

NEPVA Endorses Social Security 2100

On Friday, June 9th Kristen McCone Gordon, Director of Government and Community Affairs, joined Chapter President Brad Carlson and Chapter Volunteer Kathy Carlson in Farmington, CT to participate in a joint press conference regarding a critical piece of legislation, Social Security 2100. Congressman Larson and Congresswoman Hayes's joint press conference announced the re-filing of this legislation and the subsequent launch of our advocacy efforts.

Chapter President Brad Carlson spoke at the press conference and joined other community leaders in calling for Congress to act with urgency on this issue. Brad thanked Congressman Larson and Congresswoman Hayes for their consistently strong leadership on behalf of paralyzed veterans. He also reminded the public that more than 9 million veterans and their families receive retirement, disability, or survivor benefits from Social Security. Chapter President Carlson was clear – Congress must strengthen and protect our nation's security system – our veterans lives depend on it.

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National PVA Presents: A Webinar Series on the Art of Advocacy

PVA's National Government Relations Staff has launched a webinar series about the basics of government. The 5-part series will culminate with a session on how to advocate for your cause at various levels:

- » **Understanding the Issues and Becoming a Change Agent**
- » **Who is Advocating and Who With**
- » **The Art of Advocacy**

Please keep an eye out for more information on this opportunity on our website and in your emails!

Any questions? Contact LisaE@pva.org



Congresswoman Jahana Hayes with Brad and Kathy Carlson.



Kristen McCone Gordon, Brad Carlson and Congressman Larson.



THANKS TO ALL THOSE WHO MADE VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTIONS TO THIS ISSUE

Mike Guilbault, Fishing article
Katie Joly, Fishing photos



VA and NEPVA members and volunteers joined together to honor WW II veteran Jack Martin at the June 7 Woo Sox game.



Executive Director's Report

By Mark Murphy
Executive Director NEPVA

Dear Friends,

On Monday, May 22nd myself and several NEPVA members and volunteers attended and played in The Italian American War Veterans (ITAM) Marlborough Post's Annual Golf Tournament in Northborough, MA. As fellow veteran organizations we have maintained a strong relationship with ITAM, and we were delighted to support their golf tournament. They have also graciously supported our Chapter Golf Tournament as well, which again is on August 28th at Olde Scotland Links in Bridgewater, MA. It was a beautiful day and following the tournament we went to the ITAM Post in Marlborough for the awards dinner. This is the same location where we will be hosting our Chapter banquet on August 6th. This was my first time seeing this ITAM Post in-person, and I think it will be perfect venue for our Chapter banquet. I hope you can make it!

As you may be aware, we used to have our Chapter sports insurance facilitated through PVA National. However, that is not longer the case as Chapters throughout the country are now responsible for getting their own sports insurance coverage. It was a long and arduous process, but I am happy to report that we have finally secured a strong sports insurance policy through Sadler Sports & Recreation Insurance. They have been incredibly responsive and attentive to us as we have worked to ensure the policy is comprehensive

of our many sports programs while also being affordable. Special thanks to Board members Brad Carlson, Mike Moran, and Jim Wallack who assisted me in this extensive process of securing sports insurance for our Chapter. It was very important to get this completed and I am happy it is now done!

...I am happy to report that we have finally secured a strong sports insurance policy through Sadler Sports & Recreation Insurance.

Looking ahead, this is shaping up to be quite a busy Summer. I have already mentioned here our Chapter banquet and Golf Tournament in August, but we also have the MS and Service Connection virtual meeting with Kristen McCone Gordon, Chuck Houle and PVA National Service Officer Pete Demarkis on the morning of June 22nd, a disc golf demonstration at the Brockton VA on the afternoon of June 22nd, Sail to Prevail in Newport, RI on June 24th, and the National Veteran Wheelchair Games in July. These are all important events and programs for our Chapter. I would like to especially highlight the MS and Service Connection virtual meeting as Kristen has been working hard to ensure that this is an informative and interactive meeting for our members. I hope you can attend. Kristen has been doing great work in her expanded role



in directing our Chapter Community Affairs in addition to her work in the space of Government Relations, and her collaboration with Board member Chuck Houle in launching our new MS program has been truly outstanding.

I hope you and your families have a wonderful and safe 4th of July!

Sincerely,

Mark Murphy



Scan the QR code above to find out more about our golf tournament

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ANNUAL BANQUET

Awards, Food, Music, Dancing, Fun for All

Get out your flip flops out and plan to dance the afternoon away! Our Annual Membership Banquet, which is always a great time to get dressed up and share a night of dinner, dancing, and prizes with our Chapter members and VA Staff is going casual this year! Chowder, steak, lobster, chicken, and all the accompaniments! Live band, games, 50/50 raffle, cash bar, lots of fun!

SUNDAY AUGUST 6

Noon to 5

Italian American
War Veteran Post 45
111 Neil St., Marlboro, MA

Free for Chapter members and spouse, VA Staff and Volunteers
Please sign up by Monday, July 24th

<https://www.eventbrite.com/o/pva-new-england-chapter-66089549973>

From the President's Desk

by Brad Carlson
NEPVA President

Dear Friends,

As members of our Chapter, you should have received notice in the mail regarding our upcoming Chapter elections. We also included in the mailing information about our new Chapter MS program, including the upcoming MS and Service Connection virtual meeting with Kristen McCone Gordon, Chuck Houle and PVA National Service Officer Pete Demarkis on June 22nd at 10:00am. I would encourage you to join that meeting as it will be very informative for our members.

Along with several Chapter members and volunteers I am looking forward to attending the National Veterans Wheelchair Games from July 4-9th in Portland, Oregon. These Games are the world's largest annual wheelchair sports and rehabilitation event solely for veterans. It is open to all U.S. veterans with spinal cord injuries, amputations, multiple sclerosis, or other central neurological conditions who require a wheelchair for athletic competition. Every year hundreds of veterans compete, and it is always impressive to see. I will of course report in my article next month on highlights from the Games.

On Friday, June 9th Kathy and I joined Kristen McCone Gordon in Connecticut for an event with Congresswoman Jahana Hayes and Congressman John Larson. We were honored to be invited, and I was asked to speak at the event. Here are some words that I shared:



"The New England Chapter of Paralyzed Veterans of America is proud to endorse Social Security 2100. We are grateful for Congressman Larson and Congresswoman Hayes's consistently strong leadership on behalf of paralyzed veterans. More than 9 million veterans and their families receive retirement, disability, or survivor benefits from Social Security. Congress must strengthen and protect our nation's social security system- our veterans lives depend on it."

Special thank you to Kristen for helping to coordinate this visit, and again it was my honor to attend on behalf of our Chapter and to speak. **Advocating for social security benefits for our members is a legislative priority that we will continue to fight for strongly.**

I would like to remind you of our upcoming Chapter Banquet at the Italian American War Veterans Post 45, 111 Neil Street, Marlboro, MA on August 6th from 12:00-6:00pm. It will be an informal and free event for all, and you will soon be receiving a flyer in the mail regarding the banquet. Also, we are gearing up for our Chapter Golf Tournament on August 28th at Olde Scotland Links in Bridgewater, MA and are working to secure additional sponsors for the tournament. Please let me know if you would like to reserve a foursome.

Until next month, I am wishing you a great and happy 4th of July!

Sincerely,

Brad Carlson
National Director & Chapter President



Government Relations Report

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As Congressman Larson and Congresswoman Hayes articulated, this legislation increases and expands the following essential benefits:

- Increases benefits 2% across the board for all Social Security beneficiaries for the first time in 52 years.
- Improves the Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA), so it reflects the inflation experienced by seniors.
- Increases benefits to boost lower income seniors.
- Improves benefits for widows and widowers from two-income households.
- Restores student benefits up to age 26, for the dependent children of disabled, deceased, or retired workers.
- Increases access to benefits up to age 26, for the dependent children of disabled, deceased, or retired workers.
- Repeals the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pensions Offset (GPO) that current penalizes many public servants.
- Ends the 5-month waiting period to receive disability benefits.
- Increases benefits by an additional 5% for the elderly who have been receiving benefits for 15 years or more.
- Provides caregiver credits to ensure that people (mostly women) are not penalized in retirement for taking time out of the workforce to care for children or other dependents.
- Ends the disability benefit cliff, replacing it with a gradual offset for earnings.
- Combines the “Old Age and Survivors Insurance” (OASI) and the Disability Insurance (DI) Trust Funds into one fund to ensure seamless benefit payments.

Our Chapter is committed to advocating for this legislation during the 118th congressional session. Please continue to check our Facebook page and upcoming newsletters for more information on how to contact your Representatives about this bill.

Kristen McCone Gordon
Director of Government and Community Affairs



Upcoming opportunity for Rhode Island NEPVA members

Our Chapter is looking for 1-2 interested Rhode Island members to join us in an upcoming district meeting with Senator Jack Reed. We look forward to discussing our legislative priorities with Senator Reed and requesting his formal support as a cosponsor. If you are interested in meeting your Senator and helping us explain the urgency of issues impacting paralyzed veterans, please contact me today at kristen@pvanewengland.org. No experience necessary – just a desire to share your perspective and advocate for your fellow veterans!

Larson, Hayes: Social Security 2100 Will Address America’s Retirement Crisis and Expand Benefits

Farmington, CT – Today, Reps. John B. Larson (CT-01) and Jahana Hayes (CT-05) announced their Social Security 2100 Act to strengthen Social Security’s solvency and expand benefits.

“As Americans are faced with a global pandemic, supply chain crisis and rising costs, I am thrilled to partner with Congresswoman Hayes to announce a plan of action that will secure and expand the number one anti-poverty program for the elderly, for children, and a disability plan that more veterans rely on than the VA,” said Larson. “Social Security 2100 will provide an across-the-board benefit increase for the first time in more than 50 years and ensure benefits keep pace with inflation.

“Rep. Hayes has been a tireless advocate for students, teachers, and disabled Americans. Her leadership ensured their voices are heard in this plan. Our legislation will increase access to benefits for children living with grandparents or other relatives and restore student benefits up to age 26, end the dangerous 5-month waiting period for disability benefits, and finally repeal the WEP/GPO that penalizes public servants. We can strengthen Social Security for years to come and support the most vulnerable Americans who need our help now by ensuring the wealthiest Americans pay their fair share,” Larson continued.

“Social Security benefits have come under attack countless times since becoming law. This is why we must act now to protect the livelihoods of older Americans and others across the nation. Congressman Larson and I have worked closely with experts to craft legislation that will not only help the elderly but children and disabled individuals as well,” said Hayes. “In 2033, benefits will be cut by more than 20% which would devastate millions of Americans. That is why it is imperative that we pass Social Security 2100 now.”

“We are always striving for the best outcomes for the Fifth District and Connecticut as a whole. This legislation would provide the best outcome. The Social Security 2100 Act will expand and revitalize Social Security benefits and protect the solvency of the system for generations to come. I look forward to working with my colleagues to protect this crucial safety net,” Hayes continued.

“Social Security benefits have come under attack countless times since becoming law. This is why we must act now to protect the livelihoods of older Americans and others across the nation.”

A livestream of the press conference can be found [here](#).

A fact sheet on the bill can be found [here](#).

“Congressman John Larson and Jahana Hayes’ Social Security 2100 Act preserves and strengthens Social Security into the future so it will be there for our children and grandchildren,” said Bette Marafino, President of the Connecticut Alliance for Retired Americans.

“Because the Government Pension Offset (GPO) reduces public employees’ Social Security spousal or survivor benefits by two-thirds of their public pension, 9 out of 10 people lose their entire spousal benefit, even though their spouse paid Social Security taxes for many years. As WEP (Windfall Elimination Provision) reduces the earned Social Security benefits of an individual who also receives a public pension from a job not covered by Social Security, hard-working people lose a significant portion of the benefits they have earned themselves,” said Stacie Harris-Byrdsong, AFSCME Council 4 President. “What this means, in real terms, is that hundreds of thousands of public servants such as social workers, school support staff, librarians and police officers are losing the benefits they earned through a lifetime of public service. Social Security 2100 will right those wrongs. When you dedicate your life to public service, you and your family should be able to retire with

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Fishing with Mikey G!

by Mike Guilbault

Bass Fishing Season has a Great Start

The season is here and the Bass have been biting. On May 9th myself and CT Chapter members Tom Ferland and Ed Dusick attended the Gaylord Sports Association Veterans Fishing Tournament on Candlewood Lake in Danbury, CT. We had a beautiful day with hot sunny weather and the fish were biting. Congrats to Tom Ferland for winning the Lunker Award catching the biggest fish of the day. There will be another Tournament held by this group September 19, on Lake Congamond, Southwick, MA. At these Tournaments anglers are with licensed boat captains and are not required to have their own license.

These events are a collaborative effort between the Gaylord Sports Association, Connecticut BASS Nation, Major Steven Roy Andrews Fishing Outreach Program, and West Haven VA. A special thank you to Al Guite from the CT BASS Nation for organizing our volunteer boat captains, Joe Kowalski for tournament organization and Sylvia Morris for help with weigh in cards and luncheon organization. It takes a dedicated group of people, who are passionate about this event and who together make this tournament truly amazing! I do my best to attend every one I possibly can. It's great to see my fellow veterans and all the great people that make the Tournament possible. I must also mention a BIG thank you to Move United and the VA Adaptive Sports Grant who provided the grant funding that allows Gaylord and partners to run this tournament!



Chapter member, Tom Ferland is with his boat captain Abe Kaleckman, they took home the lunker award.



In addition the NEPVA Bass Trail held the first of our three annual tournaments Saturday June 3rd on the Charles River once again hosted by the Newton Yacht Club. The weather wasn't quite as nice as the CT Tournament; although the heavy rain held off until we were off the water, it was quite cold and misty with drizzly. A day you definitely needed your rain gear. God Bless those Nam Knights who always come to help get the anglers loaded into the boats. They ride their bikes to the Tournaments rain or shine. This year we dedicated this Tournament to Bob 'Soupy' Campbell who sadly passed in December of 2022. It was Soupy who along with Tiny founded the Tournaments over 25 years ago with their American Eagle Bass Anglers Club and a few of the other members of the Woburn Club. He was a great friend to us all and will be greatly missed just as Tiny has been. Watch for the complete results and more photos from the day in another story on the Charles River Tournament.

Enjoy the nice weather and keep on fishing, a great way to get some fresh air and have fun enjoying time in nature. See the other Bass Trail dates on the back cover and come on out and enjoy some fun. You can register on the Chapter website and please do so at least 2 weeks before the Tournament date to allow time to get boat captain volunteers.



Chapter member, Ed Dusick with his Captain Vinny.

NATIONAL VETERANS WHEELCHAIR GAMES

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Service Officers Report

The below article addresses some changes related to the recently passed PACT Act that may have an impact on chapter members with service during the Gulf War era.

The Sergeant First Class (SFC) Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act (long title) was a significant expansion of VA benefits for veterans exposed to toxins and hazardous materials during their service.

This article addresses changes for veterans who served on or after August 2, 1990, and on or after September 11, 2001, on active duty and in the locations noted below. Please note that locations of conceded presumptive exposure are different for each of those periods.

The Honoring Our Pact Act (short

title) recognizes the following medical conditions as presumptive to burn pit exposure:

The following illnesses are considered presumptive to burn pit exposure-Chronic bronchitis, Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, Constrictive bronchiolitis or obliterative bronchiolitis, Emphysema, Granulomatous disease, Interstitial lung disease, Pleuritis, Pulmonary fibrosis. Sarcoidosis, Chronic sinusitis, Chronic rhinitis.

The following cancers are presumptive to burn pit exposure: Glioblastoma, Head cancer of any type, Neck cancer of any type, Respiratory (breathing related) cancer of any type, Gastrointestinal cancer of any type, Reproductive cancer of any type, Lymphoma cancer of any type, Lymphomatic cancer of any type, Kidney cancer, Brain cancer, Pancreatic cancer, Melanoma.

Veterans covered under these presumptions include:

Veterans who served on or after August 2, 1990, on active duty in any of the following locations (including the airspace above those locations):

Bahrain	Iraq
Kuwait	Oman
Qatar	Saudi Arabia
Somalia	United Arab Emirates

Veterans who served on or after September 11, 2001, on active duty in any of the following locations (including the airspace above those locations):

Afghanistan	Djibouti
Egypt	Jordan
Lebanon	Syria
Yemen	Uzbekistan

Due to the extensive list of new

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PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA – REGIONAL NATIONAL SERVICE OFFICERS

BOSTON VA REGIONAL OFFICE

Joseph E. Badzmierowski
Director of Field Services
J.F.K. Federal Building - Room - 1575 C
BOSTON, MA 02203
phone: (617) 303-1395
fax: (617) 303-1396

TOGAS, VARO, I VA CENTER

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West Roxbury, MA 02132
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Serving Massachusetts and Rhode Island

BRONX SCI

Amauris Polanco, National Service Officer III
Paralyzed Veterans of America
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SYRACUSE VAMC

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Social Security 2100*continued from page 7*

dignity and this legislation ensures our members and those across the country will be taken care of moving forward. Our union, AFSCME Council 4, fully supports these repeals within this legislation.”

“Connecticut is facing an epic teacher shortage that is forcing school closures, early dismissals, and lost learning time for students—and that crisis is deepening by the day. In addition to a rapid rise in teacher vacancies, we are also seeing steep declines in the number of people entering the profession,” said Joslyn DeLancey, CEA Vice President. “We must address the barriers that keep people from choosing teaching careers, and a good place to start is by repealing WEP and GPO penalties that strip Connecticut educators of Social Security benefits they have earned in other jobs.”

“The New England Chapter of Paralyzed Veterans of America is proud to endorse Social Security 2100. We are grateful for Congressman Larson and Congresswoman Hayes’s consistently strong leadership on behalf of paralyzed veterans. More than 9 million veterans and their families receive retirement, disability, or survivor benefits from Social Security. Congress must strengthen and protect our nation’s social security system- our veterans’ lives depend on it,” said Brad Carlson, President of the New England Chapter of Paralyzed Veterans of America.

“Social Security was created to protect every American against the hazards and vicissitudes of life. Social Security 2100 will expand the promise made to Americans in the New Deal and help ensure that everyone who pays into the system will be able to receive their promised benefit,” said Sherry Jackson, Vice President of AFGE Council 220.

“Our 12,000 retirees are worried about the prospect of a 20% cut to their monthly benefit in just nine short years, for many of them, that will mean they cannot afford their medication, groceries or rent,” said Travis Woodward, President of CSEA SEIU Local 2001 representing 25,000 members, including 12,000 retirees, “But it is not just our retirees who are concerned about Social Security, all of our members are worried - especially our youngest workers who are seeing their retirement date get pushed further and further off with the prospect of a diminished Social Security benefit. We need Social Security 2100 so that all workers can retire in dignity.”

Service Officer Report*continued from page 11*

presumptive conditions, any chapter member who believes that they may qualify for presumptive service connection based on current diagnosis, location, and time served should contact their local PVA office so that they may assist in reviewing member records and address any necessary actions based on that review.

Please also note that several presumptive conditions were added for Vietnam era veterans, as well as changes in geographical location for Agent Orange exposure. Also, 2 new locations and dates for radiation exposure were also added. These changes will be addressed in a future chapter article

Respectfully yours,

Michael Snape, National Service Officer III

Paralyzed Veterans of America

1 VA Center

Building 248, Rm. 112

Augusta, Me. 04330

(207)-621-7394



Volunteer, Denise Pease, and Director Gary Jezierski representing NEPVA at the 49th Annual Native American Pow-Wow and Craft Fair in Attleboro, MA.

NEPVA's Veterans with MS Program

BUILDING COMMUNITY ← → **INFORMATION SHARING**

Zoom: MS and Service Connection: What you need to know!

An informational zoom with PVA's Senior National Service Officer, Pete DeMarkis.

All NEPVA members with MS are invited to an informational zoom on June 22nd at 10am featuring Senior National Service Officer Pete DeMarkis. Mr. DeMarkis and his colleagues are highly skilled at securing benefits for veterans with MS. Co-hosted by NEPVA Director Chuck Houle, the zoom will include a brief presentation on navigating MS and service connection followed by an informal Q&A with Mr. DeMarkis.

Join Zoom Meeting here: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82015061262>

Meeting ID: 820 1506 1262

Join: NEPVA's Veterans with MS Committee!

We are so excited about the launch of our new Veterans with MS program and are committed to providing quality programming for our members. We are looking to form a small committee, composed of NEPVA members with MS, to help advise us on what opportunities and information would be most beneficial to our members. Previous experience is not necessary – just a desire to join an inclusive and motivated group of people committed to serving other veterans with MS and having some fun along the way!

If you are interested in getting involved and hearing more about this opportunity, please contact Kristen McCone Gordon at kristen@pvanewengland.org with the subject line: Veterans with MS Committee.

Subscribe: to NEPVA's Veterans with MS distribution List!

Our Chapter is busy preparing events and opportunities for our members with MS. We want to ensure that our information is reaching you! Please subscribe to NEPVA's Veterans with MS email distribution list by emailing Kristen McCone Gordon at kristen@pvanewengland.org with the subject line: Subscribe to the Veterans with MS list. In the meantime, be sure to follow our Chapter on Facebook!



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The 5 W's

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basics of government.

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Issues and Becoming a
Change Agent**

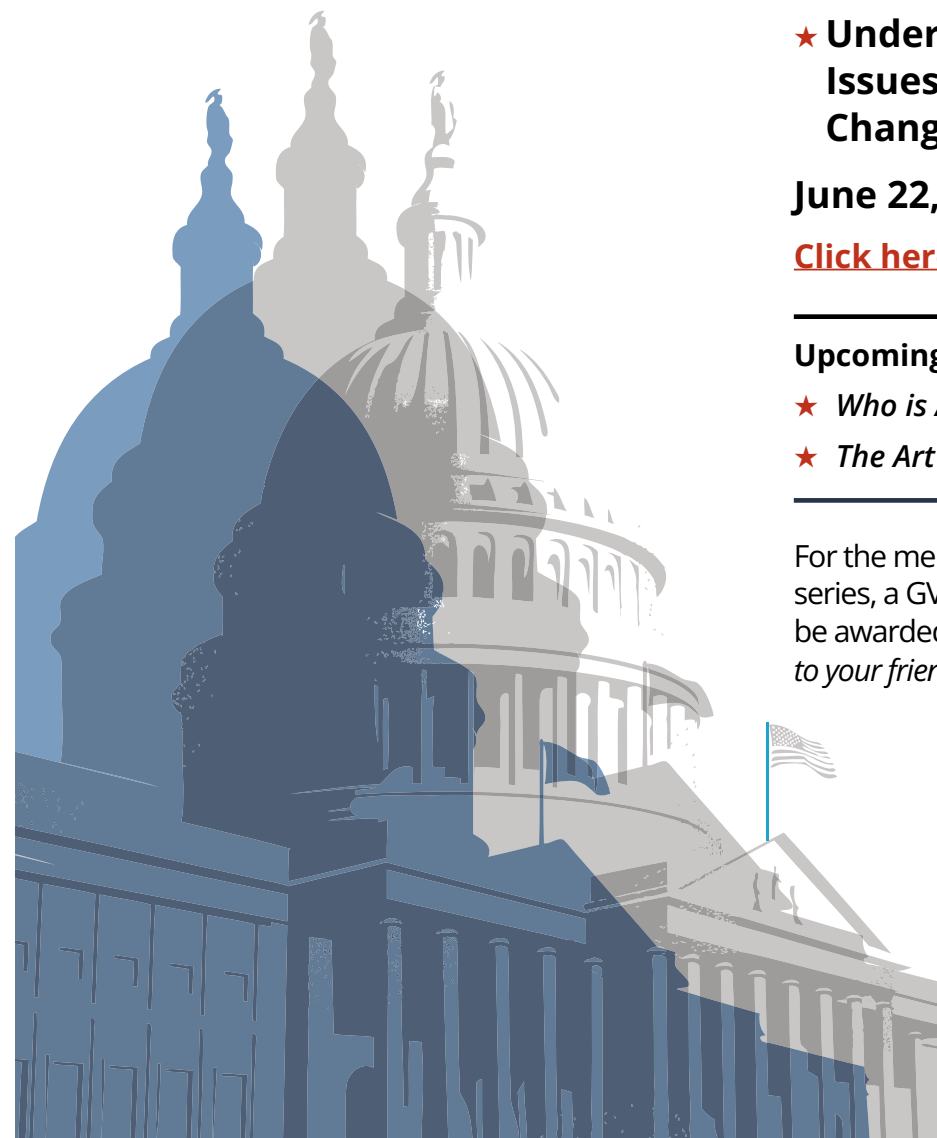
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[Click here to register](#)

Upcoming Webinars

- ★ *Who is Advocating and Who With?*
- ★ *The Art of Advocacy*

For the members who complete the entire
series, a GVR certificate of completion will
be awarded. *(Something fancy to show off
to your friends)*



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New England Chapter

2023 BASS TRAIL DATES

**September 8-10, Lake Winnepesaukee
NEPVA Bass Tournament, Camp
Robindel, Moultonborough, NH**

**September 29-October 1, Maine Bass
Tournament, Camp Wavus, Maine**

[https://www.pvanewengland.org/activities-
events/adaptive-sports/fishing/](https://www.pvanewengland.org/activities-events/adaptive-sports/fishing/)

Join Us at Our Upcoming Events

June 24-25 Sail to PreVail
Newport, Rhode Island

July 4-9 Wheelchair Games
Portland, Oregon

August 6, 2023
Annual Chapter Banquet
Italian American War Veterans
Marlboro, MA.

August 28, 2023
Annual Chapter Golf Tournament
Olde Scotland Links
Bridgewater, MA.