

July 2023

[ILCouncilMOAA.org](http://ILCouncilMOAA.org)

## FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

### Never Stop Serving!!!

*“NEVER  
STOP  
SERVING”*



#### President's column

I have enjoyed my time visiting the various Chapters. Our members remain engaged in important veteran and community support activities. As noted in the MOAA E-newsletters and the Military magazine, Congress is working on the several appropriation bills. MOAA reports several “wins” in the draft NDAA. Even so, there is concern about the CBO’s recommendation to the members that Tricare for Life (TFL) should have enrolment fees and co-pays. That would have a direct impact on most of our members! I join Colonel Smith in encouraging you to remind our folks to use the MOAA “Take Action Link” to let their elected officials know that this should be a non-starter!

As we mentioned at our last Council meeting, we had a property tax relief issue that needed gentle handling to get clarification language in this session’s legislation. It got done, and done quietly. But it only happened because knowledgeable veterans took action. This is just another example of why we Never Stop Serving. I note that several of you are serving on your county’s VAC. Good on you! I had a recent opportunity to assist a veteran’s widow in solving financial and tax liability issues through my county’s VAC. It really is about our experiences as officers in knowing, as my three-star boss used to say, “whose bellybutton do I push, & where is it?”

The State Fair is coming up. As the chairman of that committee, I especially appreciate all the financial support your chapters have provided, almost as much as I appreciate how many of you will be joining me at the Fair 13 August (in Springfield), and those who will make it to DuQuoin on 27 August. I am awaiting the LOE announcements. I know that National is currently reviewing the applications. I hope the announcement is soon, and I hope that all of our submissions are rewarded! In my book y’all should get Five-Stars! Thanks for your continued service on behalf of America’s Uniformed Veterans.

Semper Fi – Bob

## Reminder

**Just a short reminder for folks to be looking for the invitation from National for the leaders' workshop in Milwaukee 15-16 September. We can expect invitations for chapter & Council Presidents, Membership Chairs, Legislative Liaisons, and Surviving Spouses.**

**We are looking for MAXIMUM participation**

### **Illinois Chapter Presidents**

**From COL Tyler: “Since I got my email invitation to the MOAA Leaders Workshop in Milwaukee 15-16 September, I am assuming that all of you did as well. This is a great opportunity to gather with other MOAA members across the region and to meet with the folks at National. Further, it is a good opportunity to introduce the other leaders of your Chapter to the larger MOAA community. Please encourage your membership, legislative, and surviving spouse chairs to attend with you. If your identified leader is not attending, consider sending a substitute as a way to engage others in your chapter to a potential leadership position. As noted in the invitation, National will support sending an alternate.”**



## Legislative Input to the IL CoC Newsletter

### Section 1: Current Discussion of MOAA Issues

#### National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)

**Military Health System Reform.** The FY 2023 NDAA was passed and signed by President Biden in December 2022. This marks the fourth consecutive MOAA win to stop military billet cuts. As far back as the FY 2020 NDAA, MOAA has fought to retain 18,000 medical billets to help preserve medical readiness and beneficiary care. Provisions in the FY 2023 NDAA require a series of reports and congressional notification before DoD makes plans to cut personnel at its military treatment facilities (MTFs) including a five-year halt to medical billet cut, a one-year suspension to MTF restructuring, and other reporting requirements.

**Retain Skilled Veterans Act.** The FY 2024 NDAA soon could include MOAA-backed language ending a six-month waiting period for recent military retirees seeking DoD civilian positions – a delay that drives away talent and weakens our national security. The House version of the NDAA (H.R. 2670) includes a provision for the “waiver of limitation on appointment of recently retired members of armed forces to DoD competitive service positions,” removing the so-called “180-day rule” from all but excepted service and Senior Executive Service jobs. Help MOAA repeal the “180-day rule. See Item 12 in Section 2 below to submit your letters to your legislators.

**Protect TRICARE for Life Benefits.** Two clear victories for MOAA and its members stemming from the FY 2024 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) come from what’s not in either the House or Senate version of the bill, or any of the thousand-plus proposed amendments. First, the NDAA drafts include no TRICARE For Life enrollment fees or deductibles, a key priority for MOAA’s advocacy efforts. And second, the legislation includes no mention of planned staffing cuts at military treatment facilities (MTFs), as last year’s NDAA included MOAA-backed language shelving such moves for at least five years, as mentioned in Military Health System Reform above.

**Advocacy in Action (AiA) Update.** There have been a few developments from MOAA National regarding the three legislative issues we took to the Hill last April. MOAA continues to track these issues and keep the pressure on through the 118th Congress. It seems that with every recent webinar MOAA broadcasts, these three issues are always at the top of the agenda. So, MOAA is not letting up and neither should we. The following is where we stand on these issues. And as always, MOAA National depends on our support to keep Congress aware of the importance of preserving our military benefits, because these issues ultimately impact military readiness and our national security.

**TRICARE Pharmacy Status.** The TRICARE retail pharmacy network fell from about 55,000 locations in 2022 to about 42,000 as of February 2023. This was one of the three Advocacy in Action (AiA) issues April 2023. As we presented the impact of these pharmacy cuts to Congress in April, we emphasized that they negatively impacted the most vulnerable TRICARE beneficiaries, particularly those people with complex medical needs or those needing long-term care, especially in the most rural areas of the country. While there is no House or Senate bill associated with this issue, you can help MOAA to continue its work within and outside the NDAA process to restore this benefit for all TRICARE beneficiaries. You can help support MOAA’s restoration campaign by submitting your “take action” congressional letters. See Item 8 in Section 2 below to register your opposition to TRICARE retail pharmacy cuts.

**Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) to 100%.** As we mentioned in April, the BAH Restoration Act calls on DoD to restore BAH to full coverage of the monthly cost of adequate housing in a given

## Legislative Input to the IL CoC Newsletter

area based on the servicemember's rank and dependency status. This benefit was in place until 2015, when DoD began reducing BAH by one percentage point a year down to 95% in 2019. When we presented the BAH issue to Congress, BAH Restoration Act (HR 2537), Rep. Marilyn Strickland (D-WA-10) had 23 co-sponsors for the bill and there was no companion bill in the senate. Currently, HR 2537 now has 53 co-sponsors and the senate introduced BAH Restoration Act (S.1823), sponsored by Sen. Raphael Warnock (D-GA) in June 6, 2023, but with only one co-sponsor thus far.

All Volunteer Force (AVF). We brought attention to our Illinois legislators during AiA in April about the critical situation surrounding the All Volunteer Force (AVF). There is no recent congressional discussion about the AVF. But as you review the 25 legislative bills in Section 3: Key Bills in Congress below, the majority of these bills have a major impact on retaining a robust all volunteer force. With that said, it is very important for all MOAA members to access [MOAA.org/Legislative Action Center](https://MOAA.org/Legislative Action Center) and send your letters to your legislators.

Major Richard Star Act. Col Bob Norman, President of the Southwest Chapter, provided an excellent update on the Major Richard Star Act in his chapter March newsletter. To summarize his points:

More than two-thirds of Congress supports the Major Richard Star Act (H.R. 1282/S. 344) – as of July 24, 327 of 435 House members and 70 of 100 senators had signed on as co-sponsors. MOAA and other military and veteran advocacy groups have turned attention to the Senate, where Sens. Jon Tester (D-Mont.) and Mike Crapo (R-Idaho) plan to introduce a floor amendment to that chamber's version of the FY 2024 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) including the text of the Star Act.

Currently, 16 of the 17 Illinois house members have signed on to support this bill. Also, both Illinois senators have co-sponsored this bill. With three quarters of the house and 70% of the senate support the bill, why has it not been sent to the floor for a vote? Possibly because the funding is not there???

### Section 2: Active MOAA Legislative Campaign

Currently, MOAA has 18 legislative issues listed in the Legislative Action Center that deserves congressional attention. Of these 18 issues, 10 are associated with companion bills in the House and Senate, three are stand-alone bills in the House, one stand-alone bill in the Senate, and four issues that are not associated with either a House or Senate bill. These bills from the Legislative Action Center are included along with other bills that MOAA has previously highlighted in Section 3: Key Bills in Congress section.

Below are the 18 issues listed in the Legislative Action Center, hoping to encourage you to "take action" by sending the pre-formatted letters to our two senators and your local congressional representative. MOAA has set a contact goal for each of the 18 issues. Along with the issue titles is the number of actions taken and the number of actions remaining to reach MOAA's contact goal for each individual issue. You can access the Legislative Action Center my logging on to the [MOAA.org/Legislative Action Center](https://MOAA.org/Legislative Action Center), by clicking on MOAA | Legislative Action Center ([quorum.us](https://quorum.us)), or clicking on the link for each issue below. You only need to fill in your personal information on the first "take action" issue. The remaining "take action" issues are automatically populated with your personal information. Also, please inform your chapter membership and encourage them to "take action" on all 18 issues.

1. Help MOAA Fight Cuts to the TRICARE Pharmacy Network (link) - No House or Senate bill

Actions taken: 14362; Needed to reach goal: 5638

# FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Page 5

2. Urge Your Legislators to Pay Full Housing Costs for Servicemembers (link) - S.1823/H.R. 2537

Actions taken: 7760; Needed to reach goal: 2240

3. Contact Your Legislators and Urge Them to Support the All-Volunteer Force (link) - No House or Senate bill

Actions taken: 7345; Needed to reach goal: 2655

4. Urge Your Elected Officials to Fix the TRICARE Young Adult Coverage Gap (link) – H.R. 1045

Actions taken: 3699; Needed to reach goal: 301

5. Share Your Story: Impact of TRICARE Pharmacy Network Changes (link) - No House or Senate bill

Actions taken: 495; Needed to reach goal: 5

6. Urge Your Legislators to Support Concurrent Receipt (link) – S.344/H.R. 1282

Actions taken: 17823; Needed to reach goal: 2177

7. Ask Your House Member to Support the Expanding America's National Cemetery Act (link) – H.R. 1414

Actions taken: 5639; Needed to reach goal: 4361

8. Tell Congress You Oppose TRICARE for Life Fees (link) - No House or Senate bill

Actions taken: 28922; Needed to reach goal: 1078

9. Urge Your Legislators to Support the Military Spouse Hiring Act (link) – S.596/H.R. 1277

Actions taken: 2377; Needed to reach goal: 623

10. Ask Your Member of Congress to Ensure the Coast Guard is Paid During a Government Shutdown (link) – H.R. 2693

Actions taken: 313; Needed to reach goal: 87

11. Support Health Care for Children of Disabled Veterans or Veterans Who Have Died Due to a Service-Connected Disability (link) – S.1119/H.R. 2414

Actions taken: 585; Needed to reach goal: 15

12. Ask Your Lawmakers to Support the Retain Skilled Veterans Act (link) – S.334/H.R. 939

Actions taken: 3246; Needed to reach goal: 754

13. Urge Your Legislators to Support the Advancing Toward Impact Aid Full Funding Act (link) – S.871/H.R.1591

Actions taken: 967; Needed to reach goal: 33

14. Lend Your Support for the MOAA-Backed Bill to Support Military Sexual Trauma Survivors (link) – S.1028/H.R. 2441

Actions taken: 1053; Needed to reach goal: 947

15. Ask Your Legislators to Support Services for Aging and Disabled Veterans (link) – Bills of Interest: S.495/S.141/H.R. 1815—Actions taken: 2372; Needed to reach goal: 628
16. Urge Your Legislators to Support Remarriage Legislation for Surviving Spouses (link) – S.1266—Actions taken: 292; Needed to reach goal: 8
17. Urge Your Legislators to Support the Respect for Grieving Military Families Act (link) – S.1588/H.R. 3232—Actions taken: 1647; Needed to reach goal: 353
18. Urge Congress to Expand TRICARE Coverage to Certain ‘Gray Area’ Retirees (link) – S.1670/H.R. 3668  
Actions taken: 1055; Needed to reach goal: 945

### Section 3: Key Bills in Congress

This last January marked the beginning of the 118th Congress. As a result, all the bills that did not pass in the 117th Congress must be re-introduced. Currently, only six bills in the House and five bills in the Senate have been identified as key bills by MOAA. We expect this list to increase in numbers as the House and Senate continues to introduce new and previous bills from the last Congress as we progress through the next two years.

**Federal** – HR 333: Disabled Veterans Tax Termination Act. Disabled Veterans Tax Termination Act. To amend title 10, United States Code, to permit retired members of the Armed Forces who have a service-connected disability rated less than 50 percent to receive concurrent payment of both retired pay and veterans’ disability compensation, to extend eligibility for concurrent receipt to chapter 61 disability retirees with less than 20 years of service, and for other purposes.

Introduced January 12, 2023—Original sponsor: Rep. Stanford Bishop (D-GA-2); 8 Co-Sponsors

Illinois Co-Sponsors: None—Latest Action: House - 02/08/2023 Referred to the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs.

**Federal** – HR 939: Retain Skilled Veterans Act. To modify the restrictions in Section 3326 of Title 5, United States Code, relating to the appointment of retired members of the Armed Forces to positions in the Department of Defense to apply to positions at or above the GS-14 level.

Introduced February 9, 2023—Original sponsor: Rep. Blake D. Moore (R-UT-1); 15 Co-Sponsor—Illinois Co-Sponsors: None—Latest Action: House – 02/09/2023 Referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Accountability.

**Federal** – HR 1045: Health Care Fairness for Military Families Act of 2023. TRICARE Young Adult Program. To amend title 10, United States Code, to improve dependent coverage under the TRICARE Young Adult Program—Introduced February 14, 2023—Original sponsor: Rep. Patrick Ryan (D-NY-18); 69 Co-Sponsors—Illinois Co-Sponsors: Rep. Mike Quigley (D-IL-5); Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL-8); Rep. Lauren Underwood (D-IL-14); Rep. Sean Casten (D-IL-6); Rep. Bill Foster (D-IL-11)—Latest Action: House - 02/14/2023 Referred to the House Committee on Armed Services.



# Military Officers Association of America

Issue #2023-03

**Federal** – HR 1139: GUARD VA Benefits Act. To amend title 38, United States Code, to reinstate penalties for persons charging veterans unauthorized fees relating to claims for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes—Introduced February 21, 2023—Original sponsor: Rep. Chris Pappas (D-NH-1); 115 Co-Sponsors—Illinois Co-Sponsors: Rep. Dill Foster (D-IL-11); Rep Robin Kelly (D-IL-2); Rep. Lauren Underwood (D-IL-14); Rep. Raja Krishnanoorthi (D-IL-8); Rep Sean Casten (D-IL-6); Rep. Nikki Budzinsky (D-IL-12)—Latest Action: House – 03/29/2023 Subcommittee hearings held.

**Federal** – HR 1277: Military Spouse Hiring Act. To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make employers of spouses of military personnel eligible for work opportunity credit—Introduced March 1, 2023—Original sponsor: Rep. Donald Beyer (D-VA-9); 100 Co-Sponsors—Illinois Co-Sponsors: Rep. Mike Bost (R-IL-12); Rep. Bill Foster (D-IL-11); Rep. Danny Davis (D-IL-7); Rep. Robin Kelly (D-IL-2)—Latest Action: House - 03/01/2023 Referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means.

**Federal** – HR 1282: Major Richard Star Act. To amend title 10, United States Code, to expand eligibility to certain military retirees for concurrent receipt of veterans' disability compensation and retired pay or combat-related special compensation, and for other purposes—Introduced March 1, 2023—Original sponsor: Rep. Gus Bilirakis (R-FL-12); 326 Co-Sponsors—Illinois Co-Sponsors: Rep. Darin LaHood (D-IL-16); Rep. Mike Quigley (D-IL-5); Rep. Jesus Garcia (D-IL-4); Rep. Janice Schakowsky (D-IL-9); Rep. Robin Kelly (D-IL-2); Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL-8); Rep. Bill Foster (D-IL-11); Rep. Sean Casten (D-IL-6); Rep. Lauren Underwood ((D-IL-14); Rep. Bradley Schneider (D-IL-10); Rep. Danny Davis (D-IL-7); Rep. Nikki Budzinski (D-IL-13); Rep. Eric Sorensen (D-IL-17); Rep. Mary Miller (R-IL-15); Rep. Delia Ramirez (D-IL-3); Rep. Jonathan Jackson (D-IL-1)—Latest Action: House – 7/18/2023 Placed on the Union Calendar, Calendar No. 117.

**Federal** – HR 1413: Expanding America's National Cemetery Act. To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to expand or otherwise modify an existing national cemetery to ensure that full military honors are provided at such cemetery, to require the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to jointly submit to Congress a report containing a proposal to increase national cemetery capacity and an assessment of the criteria for interment at Arlington National Cemetery, and for other purposes—Introduced March 7, 2023—Original sponsor: Rep. Lisa McClain (R-MI-9); 60 Co-Sponsors—Illinois Co-Sponsors: None—Latest Action: House - 03/30/2023 Referred to the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs.

**Federal** – HR 1591: Advancing Toward Impact Aid Full Funding Act. To amend section 7014 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to advance toward full Federal funding for impact aid, and for other purposes—Introduced March 14, 2023—Original sponsor: Rep. Mike Levin (D-CA-49); 20 Co-Sponsors—Illinois Co-Sponsors: Rep. Mike Bost (R-IL-12)—Latest Action: House - 03/14/2023 Referred to the House Committee on Education and the workforce.

**Federal** – HR 2414: CHAMPVA Children’s Care Protection Act of 2023. To amend title 38, United States Code, to increase the maximum age to age 26 for children eligible for medical care under the CHAMPVA program, and for other purposes-Introduced March 30, 2023

Original sponsor: Rep. Julia Browning (D-CA-26); 7 Co-Sponsors-Illinois Co-Sponsors: None-Latest Action: House - 04/14/2023 Referred to the Subcommittee on Health.

**Federal** – HR 2441: Servicemembers and Veterans Empowerment and Support Act of 2023. To amend title 38, United States Code, to expand health care and benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs for military sexual trauma, and for other purposes-Introduced March 30, 2023

Original sponsor: Rep. Chellie Pingree (D-ME-1); 3 Co-Sponsors-Illinois Co-Sponsors: None-Latest Action: House - 04/14/2023 Referred to the Subcommittee on Health.

**Federal** – HR 2537: BAH Restoration Act. To amend title 37, United States Code, to increase the basic allowance for housing inside the United States for members of the uniformed services.

Introduced April 6, 2023-Original sponsor: Rep. Marilyn Strickland (D-WA-10); 53 Co-Sponsors-Illinois Co-Sponsors: None-Latest Action: House

04/06/2023 Referred to the House Committee on Armed Services.-Read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs-Federal – HR 2693: Pay Our Coast Guard Parity Act of 2023. To amend title 14, United States Code, to make appropriations for Coast Guard pay in the event an appropriations Act expires before the enactment of a new appropriations Act, and for other purposes-Introduced April 18, 2023

Original sponsor: Rep. Hillary Scholten (D-MI -3); 20 Co-Sponsors-Illinois Co-Sponsors: None-Latest Action: House - 04/19/2023 Referred to the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation.

**Federal** – HR 3232: Respect for Grieving Military Families Act. To amend title 10, United States Code, to direct the forgiveness or offset of an overpayment of retired pay paid to a joint account for a period after the death of the retired member of the Armed Forces.

Introduced May 11, 2023.

Original sponsor: Rep. John Geramendi (D-CA-8); 13 Co-Sponsors

Illinois Co-Sponsors: None

Latest Action: House - 05/25/2023 Referred to the House Committee on Armed Services.

**Federal** – HR 3668: TRICARE Fairness for National Guard and Reserve Retirees Act. To amend title 10, United States Code, to improve the TRICARE program for certain members of the Retired Reserve of the reserve components.

Introduced May 25, 2023.

Original sponsor: Rep. Bill Johnson (R-OH-6); 1 Co-Sponsor(s)

Illinois Co-Sponsors: None

Latest Action: House - 05/11/2023 Referred to the House Committee on Armed Services.

**Federal** – S.334: Retain Skilled Veterans Act. To modify the restriction in section 3326 of title 5, United States Code, relating to the appointment of retired members of the Armed Forces to positions in the Department of Defense to apply to positions at or above the GS-14 level.

Introduced February 9, 2023

Original sponsor: Sen. James Langford (R-OK); 7 Co-Sponsors

Illinois Co-Sponsors: None

Latest Action: Senate - 02/09/2023 Read twice and referred to the Committee on Armed Services.



**Federal** – S.344: Major Richard Star Act. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to provide for concurrent receipt of veterans' disability compensation and retired pay for disability retirees with fewer than 20 years of service and a combat-related disability, and for other purposes.

Introduced February 9, 2023

Original sponsor: Sen. Jon Tester (D-MT); 69; Co-Sponsors

Illinois Co-Sponsors: Sen. Richard Durbin (D-IL), Sen. Tammy Duckworth (D-IL)

Latest Action: Senate - 02/09/2023 Read twice and referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

**Federal** – S.495: Expanding Veterans' Options for Long Term Care Act. A bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program to provide assisted living services for eligible veterans, and for other purposes.

Introduced February 16, 2023

Original sponsor: Sen. Jon Tester (D-MT); 5 Co-Sponsors

Illinois Co-Sponsors: None

Latest Action: Senate – 07/12/2023 Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Hearings held.

**Federal** – S.497: Military Family Nutrition Access Act of 2023. A bill to amend the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 to exclude a basic allowance for housing from income for purposes of eligibility for the supplemental nutrition assistance program.

Introduced February 16, 2023

Original sponsor: Sen. Tammy Duckworth (D-IL); 17 Co-Sponsors

Illinois Co-Sponsors: Sen. Richard Durbin (D-IL)

Latest Action: Senate - 02/16/2023 Read twice and referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

**Federal** – S.596: Military Spouse Hiring Act. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make employers of spouses of military personnel eligible for work opportunity credit.

Introduced March 1, 2023

Original sponsor: Sen. Tim Kaine (D-VA); 38 Co-Sponsors

Illinois Co-Sponsors: Sen. Tammy Duckworth (D-IL)

Latest Action: 03/ 01/2023 Read twice and referred to the Committee on Finance. (Sponsor introductory remarks on measure: CR S570)

**Federal** – S.871: Advancing Toward Impact Aid Full Funding Act. To amend section 7014 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to advance toward full Federal funding for impact aid, and for other purposes.

Introduced March 16, 2023

Original sponsor: Sen. Ben Ray Lujan ((D-NM); 7 Co-Sponsors

Illinois Co-Sponsors: Sen. Richard Durbin (D-IL)

Latest Action: House - 03/16/2023 Read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

**Federal** – S.1028: Servicemembers and Veterans Empowerment and Support Act of 2023. To amend title 38, United States Code, to expand health care and benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs for military sexual trauma, and for other purposes.

Introduced March 29, 2023

Original sponsor: Sen. Jon Tester; 1 Co-Sponsors

Illinois Co-Sponsors: None

Latest Action: House – 03/29/2023 Read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

**Federal** – S.1119: CHAMPVA Children’s Care Protection Act of 2023. To amend title 38, United States Code, to increase the maximum age to age 26 for children eligible for medical care under the CHAMPVA program, and for other purposes.

Introduced March 30, 2023

Original sponsor: Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH); 7 Co-Sponsors

Illinois Co-Sponsors: Sen. Richard Durbin (D-IL), Sen. Tammy Duckworth (D-IL)

Latest Action: House - 03/30/2023 Read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

**Federal** – S.1588: Respect for Grieving Military Families Act. To amend title 10, United States Code, to direct the forgiveness or offset of an overpayment of retired pay paid to a joint account for a period after the death of the retired member of the Armed Forces.

Introduced May 18, 2023.

Original sponsor: Sen. J.D. Vance (R-OH); 1 Co-Sponsors

Illinois Co-Sponsors: None

Latest Action: Senate - 05/18/2023 Read twice and referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

**Federal** – S.1670: TRICARE Fairness for National Guard and Reserve Retirees Act. To amend title 10, United States Code, to improve the TRICARE program for certain members of the Retired Reserve of the reserve components.

Introduced May 11, 2023.

Original sponsor: Sen. John Cornyn (R-TX); 2 Co-Sponsors

Illinois Co-Sponsors: None

Latest Action: Senate - 05/11/2023 Read twice and referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

**Federal** – S.1823: BAH Restoration Act. To amend title 37, United States Code, to increase the basic allowance for housing inside the United States for members of the uniformed services.

Introduced June 6, 2023

Original sponsor: Sen. Raphael Warnock (D-GA); 1 Co-Sponsor(s)

Illinois Co-Sponsors: None

Latest Action: Senate - 06/06/2023 Read twice and referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

## Chaplain's Column

In the Book of Numbers 1: 2- 3, we read: “ The Lord spoke to Moses saying: Take a census of the whole congregation of Israelites in their clans, by ancestral houses, according to the number of names, every male individually, from 20 years old and upward, everyone in Israel able to go to war: You and Aaron shall enroll them, company by company”.

We find in this text the Lord speaking directly to someone, a phenomenon which God does not choose to do today, preferring to speak to us through His Word. Where He has not specifically spoken about something, He leaves the matter to our good judgment, accepting what we offer to Him.

Israel was surrounded by enemies not only of God Himself but also His Divine Word. Just because they were God's people didn't mean they were exempt from challenge to them as Divinely chosen. Today is no different. God's people need the protection of good government to survive and thus, during WW 2, it was necessary for Christian people to leave China until such time as the Japanese war machine was thoroughly defeated so that God's people could return and worship and serve their God. `

To meet the challenge, this time coming from the Canaanites, God ordered a census, starting from the nation as a whole down to individual families to measure its fighting strength, excluding women, the lame, the blind the deaf and others who suffered from some sort of mental defect.

In any census for mobilization today, similar measures are taken to insure combat readiness. We find out who is eligible to be drafted or taken by enlistment. There are physicals and questions about powers of attorney, religious preferences, academic training, job skills, numbers of children, housing arrangements, who is to be notified in case of injury or death and knowledge of reemployment rights and retirement benefits - all designed to get to know the soldier, sailor marine, airman. Coast guardsmen or space-force members as best as possible so as to successfully defeat the enemy.

In much less dramatic ways, our MOAA Illinois faces the enemy of extinction. When I joined MOAA Illinois by invitation from Col John Raaschke and LTC David Miller some 15 years ago, it was not unusual to go to meetings with upwards of 50 or more attending with excellent speakers and dinners. We have far less chapters now and attendance although good meetings still take place. It is possible that MOAA Illinois has run its course and it may be time to fold the flag and take our interests in helping veterans and dependents elsewhere. There would be no shame in that. I have been a member of congregations, military and civilian organizations which have either been absorbed by something else or disappeared altogether. That is part of life.

What helps hold us together is commonality. Sociology teaches that people tend to join groups where they have much in common with the membership. They, of course, accept the basic principles of the church, for example, but what really clinches it for them are other factors, such as the members living near each other, their kids going to the same schools, working in similar jobs, etc.

We, in MOAA, accept its basic principles but what appears to be missing is how well we know each other. It's been suggested - and it's a good one - that we have some sort of State - wide gathering, centrally located with some recreation and a dinner dance to follow. There are problems to be sure but the point here is that we start somewhere and thereby get to know one another better and thus, to a measure, increase our membership. So I suggest that we informally “ census “. I will be glad to help.

In Your Service,

Ch Ralph Woehrmann

Council Chaplain

## Survivor Outreach Services Coordinator

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to introduce myself.

My name is Michelle Rutherford. I am the newly appointed Illinois Survivor Outreach Coordinator in Springfield.

Retiring after 32 years in the Army and government employee, I am fortunate enough to continue in a position that will continue to serve assisting the Survivors and Families of those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

I am aware my Predecessor worked closely with the Lincoln Land Chapter MOAA assisting in initiatives.

I look forward to learning about those initiatives and setting goals as a team.

My government email is not established. However, I can be reached by email at:  
[michellerutherfordsos@gmail.com](mailto:michellerutherfordsos@gmail.com).

If I can assist with anything, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Best to all,

Michelle



## PROVIDING CRISIS RELIEF TO OUR NATION'S HEROES

Together, we can offer support and stability to the uniformed services and veteran communities during a crisis.



### OUR GOAL

Our goal is to raise \$1 million to endow The MOAA Foundation's Crisis Relief Fund and continue our great work.



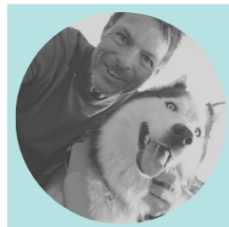
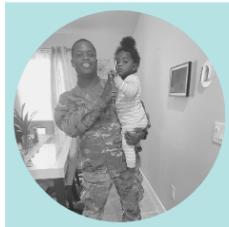
### WHY CRISIS RELIEF?

More than 12 million veterans without a VA disability rating have virtually no support when disaster strikes.



### CAN YOU HELP?

Our hope is your generous contribution will help us reach our goal to fund this program in perpetuity.



## READY TO ASSIST

In April 2020, The MOAA Foundation launched an emergency COVID-19 Relief Fund to support uniformed services families impacted by the pandemic.

**As the pandemic has ebbed, we know crisis-related needs of uniformed services families and veterans still exist.**

To answer the call for help, we established The MOAA Foundation Crisis Relief Fund — an enduring emergency relief fund to assist uniformed services personnel, veterans, and their families (including caregivers and survivors) in the midst of crisis.

## WHAT SETS US APART



Our streamlined application takes less than 20 minutes to complete, saving applicants the time they need to address other urgent priorities.



Funds reach an approved applicant's bank account within days of approval — timely relief when it can have the most impact.



Financial grants are awarded to qualifying applicants to help with housing costs, utilities, medical and insurance bills, groceries, and more.



100% of our Crisis Relief applicants would recommend our program to others in need.



(800) 234-6622



moaa\_foundation@moaa.org



charities.moaa.org/crisisrelief



## Reasons to Join a MOAA Chapter

### **You know the value of belonging to MOAA and your chapter!**

But when you're talking to a potential new chapter member, it's important to remember that many officers might have only limited knowledge of MOAA's chapter system.

Creating a dialogue and asking open-ended questions is the best way to find out if and how a chapter membership could help a prospective member.

Find out as much as you can about their priorities in order to tailor a response that is more likely to resonate with them personally.

Here are some aspects of membership that may appeal to them:

1. **Make yourself heard.** MOAA's chapters provide critical grassroots support for MOAA's national legislative agenda. Chapter members let their legislators know what's on their minds and open doors for MOAA's legislative team in Washington, D.C.
2. **Give back to the community.** Chapter members are MOAA's ambassadors in their communities, supporting countless programs that make a difference in the lives of others. These members continue to serve and are giving back in the truest sense.
3. **Value added to chapter members' lives.** MOAA chapters sponsor interesting programs and opportunities to interact with civic, political, military, and business leaders on issues important to members.
4. **Networking with fellow officers.** Chapters include second-career members in the work force and retired service members who have contacts in their communities that can be valuable to transitioning officers.
5. **Stay informed.** Chapter newsletters, websites, and meetings provide you with the latest information on local, state, and national issues and changes to military benefits.
6. **Influencing state legislation.** Most states have a council of chapters that unites chapters in the state. These councils, and independent chapters in states without a council, often lobby for and pass state-level legislation that affects military members and their families, such as exempting military retired pay from state income tax or increasing funding for state veterans' programs.
7. **Camaraderie with a purpose.** MOAA chapters unite active duty, former, and retired officers from every branch of service, including National Guard and Reserve, as well as surviving spouses, offering the opportunity to connect with others with similar backgrounds and interest and develop close and lasting friendships.

## Council of Chapters

### New Website

The Council has a new website. Address is <http://www.ilcouncilmoaa.org>

If you have any items or input for the website, contact MAJ (USAF, Ret) Dave Knieriem at the following email address: [dknieriem@casscomm.com](mailto:dknieriem@casscomm.com)

**MOAA is the nation's largest and most influential association of military officers. It is an independent, nonprofit, politically nonpartisan organization.**

**While MOAA is permitted by law to lobby—and does so actively—its status as a tax-exempt veterans organization precludes it from participating in political activities, which are defined as intervening directly or indirectly in any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office.**

**Stated briefly: the association may advocate issues, but it may not advocate the election or defeat of particular candidates or political parties. This newsletter follows the policies of MOAA National.**



**Never Stop Serving!!!**

## **MOAA Store and ROTC/Junior ROTC Items**

The MOAA store has re-opened at <https://moaa.estore.shop/>. In addition to promotional gear, you can find ROTC and Junior ROTC (JROTC) award certificates (in stock now) and medals (place orders now for backorders to be shipped when medals are in stock, expected by the end of April). Electronic certificates may be customized and downloaded [online](#) at any time. Note that medals have been updated to reflect all eight uniformed services, and JROTC certificates have been updated with language more appropriate to high school students rather than ROTC students.

The cost of medals to affiliates will remain at \$3.00 per medal due to a MOAA subsidy. Additionally, the store recently added the USPS live rate to shipping options, providing a lower-cost alternative.

**Never Stop Serv-  
ing!!!**

### MOAA Legislative Action Center

You can help MOAA by visiting their legislative action center and contacting your elected officials regarding pending legislation MOAA is working. You can reach the Legislative Action Center at the following email address: [take.action.moaa.org](mailto:take.action.moaa.org)

## ILLINOIS COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS OFFICERS

### President

Col Bob Tyler, USMC (Ret)  
324 Greenway Lane  
Decatur, IL 62521-2529

### 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President

COL Darrell Roll, USA (Ret)  
826 Poplar Drive  
Petersburg, IL 62675-9578

### Treasurer

Col Robert Norman, USAF (Ret)  
1021 Woodleaf Drive  
O'Fallon, IL 62269-3149

### Secretary

Lt Col Jim Forman, USAF (Ret)  
1807 Emerson Drive  
Champaign, IL 61821-5702

### Membership

LT Chet Klodnicki, USN (Ret)  
14 Cottage Green  
Ottawa, IL 61350-9044

### Immediate Past President/Dir of Legislation

Col Richard V. Smith, USAF (Ret)  
1065 Edgewood Drive  
O'Fallon, IL 62269-2860

### Chaplain

MAJ (Ch) Ralph [Woehrmann](#), USA (Ret)  
2115 East Lake Shore Drive  
Taylorville, IL 62568-8932

### Director of Communications

LTC Dave Miller, USA (Ret)  
61 Laconwood Drive  
Springfield, IL 62712-8727

### Special Advisor to the Council

LTC John DeReu, USA (Ret)  
406 Juniper Parkway  
Libertyville, IL 60048-3529

### Webmaster

Maj Dave Knieriem, USAF (Ret)  
633 W Elm St; PO Box 95  
Mason City, IL 62664-0095

The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) established the **MOAA Scholarship Fund** in 1948 to provide educational assistance benefits to children of military families. It supports one of the association's founding principles: ***education is the cornerstone of a strong democracy***. It is funded by donations from MOAA members, Councils and Chapters, corporations, and others with a desire to help military families. For additional details, go to the MOAA website at **MOAA.org**

Never Stop Serving



The Greatest Casualty is  
Being Forgotten!

Now and Always  
We'll be There.



90228

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