



**Paralyzed Veterans
of America**

New England Chapter

CORDWORD

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

Advocacy & Legislative Seminar



INSIDE THIS EDITION

EXEC. DIR. HONORED

HOUSE PASSES H.R. 620



NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER OFFICES



Paralyzed Veterans Executive Director Honored by HillVets

WASHINGTON, DC—Paralyzed Veterans of America (Paralyzed Veterans) is proud to announce to that its Executive Director, Carl Blake, has been named to the HillVets100 Class of 2017. Blake will be honored in Washington, at the HillVets100 Tribute Gala hosted by Military Times and Hiring Our Heroes, on March 29. “I’m truly honored and humbled to receive this award,” said Blake. ...continued on page 4.



H.R. 620 - House Votes to Gut the ADA

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But many disability and civil rights groups fear the bill will weaken incentives for businesses to comply with the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), to public ...continued on page 4.

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Out Front

Michael G. Negrete, President

Another successful PVA Advocacy and Legislation Seminar completed! Our Chapter delegation of 5 was able to meet face-to-face with 21 of New England's 33 Members of Congress or their Staff Representatives. This was a well coordinated effort in appointment scheduling and time management. I'd like to Thank Chapter Volunteer Denise Pease for her time and efforts in helping with both of these. This year's Seminar focused on several critical issues to be presented to our Legislators - Protection of Specialized Care within the VA, Expand Eligibility for VA's Comprehensive Family Caregiver Program to include Pre-9/11 Veterans, ADA Notification Act, and continuing Air Carrier Access Amendments Act, to name a few. There were also lecture sessions on Prosthetics and Benefits for Catastrophically Disabled Veterans, Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, Disaster Response and Recovery preparedness, and Local Advocacy training. Yes, these were very long days, but very rewarding to have the opportunity to represent our New England membership at the Seminar, and more importantly directly in front of our Legislators. It takes these continual efforts to maintain a foothold in the minds of our Legislators, keeping them educated and informed on the issues and challenges faced by PVA and our membership.

In the coming months we'll be preparing for the National Veterans Wheelchair Games in Orlando, FL. Last year we had 20 athletes and 10 volunteers/ medical staff represent New England. I look forward to again seeing another large contingent participating from the New England Chapter this year. In planning your expenses, please remember the changes to the Chapter's Individual Allotment program and how it might effect you. If you need a copy of the current IA program policy, please contact the office. We look forward to supporting our athletes as they both enjoy and challenge themselves at the games.

Finally, I'd like to circle back to our Ad/Leg Seminar and Thank each of our Chapter volunteers for their time and efforts in making it a success for the Chapter - Terry Negrete, Denise Pease and Neal Williams. They receive no pay or compensation for this, and for some it actually costs them to go, yet they spend countless hours away from their work, family and other obligations to work these long days because they care about what the Chapter does and how it effects its members. Without our Volunteers, a lot of what we do simply wouldn't be possible.

Michael G. Negrete
President and Paralyzed Veteran

From the Director's Desk

Debra A. Freed, Executive Director



Very, Very Important – If I am not aware that you have registered for the Vet Games by our **deadline of March 15th, 5pm**, the New England Chapter **WILL NOT** be responsible for your one half of the room. Another announcement, I need to make here is that for folks who wish to apply to the Board for Individual Allotment, best get their request in soon. Once the funds run out, they run out. It may only be worth \$500 but I know how much help it could be.

Unfortunately, due to a scheduling conflict, the Chapter banquet, yes, we are planning on having one in 2018, will be held on October 5th, 2018 at Moseley's On The Charles. As the time gets closer, we will have more information.

Finally, I know that health issues can sideline us at any moment. However, I really hope that our members are willing to make the extra effort to keep commitments they make in attending events or practicing a sporting event. Recreational Therapy work very hard every day to work with outside groups to get you out and involved. We are/have gone to DC to keep these and more from disappearing. So, please, I do understand that illness can happen at any time. But do your best to keep your commitments.

Debra A. Freed
Executive Director

New England PVA Contact Information

1208 VFW Parkway, Suite 301
West Roxbury, MA 02132
Phone: (800) 660-1181
Fax: (857) 203-9685

www.newenglandpva.org
info@newenglandpva.org
Office Hours: Mon-Fri, 9:00am-4:30pm

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Fax: (617) 303-1396
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Paralyzed Veterans Executive Director Honored by HillVets

By Lani Poblete - PVA, Associate Director of Media and Public Relation



WASHINGTON, DC—Paralyzed Veterans of America (Paralyzed Veterans) is proud to announce to that its Executive Director, Carl Blake, has been named to the HillVets100 Class of 2017. Blake will be honored in Washington, at the HillVets100 Tribute Gala hosted by Military Times and Hiring Our Heroes, on March 29.

“I’m truly honored and humbled to receive this award,” said Blake. “I consider it a privilege to work every day on behalf of veterans with disabilities to help improve their lives.”

Blake is being honored under the HillVets100 category of ‘Traditional Nonprofits’. This category honors some of the longest standing nonprofit supporters of the veterans’ community who continuously show dedicated and committed efforts to bringing veteran and service members’ interests to the forefront of the national dialogue.

The HillVets 100 includes veterans from all eras, from the Vietnam War

to the more recent Iraq and Afghanistan Wars. Selectees represent a broad spectrum of veterans from artists to elected officials to business executives, among others.

Blake was recently named executive director of Paralyzed Veterans, after serving as its interim executive director since November 2017. Prior to that, he led the organization’s government relations program.

As head of the organization’s government relations department, Blake was responsible for the planning, coordination, and implementation of its national legislative and advocacy program agendas with the United States Congress and federal departments and agencies. He has developed and executed Paralyzed Veterans’ Washington agenda in areas of budget, appropriations, health care, and veterans’ benefits issues, as well as disability civil rights. He has also spearheaded the consortium of veterans service organization partners who annually plan, author and publish The Independent Budget, a collaborative policy and budget recommendation publication that is presented each year to the United States Congress.

Blake, a U. S. Army veteran, graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point. Upon graduation, Blake was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Infantry in the United States Army. He was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment (1stBrigade) of the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He graduated from Infantry Officer Basic Course, U.S. Army Ranger School, U.S. Army Airborne School, and Air Assault School. His awards include the Army Commendation Medal, Expert Infantryman’s Badge, and German Parachutist Badge. Carl retired from the military in October 2000 due to injuries suffered during a parachute training exercise. He has been a Paralyzed Veterans member since 2001.

H.R. 620 - House Votes to Gut the ADA

By Carlos Ballesteros, Staff Writer, Newsweek



In a 225-192 vote, most House Republicans and a dozen Democrats passed a bill that makes it harder for disabled persons to sue for discrimination, in an effort to prevent opportunistic attorneys from taking advantage of business owners.

But many disability and civil rights groups fear the bill will weaken incentives for

businesses to comply with the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), which mandates equal access to public accommodations.

Proponents argue that the bill, the ADA Education and Reform Act, or H.R. 620, is necessary to stem the flow of “drive-by lawsuits” brought by lawyers who only wish to line their pockets. The bill would require those

filing suit in federal court against businesses for not complying with the ADA to first give that business 60 days to devise a plan to fix the problem. They then have another 120 days to implement the changes.

“There is now a whole industry made up of people who prey on small business owners and file unnecessary and abusive lawsuits,” Representative Ted Poe of Texas, who co-sponsored the bill, said after introducing the measure in 2017. “This bill will change that by requiring that the business owners have time to fix what is allegedly broken.”

The bill would effectively gut the ADA, detractors argue. Without a fear of being sued, businesses might be inclined to ignore ADA compliance rules. Critics of the bill also believe people with disabilities should not bear the responsibility of making sure businesses are ...*continued on page 7.*

2018 and Beyond: Fighting For You!

Debra A. Freed, Executive Director



A couple of quick notes before moving on. I was invited to participate in the Brockton Bldg 8's Cape Cod Curling Club event on 2.23. I had gone before but never as a participant. Yes, it can get cold on the ice so I knew how to dress. I actually had a good time. I want to impress upon everyone that events like this do not happen with the dedicated staff and volunteers who work tirelessly (Joanie Lynch, Jenny McLaughlin, Holly Washaw, driver Jimmy Delelio just to mention a few. Oh, and

please remember to thank them and especially the staff at Bldg 8 who make sure you are up, dressed, and ready so you can go to these events.

Well, probably by the time you read this, Mr. & Mrs. N. Williams, Mr. & Mrs. M. Negrete, myself and Chapter Volunteer D. Pease will have gone and returned from Washington, D.C. Why should you care? If we don't go on your behalf, who will? If we don't go, then your stories will not be heard. If we don't go, then that event you might have been a little too tired to participate in, just may disappear.

We really are lucky to live in New England. When we go to D.C, we are very close to preaching to the choir. While there is only one current

Representative who is a veteran, the others do get it. They know that dissolving the VA would be a huge, huge mistake. Where will you go? What will you do? For our long-term care veterans, do you honestly think anyone will care if you went to a curling exhibition, or a fishing event, or even to the movies? Last year, a new Long-Term Care veteran commented that there were more outings and events in their first two weeks than in the year spent in a nearby nursing home.

It isn't just our elected officials who are trying hard to keep the VA. There are a large number of employees who want to keep the VA. Yeah, I know, because they are worried about their jobs. If their jobs disappear, so do your opportunities to do anything, go anywhere, maintain any semblance of freedom and receive decent healthcare. Oh, and trust me, while there are a few folks who are just there because it is a paycheck there are three times as many that are truly dedicated to assist YOU, the veteran.

Lastly, a few of the items we will have brought before our Congressional delegation is Protection of Specialized Services, Expand Caregiver program, Protection of Medicare & Medicaid programs, and the Air Carrier Access Amendments Act which gives us our ability to fly. We will keep you apprised of our meetings and their outcomes.

Myths and Truths About the "ADA Education and Reform Act" (H.R. 620)

Originally published on www.aclu.org

The so-called ADA Education and Reform Act of 2017 is not what its proponents claim and will not achieve its stated goals. Instead, this bill undermines the very purpose of the landmark civil rights law, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and harms people with disabilities. We address and dispel, below, the myths and misinformation about H.R. 620.

MYTH: The "ADA Education and Reform Act" strengthens the Americans with Disabilities Act.

TRUTH: The so-called "ADA Education and Reform Act" weakens the Americans with Disabilities Act and undermines one of the key goals of the law.

Title III of the ADA prohibits places of public accommodation (i.e., businesses or service establishments that are open to the public like grocery stores, doctors' offices, recreation facilities, private schools, homeless shelters) from discriminating against people with disabilities. If a person with a disability encounters an architectural barrier that prevents her from accessing the business, she has 3 options under the ADA: speak with the business, file a complaint with the Department of Justice, or file a lawsuit as provided under the law.

The "ADA Education and Reform Act" upends a key provision of the ADA by preventing people with disabilities from immediately going to court to enforce their rights and to press for timely removal of the barrier that impedes access. Without this critical enforcement mechanism, compliance under the ADA will suffer and people with disabilities will be denied the access to which they are entitled to under the law.

MYTH: The "ADA Education and Reform Act" doesn't harm people with disabilities because it merely delays the ability to go to court.

TRUTH: The so-called "ADA Education and Reform Act" means that people with disabilities won't have access for weeks, months, or possibly years, and it removes any incentive for businesses to comply proactively with the ADA. This change in the law would be a boon for businesses at the expense of people with disabilities.

This ill-informed legislation requires people with disabilities to jump through numerous procedural hoops before they can commence a lawsuit to protect their rights. It also removes any reason for businesses to proactively comply with the ADA. Instead of ensuring that people with disabilities have access, as the law requires, businesses will likely wait until a customer confronts an obstruction...*continued on page 14.*

Keep Moving: The Weather is Getting Better

Debra A. Freed, Executive Director



As stated in an earlier article, I had the privilege of participating in the Cape Cod Curling Club event with Bldg. 8's Joanie Lynch and four Long Term Care Veterans, Dan S, Patricia T, Frank W, and Ben H. Volunteers were Holly, Denise, Mary, and Joe. And we would not have gotten anywhere if not for Jimmy D.

These events are worked on for a long time, and while there are always possibilities that folks need to cancel, it is highly suggested that those who committed to participating do their best not to cancel just because they don't feel like getting out of bed? A quick example is I too thought about bailing on my event on both Friday and Saturday, but I didn't, and I am extremely glad that I didn't.

I took one of our Chapter volunteers, Denise with me to show her a new sport and how they can make things accessible. Myself & Dan S were the only 2 in manual wheelchairs. However, that didn't stop Frank, Ben, or Patricia. It seems that they could participate just by pushing the stone in front of their chairs. They all managed to get at least a couple of stones "in the house" as they say.

I was a bit luckier. I had two great coaches, Ms. Meghan Lino who is going as an alternate for the upcoming Paralympics, and Chapter Life Member, Mr. Steve Emt who is going to represent the U.S. I think my luck was due to my participation in the Chapter Team Bowling League. It is not at all the same. However, there is a serious strategy that is needed in getting the stone, which weighs 42 pounds more than 130 feet. While the stone can be pushed by hand, it is easier to use a delivery stick, which is a pole with a bracket that fits over the rock handle. A bowling ball can weigh a maximum of 16 pounds and the lane is only 60 feet long, less than half the distance for curling. The delivery stick can be long, short, whatever works best for the athlete. In egging me on, Mr. Emt asked how many stones will I get in the house. I said four. I was given nine and I got seven of nine.

On behalf of the New England Chapter, our Long-Term Care members, 2 of our life members, Mr. Steve Emt and Mr. Dave Sawyer, we sincerely appreciate all those who came out to support this event and providing lunch. Thank You Cape Cod Curling Club! Oh, there is another event March 30th. I plan on being there.



House Votes to Gut the ADA

Continued from Page 4.

compliant with the law.

“Instead of expecting businesses to own the responsibility of complying with civil rights laws, it shifts the burden to the individual who is being denied access,” the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) wrote in a letter to congressional representatives on Thursday.

The ACLU called the bill unacceptable. “This scheme removes the business’s incentive to proactively ensure that it is accessible to people with disabilities,” it said. “Instead, businesses will simply wait until someone’s right to access is violated and notification is received before making the change they were already obligated to make.”

“H.R. 620 will not only decimate the protections that people with disabilities rely on, it will send an unmistakable message that we should be treated as second class citizens”, said Congressman Jim Langevin (RI-D)

More than 200 disability rights supporters signed a letter in opposition to the bill, including the National Bar Association, the Paralyzed Veterans of

America and the NAACP.

The motivation for the bill stems from reports of trial lawyers and firms across the country submitting dozens of lawsuits against businesses for not complying with the ADA. A 60 Minutes segment from earlier this year showed lawyers in California filing ADA ...continued on page 11. complaints simply after noticing violations by driving by a business or going online via Google Earth.

But critics say that these issues can be addressed at the state level and through district courts.

“[Frivolous] ADA lawsuits...are not an ADA issue; they are a state and court problem,” disability rights lawyer Robyn Powell wrote in an op-ed for Rewire in May 2017. “Indeed, ethics rules bar attorneys from bringing frivolous lawsuits. Rather than go after people with disabilities, attention should be focused on stopping these few bad attorneys.”

The bill now goes to the Senate.

Advocacy and Legislation Seminar

Meeting with New England’s Members of Congress



21 Down and Getting Better All the Time!!

Mike Guilbault, VP & Sports Director



January 22-26 the 21st Winter Sports Clinic for Disabled Veterans was held at Mount Sunapee Resort once again this year. Once again, as a reminder of the very 1st WSC we all dealt with the rain. Registration and equipment fitting all went well and then the sled hockey clinic was held on Monday afternoon for those interested and all registered. Some participants missed out since they hadn't yet arrived or checked in yet sadly. Once again it was a well-run clinic, many returned to the hotel full of stories, enthusiasm and a bit more tired

than when they left. Thanks to the James Campion rink and the Ice Vets for hosting the clinic. I must give big respect to the sled hockey players who play the game regularly on teams and travel to tournaments. The game will keep one quite fit since much strength and endurance is needed to play.

The opening ceremonies were that evening where a good meal and team meetings completed the day. Any questions got answered by the team leaders and skiing times were assigned. Once again, when not skiing there were plenty of other activities for the veterans to try and enjoy and the information about all these options were covered. Then it was time to rest up for Tuesday's activities.

On Tuesday the ski lessons began; however, the rain did not stop but it didn't dampen the spirits of the participants. While some chose not to ski in the rain, mostly those who've been skiing for years already, most of us chose to brave the rain. Team leaders got us ponchos to cover up with and stay mostly dry!! Believe me there were plenty of smiles and they had to come get us and tell us that's enough, time for lunch. Those not on their ski lesson had the opportunity to kayak, shoot the air rifle, get a massage, do some yoga or have a group meeting and discussion with the chaplain. Once the day's activities were concluded the calories spent were replaced at the pizza party. Buses now loaded up and off we went to the annual wheelchair basketball game fundraiser. The Sunapee Fire Department have been playing the veterans for years now and it shows; their skill level in both shooting and chair maneuvering made for a close game. Thanks to the

hustle of NEPVA members Mark Sanders and Ed Dusick, getting his A game on, his hot shooting led the veterans to a victory once again. It's always a very entertaining evening with the game, wisecracking announcers, cheer leaders and raffles; this year the fire department again played very well, it was a closely contested game.

Wednesday continued like Tuesday with everyone skiing and trying alternate activities. There was no rain so everyone took to the slopes during their scheduled lesson. Some ski ½ days, either morning or afternoon which leaves them plenty of time to try out the alternate activities. One team skis full days, the Wing Dings are the full day team since many own their own equipment and are independents skiers, I'm lucky enough to be one of them. Since I've attended all 21 I should be good enough to ski independently by now! I enjoyed getting to be able to be on the slopes and see all the participants out there morning and afternoon. I was even asked to help on my roommate's lesson and was pleased to hear him tell me I was really helpful. Spending time with and watching many of the newer skiers have such fun reminded me why this event is so successful, we have a waiting list each year since the number of participants must be limited. I am also happy to report a few of the rookies and 2nd year skiers have already been back to ski with NEHSA again already this season.

Thursday is race day! Each participant gets two runs through the race course and then proceeds to the lodge with their Instructors to be presented a medal from the WSC Co-Founder Ralph Marche along with VA dignitaries. We are very lucky our New England VA Medical Centers are so supportive of adaptive sports. Many of the recreation therapists as well as nurses, physical and occupational therapists and other VA staff make up some of the volunteer force. Rehabilitation through Recreation is certainly proven to be evident during this week every year. The week is to introduce the veterans to some of the sports they can participate in. Each VAMC has recreation programs which run all year, the activity depending on the season. These activities range from sled hockey, hand cycling, kayaking, shooting, Boccia and soon to come archery.

A Texas Hold 'Em poker tournament was held after the races and lunch with many great prizes given out thanks to the Veterans Canteen Service. The week ends with the closing banquet in the evening where many of the sponsors



were recognized since this event wouldn't be possible without their support. Please see our list of sponsors and support them when you can. This year the theme of the banquet was the 50's so there were poodle skirts, greasers and many dressed to fit that era, it had the feeling of the movie Grease. The Awards were then given out to the participants and volunteers who've won, and the highlight was the slideshow of the week's activities which ended the banquet. It's amazing what a great job the team does putting it together, even photos taken that day at the race are included and put to music.

A great moment happened after the slide show! Our VA Adaptive Sports Case Manager, Jenny McLaughlin was proposed to by her boyfriend, another great volunteer Mike Vulpis. She did say yes, congratulations to those two wonderful people.

The banquet may have finished but the party hadn't. Most everyone heads to the Salt Hill Pub adjacent to the hotel to socialize and dance. On Friday it's time to pack up and head home with many great stories to tell.

Each year we miss some of our fellow veterans who have come in previous years; however, that makes room for new participants. The good news is that those who are missed usually are not there because of other commitments. They may not be able to attend because they have Paralympic team conflicts or other events. This fact just goes to show the value that the introduction to adaptive sports has on those who attend. Not everyone will go on to the elite level of sports; yet, if never exposed to them at this clinic, they may never have even had the chance to play and get to that level. Some of us are happy to just stay at the recreational level and doing so just helps maintain good health and self-confidence. So if you've never tried attending the clinic it is worth checking out. Never think you can't do it, the folks at NEHSA and all the capable volunteers will always find a way to make it possible for you. I can recall a 75-year-old double amputee who had never skied a day in his life coming to the 3rd WSC and he had a fantastic time and another favorite memory of mine is getting an elderly veteran on a ventilator out skiing along with his vent. They can make it possible that's why the national slogan is "Miracles on the Mountain!"

AWARD WINNERS :

- Rookie of the Year:** Amanda Morse
- Top Gun -leader & helps other vets:** Paul Munier
- Blood, Sweat, and Tears:** Edward Dusick
- Support Award:** Jerry Greenwood, WRJ Vet Center
- Most Improved:** John Vacca
- Human Snowplow:** Tina Lavallee
- Most Dangerous:** William Roy
- Don Cantlin/Best Instructor:** Jennifer Stark
- Jim Koss (Give me a chance, I'll make you proud):** Paul Kenney
- Veteran's Choice Award:** Ellen Mitchell
- Ken Medieros, Phoenix Award:** Thomas Ferland
- Tony Santilli Founders Award:** Lawrence Mangini
- Ralph March Leadership Award:** Tom Kersey



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Women Veterans Appreciation Ski Day

By Mackenzie Adams, Public Affairs Specialist, VA Boston Healthcare System



Annual Welcome Home Women Veterans Ski Appreciation day March 6.

The annual event is organized in part by VA Boston Healthcare System, White River Junction VAMC, NEHSA and the Veterans Education and Research Association of Northern New England.

Approximately 30 women Veterans from various parts of the New England area participated in the annual event. The Veterans were provided lessons and adaptive ski equipment at no cost to them. Some, like U.S. Army Veteran Ramona Johnson, participated in the event for the first time.

"I surprised myself out there today," said Johnson. "I definitely have a newly found respect for the sport of skiing and skiers in general."

Johnson was encouraged to attend by her fellow women Veterans and VA Boston's Adaptive Sports Case Manager Jenny McLaughlin for several years. "I committed to coming to this event about a year ago," said Johnson. "My friends had told me about the ski day and although I was apprehensive I finally thought I would give it a try."

According to Jenny McLaughlin, Johnson's response to the ski day is a familiar one.

"We have people that come here, not knowing what to expect or having apprehensions about skiing and by the end of the day they are happy and proud of their accomplishments," said McLaughlin. "This event allows our women Veterans to open up and try something new."

During the ski day event women Veterans were able to network with other women and meet new people. U.S. Navy Veteran Heather Vaughn attended the event and was able to share her experiences with other women.

"I came out today to be with other women Veterans and to have the support of other women Veterans," said Vaughn. "To participate in this event and to be able to network and build a support system is great."

We encourage all women Veterans to participate in this event, despite their level of skill, mentioned McLaughlin.

"It's amazing to see the transformation that takes place with just this one day," said McLaughlin. "We have a great team of volunteers that make this day possible and it's truly a rewarding experience for all involved."

For more information on VA Boston's Adaptive Sports Program or how to get involved with events like this one, please contact Jenny McLaughlin at jenny.mclaughlin@va.gov



MAKE A TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION TODAY!

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VA Compensation

Charlie Tocci, Veteran Health & Benefits Specialist III, Syracuse VAMC, NY

Monthly compensation provided by VA is known as VA disability compensation. This benefit is available for veteran with disabilities, diseases, or injuries suffered during active military service. Conditions and disabilities aggravated during active military service will also entitled a veteran to receive the VA disability compensation. Monetary benefits are also extended to surviving spouse, dependent parents and children. The purpose of benefits for surviving spouses and dependents are to compensate the loss of income of a veteran who passed away.

Disability Compensation: Can best be explained as a tax free monthly monetary paid benefit for veterans who suffered or aggravated injuries while in active military service. The amount of money for this benefit is determined by taking into consideration the severity of the disability and how much it is affecting the veteran. VA assigns percentages to service connected disabilities or conditions base on severity and limitations due to the conditions. To received monetary VA benefits a rating between 10 percent and 100 percent is required. The VA assigns percentages to disabilities in increments of 10 percent. It should be noted that veterans can also receive monetary compensation from the VA for disabilities that are secondary to a service connected disability.

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC): This is also a monetary tax free benefit available only to surviving spouses and dependents of members of the arm forces who died while in active duty or active duty for training. Parents of service members are entitled to parents DIC if they

were financially dependent on a veteran who died of a service connected disability. Survivors of veterans whose death is caused by a serviced connected condition are also entitled to survivors DIC.

Special Monthly Compensation (SMC): SMC is another monetary tax free benefit paid to veterans, surviving spouses and parents. Veterans can received this benefits under special circumstances. SMC could be granted based on the need of Aid and Attendance of another person to accomplish activities of daily living. It can also be granted for the loss of a limb. Spouses and surviving spouses will receive this benefit in the form of Aid and Attendance based on the need of another person to accomplish activities of daily living.

Claims Based on Special Circumstances: After a veteran is granted service connection for a disability, the veteran could then be eligible for special disability benefits. If the veteran meets the criteria he or she can be entitled to benefits such as individual employability, clothing allowance, automobile allowance, convalescence, dental, and birth defects. Each one of these benefits have requirements that will need to be met.

Claimants should seek assistant from an accredited representative such as Paralyzed Veterans of America to file any claims for VA benefits. Service Officers can help determine what benefits to apply for and the needed documentation.

Help with Pressure Ulcers in a Mobile App

My HealtheVet



A skilled and well-informed caregiver can make a difference to a Veterans' health. Roughly 66 million people in the United States serve as caregivers. VA has a new

mobile application (app) that can help caregivers and those they care for with pressure ulcers/injuries.

Pressure ulcers/injuries can develop when skin is pressed against hard surfaces or when skin slides against a surface area for long periods of time. The pressured area can block the blood flow and damage or kill the skin. This often occurs when someone is immobile, bedridden or confined to a wheelchair. While a discolored area of the skin doesn't sound like a huge concern, this minor irritation can quickly develop into a more serious health problem.

The VA Pressure Ulcer/Injury Resource (VA PUR) app can help Veterans and caregivers learn about preventing and taking care of existing pressure ulcers/injuries. The VA PUR app is an easy-to-use tool that helps prevent,

understand and track pressure ulcers. It also provides access to other useful resources to help manage daily care.

There are four main pages of the app:

- Home: Write journal entries, set reminders, find symptoms and causes, ask your medical team questions, and create shortcuts to your favorite features.
- Learn: Learn about pressure ulcers/injuries; preventive measures and ways to manage nutrition, exercise, medicines, pain, vital signs and home safety; and tips for caregivers.
- Tools: Watch videos on how to use the app and how to prevent and take care of existing pressure ulcers/injuries.
- Get Help: Obtain support through text or chat and get directions to a facility or other resources near your home.

The app is now available on the Apple App Store and the Google Play Store.

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Myths and Truths About the “ADA Education and Reform Act” (H.R. 620)

Continued from page 5.

and has completed the detailed notification process. Even then, the only action the business is required to make is “substantial progress” in removing the barrier described in the notice. A business could wait years without actually removing barriers and face no penalty, as long as it can show “substantial progress” was made. There would be no incentive for a business to learn about ADA compliance and take steps prior to notification. “Wait and see” would become the norm.

This bill would also effectively change Title III’s requirements from providing access to making “substantial progress” in removing barriers. Progress is not access. Changing the standard under the ADA from access to substantial progress would not only harm the civil rights of people with disabilities but would also increase litigation due to uncertainties about what constitutes “substantial progress.”

MYTH: Lawsuits under Title III of the ADA expose businesses to big damage awards for people with disabilities and their lawyers.

TRUTH: There are no money damages under Title III of the ADA.

Under Title III of the ADA, an individual who files a lawsuit and is successful is entitled to removal of the barrier and attorney’s fees. There are no damage awards. Once a business removes the barrier in question, legal claims challenging that barrier under Title III no longer exist. Some state laws, however, do authorize money damages for non-compliance. Amending the federal ADA, as this bill does, will have no effect on lawsuits seeking damages under those state laws.

MYTH: It’s too difficult for businesses, particularly small businesses, to understand their obligations under the ADA.

TRUTH: Complying with the ADA is no more burdensome than complying with other laws and ample resources exist to aid compliance.

Businesses must comply with many complex and detailed laws, including tax laws and health and safety laws. Civil rights laws and other laws protecting people with disabilities should not be treated differently.

Furthermore, free resources are available to help businesses comply with the ADA. The federal government funds the ADA National Network which provides free technical assistance to businesses about their responsibilities under the ADA. Specifically, there are 10 regional ADA centers that provide individual assistance, in-person trainings, webinars, and publications. There are also tax credits to help businesses remove barriers, including a specific small business tax credit.

MYTH: The “ADA Education and Reform Act” is necessary to stop lawyers who abuse the ADA by filing frivolous lawsuits.

TRUTH: The so-called “ADA Education and Reform Act” will do nothing to stop frivolous lawsuits. And there are ways to address the problem of unscrupulous attorneys without placing unwarranted burdens on the rights of people with disabilities.

Although a very small number of lawyers have filed significant numbers of lawsuits that may be frivolous or fraudulent, a “notice and cure” period would not eliminate fraud or frivolous suits. At best, it defers the lawsuit. The true purpose of this bill is to allow businesses to delay meeting their obligations under the law – for weeks, months, or longer – at the expense of people with disabilities.

Additionally, there are established and tested avenues to address this problem. Courts and state bar examiners have the tools needed to shut down unscrupulous lawyers through sanctions, disciplinary measures, and other steps. These mechanisms have been, and continue to be, successfully used to address fraudulent and unethical practices under Title III.

For additional information or questions please contact Heather Ansley, Associate General Counsel for Corporate and Government Relations, Paralyzed Veterans of America, heathera@pva.org; Jennifer Mathis, Director of Policy and Legal Advocacy, Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, jenniferm@bazelon.org; or Vania Leveille, Senior Legislative Counsel, American Civil Liberties Union, vleveille@aclu.org

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 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.

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:

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- 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.



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1208 VFW Parkway, Suite 301
West Roxbury, MA 02132

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COMING EVENTS AND IMPORTANT DATES

Mar: Seated Yoga at Gaylord Hospital - Wallingford, CT. Call for 203-284-2772 for Monthly Schedule.

Mar 28: Brockton SCI Pizza Party

Apr 1-6: National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic Snowmass Village, CO

Apr 7: Adaptive Sports Fest Registration. Gaylord Sports Association, New Haven, CT. Call 203-284-2772 or visit www.gaylord.org/sports

Apr 18: West Roxbury SCI Pizza Party

Apr 28: Brockton Gym Bldg. 23, Air Gun/Boccia Tournament – Spaulding Rehab/VA Rec Therapy

May 23: Brockton SCI Pizza Party

Jun 2: NEPVA Bass Fishing - Newton Yacht Club, MA

Jul 16-20: New England Summer Sports Clinic

Jun 20: West Roxbury SCI Pizza Party

Jul 25: Brockton SCI Pizza Party

Jul 29-Aug 5: National Veterans Wheelchair Games, Orlando, FL

Aug 15: West Roxbury Annual Ice Cream Social

Sep 7-9: NEPVA Bass Trail Fishing - Lake Winnepesaukee, NH

Sep 26: Brockton SCI Pizza Party

Oct 6-8: Maine Bass Trail event at Pine Tree Camp

For more information on any upcoming events please contact the Chapter office at (800) 660-1181.

Mike Guilbault - Sports Director

Mike Moran - Asst. Sports Director



Serving Paralyzed Veterans and the Disabled Community Since 1947.