

BULLETIN – JANUARY 2024



JANET LONG, CHAIRMAN LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

ACTION CORPS.

Reading the reports I have received I see many Auxiliaries do not have anyone signed up for the VFW Action Corps. This program has lots of good information and is a good way to become an Advocate. To sign up go to www.vfw.org/ActionCorps follow the directions and you will receive all VFW Alerts. Please consider this and then send me a report stating you are receiving this important information.

PACT ACT

The **Pact Act** advances a top priority of the **VA** and the **VFW** – getting more veterans into **VA** care. Three new categories of veterans will be phased into receiving hospital care, medical services and nursing home care.

What is the PACT ACT?

The Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act of 2022 is a new law that expands VA health care and benefits for veterans exposed to burn pits, Agent Orange and other toxic substances. For more information on this go to www.vfw.org click on assistance.

ACTION CENTER – Stop claim sharks now:

A Claim shark is an individual or company that charges hefty fees to “assist” or “consult” veterans and survivors with filing their VA benefits claims. This practice is illegal! In fact, none of these private companies is better than the others. They are all operating illegally. Claim Sharks are not VA accredited, meaning they are not required to adhere to professional and ethical standards, so their advice can be misleading or even fraudulent. Some of their predatory practices include guaranteeing an increased disability rating or percentage increase; advertising expedited VA claims decisions; requesting login credentials to access a veteran’s personal information through secure VA websites like eBenefits or VA.gov; imposing their predatory contracts; and telling veterans to forego VA medical examinations while offering consultations from their own network of doctors. The VFW opposes proposed legislation like the *PLUS for Veterans Act* or any legislation that would assign future benefits and legalize these practices to allow companies to charge up to \$12,500 for claims assistance. No veterans should have to pay for earned benefits.

Witness Slips

This is a program you can find on the www.vfwil.org website go to resources, legislative help, witness slips. At times the VFW Legislative team will ask you to assist by filling out a witness slip. Download the example and/or watch the video at the bottom. You assist our community

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when you submit one for a bill the VFW supports. This site will help you find your State Legislators; contact State Senators; and contact State Representatives.

Witness slip instructions:

Name: Full name or an abbreviation that you prefer

Address: Add either your home or work address

Firm/Business or Agency: Post & location, if none then Self.

Title: Mr. Mrs. Miss. Ms.

Email: Personal or work

Persons, groups firms represented in this appearance: Self, please do not put down an organization unless you are authorized by department. (Auxiliary is authorized by the VFW Department if Illinois)

Position: Proponent

HFA2 Testimony: Record of Appearance only

Please agree to the Terms of Agreement: Check this box

Create (slip): Click this tab to submit completed Witness Slip

(if submitted properly you should receive a confirmation email within a few minutes.)

The VFW Legislative committee is working on training for District and Post legislative officer to do witness slips to support bills when a hearing is called and in talking with District Staff for State Senators and Representatives to cosponsor bills. If you need help with the Witness slips contact your post legislative chairman or Dutch DeGroot the VFW Department Legislative Chairman (217) 814-2585 email: dutch23mp@comcast.net

Since you will receive this after the Holidays, I hope all had wonderful times with family and friends.

Wishes for a Healthy – Happy New Year.