



**Department of
South Carolina
The American Legion**

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SOUTH CAROLINA NEWS LINE

Positive anything is better than negative nothing.

Possible Vets Outside Health Care Bill

The Senate overwhelmingly passed emergency legislation on Veterans Affairs Department health visits and administrator accountability Wednesday, paving the way for the reforms to become law in a matter of days. The chamber voted 93-3 in favor of the measure, crafted in recent days by Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., and Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz. It was an unusually quick turnaround for the Senate, which began moving the reforms following the resignation of VA Secretary Eric Shinseki less than two weeks ago.

"These issues must be addressed now," Sanders said on the Senate floor shortly before passage. "What our veterans deserve is to be able to get into the VA system in a timely manner and get quality care." The Senate deal would create a two-year program giving veterans who face long wait times for medical appointments at VA facilities or living in rural areas the ability to seek health care from private providers, with VA covering the costs. An audit released by VA officials this week found more than 100,000 veterans nationwide have faced longer-than-promised wait times for medical appointments, with nearly one-fourth waiting more than three months for care.

Lawmakers had promised swift action to help solve that problem. On Wednesday, House members unanimously passed legislation providing similar private care access to veterans, which will be part of the legislative reconciliation process to come. The Senate deal also includes plans for 26 new medical facility leases for VA, at an estimated cost of about \$1.4 billion, and provides \$500 million for hiring new VA doctors and nurses. Both moves are expected to improve access for veterans, and hopefully cut down on wait times.

The bill also would ensure that wait time statistics are no longer used in performance evaluations of VA officials, after investigators found that some of the record-keeping problems stemmed from administrators trying to protect their annual bonuses. Acting VA Secretary Sloan Gibson has already promised to make that change, with or without legislative action. And the Senate plan would give broader authority to fire senior executives with questionable performance — echoing already-passed House legislation — along with mandating a new independent commission on scheduling to address the ongoing scandal.

Sanders also included several provisions unrelated to medical appointment wait times in the wide-ranging veterans bill, including extending in-state tuition rates to all veterans using GI Bill benefits, extending those education funds to spouses of fallen troops, and expanding care eligibility for military sexual trauma victims.

The total price tag of the moves remains unclear. The Congressional Budget Office estimated that the health care portions of the bill alone could reach \$35 billion over the next decade.

McCain has said that some of the expense of the new measures could be absorbed in unspent funds already in VA accounts. Before Thursday's bill passage, senators voted to waive budget concerns in an effort to speed the legislation into a conference committee with House lawmakers. Sanders said his goal is to move quickly, and have the final bill approved by both chambers and on President Obama's desk sometime next week. The White House on Thursday offered support for the Senate deal, saying in a statement: "We need to make sure that the problems identified at VA medical facilities get fixed."

Vietnam Era Vets

Senator Tim Scott is hosting a Vietnam Era Veterans Recognition Ceremony scheduled for Saturday August 2nd. The Senator is honored to have the opportunity to express our gratitude to these Vietnam War Era veterans and will present each one with a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition and a pin.

We scheduled the event in a central location - downtown Columbia. At 10 AM on August 2nd, we will be recognizing these brave men and women at the First Baptist Church of Columbia, at 1306 Hampton Street. We are enlisting your help to spread the word about this event within your organization and throughout the community. This Recognition Ceremony cannot be a success without the involvement of our Veteran partner organizations. There is no fee to participate in or attend this event. We do ask these veterans and the surviving families of deceased veterans to contact us to register. You can do this online at: <http://scott.senate.gov/veterans> <https://outreach.senate.gov/iqextranet/iqClickTrk.aspx?&cid=quorum_scott-iq&crop=14308.6409133.5232973.7131919&redirect=http%3a%2f%2fwww.scott.senate.gov%2fveterans> or by phone, at 844-820-0146 (toll free). Attached you will find a flyer to post at your organization. You are welcome to reproduce the flyer and include it in your newsletters and online communications as well.

The Vietnam War era was one of the most challenging in our nation's history, and it is truly my honor to host these brave men and women who fought for freedom this year. Their sacrifices, as well as those made by their families, will never be forgotten.

Thank you for your support of our Veterans and the Vietnam War Era Veterans Recognition Ceremony. I hope to see you and your fellow veterans in Columbia on August 2nd!

New Dept Officers

Last Saturday, May 31 at Greenville at the 96th Annual Department Convention, the following officers were elected to the indicated offices for the ensuing 2014-2015 American Legion Year. They are:

Commander: John Collins, Post #3, Greenville
Department 1st Vice Commander: John Davis, Post #249, Dillon
Department 2nd Vice Commander: Harry Brown, Post #208, Charleston

Department 3rd Vice Commander: Bob Scherer, Post #200, Boiling Springs
Department 4th Vice Commander: Michael Strauss, Post #172, Headquarters
Alternate NECman: Cecil "Bud" Hennis, Post #178, Murrells Inlet
Department Historian: Bill Wade, Post #147, James Island
Department Chaplain: James W. Quarles, Post #25, Laurens

Congratulations to all of the above officers and look forward to working with you in the upcoming year.

VA News

District Commander Frank Coderre has passed on information that there is a new dental plan that the VA has and stated that information can be found at the link below if anyone would desire to use it. The link is:

<http://www.deltadentalvadip.org/plans/rate2.html>

Condolences

Our heartfelt condolences to Past Department Chaplain Ed Miller for the lost of his mother, Mae Amick Miller of Newberry. Condolences can be sent to Chaplain Ed and Kate at P.O. Box 1212, Newberry, SC 29108. He can be reached at 864-554-4648. Visitation at McSwain-Evans Funeral Home today, June 19, at 6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. Graveside services will be held 10:00 a.m. Friday, June 20 at Newberry Memorial Gardens, Newberry. Memorials may be made to Mayer Memorial Lutheran Church, 1307 Drayton Street, Newberry, SC 29108.

ALRSC News

On June 21, 2014 the American Legion Riders of Chapin, South Carolina, Chapter 193 will hold their American Legion Legacy Fund Poker Run to benefit children of fallen heroes. Registration for the Ride will be from 8:00am – 10:00am at the Texas Roadhouse on 400 Columbiana Dr. Columbia, SC. Cost of participation is \$25.00 per hand, breakfast is included with registration. The last bike out will depart Texas Roadhouse not later than 1100. The Run will cover approximately 90 miles and culminate at Harley Haven, 941 Western Lane, Irmo, SC. Entertainment will be provided by the Robby Cockrell Band, concessions will be provided and prize drawings will start at 3:00 PM. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend, you can participate in the run or just come out listen to the band and have some great food.

The American Legion Legacy Scholarship provides scholarships to children who have had a parent die while serving on active military service since September 11, 2001. The 2013 American Legion Riders of South Carolina raised and donated over \$60,000.00 to the National Fund. The American Legion Department of South Carolina had the largest donation to the Legacy Fund over all other American Legion Departments in the United States. This event is a great ride and for a great cause. The American Legion Legacy Scholarship helps ensure the children of our fallen heroes have funds set aside to assist them in going to college. One hundred percent of the money raised on this run will be donated to the National Legacy Fund. All donations are tax

deductable and anyone desiring to make a donation can contact any person listed below. Thank you for supporting the children of our fallen heroes.

For more info Contact:

Steve Goulet	803-732-9569
Bill Wilson	803-767-9466
Chuck Ashmore	803-467-3962

**Aiken County Vets
Office**

Following is the new address of the Aiken County Veterans Affairs Office, now located in the new county administration building: Aiken County Veterans Affairs
1930 University Parkway, Ste 2305
Aiken, South Carolina 29801

The telephone numbers will not change. The above is from the VAO Jim Harris.

Pro Bono Info

Lawyers4Vets - Monthly Pro Bono Veterans Legal Clinic

Introduction: As a service to area Veterans, the South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center has partnered with the Wm. Jennings Bryan Dorn VA Medical Center and members of the private bar to establish Lawyers 4 Vets, a Pro Bono Veterans Legal Clinic.

Purpose:

Lawyers 4 Vets connects low income and homeless Veterans with attorneys who provide legal advice and representation on certain issues.

Legal Issues and Services: The clinic will ONLY address the following topics:

- Obtaining identification (Social Security, South Carolina State ID, birth certificates)
- Child support and visitation issues (in South Carolina)
- Expungements and pardons (for convictions from South Carolina courts)
- Consumer protection
- Simple wills and healthcare power of attorney

Eligibility:

Veterans will be screened for eligibility, and if eligible will be given an appointment at the clinic. Lawyers 4 Vets will assist eligible Veterans regardless of military discharge status.

Appointments: Veterans who would like to be screened for eligibility should call the number listed below and leave a message including their name, phone number, and legal issue. The Veteran will be contacted within 2 business days by an intake volunteer who will ask the veteran a number of questions to determine if they are eligible. If the Veteran is eligible and has a qualifying legal issue, they will be given the next available appointment at the legal clinic. Appointments are required for a Veteran to receive a face-to-face meeting with a lawyer. Walk-ins will not be seen and will be directed to contact the telephone intake.

Number to call: Toll Free 1-877-289-6000

Clinic Dates: The Clinic will be held from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month. The 2014 Clinic dates are:

- * May 15, 2014
- * July 17, 2014
- * September 18, 2014
- * November 20, 2014

- * June 19, 2014
- * August 21, 2014
- * October 16, 2014
- * December 18, 2014

Where: (BY APPROVED APPOINTMENT ONLY AND SPECIFIC LOCATION PROVIDED UPON CONFIRMATION): Wm. Jennings Bryan Dorn VA Medical Center, 6439 Garners Ferry Road, Columbia SC 29209.

What's Happening

June 21, Saturday – ALRSC Chapter 193 hosting Poker Run starting 8 a.m.

June 21, Saturday – Nathan M. Wolfe Law Enforcement Cadet Academy Registration SC Fire Academy 1 p.m.

June 23, Monday – Post #195 will be holding a blood drive 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Main Hall on Wild Wood Lane. FMI contact Bill Heil 438-8614.

June 27, Friday – Graduation, Law Cadet Program, 10 a.m. SC Fire Academy.

Post Officer Listings

District Commanders Please Note: Even though you may have the same officers in the same positions for the 2014-2015 year, you should also submit a listing to department. Also, for those that have email addresses, please indicate that on the listing. Your assistance and attention to this matter will be greatly appreciated. The following is a listing of the posts. If they are in your district, please contact them and request they submit the information as soon as possible.

Proud To Serve

Lloyd H. Woods
Department Adjutant

Vietnam War Era Veterans Honor Ceremony

Hosted by U.S. Senator Tim Scott



*All Vietnam era veterans and their families
are invited to attend and be recognized!*

When: August 2, 2014, 10 AM

Where: First Baptist Church of Columbia
1306 Hampton Street, Columbia, SC 29201

RSVP or to learn more: 844-820-0146 (toll-free)
or www.scott.senate.gov/veterans