

MOAA Legislative Affairs Update

High Country Chapter – June 2026

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



LEGISLATIVE SNAPSHOT – QUICK REFERENCE

Federal Legislation

Bill	Issue Area	Status	Momentum	Member Action
Major Richard Star Act	Concurrent receipt for combat-injured retirees	Top MOAA priority	Strong bipartisan support	Contact Congress
GUARD VA Benefits Act	Protects veterans from claims exploitation	Advancing	High	Express support
Veteran Caregiver Reeducation, Reemployment, and Retirement Act	Caregiver retirement and employment support	Building momentum	Strong	Express support
Shutdown Fairness Act	Protects servicemember pay during future shutdowns	Active advocacy priority	Growing	Contact Congress
Caring for Survivors Act	Dependency and Indemnity Compensation reform	Awaiting movement	Moderate	Monitor
Love Lives On Act	Survivor remarriage protections	Awaiting movement	Moderate	Monitor



North Carolina Legislation

Bill	Issue Area	Status	Barrier	Member Action
H.B. 118	Homestead exclusion increase (\$45,000 → \$61,000)	Passed House	State budget unresolved	Contact NC legislators
S.B. 660	Expanded veteran property and vehicle 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 Expanded spouse hiring preference

Committee study Workforce package timing Monitor

Federal Update

National MOAA Priorities

MOAA recently reaffirmed four primary advocacy priorities:

1. Major Richard Star Act
2. GUARD VA Benefits Act
3. Veteran Caregiver Reeducation, Reemployment, and Retirement Act
4. Shutdown Fairness Act

These priorities continue to receive bipartisan attention and remain central to MOAA's advocacy efforts.

Major Richard Star Act

The Major Richard Star Act remains MOAA's premier legislative priority. The bill would allow combat-disabled retirees with fewer than 20 years of service to receive full military retired pay and VA disability compensation concurrently.

The legislation has enjoyed broad bipartisan support in recent Congresses but continues to face budget scoring challenges.

GUARD VA Benefits Act

The GUARD Act would provide stronger protections against unaccredited claims consultants who charge veterans excessive fees for disability claims assistance. This legislation remains one of the most likely veteran-focused bills to advance during the current Congress.

Veteran Caregiver Act

This legislation would provide retirement, employment, and financial support for caregivers of veterans. MOAA leadership continues to identify caregiver support as one of the most important quality-of-life issues affecting military families.

Shutdown Fairness Act

Following recent funding disputes, MOAA is advocating for legislation that would guarantee pay and benefits for servicemembers during future government shutdowns. MOAA is also supporting

inclusion of the U.S. Public Health Service and NOAA Commissioned Corps in these protections.

VA Disability Rule Rescinded

The VA formally rescinded its February rule regarding the impact of medication on disability ratings after significant opposition from veterans organizations and more than 19,000 public comments.

Bottom line: veteran advocacy worked, and benefits remain protected.

Military Benefits Watch

MOAA continues to monitor:

- Potential increases in TRICARE fees and cost-sharing
- Military compensation and pay comparability
- Preservation of retirement benefits
- Long-term federal debt impacts on military and veteran programs

These issues affect nearly every military retiree, survivor, and currently serving member.

PACT Act Reminder

Veterans should continue reviewing eligibility under the PACT Act. MOAA highlighted the continuing expansion of presumptive conditions associated with toxic exposures. Hypertension remains particularly important because it may support secondary service connections for other conditions.



North Carolina Update

North Carolina still lacks a finalized state budget, which remains the primary obstacle to implementing veteran-focused tax relief.

H.B. 118 – Disabled Veterans Tax Relief Bill

This legislation would increase North Carolina's disabled veteran homestead exclusion from \$45,000 to \$61,000 of appraised home value. The measure has bipartisan support but remains tied to broader budget negotiations.

S.B. 660 – Expanded Veteran Tax Relief

This bill would expand property and vehicle tax relief for eligible disabled veterans and military retirees. Like H.B. 118, implementation depends upon state budget resolution.

LEGISLATIVE CONTACTS

Federal Representatives

Office	Representative	Phone	Coverage
U.S. Senate	Sen. Thom Tillis	(202) 224-6342	North Carolina
U.S. Senate	Sen. Ted Budd	(202) 224-3154	North Carolina
U.S. House NC-5	Rep. Virginia Foxx	(202) 225-2071	Watauga & Ashe Counties
U.S. House NC-11	Rep. Chuck Edwards	(202) 225-6401	Avery & Mitchell Counties
U.S. House NC-10	Rep. Pat Harrigan	(202) 225-2576	Caldwell County

Congressional District Note

The High Country Chapter's primary Area of Operations spans two congressional districts:

- **Watauga County** is represented by Rep. Virginia Foxx (NC-5)
- **Avery County** is represented by Rep. Chuck Edwards (NC-11)
- **Mitchell County** is represented by Rep. Chuck Edwards (NC-11)

Members should contact the representative for their county of residence when advocating for federal legislation.

North Carolina General Assembly

Office	Representative	Phone	Coverage
NC House District 85	Rep. Dudley Greene	(919) 715-3009	Mitchell & Avery Counties
NC House District 93	Rep. Ray Pickett	(919) 733-5749	Watauga & Ashe Counties
NC Senate District 47	Sen. Ralph Hise	(919) 733-3460	Mitchell, Avery, Watauga & Ashe Counties
NC House District 87	Rep. Destin Hall	(919) 733-5870	Caldwell County
NC Senate District 46	Sen. Warren Daniel	(919) 733-5859	Caldwell County



Local Government Leadership

Watauga County

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

Boone

- Mayor: Dalton George
- Town Manager: Vacant

Blowing Rock

- Mayor: Charlie Sellers
- Town Manager:

Avery County (County Seat: Newland)

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

Newland

- Mayor: Derek Roberts

Banner Elk

- Mayor: Brenda Lyerly
- Town Manager: Rick Owen

Mitchell County

- County Commission Chair: Jeff Harding
- County Manager: Allen Cook



Local Issues Affecting Veterans

- Rising property reassessments increasing tax burdens on fixed-income retirees
- Rural Veterans Service Office staffing and access
- Monitoring impacts of UNC System staffing reductions on veteran services
- Housing affordability and availability throughout the High Country



What Members Can Do

Contact Your NC Legislators

"I support H.B. 118 and S.B. 660. Please resolve the state budget so these veteran tax relief measures can take effect."

Contact Your Member of Congress

"I support the Major Richard Star Act, the Veteran Caregiver Act, the GUARD VA Benefits Act, and the Shutdown Fairness Act."

Phone calls remain the most effective form of advocacy.

Bottom Line

National MOAA priorities align closely with issues affecting veterans in the High Country. While federal legislation continues to advance, state-level tax relief remains stalled pending budget negotiations. Member engagement remains critical to protecting earned military and veteran benefits.