

Legislative Affairs Update – September 2025

Legislative Climate

Congress in Recess Until September 6

Both the House and Senate remain in recess through early September. This pause has temporarily stalled movement on veteran-related legislation, but provides an opportunity for local advocacy before legislative sessions resume.

Omnibus Veterans Bill Expected in September

Senate and House committee staff have indicated that a consolidated veterans package may be introduced shortly after Congress reconvenes. Likely inclusions are:

- Major Richard Star Act
- Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) reform
- Caregiver support provisions
 - **Action:** Prepare for a fast-moving advocacy window in September. Chapters may wish to coordinate with MOAA National to ensure key provisions are retained.

FY26 Budget Negotiations Resume Mid-September

The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) and VA appropriations markups are expected to resume the week of September 9. Multiple benefits-related bills remain stalled due to ongoing debate over budget offsets.

► **Action:** Emphasize the moral and long-term cost of continued delays in member communications and public advocacy.

Federal Legislation – August Status Updates

Major Richard Star Act (H.R. 2102 / S. 1032)

► **Update:** Remains a central MOAA priority. Language may be included in the expected omnibus package.

► **Action:** Constituents should request support from their representatives before the September session begins.

Caring for Survivors Act (H.R. 680)

► **Update:** Dependency and Indemnity Compensation reform continues to gain visibility. Advocates expect language to be bundled into broader legislation.

► **Action:** Survivor families who are comfortable doing so may wish to share testimony with MOAA or allied organizations.

Fair Access to VA Services Act (S. 1147 / H.R. 2814)

- **Update:** Senate staff met in late July to revise key language on telehealth and transportation support.
- **Action:** Chapters are encouraged to gather anecdotes from rural veterans experiencing access issues.

Military Retiree Survivor Comfort Act (H.R. 3790)

- **Update:** MOAA National has circulated a chapter resolution template for formal endorsements.
- **Action:** Chapters may vote to endorse in upcoming September meetings.

State Legislation – Session Concluded

North Carolina General Assembly Adjourned August 9

The 2025 short session ended with several veteran-related bills unresolved or referred to interim study. There is no further state legislative action expected until the 2026 long session unless a special session is called.

Bill Status Highlights

- **H.B. 118 – Property Tax Relief for Disabled Veterans**
 - Cleared Senate Finance but did not receive a floor vote. Strong bipartisan support remains.
 - Action: Encourage county commissions to prepare for local adoption if reintroduced in 2026.
- **H.B. 114 – Veteran Employment Preference**
 - Referred to a workforce study group for inclusion in future reforms.
 - Action: Share bill details with local government HR departments or community colleges to explore pilot initiatives.
- **S.B. 660 – Phased Property Tax Exemption Expansion**
 - No final action taken before adjournment.
 - Action: Continue local conversations about municipal reimbursement and veteran affordability.

Local & Regional Advocacy – August Summary

Rep. Ray Pickett Listening Tour Rumored, Not Confirmed

Although informal reports suggested early August constituent meetings in Foscoe and West Jefferson, no public schedule was released.

- **Action:** Monitor Rep. Pickett's communications for future event announcements or fall town halls.

Regional Veteran Priorities for September

- **VSO Staffing in Ashe and Avery Counties**
 - Reports of staffing shortages or limited hours persist.
 - Action: Chapters may draft letters to county commissioners encouraging stable VSO funding in FY26 county budgets.
- **Affordable Housing & Fixed-Income Veterans**
 - Rising housing costs in Boone, Banner Elk, and Spruce Pine continue to pressure veteran families.
 - Action: Encourage local governments and housing authorities to consider tax relief programs like H.B. 118 in their long-term planning.
- **Workforce Partnerships (Caldwell, CCC&TI)**
 - Local interest in veteran hiring pathways remains strong.
 - Action: Continue sharing employment preference legislation with workforce development boards.

Looking Ahead – September 2025

- **September 6–9:**
Congress reconvenes. Expect fast-tracked committee activity on veterans legislation and FY26 budget markups.
- **Mid-to-Late September:**
Potential floor votes on veterans omnibus package. Chapters should be prepared to mobilize local members quickly via MOAA's Legislative Action Center.
- **County Budget Discussions:**
Fall is a key time for local budget planning. VSO and veteran housing concerns should be raised in September and October commission meetings.