

## □□ Federal Legislative Snapshot (as of January 3, 2026)

Priority Item	Summary	Latest Status	HCC MOAA Action
<b>Continuing Resolution (CR)</b>	Temporary funding bill keeping government open	Expires <b>January 30, 2026</b> . Shutdown risk remains high.	Urge early engagement with lawmakers during January recess.
<b>Major Richard Star Act</b>	Ends offset preventing concurrent receipt of retirement + VA disability pay	No committee markup yet; included in some NDAA drafts.	Keep pressure on NDAA negotiators and push inclusion in final package.
<b>DIC Reform – Caring for Survivors Act</b>	Increases Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) rates	Still in committee; no budget offsets identified yet.	Highlight survivor hardship stories; maintain grassroots engagement.
<b>Love Lives On Act</b>	Allows SBP + DIC benefits to continue after remarriage	No recent movement; possible reintroduction in 2026 session.	Maintain support posture; consider endorsing in February if revived.
<b>Fair Access to VA Services Act</b>	Expands rural care via mobile clinics and telehealth	No hearings scheduled.	Collect local rural access stories to support hearing requests.
<b>Veteran Caregiver Support (S. 879)</b>	Improves caregiver access to training, employment, retirement	Stakeholder consultation phase wrapping up.	Consider joint chapter letter with caregiver coalitions.

□□ See below for expanded information on each item.

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## □□ National Developments & Strategic Outlook

### □ Shutdown Risk

- The **CR expires January 30**. Political deadlock continues, with **border policy and domestic spending** as major obstacles.
- The **VA is already fully funded through FY26**, so **veteran health care and benefits will continue regardless of a shutdown**.
- Programs **outside the VA**, like DoD pay processing, Tricare customer service, and contractor support, **could be disrupted**.

**Implication:** Use January to inform members and encourage preemptive outreach to avoid harmful delays in early February.

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## □□ November 2025 Elections

- **Control of several House committees** remains uncertain due to recounts (e.g., Tennessee 7th District is still contested).
- **Polarization increased**, making it harder to pass bipartisan veteran legislation.

**Implication for MOAA:** Expect a slow start to the 2026 legislative year. Local advocacy and relationships will matter more than ever.

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## □□ North Carolina Legislative Landscape (as of January 3, 2026)

State Priority	Summary	Status	HCC MOAA Action
<b>H.B. 118 – Property Tax Relief</b>	Raises homestead exclusion for disabled veterans to \$61K	Passed House; stalled due to budget impasse	Continue to promote with legislators and counties.
<b>S.B. 660 – Tax Relief Expansion</b>	Adds vehicle tax relief and reimbursement to counties	Awaiting further Senate review	Track municipal feedback; emphasize fixed-income veterans' needs.
<b>H.B. 213 – Veteran Info Posters</b>	Requires employer poster with VA benefits	Passed committee; floor vote delayed	Promote voluntary adoption while bill remains in limbo.
<b>H.B. 114 – Veteran Hiring Preference</b>	Adds spouses and dependents to state job preference	In workforce study group	Share info with county HR offices and local boards.

□ □ See below for context on the NC budget and how it affects these bills.

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## □ Local & Regional Issues (Watauga, Avery, Ashe, Caldwell, Mitchell)

- **VSO Staffing Shortages** in Avery and Ashe counties persist. Veterans may be underserved.
  - Consider contacting county commissions again in Q1 to advocate for hiring or outreach funds.
- **Veteran Housing Pressures** remain elevated:

- Boone, Banner Elk, and Spruce Pine median home values are still rising. Support for local tax relief (H.B. 118, S.B. 660) is crucial.
- **Workforce Development:**
  - Caldwell Community College's interest in veteran hiring pipelines remains active. They may be a useful testbed for H.B. 114 promotion.

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## **Special Topics for MOAA Attention**

### **NC Budget Still Unresolved**

- North Carolina is **still the only U.S. state without a finalized budget** for FY25–FY27.
- Temporary “mini-budgets” fund basic operations, but **new programs (like tax relief) lack funding.**

#### **Implications:**

- HCC MOAA should continue raising awareness of how this affects local veterans.
- Emphasize need for timely funding of passed bills and state-level support services.

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## **Current Events Shaping Federal and Military Policy**

- **Venezuela Crackdown & Immigration Surge:**
  - May reshape DoD resource allocations at the southern border.
  - Could affect recruiting or require National Guard mobilizations.
- **Washington, DC Killings and Urban Crime Spikes:**
  - May influence defense policy on homeland support and emergency preparedness.
- **Economy & Immigration:**
  - Tight labor markets may drive increased reliance on immigrant recruitment.
  - Could influence future military composition and benefits strategy.

#### **MOAA Lens:**

- Focus on maintaining **benefits stability**, promoting smart **recruiting policy**, and supporting **military families** amid political flux.

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## □ Chapter Recommendations (January 2026)

- Educate members on **shutdown impacts**—especially what VA services will continue.
- Reach out to Congress during **district recess**—especially on the **Star Act** and **DIC Reform**.
- Monitor NC budget resolution; explain implications to members.
- Support rural veteran care and caregiver initiatives with local testimonials.
- Continue to collaborate with local colleges, VSOs, and counties on veteran workforce and housing concerns.