

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

Priority Item	Summary	Latest Status	HCC MOAA Action
Continuing Resolution (CR)	Temporary funding bill keeping government open	Expires January 30, 2026 . Shutdown risk remains high.	Urge early engagement with lawmakers during January recess.
Major Richard Star Act	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.
DIC Reform – Caring for Survivors Act	Increases Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) rates	Still in committee; no budget offsets identified yet.	Highlight survivor hardship stories; maintain grassroots engagement.
Love Lives On Act	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.
Fair Access to VA Services Act	Expands rural care via mobile clinics and telehealth	No hearings scheduled.	Collect local rural access stories to support hearing requests.
Veteran Caregiver Support (S. 879)	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.

□ □ 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.

□ □ 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.

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

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

□ 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.

☐ **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.

☐ 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.