Navy corpsmen and surgeons assigned to the Marines. The Fifth Fleet and participating U.S. Army and Army Air Corps units suffered other fatalities during the battle. In all, more than 6,800 Americans gave their lives for every square mile of Iwo Jima’s black volcanic sand.

About the National Museum of the Marine Corps

*The Museum is a public-private partnership between the U.S. Marine Corps and the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation. The Foundation was established in 1979 as a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization to support the historical programs of the Marine Corps in ways not possible through government funds. The Foundation’s current primary mission is to secure the necessary funding to complete the construction of the National Museum of the Marine Corps. They also support the Museum’s volunteer and educational programs.*



**FLAG RAISINGS ON IWO JIMA**

“The raising of the flag on Suribachi means a Marine Corps for the next 500 years”  
- James Forrestal, Secretary of the Navy, to General Holland M. Smith, USMC

**MAP:** IWO JIMA (4.4 mi, 3.4 mi, 554 ft)

**FLAGS RAISED:**

- 1. 28 1/2" x 55 1/2"
- 2. 56" x 88 3/4"

**IMPORTANT DATES:**

- 19 FEB: D-DAY ON IWO JIMA
- 23 FEB: 1ST AND 2ND FLAG RAISED
- 14 FEB: 2ND FLAG TAKEN DOWN
- 26 FEB: THE BATTLE OF IWO JIMA ENDS
- 26 FEB: BOTH FLAGS RETURN TO THE U.S.

**6 FLAG RAISERS\***

\*The 2nd flag raising

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE MARINE CORPS



## Getting Paralyzed Veterans Walking Again with Indego®

New VA Program offers eligible veterans an Indego® Exoskeleton at no cost.



### What is Indego?

**A robotic device that enables veterans to walk again.**

Indego is an FDA-approved exoskeleton worn around the waist and legs that enables individuals paralyzed from spinal cord injuries to stand and walk, offering a new level of independence.

Indego can currently be used with spinal cord injury levels of T3 to L5 in community or home settings. The device offers:

- Lightweight, modular design
- Slim profile compatible with most wheelchairs
- Rapid setup and breakdown for easy transportation
- Can be used with forearm crutches or walker



Contact us today to find out if you are eligible to receive an Indego exoskeleton

**Email:** [support.indego@parker.com](mailto:support.indego@parker.com)

**Phone:** 844-846-3346





# Take Charge of Your Own Health Care in 2020

The Whole Health System is an approach to healthcare that **EMPOWERS** and **EQUIPS** Veterans to take charge of their health and well-being, and to live their life to the fullest.

*Please join us for an*

## Introduction to Whole Health

<p><b>Jamaica Plain VA</b> <b>2nd Thursday/month</b> <b>10-11am</b> 150 S Huntington Ave <u>Primary Care Clinic</u> Conf Rm F2-04</p>	<p><b>West Roxbury VA</b> <b>3rd Wednesday/month</b> <b>10-11am</b> 1400 VFW Parkway <u>Canteen Conference Room</u> Bldg 3, 1st Floor</p>	<p><b>Brockton VA</b> <b>4th Wednesday/month</b> <b>10-11am</b> 940 Belmont St <u>Primary Care Clinic</u> Bldg 3, 3rd Floor</p>
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**Transitioning Service Members, Veterans, Families and Employees are invited and encouraged to attend.**

**\* DROP-IN \*\* NO Appointment Needed \***

For questions and more information, contact:  
Whole Health at 857-203-4876

# Free Sled Hockey Clinic!

Friday, February 14<sup>th</sup> from 8:50-9:50am

Friday, February 28<sup>th</sup> from 2:20-3:20pm

Camden National Bank Ice Vault, Hallowell

Open to all Maine Veterans and their families. All gear and instruction will be provided by your local New England Warriors!

Space is limited. Call to reserve your spot today!



Hosted by USA Hockey, the New England Warriors and VA Maine Recreation Therapy!

For more information and to reserve your space, please contact Recreation Therapy:  
Courtney Oliver, CTRS (207) 623-8411 x4589 or [Courtney.Oliver@va.gov](mailto:Courtney.Oliver@va.gov),  
Elizabeth Marrone, CTRS (207) 623-8411 x5371 or [Elizabeth.Marrone@va.gov](mailto:Elizabeth.Marrone@va.gov)



**GIFT YOUR OLD  
WHEELS FOR GOOD.**



Paralyzed Veterans  
of America

WHEELS HELPING  
**WARRIORS**

Your donated vehicle can go far in helping severely injured veterans. Donations are sold at auction with proceeds going toward programs and services for veterans and their families. You may also receive a tax break, too!



WheelsHelpingWarriors.org / 866-204-4548  
Paid for by the Jeffrey Carlton Charitable Foundation



# Connect With What Matters



## Being there makes a difference

Recently the Ride-Away team joined forces with MobilityWorks so that we could provide our veterans with the largest selection of mobility solutions that best fit their physical capabilities and lifestyle. Veterans have unique needs so we treat each of them as individuals. First of all, we listen. Then, we work together find the best solution. Collectively, Ride-Away and MobilityWorks will continue to build on our mission to help veterans connect with who and what matters most.

MobilityWorks has more than 50 locations across the country with the largest selection of accessible vehicles and adaptive solutions:

- Minivans, full-size vans and trucks
- The latest in adaptive technology
- Complete maintenance and service
- Rental vans — veterans receive a 10% discount

MobilityWorks is committed to serving you. Contact us today so we can evaluate your needs and find a solution that best fits your lifestyle.



SUVs



Trucks



Lifts and stowage products



Electronic control systems

**USA's largest accessible van dealer!**

### Gray

32 Lewiston Road, Unit 2B  
Gray, ME 04039  
207-747-2064

### Londonderry

54 Wentworth Avenue  
Londonderry, NH 03053  
603-210-4610

### Norwood

333 Boston Providence Turnpike  
Norwood, MA 02062  
781-222-3622

### Essex Junction

5C David Drive  
Essex Junction, VT 05452  
802-222-0265

### North Attleboro

57 George Leven Drive  
North Attleboro MA 02760  
508-859-0940

### East Hartford

104 Pitkin Street  
East Hartford, CT 06108  
860-215-4100

  
mobilityworks®  
www.mobilityworks.com



# NATIONAL VETERANS WHEELCHAIR GAMES

40<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY



# JULY 3-8, 2020

Portland, OR • [WheelchairGames.org](http://WheelchairGames.org)

Co-Presented by:



**VA** U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs



Paralyzed Veterans  
of America



**ANNUAL AIR RIFLE &  
AIR PISTOL PROGRAM**

**Camp Pendleton Air Rifle  
and Pistol Tournament**  
December 2-3, 2019  
Camp Pendleton, CA

**Cal-Diego Air Rifle  
and Pistol Tournament**  
January 27-28, 2020  
San Diego Naval Base  
San Diego, CA

**Mid-Atlantic Air Rifle  
and Pistol Tournament**  
March 4-5, 2020  
Colonial Shooting Academy  
Richmond, VA

**Wisconsin Air Rifle and  
Pistol Tournament**  
March 21-22, 2020  
Milwaukee Area Tech College  
Milwaukee, WI

**Buckeye Air Rifle and  
Pistol Tournament\***  
April 16-18, 2020  
Spire Institute  
Geneva, OH  
*\*Buckeye Wheelchair Games*

**PVA BOATING/FISHING  
TOUR**

**Mid-America Bass Tournament**  
September 20-22, 2019  
Lake Eufaula  
Eufaula, OK

**Vaughan Bass Tournament**  
October 4-6, 2019  
Rend Lake  
Mount Vernon, IL

**Florida Gulf Coast  
Bass Tournament**  
April 3-5, 2020  
Lake Harris  
Tavares, FL

**Kentucky-Indiana  
Bass Tournament**  
April 24-26, 2020  
Lake Barkley  
Kuttawa, KY

**Mid-Atlantic Bass Tournament**  
June 5-7, 2020  
James River  
Hopewell, VA

**Capital Clash Bass Tournament\***  
June 12-14, 2020  
Potomac River  
Marbury, MD

*\*Year-End Tournament*

**ANNUAL PVA/NWPA  
BILLIARDS TOURNAMENT  
SERIES**

**Mid-Atlantic Billiards Tournament  
Chuck Willis Memorial**  
March 13-15, 2020  
Diamond Billiards  
Midlothian, VA

**Mid-America  
Billiards Tournament**  
April 3-5, 2020  
Slick Willies Pool Hall  
Oklahoma City, OK

**Buckeye Billiards Tournament**  
June 5-6, 2020  
Wickliffe Lanes  
Wickliffe, OH

**Mountain States  
Billiards Tournament**  
June 20-21, 2020  
Widefield Corner Pocket Billiards  
Fountain, CO

**ANNUAL PVA/AWBA  
BOWLING TOURNAMENT  
SERIES**

**Nevada Bowling Tournament**  
December 5-8, 2019  
Sunset Station Hotel & Casino  
Las Vegas, NV

**Mid-America Bowling Tournament**  
April 9-12, 2020  
Firelake Bowling Center  
Shawnee, OK

**Vaughan Bowling Tournament**  
April 30–May 3, 2020  
Bowlero  
Romeoville, IL

**PVA NATIONAL SHOOTING  
SPORTS CIRCUIT**

**Mid-Atlantic Shooting  
Sports Tournament**  
Dates TBD  
Conservation Park of Virginia  
Charles City, VA

**Nevada Shooting  
Sports Tournament**  
March 13-15, 2020  
Clark County Shooting Park  
Las Vegas, NV

**Cal-Diego Shooting  
Sports Tournament**  
March 27-29, 2020  
Redlands Shooting Park  
Redlands, CA

**Lone Star Shooting  
Sports Tournament**  
May 22-23, 2020  
Desoto Gun Club  
Waxahachie, TX

**Vaughan Shooting  
Sports Tournament**  
June 5-7, 2020  
St. Charles Sportsman Club  
Elburn, IL

**Iowa Shooting  
Sports Tournament**  
June 12-14, 2020  
Otter Creek Sportsman Club  
Cedar Rapids, IA

**Wisconsin Shooting  
Sports Tournament\***  
June 26-28, 2020  
Brown County Sportsman Club  
Green Bay, WI  
*\*Year-End Tournament*

**BOCCIA**

**PVA National  
Boccia Tournament**  
October 22-26, 2019  
The Pavilion at Lemay  
St. Louis, MO

**Bayou Gulf States Boccia  
Tournament**  
January 31-February 1, 2020  
Harrison County Shelter  
Gulfport, MS

**Buckeye Boccia Tournament\***  
April 16-18, 2020  
Spire Institute  
Geneva, OH

**Mid-Atlantic Boccia Tournament**  
May 7-9, 2020  
Fort Monroe Community Center  
Hampton, VA

**Vaughan Boccia Tournament**  
June 26-28, 2020  
Fountain View  
Recreation Center  
Carol Stream, IL

*\*Buckeye Wheelchair Games*

**CODE OF HONOR QUAD  
RUGBY INVITATIONAL**

February 7-9, 2020  
The St. James  
Springfield, VA

**NATIONAL VETERANS  
WHEELCHAIR GAMES**



**July 3-8, 2020  
Portland, OR**

**HANDCYCLING**

**Valley of the Sun**  
February 14-16, 2020  
Phoenix, AZ

**Off-Road Spring Expo**  
March 27-29, 2020  
Chesterfield, VA

**PVA Racing  
High Performance Camp**  
April 15-20, 2020  
Tucson, AZ

**Redlands Cycling Classic**  
April 22-26, 2020  
Redlands, CA

Paralyzed Veterans of America  
New England Chapter  
1208 VFW Parkway, Suite 301  
West Roxbury, MA 02132

T 800-660-1181  
F 857-203-9685

info@newenglandpva.org  
www.newenglandpva.org

Office Hours  
Mon-Fri, 9:00am - 4:30pm



## NATIONAL VETERANS WHEELCHAIR GAMES | JULY 3-8, 2020 | PORTLAND, OR

**MARCH 13TH - DEADLINE FOR ALL NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER MEMBERS TO PROVIDE COPY OF THEIR NVWG APPLICATIONS AND ROOMMATE PREFERENCE TO CHAPTER OFFICE. QUESTIONS CONTACT MIKE GUILBAULT 800-660-1181 OPTION #3.**

### COMING EVENTS AND IMPORTANT DATES

**Feb 24/26** - Gunstock Ski Trip w/LRDS. (Feb 1 Application deadline.)

**Feb 27** - Mass DCR Adaptive Skating and Games, 11am-12:50pm, Driscoll Rink, Fall River, MA

**Feb 29** - Waterville Valley Skiing, (Jan 27 Application deadline)

**Mar 5** - Mass DCR Adaptive Skating and Games, 11:30am-1:20pm, Porazzo Rink, E. Boston, MA

**Mar 10** - Mass DCR Adaptive Skating and Games, 1-2:50pm, Fitzpatrick Rink, Holyoke, MA

**Mar 14** - Waterville Valley Skiing, (Feb 10 Application deadline)

For a complete list of Massachusetts DCR activities please visit their website at [www.mass.gov/dcr/universal-access](http://www.mass.gov/dcr/universal-access)



*For more information on upcoming sporting events or activities please contact the Chapter office at (800) 660-1181 option #3.*

*Mike Guilbault - Sports Director*

*Mike Moran - Asst. Sports Director*

**New England PVA's Official Facebook Page**

**[www.facebook.com/NEPVA1947](http://www.facebook.com/NEPVA1947)**

*Serving Paralyzed Veterans and the Disabled Community Since 1947.*