

April 2025

Website: <http://lincolnlandmoaa.org>
Facebook.com/
MOAALincolnland/

Upcoming Events

- April 11, 2025—
Northfield Center
- June 13, 2025—
Beach House, Decatur
- August 8, 2025—
Island Bay Yacht Club
- October 10, 2025-
Northfield Center
- December 12, 2025-
Northfield Center
- Golf Outing 2025-
October 11, 2025-
Shamblee Golf Course, Lake Petersburg

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THE SALUTE—Never Stop Serving...



Next Meeting Information

Lincoln Land Chapter Dinner Meeting, April 11, 2025

Date: Friday, April 11, 2025

Location: Northfield Center

3280 Northfield Dr, Springfield, IL 62702

Onyx Room

Time: Social Hour at 6:00PM, Dinner at 7:00PM

COST: \$36.00 Per Person

PROGRAM: *Patrick Harper, US Public Health Service*

Menu: Plated Dinner - Entree Choices:

Salmon w/ Creamy Dill Sauce

Chicken Breast w/ Basil Cream Sauce

Both Entrees Include:

Tossed Salad, Rolls and Butter, Mashed Whipped Potatoes with Gravy, California Vegetable Mix Honey Glazed, Mixed Pie Selections, Coffee, Water, and Iced Tea

IMPORTANT * ENSURE YOUR RESERVATION IS MADE NOT LATER THAN 5PM on April 8th**

[MAKE RESERVATIONS ONLINE \(Preferred Method\)](#)

or by Contacting by Phone/Text/Email:

Dave Knieriem 217-899-5526 (dknieriem@casscomm.com)

Please let us know how many will attend and your entree choice(s)

President's Corner
April 2025

Greetings to members of Lincoln Land Chapter MOAA.

We are moving into Springtime ... Much warmer for ALL of us!

As for items for MOAA:

MOAA's Legislative Action Center:

2025 is a new year, and we have a new administration, and a new congress. Clearly there is much speculation about what these changes will mean for America's veterans.

Within the newsletter, I have asked we include a letter from MOAA National and have provided a copy of the statement MOAA national has released through our communications channels regarding the recent actions of the new administration and its potential impact on the military and veteran community.

NOTE: MOAA's position has not changed -- in this uncertain time, MOAA is focused on our core mission to preserve and protect the benefits earned of our uniformed services community, including those who are currently serving, veterans, retirees, families, and surviving spouses

Please review the current issues of the Military Officer Magazine to keep up to date and review details of MOAA's legislative priorities for 2025. Among the listed issues are military housing, toxic exposure, spouse employment, and health care. With a new Congress working on new legislation, all previous legislation will need to be reintroduced.

I ask that you all help MOAA and our cause by visiting their legislative action center and contacting your elected officials regarding pending legislation MOAA is working.

PLEASE!!! - GET INVOLVED WITH OUR MISSION AND OUR FUTURE!

You can reach the Legislative Action Center at the following web address:

<https://moaa.quorum.us/>

And ... Be sure to read the Legislative Update both here in the newsletter and on our website. I would like to extend a BIG "Thank You" to Colonel Bob Tyler and his outstanding efforts and work as our Legislative Liaison for our Chapter.

Finally, if you are not signed up for MOAA's Weekly Newsletter ... Please do so and keep up to date and informed with MOAA's positions and view on issues.

Upcoming Meetings:

April 11, 2025 – Northfield Inn – Springfield, IL: Program: CMDR Patrick Harper, USPHS

June 13, 2025 – Beach House – Decatur, IL: Program: Military Chaplains' Program

August 8, 2025 – Island Bay Yacht Club, Springfield, IL: Program: Lincoln Land Chapter Scholarship Presentation

MOAA National and Chapter Membership Concerns:

There are still a few snags in the new MOAA National database access. However, we are REMARKABLY close to accessing this information and grow our chapter. We will be contacting National MOAA members who are not a member of a chapter, with alternative options for becoming a Chapter member. This will enable us to extend the opportunity to join our chapter and stress the many benefits of chapter membership whether it be directly with our chapter, or as a Satellite or other affiliate. I will keep you up to date via email blasts and on our Chapter website as this develops for us.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

In the next few weeks, I will be sending another “Survey Monkey” survey to all of you to capture some thoughts from all of you considering our meeting and our future efforts. PLEASE respond to the survey to help give us direction for now and the future. I welcome your candid responses. It is YOUR Chapter!

Additionally, We need your help to make Lincoln Land Chapter and MOAA National even better organizations. Here is how you can help **right now**:

Recruit new members – you are ALL recruiters.

I implore you to attend as many of our meetings as possible and invite guests to attend.

Support our fund-raising efforts within the Chapter to support ALL our projects.

Please browse the Chapter Website and our Facebook presence and read our Chapter

Newsletter to keep informed concerning events and issues of the Chapter and MOAA:

Website: <https://lincolnlandmoaa.org>

Newsletter – Available on the website and emailed to you.

Chapter Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/MOAAincolnland>

ALSO ... “NEVER STOP SERVING”!!

Thank you for your confidence in me and our Executive Committee, and your continued support. See you all soon! Call me ANYTIME if you have questions or concerns. My door is ALWAYS open.

Dave Knieriem, Major, USAF (Ret)
Lincoln Land MOAA Chapter President

Council and Chapter Presidents:

Good morning. In the spirit of keeping you informed of major events impacting our association, I'm writing at General Kelly's request to provide a copy of the statement MOAA national has released through our communications channels regarding the recent actions of the new administration and its potential impact on the military and veteran community.

MOAA's position has not changed -- in this uncertain time, MOAA is focused on our core mission to preserve and protect the earned benefits of our uniformed services community, including those who are currently serving, veterans, retirees, families, and surviving spouses.

It is extremely important for MOAA to stay focused on our mission as directed in our congressional charter as a nonpartisan, nonprofit association.

Our mission is our compass and North Star to ensure we are not distracted or drawn into unrelated social or political issues. I want to reassure you our headquarters team is vigilantly monitoring current events, and if we identify an impact or actual threat MOAA will act to preserve and protect our earned benefits.

Our complete statement follows. Please reach out if you have questions and thanks for your leadership and support, Jim

Statement on Federal Budget and Workforce Reductions **March 2025**

The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) has always advocated for a strong national defense, with a particular focus on the people whose service and sacrifices make it possible. Maintaining this strength requires both sufficient funding and a capable workforce.

However, the nation's growing debt and fiscal challenges pose a significant risk to future prosperity and place increasing pressure on our ability to sustain a robust force.

Given this reality, ongoing budget scrutiny to find efficiencies and savings is not only appropriate but necessary. However, early results from these exercises and actions have highlighted the need for thoughtful implementation and greater caution as budget reviews continue.

There have been opportunities to reconsider and reverse rapid decisions when their negative consequences became evident; a prime example came in the protection of military spouses with existing remote-work arrangements from a return-to-work directive that would've significantly harmed military families.

We must balance fiscal responsibility with maintaining a strong and prepared all-volunteer force, ensuring

the nation upholds its promises to those Americans and their families who commit themselves to uniformed service and sacrifice for their country.

Those who serve and have served in uniform make extraordinary commitments and sacrifices — not only for our national defense, but for the very ideals that define America: freedom, security, and prosperity. Military members uphold the foundation of economic prosperity and freedoms all Americans enjoy — foundations built by veterans.

These servicemembers swear an oath to protect and defend the Constitution, many putting their lives on the line, to make this happen. They don't join to get rich or receive accolades, they join to defend and protect liberties often taken for granted.

In return, they expect the nation to honor its commitments and uphold promises made to care for them and their families both during and after their service. Fulfilling these promises is essential to ensuring those who wear the uniform — and their families — continue to encourage future generations to serve.

Despite statements to the contrary, some of the cuts made to the federal workforce and budget have negative consequences for the uniform services community, veterans, and families. Veterans, who make up approximately 30% of the federal workforce, are being dismissed.

The speed of current actions is preventing recognition of the previous commitments made by the nation through veterans' hiring preferences. Similarly, military spouses who are granted a federal hiring preference are also being let go. For military spouses, the impact extends beyond household income—their job loss directly impacts the readiness and retention of their uniformed partners. Military families increasingly rely on dual incomes, and the loss of that second income stream plays a significant role in the decision to remain in service.

These preferences were not established as handouts, but as a strategic investment recognizing the vital role of these workers in supporting recruiting, retention, and overall warfighting readiness.

Unfortunately, in the rush to make reductions, broad assumptions have emerged that veterans and spouses are simply being handed employment. In reality, their unique skillsets, experience, and dedication are highly valued and difficult to replace.

Many of these individuals sought federal jobs so they could continue to serve the country and, in some cases, keep their military family together, when they could have commanded higher salaries in the private sector. As demonstrated in previous reversals and during DOGE updates that have highlighted a need to clean up the inevitable mistakes, some of these actions should be reversed quickly to eliminate inadvertent impacts on national defense.

The pace of current actions underscores the need to apply lessons learned and proceed with greater caution as budget reduction efforts, such as those announced for DoD, take place. As in previous budget-cutting exercises, it is not unusual for operations and maintenance and military personnel accounts to receive the most scrutiny. These tend to be the easiest areas to generate quick savings, free from the political or contractual concerns associated with other parts of the budget.

Once again, the right statements about supporting the uniformed service members and families who bear the burden are being made. But history tells us budget discussions often lead to reductions in "people programs" — housing allowances, healthcare benefits, cost-of-living adjustments, compensation, and manpower reductions themselves. These cuts may appear to offer immediate savings, but they have often proven more expensive thanks to unintended long-term costs:

- **Retention and Recruitment Risks:** Reductions in benefits make military service less attractive, weakening our ability to maintain a skilled and ready force.
- **Readiness Degradation:** Morale and stability among servicemembers decline when financial security is undermined.
- **Historical Lessons Ignored:** Past budget reductions, such as those seen during the 2014-2016 sequestration period and after Operation Desert Storm, led to force management challenges and cost more to correct. The costs to hastily reverse force reductions made without connections to actual defense strategies were significant. Even more costly was the extensive loss of experience, as new recruits replaced experienced members (who were in many cases paid to depart).

If increasing focus on warfighting and meritocracy is a target, then addressing harder but more lucrative places to generate savings should be in the plan. Though more difficult given the amount of associated political considerations, there are opportunities to generate savings through responsible defense budget reform:

1. **Efficient Program Management:** Allowing defense leaders to shutter outdated programs, weapon systems, and infrastructure through a BRAC would free up significant funds.
2. **Acquisition Reform:** Addressing inefficiencies in the procurement process would reduce costs.
3. **Long-Term Fiscal Planning:** Instead of making hasty cuts to meet short-term budget targets, policymakers should focus on sustainable financial strategies that prevent costly course corrections.

The men and women in uniform understand their duty to serve and protect this nation. It is the nation's duty to ensure their sacrifices are honored — not just with words, but with policies that reflect the value of their service. Budget constraints must be addressed — even within DoD and the VA, but cuts should not come at the expense of those who have given so much. By working together — lawmakers, advocacy groups, and the American public — we must find fiscally responsible solutions that uphold our commitment to those who serve.

MOAA stands ready to work in a bipartisan way to ensure that we, as a nation, fulfill the promises made to those who serve and have served — along with their families. Now is not the time to erode our servicemembers' earned benefits. Rather, it's time to find solutions.

Jim Carman, CAE
Captain, U.S. Navy (Retired)
Vice President Council/Chapter and Member Support
Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)

Legislative Liaison Update

OK, as we've noted earlier, it is a new administration and a new Congress. There's been a flurry of activity around agencies and funding. MOAA National has reminded us of our apolitical nature in that we are concerned for the earned benefits of America's service members regardless of the current administration. Our focus is on the Veteran and their earned benefits.

That said, maintaining vigilance as our elected officials deal with resource allocation and agency viability is important so that we can assist decision makers in the need to not forget the promises made to those who have served. So once again, I encourage each of you to sign up and read the MOAA e-newsletters and to use the MOAA advocacy links to let our legislators know that we have *"Never Stop(ped) Serving!"* and neither should they.

At the state level, there is one Bill that is very important to our "token" US Public Health member. That Bill is SB 0089 that changes state language describing service members to include USPHS and NOAA members by including them as "uniformed members" instead of "military members." Please consider following this legislation as it moves through the legislature and to submit witness slips supporting its passage when appropriate.

Finally, I will be just returning from DC and MOAA's annual Advocacy in Action event when we next meet. MOAA has made some changes to how the AinA event will go this year.

Hopefully, I will have some current insights to share at our 11 April meeting. It's an active time in Springfield and in Washington, and not many of those making decisions are veterans. So, we need to help them understand that their actions impact everything from recruitment, retention, and even retirement for those who have raised their hand and said "I will"!

Let us *"Never Stop Serving"* as we remind our elected officials of their duty to America's veterans.

Semper Fi – Bob Tyler



Tips for Meeting With Your Legislators

Start preparing now for upcoming August congressional recess meetings with your elected officials.

Every year, lawmakers return to their home states and districts for a monthlong recess. This year, they are scheduled to be back home from Aug. 5 to Sept. 6.

Council and chapter leaders are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity to meet with their elected officials to help further MOAA's legislative objectives.

Your voice is essential because legislators want to hear from you, their constituents. Schedule a visit and meet face-to-face. Some elected legislators might even welcome an opportunity to address an entire chapter.

Preparation is key to a successful meeting. Here are some tips:

1. Familiarize yourself with MOAA's positions on significant issues that might arise. Visit [MOAA's Legislative Action Center](#) to find details about legislative campaigns, contact information for elected officials, pre-formatted letters to lawmakers, and much more. If this is your first time visiting the action center, you might see a prompt to fill out a sign-up form. You will need to complete this step before you can send messages to Congress.
2. Make sure a legislator understands the purpose of a visit before a meeting. Every lawmaker deals with a wide variety of legislative issues and cannot be expected to be an expert on every one of them.
3. Become acquainted with the legislator's local office staff, especially those with responsibility in areas of interest to MOAA members. Don't consider it a put-down if you don't get to visit a legislator in person. They are busy and rely on staff for advice.

If a meeting with a legislator involves a chapter visit, reserve time for a question-and-answer period. Provide a legislator with advance notice of the kinds of questions or issues he or she should be prepared to address during a visit. Key questions should be prepared in advance and given to designated chapter members to ensure the session is productive.

From Your Chaplain

Kindest Greetings to all as we anticipate some rough weather on the evening of Friday 14 March.

The local channels anticipate winds as high as 80 miles per hour with some hail and heavy rains between the hours of 8:00 PM and 3:00 AM Saturday morning. Forecasts for the St Louis area, as reported by Channel 5, St Louis, are much more severe. We may be comforted somewhat that the National Weather Service has overestimated the severity of the storms at times, their record of accuracy being much smaller than the Farmers' Almanac, and, in fact nothing may have happened at all

We pray of course for everyone's welfare, especially for those in mobile homes and for those who live in the Southern portions of the United States, who this year have experienced a lot of severe weather.

Severe weather at any time of the year is the result of sin. God's Creation, initially perfect, was damaged by the sin of Adam such that the Apostle Paul writes in his letter to the Romans, that the whole creation groans, waiting for deliverance.

This will happen when The Son Of Man returns in all His Glory. Then there shall be the new heavens and new earth. No more sorrow in any form, including bad weather.

In the meantime, we have the assurance that though the weather changes, God does not. He is eternal and does not change including His promise to protect us. A few such scripture we now look at Joshua 20: 1, "The name of the Lord God protects you", Ps 41:2 "The Lord protects them and keeps them alive," John 17:11 "Father protect them in your name", and one of my favorites, Psalm 46: 1 and 2 "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble, Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be removed and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea".

With such assurance, even though we may lose property and perhaps even our very lives, they who call upon the Name of the Lord, will find themselves in the Lord's presence forever.

In Your Service

Ralph Woehrmann

Ch Major USA RET

Illinois Council of Chapter President's, Chaplain



From The Survivor Outreach Services Coordinator



Survivor Outreach Services

Happy New Year

Many choose new goals for the beginning of the Year.

Organization is a great place to start. DFAS, BENEFEDS, MILCONNECT and the VA are all great online resources and a great place to start.

As a reminder the Survivor Benefit Plan

Marital Status Update form (Formally Certification of Eligibility) is due annually

on the Annuitants' birthday. If you have questions, contact Michelle Rutherford at

michelle.r.rutherford3.ctr@army.mil or 217-720-9574.





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.



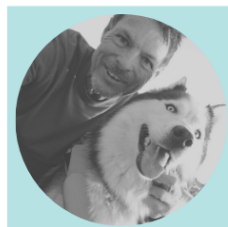
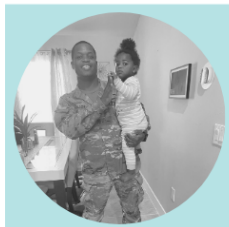
WHY CRISIS RELIEF?

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

Never Stop Serving

Lincoln Land Chapter MOAA

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http://
lincolnlandmoaa.org



Our Purpose—Serving the entire Military Community locally & nationally

Our Motivation—Supporting our most reliable asset—the US military member

Our Means—Informing legislators, supporting local events & organizations

Our Membership—Commissioned Officers of the Eight Uniformed Services (USA, USMC, USN, USAF, US Space Force, USCG, NOAA, USPHS) who strongly believe in supporting a volunteer force for the safety and security of our country

MISSION OF THE LINCOLN LAND CHAPTER

The Lincoln Land Chapter's mission is:

To foster fraternal relations among the retired, active and former uniformed services and their National Guard or Reserve components;

To protect the rights and interest of same to include dependents and survivors;

To further promote useful services for members of the former and current members of the Armed Forces and their dependents and survivors;

and to serve the community to the fullest extent possible.

Our Chapter has a Facebook page presence on the web:

<https://www.facebook.com/MOAAlincolnland> Check it out—Also, it may be accessed through our website by clicking the “F” logo near the top of the home page.

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.

Now and Always
We'll be There.



90228

1-800-247-2192 • www.moaainsurance.com



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:takeaction.moaa.org)

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.

All about MOAA

The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) is the country's leading organization protecting the rights of military service members and their families. Those who belong to MOAA not only lend their voices to a greater cause, but they also gain access to extensive benefits tailored to the needs and lifestyles of military officers. MOAA members proudly hail from every branch of the uniformed services. To them, we have made the same promise that they have made to their country: Never Stop Serving. MOAA's greatest mission is to improve the lives of those who serve and their families, which is achieved largely through the tireless advocacy efforts taking place in our nation's capital. MOAA's experts in Washington are there to support legislation that benefits the military community and are equally vigilant when fighting to stop legislation that threatens our livelihood. The larger our numbers, the greater our voice. Membership is open to active duty, former, retired, and National Guard and Reserve commissioned and warrant officers of the uniformed services and their surviving spouses. MOAA is the nation's largest and most influential association of military officers. It is an independent, nonprofit, politically nonpartisan organization. With more than 350,000 members from every branch of service - including active duty, National Guard, Reserve, retired, former officers, and their families - we are a powerful force speaking for a strong national defense and representing the interests of military officers at every stage of their careers. MOAA's highest priority is providing first-class service to our members. We are the leading voice on compensation and benefit matters for all members of the military community. We provide expert advice and guidance to our members. While the association does advocate a strong national defense, it does not, as an association, become involved in matters pertaining to military strategy or individual weapons systems of the various services. The association's board of directors has long believed that such decisions can be made only by those who have all of the facts available to them: today's actively serving military leadership. The association plays an active role in military personnel matters and especially proposed legislation affecting the career force, the retired community, and veterans of the uniformed services. MOAA's overarching goals are captured in its resolutions, which reflect the views of the entire membership. The membership provides input and votes on resolutions every two years (on even years). 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.

MOAA's Key Goals for the 119th Congress

As the legislative slate resets for the 119th Congress, MOAA member engagement will become even more vital to achieving our advocacy objectives. Your advocacy ensures that MOAA and the broader community of military and veteran service organizations (MSOs/VSOs) maintain momentum for existing priorities such as the Major Richard Star Act, [which would benefit tens of thousands of combat-injured veterans](#). We also need your help to build support for new objectives and emerging issues, often via immediate action, to respond to the sporadic nature of the legislative process.

First step: Register as an advocate in [our Legislative Action Center](#). If you're already registered, send the link to a family member or friend. Remember, the Legislative Action Center is open to all who support the uniformed services community. While our advocacy team remains active on many issues not listed here, our priorities are shaped throughout the year depending on policy developments or emerging issues that necessitate an all-hands approach. Additionally, we share many interests with [The Military Coalition](#) and other stakeholders. MOAA leverages those relationships to expand our reach on Capitol Hill.

These are among MOAA's priorities for this year:

Currently Serving

Military housing: Recent reporting from the Government Accountability Office (GAO) reveals the myriad challenges servicemembers in unaccompanied housing are facing. The health, safety, and privacy concerns outlined by GAO show the need for action. MOAA seeks to improve funding and condition transparency for unaccompanied housing by requiring an annual, publicly available report, which will highlight areas that require the most attention from both DoD and Congress.

Retirees/Veterans

Toxic exposure: MOAA will focus on capitalizing on our recently released report, [Ending the Wait for Toxic-Exposed Veterans](#), to advocate for veterans exposed to toxic materials during their service. While the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act has made major improvements to how toxic exposures are treated by the VA, additional measures are required. In cooperation with other VSOs, MOAA will advocate for Congress to pass legislation that shortens the time veterans must wait before their toxic exposures are acknowledged and conceded by the VA.

Family/Survivors

Spouse employment: Rates of unemployment for military spouses continue to be four to five times higher than the national average. This persistent challenge requires not only providing education and employment resources for spouses, but also incentivizing businesses to hire someone who will likely move in two to three years. The Work Opportunity Tax Credit program was established to support populations who face significant barriers to employment, and adding a military spouse target group is long overdue. Passing the Military Spouse Hiring Act will provide another important lever needed to address the critical issue of spouse unemployment.

DoD Health Care

Access to care: DoD has acknowledged that congressionally directed reforms to the Military Health System (MHS), together with U.S. medical workforce volatility, exacerbated long-standing access challenges and led to a destabilized MHS that does not consistently deliver timely care to beneficiaries. Current patient resources for reporting access problems and getting assistance navigating the MHS are inadequate. Also, it is unclear if there are mechanisms for reporting up to the Defense Health Agency so systemic access challenges can be identified and addressed. MOAA seeks a digital MHS assistance platform allowing beneficiaries to report access-to-care challenges and receive help navigating the MHS, including reporting requirements to increase visibility on barriers to access so fixable issues can be addressed.

VA Health Care

Support for caregivers: MOAA has long advocated for legislation that would improve caregiving support for veterans' families. This includes enhancements to the VA Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) and expansion of home health and long-term care services to meet current and future needs of veterans, their caregivers, and families. This year, MOAA strongly supports the reintroduction and enactment of the Veteran Caregiver Reeducation, Reemployment, and Retirement Act. This legislation acknowledges caregivers' invaluable contributions while addressing the significant economic and emotional burdens they face. By offering education, employment, and retirement opportunities, the legislation empowers caregivers to achieve financial security while potentially reducing the federal government's long-term economic burden.

Persistent Efforts

There are certain issues that MOAA will always advocate for until they are passed. Among these are concurrent receipt for combat wounded (Major Richard Star Act), Arlington National Cemetery access, and cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs).

MOAA will also continually monitor certain issues and will immediately mobilize the entire association, our membership, and VSO/MSO allies to ensure these issues are not negatively impacted. These issues include:

- Decrements to scheduled pay increases.
- New TRICARE or TRICARE Pharmacy Program fees.
- TRICARE cost-sharing increases that exceed military retired pay COLA or TRICARE Pharmacy Program cost sharing that exceeds common industry practice.

Unequal decrements of compensation and benefits based on rank, age, family composition, retirement status, or disability benefits.

As the work of the 119th Congress gets underway, MOAA will continue its efforts to advocate on behalf of our members and the entire uniformed services community. We will leverage our experience and our relationships on Capitol Hill and with our partners to navigate an increasingly partisan environment.

Through our efforts, MOAA will seek to ensure that servicemembers, veterans, and retirees and their families — who have sacrificed so much — continue to receive benefits earned through their service.

When MOAA Speaks, Congress Listens

Learn more about MOAA's key advocacy issues and contact your elected officials using the MOAA messaging platform.

THE OFFICIAL TRAVEL AGENCY OF MOAA

Booking travel through MOAA Vacations offers several advantages for members including:

Exclusive Discounts: MOAA Vacations provides exclusive deals and discounts that are not available to the general public. This can lead to significant savings on cruises and vacation packages.

MOAA Exclusive Amenities: As a member, you receive additional perks and benefits on most cruises and tours including additional dollars off, free shipboard credit, cabin upgrades and more.

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