



American GI Forum of the United States

National Office

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2023 Overview of Resolutions Passed

July 26, 2023

As the 2023 National Commander of the American GI Forum of the United States (AGIF-US) and Lawrence Romo as the AGIF-US National Legislative Director, successfully passed ten resolutions regarding veterans and civil issues at the 75th Annual AGIF-US National Conference held at the Boothill Conference Center in Dodge City, Kansas on July 23rd -26th, 2023. These resolutions will be distributed to various designated areas, including AGIF-US Memberships, Congressmen, Senators, the VA Secretary, and other relevant agencies.

The resolutions that were approved by the delegates in the 75th Annual AGIF-US National Conference are as follows:

1. AGIF 2023-1: Veterans Benefits Improvement Act

This resolution likely focuses on enhancing and expanding benefits and support for veterans in various areas, such as healthcare, education, housing, and employment.

2. AGIF 2023-3: Support of the Veterans Job Training Act, H.R. 523

This resolution shows support for the Veterans Job Training Act (H.R. 523), which is likely aimed at improving job training and employment opportunities for veterans.

3. AGIF 2023-4: Support of H.R. 394: Veterans Cannabis Use for Safe Healing Act

This resolution likely advocates for supporting H.R. 394, which may propose the use of cannabis for medicinal purposes in the treatment and care of veterans.

4. AGIF 2023-5: Elizabeth Dole Home Care Act

This resolution probably supports the Elizabeth Dole Home Care Act, which may focus on improving home care services and support for veterans, especially those with disabilities or in need of long-term care.

5. AGIF 2023-6: Commitment to Veteran Support and Outreach Act

This resolution likely emphasizes the commitment to providing ongoing support and outreach programs to veterans to ensure their well-being and successful reintegration into civilian life.

6. AGIF 2023-7: H.R. 717 To prohibit the removal from the United States of certain veterans, to expedite their naturalization, and for other purposes.

This resolution supports H.R. 717, which may be a legislative proposal aimed at protecting certain veterans from deportation, expediting their naturalization process, and addressing related issues.

7. AGIF 2023-8: H.R. 303 Retired Pay Restoration Act

This resolution likely supports H.R. 303, which could be a bill aimed at restoring retired pay for veterans, ensuring they receive the benefits they deserve.

8. AGIF 2023-9: S263, Restoring Benefits to Defrauded Veterans Act

This resolution supports S263, which may be an act focused on restoring benefits to veterans who were victims of fraud or scams.

9. AGIF 2023-10: Rio Grande Valley VA Hospital Medical Center

This resolution probably pertains to the establishment or improvement of the Rio Grande Valley VA Hospital Medical Center, ensuring better healthcare services for veterans in that region.

10. AGIF 2023-12: The National Pacific Home Branch

This resolution likely involves the establishment or recognition of The National Pacific Home Branch, which could provide specialized services and support for veterans in the Pacific region.

With these resolutions, AGIF-US aims to advocate for the interests and well-being of veterans and address important civil issues affecting them. The distribution of these resolutions to various stakeholders will help create awareness and support for these proposed initiatives and legislation.

Respectfully,



Luis A. Vazquez-Contes

2023 AGIF-US National Commander

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AGIF Resolution 2023-1 - Veterans Benefits Improvement Act

WHEREAS, the American GI Forum of the United States (AGIF-US) whole-heartedly support our military, veterans and their families; and

WHEREAS, Senate Bill 3388, Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 2021 passed unanimously in the US Senate last legislature session, but House bill 7556, Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 2022, exactly the same bill did not pass the US House and therefore did not pass; and

WERERAS, the Senate Bill received the strong backing from the VA during a Committee hearing; and

WHEREAS, the Senate *Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 2021* would bolster employee recruitment for the Board of Veterans' Appeals and improve VA's scheduling of veterans' medical disability exams by increasing communication between contractors conducting disability exams, Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs), and attorneys assisting veterans with their claims; and

WHEREAS, the bipartisan bill will make it easier for folks to obtain their VA benefits, by cutting down the timeline for processing claims, increasing transparency over the process, and reducing backlogs across a system that was created to efficiently serve those who served us; and

WHEREAS, changes and improvements to the Veterans Benefits Administration and the Board of Veterans' Appeals would help hire and retain quality staff at VBA and the board, make improvements to the veteran disability claims process and increase access to medical disability examinations for veterans who live abroad; and

WHEREAS, the *Veterans Benefits Improvement Act* will:

- Require the Board of Veterans' Appeals to set up a competitive internship program to attract high-performing law students, and a competitive "honors program" to provide certain incentives for high-performing entry-level attorneys;
- Enhance VA's Disability Benefits Questionnaires to help veterans save time during the claims process by allowing them to fill out the forms in advance;
- Require VA contractors to contact a veteran's representative, in addition to the veteran, when establishing contact with a veteran to schedule an exam;
- Instruct VA to improve the Department's outreach efforts and work with veteran groups to educate veterans on how contract disability exams are scheduled; and
- Authorize the Department to provide instant, electronic notification of claims decisions—allowing for quicker delivery of benefits, especially amidst COVID-related mail delays.

BE IT RESOLVED. the AGIF-US requests the Senate and House Veterans Affairs Committee reintroduce the Veterans Benefits and Improvement Act and pass the legislative bill in both chambers

Submitted by Miguel Hernandez Chapter. Passed at the Texas State Conference, June 21, 2023, at the National Conference on July 26, 2023

"Education is Our Freedom and Freedom Should be Everybody's Business"



AGIF Resolution 2023-3 – Support of the Veterans Jobs Training Act, H.R. 523

WHEREAS, the American GI Forum of the United States (AGIF-US) whole-heartedly support our military, veterans and their families; and

WHEREAS, this legislation increases funding for the highly successful Homeless Veterans Reintegration (HVRP) which works to expand job training and placement services for our nation's veterans; and

WHEREAS, funded by the US Department of Labor, the HVRP program is the only federal grant to focus exclusively on competitive employment for unhoused veterans; and

WHEREAS, since 1988, the US Department of Labor (DOL) has utilized this program to offer job counseling, resume preparation, and job placement for former service members; and

WHEREAS, the program follows-up with participants at the 30-, 90- and 180-day intervals; and

WHEREAS, this legislative bill would increase the funding allocated to the HVRP from \$60 million per year to \$75 million; and

WHEREAS, the Government Accountability Office cited the HVRP program as one of the most effective, efficient federal homeless assistance programs in the nation; and

BE IT RESOLVED. the AGIF-US requests whole-heartedly endorses passage of the Veterans Job Training Act, H.R. 523

Submitted by Miguel Hernandez Chapter

Passed at the Texas State Conference, June 21, 2023, Passed at the National Conference on July, 26, 2023



AGIF Resolution 2023-4 – Support of H.R. 394: Veterans Cannabis Use for Safe Healing Act

WHEREAS, the American GI Forum of the United States (AGIF-US) whole-heartedly support our military, veterans and their families; and

WHEREAS, this legislation prohibits the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) from denying a veteran any VA benefit due to participation in a state-approved marijuana program; and

WHEREAS, for veterans participating in these approved programs, the VA must ensure its health care providers (1) discuss marijuana use with such veterans and adjust treatment plans accordingly, and (2) record such use in the veterans' medical records; and

WHEREAS, under the bill, the VA shall authorize physicians and other VA health care providers to provide recommendations to veterans who are residents of states with approved programs; and

BE IT RESOLVED, the AGIF-US requests whole-heartedly endorses passage of H.R. 394: Veterans Cannabis Use for Safe Healing Act

Submitted by Miguel Hernandez Chapter

Passed at the Texas State Conference, June 21, 2023, Passed at the National Conference on July 26, 2023



AGIF Resolution 2023-5 – S.141 – Elizabeth Dole Home Care Act

WHEREAS, the American GI Forum of the United States (AGIF-US) whole-heartedly support our military, veterans and their families; and

WHEREAS, the Elizabeth Dole Home Care Act increases the expenditure cap for noninstitutional care alternative programs from 65 percent to 100 percent of nursing home care costs; and

WHEREAS, expands access to home and community-based alternative care programs to veterans at all VA medical facilities, as well as to veterans living in U.S. territories and Native veterans enrolled in IHS or tribal health programs; and

WHEREAS, requires the creation of a centralized website to disseminate information and resources related to home and community-based programs and help veterans and caregivers determine their eligibility; and

WHEREAS, requires VA to review staffing and resource needs, accessibility, and other aspects of the Office of Geriatrics and Extended Care and Caregiver Support Program Office to make certain they are appropriately serving veterans and caregivers; and

WHEREAS, creates a pilot program to provide home health aide services for veterans that reside in communities with a shortage of home health aides; and

WHEREAS, requires VA to establish a warm handoff process for veterans and caregivers who are discharged from or ineligible for the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers; and

BE IT RESOLVED. the AGIF-US whole-heartedly supports passage of S. 141 – Elizabeth Dole Home Care

Submitted by Miguel Hernandez Chapter

Passed at the Texas State Conference, June 21, 2023, and

Passed at the National Conference on July 26, 2023



AGIF Resolution 2023-6- S.106 – Commitment to Veteran Support and Outreach Act

WHEREAS, the American GI Forum of the United States (AGIF-US) whole-heartedly support our military, veterans and their families; and

WHEREAS, the Commitment to Veterans Support and Outreach, authorizes the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to provide grants to states to implement programs that improve outreach and assistance to veterans and their families to ensure that such individuals are fully informed about veterans' benefits and programs; and

WHEREAS, the VA may provide grants to states to (1) implement or enhance outreach activities or activities to assist in the development and submittal of claims for veterans, or (2) increase the number of county or tribal veterans service officers in the state; and

WHEREAS, the VA must prioritize awarding grants in areas with a critical shortage of county or tribal veterans service officers, areas with high rates of suicide among veterans, and areas with high rates of referrals to the Veterans Crisis Line; and

BE IT RESOLVED. the AGIF-US whole-heartedly supports passage of S. 106 – Commitment to Veteran Support and Outreach Act

Submitted by Miguel Hernandez Chapter

Passed at the State Conference, June 21, 2023, Passed at the National Conference on July 26, 2023



AGIF Resolution 2023-7- H.R.717 - To prohibit the removal from the United States of certain veterans, to expedite their naturalization, and for other purposes

WHEREAS, the American GI Forum of the United States (AGIF-US) whole-heartedly support our military, veterans and their families; and

WHEREAS, H.R. 117 passage, would allow deported veterans who were honorably discharged or released to go through the naturalization process abroad. This excludes those who have been convicted of crimes such as voluntary manslaughter, murder, rape, sexual abuse of a minor, adult, child abuse, and/or terrorism; and

WHEREAS, would order the Attorney General to cancel or rescind a removal order that affects any eligible veteran, and subsequently change his or her status to legal permanent resident; and

WHEREAS, would require the Secretary of Homeland Security to create a program and application procedure to allow veterans, who are eligible and were removed prior to the bill's enactment, to return to the U.S. lawfully and be admitted as a permanent resident; and

WHEREAS, would require the Secretary of Homeland Security to identify and maintain records of immigration cases involving qualifying veterans; and

WHEREAS, this legislation is a bipartisan piece of legislation that would create a pathway to citizenship for deported veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces

BE IT RESOLVED. the AGIF-US whole-heartedly supports passage of -H.R.717 - To prohibit the removal from the United States of certain veterans, to expedite their naturalization, and for other purposes

Submitted by Miguel Hernandez Chapter

Passed at the Texas State Conference, June 21, 2023, Passed at National Conference on July 26, 2023



AGIF Resolution 2023-8- H.R.303 - Retired Pay Restoration Act

WHEREAS, the American GI Forum of the United States (AGIF-US) whole-heartedly support our military, veterans and their families; and

WHEREAS, H.R. 303 passage, would amend title 10, United States Code, to permit additional retired members of the Armed Forces who have a service-connected disability to receive both disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs for their disability and either retired pay by reason of their years of military service or combat-related special compensation; and

WHEREAS, since 1999, Congress has enacted legislation to progressively expand eligibility criteria for relief of the retired pay disability offset and reduce the burden of financial sacrifice on disabled military retirees; and

WHEREAS, absent adequate funding to eliminate the sacrifice for all disabled retirees, Congress has given initial priority to easing financial inequities for the most severely disabled and for combat-disabled retirees; and

WHEREAS, in the interest of maximizing eligibility within cost constraints, Congress effectively has authorized full concurrent receipt for all qualifying retirees with 100-percent disability ratings and all qualifying retirees with combat-related disability ratings, while phasing out the disability offset to retired pay over 10 years for retired members with noncombat-related, service-connected disability ratings of 50 percent to 90 percent; and

WHEREAS, in pursuing these good-faith efforts, Congress acknowledges the regrettable necessity of creating new thresholds of eligibility that understandably are disappointing to disabled retirees who fall short of meeting those new thresholds; and

WHEREAS, it is the sense of Congress that military retired pay earned by service and sacrifice in defending the United States should not be reduced because a military retiree is also eligible for veterans' disability compensation awarded for service-connected disability; and

BE IT RESOLVED. the AGIF-US whole-heartedly supports passage of H.R.303 - Retired Pay Restoration Act

Submitted by Miguel Hernandez Chapter

Passed at the Texas State Conference, June 21, 2023, Passed at the National Conference on July 26, 2023

"Education is Our Freedom and Freedom Should be Everybody's Business"



AGIF Resolution 2023-9, S263, Restoring Benefits to Defrauded Veterans Act of 2023

WHEREAS, the American GI Forum of the United States (AGIF-US) whole-heartedly support our military, veterans and their families; and

WHEREAS, under current law, if a defrauded Veteran passes away before their case with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is resolved, the Veteran's family cannot seek reimbursement for the defrauded funds; and

WHEREAS, S263 passage of the Restoring Benefits to Defrauded Veterans Act would require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to reissue misused benefits to a beneficiary's estate in cases where the beneficiary predeceased reissuance; and

WHEREAS, will provide reissued benefits to either the Veteran's estate, successor, or next inheritor; and

WHEREAS, the bipartisan legislation would make a simple fix to help defrauded Veterans and their families receive the support they need and deserve; and

WHEREAS, the Restoring Benefits to Defrauded Veterans Act is endorsed by the Paralyzed Veterans of America, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Wounded Warrior Project, and the American Legion; and

BE IT RESOLVED. the AGIF-US whole-heartedly supports passage of S263, Restoring Benefits to Defrauded Veterans Act of 2023

Submitted by Miguel Hernandez Chapter

Passed at the Texas State Conference, June 21, 2023, Passed at the National Conference on July 26, 2023



AGIF Resolution 2023-10 – Rio Grande Valley VA Hospital/Medical Center

WHEREAS, the American GI Forum of the United States (AGIF-US) whole-heartedly support our military, veterans and their families; and

WHEREAS; the Department of Veterans Affairs estimates that more than 100,000 veterans reside in Deep South Texas, which have always been among the first to answer our country's call. In time of war; and

WHEREAS, the nearest VA Medical Center is approximately 250 miles from the Rio Grande Valley of Texas located in San Antonio, Texas; and

WHEREAS, the current and future health care needs of veterans residing in the deep South Texas area are not being completely met by the Veterans Administration; and

WHEREAS, because of the efforts of all veterans' organizations united and the support of elected officials at all levels of government of the Rio Grande Valley, veterans now have the "Valley-Costal Bend Health Care System," independent of the San Antonio HealthCare System; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of the great State of Texas voted in favor of proposition 8, that provides money and/or land to the Veterans' Administration to construct a Veterans Hospital in the Rio Grande Valley; and,

WHEREAS, VA Secretary McDonough said in a December 17, 2021 article in Stars and Stripes that there are also serious discussions about building a new VA hospital south of San Antonio in what's known as the Rio Grande Valley.

"We're having, believe me, intensive, top-to-bottom discussions about where we need facilities, where our facilities need to be updated, and where facilities may be overweighted," he said. "We've talked about our infrastructure needs in every market in the country."; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans Administration could establish as partnership with the new University of Texas Rio Grande Valley School of Medicine and other hospitals in the area

BE IT RESOLVED, the AGIF-US requests the Senate and House Veterans Affairs Committee introduce, support, and vote on a bill authorizing a new Veterans Hospital/Medical Center in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas area

Submitted by Miguel Hernandez Chapter

Passed at the Texas State Conference, June 21, 2023, Passed at National Conference on July 26, 2023

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AGIF Resolution 2023-12 – The National Pacific Home Branch

WHEREAS, the American GI Forum of the United States (AGIF-US) whole-heartedly support our military, veterans and their families; and

WHEREAS; the America GI Forum of California and the United States endorses the perpetuation of the deed-restricted land-use mandates of the National Pacific Home Branch; and

WHEREAS, the American GI Forum of California and the United States declares that the settlement of the case “Valentini v. Shinseki” did not settle the claims presented, and that the theft of the land continues; and

WHEREAS, the American Gi Forum of California and the United States demands that the AMI (Area Median Income) qualification that keeps disabled veterans from permanent housing be suspended on an emergency basis at the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers because Veterans have already paid; and

WHEREAS, the American GI Forum of California and the United States supports the activities of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers (NHDVS) Coalition and the American GI Forum El Camino Real Chapter in exposing the theft of land from the National Home and the exclusion of Disabled Veterans from their home; and

WHEREAS, the American GI Forum and the United States declares that non-veteran NGOs have neglected to care for veterans entrusted in their care, and should not be allowed to operate any buildings at the National Pacific Branch Home or receive any public funds; and

BE IT RESOLVED, the American GI Forum of California and the United States recommends a Congressional Inquiry be initiated to review these demands and declarations

Submitted by El Camino Real Chapter

Passed at the California State Conference, July 19, 2023, Passed at National Conference on July 26, 2023