

Veterans

New: Department of Veterans Affairs Launches Website for Returning Service Members.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) launched a website for returning service members, <http://www.oefoif.va.gov/>, to show our newest veterans how the VA can help them.

Congressman Gus Bilirakis, a member of the Veterans Affairs Committee and Chairman of the Republican Policy Committee's Task Force on Veterans Affairs, is working to honor our veterans and ensure they receive the benefits they deserve and have rightly earned.

INCREASED FUNDING FOR VETERANS' BENEFITS: Bilirakis supported the largest funding increase for veterans' health care in history, providing \$43.2 billion to the VA to better care for America's veterans. The legislation provides increased funds for health care and new programs to help those with traumatic brain injuries and other mental health needs.

EXPANDING ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE: Bilirakis worked with local and national VA officials to expand the Pasco County VA Outpatient Clinic and establish an outpatient clinic in Brandon to bring additional health care services, such as dental care, to area veterans.

AUTHORED TRICARE MAIL ORDER PHARMACY PILOT PROGRAM: Bilirakis introduced legislation to create a test mail-order pharmacy program with no co-payments for prescriptions to save military retirees both time and money.

INCREASED PAY FOR ACTIVE DUTY: Bilirakis has introduced several pieces of legislation to increase military pay for members of the uniformed services, further narrowing the "pay gap" that exists between the military and private sector pay scales.

FULL CONCURRENT RECEIPT: Bilirakis supported legislation to expand the Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) Program has been incorporated into Public Law 110-181. In addition, Bilirakis has introduced the Retired Pay Restoration Act, to allow for full concurrent receipt for our veterans.

IMPROVED SURVIVOR BENEFITS: Bilirakis introduced legislation to allow the widows of veterans to remarry at age 55 and retain their survivor benefits. [Click here \(PDF\)](#) to learn more about Congressman Bilirakis efforts as a member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee. In addition to these services, Congressman Bilirakis has established a Veterans' Advisory Board. Comprised of local veterans from all three counties in the 9th Congressional District, the Advisory Board regularly meets with the Congressman and his staff to discuss a multitude of veterans' issues and to provide guidance and ideas for legislative initiatives, events and efforts to assist local veterans. If you need assistance with veterans' matters or any other federal issue, please contact Congressman Gus Bilirakis' office by calling: (727) 773-2871 (Palm Harbor) | (813) 985-8541 (Temple Terrace) www.va.gov Online Resources:

- Find a VA Form
- Find a Veterans Benefits Office
- Compensation and Pension Benefits
- Benefits Fact Sheet
- Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents Booklet
- VA National Center for Rehabilitative Auditory Research

Local Assistance: Contact a VA facility near you.

- Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs
- Bay Pines VA Healthcare System Home
- James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital

Education: The GI Bill (the generic term comprising various education assistance programs administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs) provides benefits to veterans, servicemembers, and some dependents of disabled or deceased veterans wishing to pursue an education.

- GI Bill Website
- New GI Bill Information pamphlet (PDF)

Home Loan Guaranty Services: The VA Loan Guaranty Service is the organization within the Veterans Benefits Administration, charged with the responsibility of administering the home loan program.

- Important Announcements for Home Loan Guaranty Services
- Am I eligible for a home loan?
- VA Regional Loan Centers

Veterans' Employment: Learn more about federal programs which provide veterans and transitioning service members with the resources and services necessary to succeed in the 21st century workforce.

- U.S. Department of Labor, Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS)
- U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Veterans Employment Information
- General Information for Job Seekers

Life Insurance: VA insurance programs were developed to provide insurance benefits for veterans and service members who may not be able to get insurance from private companies because of the extra risks involved in military service, or a service connected disability.

- Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI)
- Servicemembers' & Veterans' Group Life Insurance FAQ

Survivor Benefits: The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Department of Defense (DoD), Department of Labor (DOL) and the Social Security Administration (SSA) offer a wide range of benefits and services to the survivors of U.S. military personnel who died during active service to their country. Surviving spouses and dependents of military personnel who died while in active military service and to the survivors of veterans who died after active service are eligible for benefits.

- Partnerships, Groups and Associations for Survivor's Aid and Benefits

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