

# MOAA Legislative Affairs Update

High Country Chapter – April 2026

Area of Operations: Mitchell, Avery, Watauga | Regional Interest: Ashe, Caldwell



## LEGISLATIVE SNAPSHOT – QUICK REFERENCE



### Federal Legislation

Bill	Issue Area	Status	Momentum	Member Action
Major Richard Star Act	Concurrent receipt for combat-injured retirees	Awaiting reintroduction	Long-term priority	Contact Congress
Caring for Survivors Act	Dependency and Indemnity Compensation reform	Awaiting reintroduction	Moderate	Contact Congress
Veteran Caregiver Act	Caregiver financial security	Highlighted Feb. 24 hearing	Building bipartisan support	Express support
GUARD VA Benefits Act	Stops claims exploitation	Moving in committee	Strong	Express support
TAP Promotion Act	Transition Assistance reform	Gaining traction	Growing	Monitor & support
Love Lives On Act	Survivor remarriage protection	Expected reintroduction	Moderate	Express support



### North Carolina Legislation

Bill	Issue Area	Status	Barrier	Member Action
H.B. 118	Homestead exclusion increase (\$45K → \$61K)	Passed House	State budget unresolved	Contact NC legislators
S.B. 660	Expanded veteran tax relief	Awaiting Senate action	Budget uncertainty	Contact NC legislators
H.B. 213	Veteran benefits workplace posters	Awaiting floor vote	Legislative bandwidth	Express support
H.B. 114	Spouse hiring preference	Committee study	Workforce timing	Monitor



## Federal Update

The federal government remains in a **partial shutdown limited to DHS funding**.

### Not affected:

- VA benefits, healthcare, GI Bill, pensions
- Department of Defense

### Affected:

- DHS agencies
- U.S. Coast Guard (operations continue; potential pay delays)

### VA Disability Rule

The VA has **fully rescinded** its February rule on medication and disability ratings following strong opposition and over 19,000 public comments.

**Bottom line:** VA benefits are stable, and advocacy worked.

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## North Carolina Update

North Carolina still **does not have a finalized budget**, which remains the primary barrier to:

- Implementing **H.B. 118 (homestead exclusion increase)**
- Advancing **S.B. 660 (tax relief expansion)**

With rising property assessments, these measures are increasingly important to local veterans.

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## Contact Your Elected Officials

### Federal

- **Sen. Thom Tillis** – (202) 224-6342
- **Sen. Ted Budd** – (202) 224-3154
- **Rep. Virginia Foxx (NC-5)** – (202) 225-2071  
*(Mitchell, Avery, Watauga, Ashe)*

- **Rep. Pat Harrigan (NC-10)** – (202) 225-2576  
*(Caldwell)*
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### **State (Primary AO)**

- **Rep. Dudley Greene (District 85)** – (919) 715-3009  
*(Mitchell & Avery – includes Banner Elk & Newland)*
  - **Rep. Ray Pickett (District 93)** – (919) 733-5749  
*(Watauga & Ashe)*
  - **Sen. Ralph Hise (District 47)** – (919) 733-3460  
*(Mitchell, Avery, Watauga, Ashe)*
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### **State (Regional Interest)**

- **Rep. Destin Hall (District 87)** – (919) 733-5870
  - **Sen. Warren Daniel (District 46)** – (919) 733-5859  
*(Caldwell)*
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## **Local Government Leadership**

### **Watauga County**

- Commission Chair: Braxton Eggers
- County Manager: Deron Geouque

### **Town of Boone**

- Mayor: Dalton George
- **Town Manager: Vacant**

### **Town of Blowing Rock**

- Mayor: Charlie Sellers *(verify if needed)*
  - Town Manager: Shane Fox
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### **Avery County (County Seat: Newland)**

- Commission Chair: Tim Phillips
- County Manager: Philip Barrier

### **Town of Newland**

- Mayor: Derek Roberts

### **Town of Banner Elk**

- Mayor: Brenda Lyerly
  - Town Manager: Rick Owen
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## **Mitchell County**

- Commission Chair: Jeff Harding
  - County Manager: Allen Cook
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## **Local Issues Affecting Veterans**

- **Property reassessments** increasing tax burdens
- **VSO staffing limitations** in rural counties
- **UNC System staff reductions (~700 positions)**
- **Housing availability and affordability pressures**

Local decisions on taxes, housing, and services directly impact veterans.

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## **Recommended Language**

### **State-Level (Highest Impact)**

“As a constituent and veteran, I support implementation of H.B. 118 and S.B. 660. Resolving the state budget is critical to delivering these benefits.”

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### **Federal-Level**

“As a constituent and MOAA member, I support the Major Richard Star Act, caregiver legislation, survivor benefit reform, and protections against claims exploitation.”

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## Advocacy Tip

Phone calls to district offices are the most effective form of communication. Be brief, identify yourself as a constituent, and mention MOAA.

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## Bottom Line

- VA benefits remain secure
- The disability rule was rescinded
- Caregiver and protection legislation is gaining momentum
- State tax relief depends on budget resolution
- Local conditions are increasingly important