

Reserve Organization of America's 119th Congress veterans' policy portfolio

For more than a century, ROA has fought for a strong and ready reserve force to ensure military readiness and national security.

Although the Department of Veterans Affairs as we know it today was not formally established until 1930, eight years after ROA's founding, ROA recognizes the inextricable connection between the VA and Department of Defense.

As outlined in the *VA-DoD Joint Executive Committee's Joint Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2022-2027*, "Today, VA and DoD leadership. . . have moved past the historically bifurcated views. . . to embrace a new appreciation of overlapping interests and intertwined responsibilities across the Service member and Veteran life cycle."

While this sentiment is commendable, significant discontinuities remain that have uniquely impacted reserve component servicemembers, veterans, and families.

ROA's 119th Congress policy portfolio, crafted in accordance with the Association's resolutions process, addresses these findings through a sole and exclusive focus on the reserve components.

ROA's veterans' policy priorities

- **Resolution No. 23-13:** ROA opposes efforts to reduce the VA's budgetary liability at the expense of the DoD's value proposition, including the Office of Management and Budget's withholding of Duty Status Reform.
- ROA urges Congress to exercise ample oversight of the VA's proposed workforce reduction plans.
- **Resolution No. 22-36:** ROA urges Congress to confer veteran status (for federal veterans' hiring preference) on reserve component members after 180 "cumulative" days on active duty.
- ROA urges Congress to compel the VA to administer specialized training for its workforce on reviewing reserve component claims.

- ROA urges Congress to help the nation and the Veterans Health Administration overcome the critical nurse workforce shortage by establishing a national strategy, funding academic nurse education, expanding student nursing programs, and authorizing a “Health Care Workforce Commission.”
- **Resolution No. 22-38:** ROA urges Congress to establish a presumption of service connection to those service members who were in the Pentagon on 9/11 and were forced to come back to work beginning 9/12.
- **Resolution No. 23-15:** ROA urges Congress to amend the Transition Assistance Program’s eligibility requirements to allow reserve component servicemembers who accumulate 180 cumulative days of active service, which includes drill weekends and active duty for training, to participate.
- **Resolution No. 23-15:** ROA urges Congress to provide reserve component servicemembers who take TAP multiple times with diminishing returns the opportunity to opt out of their TAP requirements, with certain restrictions.
- **Resolution No. 23-15:** ROA urges Congress to add certain reserve component focused matters to the TAP preseparation checklist and process.
- **Resolution No. 23-15:** ROA urges Congress to ensure military spouses are fully integrated in their service spouse’s TAP process.
- ROA urges Congress to expand VA Home Loan program eligibility for Reserve and National Guard servicemembers who spend 30 or more consecutive days on Active Duty for Training.
- **Resolution No. 23-03:** ROA urges Congress to ensure veterans prescribed black box warning drugs provide written informed consent and include caregivers in the process.
- ROA urges Congress to allow all members of the Reserve and National Guard to receive a VA furnished headstone or grave marker for their burial site.
- **Resolution No. 23-09:** ROA urges Congress to create a reserve component committee within the VA-DoD Joint Executive Committee.
- ROA urges Congress to support the *Montgomery GI Bill Selected Reserve Parity Act*.
- **Resolution No. 22-35:** ROA urges Congress to prohibit the use of forced arbitration disputes under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act.
- ROA urges Congress to incorporate reserve component data in VA’s *National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report*.
- ROA urges Congress to allow all paid points days to count towards the Post 9-11 GI Bill.