

> RAO Bulletin Update
> 1 October 2007

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> Editor's Note: The downgrading of my new HP Pavillion dv2000 computer from its installed VISTA operating program to XP has allowed the 3 years of missing work files to be restored from my external hard drive. However, this has caused a number of other problems which the dealer is still trying to rectify. Fortunately, I am now in the position of being able to resume publishing the Bulletin. This one is somewhat abbreviated as I have only had a few days to work on it. Readers should be aware if they have to buy a new computer most likely its operating program will be VISTA which is extremely user unfriendly. Also, I found it to be a much slower operating system than XP to the point that I would not have been able to continue publishing a twice monthly Bulletin.. In response to my 15 SEP notice I received over 500 emails from frustrated subscribers who have been exposed to this program. Only 5 of these messages had anything good to say about it. The remainder described numerous horror stories of lost file, excessive expense in trying to unsuccessfully get the bugs out, returning computers to dealers out of frustration, and an overall degradation of user's ability to perform the same operations they had formerly done with their older

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> VA SECRETARY UPDATE 02: Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs Gordon H. Mansfield becomes the Acting Secretary of Veterans Affairs following the resignation of Secretary Jim Nicholson. Secretary Nicholson tendered his resignation to President Bush on 17 JUL 07, to be effective no later than 1 OCT 07. Mansfield assumes the role on 1 OCT under the terms of the Federal Vacancies Reform Act, where a Deputy Secretary begins to serve as the acting officer immediately and automatically upon the occurrence of the vacancy. Mansfield will serve as Acting Secretary until the next nominee of the President is confirmed by the United States Senate. Appointed by President Bush in NOV 03, Deputy Secretary Mansfield served as the chief operating officer for the federal government's second largest department, responsible for a nationwide system of health care services, benefits programs and national cemeteries for America's veterans and their dependents. He previously served as VA Assistant Secretary for Congressional and Legislative Affairs since 1 AUG 01, serving as the legislative advisor to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. He was responsible for VA's Congressional relations and representing VA programs, policies, investigations and legislative agenda to Congress.

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> Prior to joining VA, Mr. Mansfield served as executive director of the Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) since APR 93. In that position, the highly decorated Vietnam veteran oversaw daily operation of PVA's national office in Washington, D.C. Mr. Mansfield held a number of positions at PVA from 1981 to 1989, and served as the organization's first associate executive director of Government Relations. Mr. Mansfield served as Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity at the Department of Housing and Urban Development from 1989 to 1993 under President George H. W. Bush's Administration. Prior to 1981, he practiced law in Ocala, Fla. Mr. Mansfield received his undergraduate degree from Villanova University and law degree from the University of Miami. Following his 1964 enlistment in the Army, Mr. Mansfield served two tours of duty in Vietnam. While serving as company commander with the 101st Airborne Division during his second tour, he was wounded during the Tet Offensive of 1968 sustaining a spinal cord injury. For his actions while his unit was under fire, he was decorated with the Distinguished Service Cross, the second highest personal decoration for valor in combat. He was medically retired by the U.S. Army at the grade of Captain. His other combat decorations include the Bronze Star, two Purple Hearts, the Combat Infantryman's Badge and the Presidential Unit Citation. Mr. Mansfield is a recipient of the Presidential Distinguished Service Award and the Villanova University Alumni Human Relations Medal. He was inducted into the U.S. Army Officer Candidate School Hall of Fame in 1997. [Source: VA News Release 28 Sep 07 ++]

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> NDAA 2008 UPDATE 08: The Senate, having finally taken up consideration of its version of the National Defense Authorization Act (S. 1547) announced some significant initial action. That information had to do with favorable outcomes in Senate consideration of several hundred amendments proposed for S.1547 already passed in the House as H.R.1585).

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> . Sen. Reid's amendment that would provide full, immediate concurrent receipt to disabled retirees deemed "unemployable" by the VA retroactive to 1 JAN 05.

> . Sen. Nelson's amendment that would accelerate 30-year paid-up Survivor

Benefit Plan (SBP) coverage to 1 OCT 07 and bar deduction of VA survivor benefits from SBP annuities (the SBP-DIC fix).

> . Sen. Lautenberg's and Sen. Hagel's amendment that would bar any increases in TRICARE fees for FY2008 and articulate the sense of Congress that military health care is a crucial offset to the adverse conditions of service and that military people pay substantial premiums up-front in extended service and sacrifice over and above any cash fees.

> . Sen. Chambliss's amendment that would reduce the Reserve retirement age by three months for each 90 days served on active duty since 9/11/01.

> . Sen. McCain's amendment that would increase the maximum annual points creditable for Reserve component retirement to 130 points (vs. 90) for 2007 and subsequent years.

> . Sen. Coleman's amendment that would authorize paying increased reimbursements for mental health care if required to meet needs, and requiring a Pentagon report on military beneficiaries' adequacy of access to mental health services.

> . Sen. Lincoln's amendment that would authorize Guard or reserve members to use their mobilization GI Bill benefits up to 10 years after separating from the selected reserve.

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> There were some big differences between the basic Authorization bills passed by the House and considered by the Senate. For example, the Lautenberg/Hagel amendment now matches the House position on Tricare Prime or Standard copay increases but it's not clear that the Senate position on Tricare payment for certain Rx's (requiring drug companies to provide discounts to the Tricare retail system -which we liked--) will override the House's position (barring Tricare payment for specific drugs if the manufacturer refuses to apply the Federal discount to the Tricare retail system - not good for beneficiaries). It does not appear there will be any further effort this year to grant Concurrent Receipt across the Board. More important, the Senate has not, so far, acted to stop the 9.9% cut in Medicare -and therefore Tricare-payments to providers that is now scheduled to take effect in 1 JAN 08. The House had passed such a provision but made it a part of the update of the Children's Health and Medicare Protection Act. The Senate did not include the Medicare/Tricare provision in its version of the Act. [Source: PMOANET Legislative & Retiree Affairs Advisory 16-07++]

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> DEFENSE HEALTH AGENCY: A DoD plan to put the Army in charge of all military medical training and research could be pulled soon, in favor of establishing a Defense Health Agency (DHA) to handle those responsibilities and more, senior officials told the DoD Task Force on the Future of Military Health Care. The DHA would assume oversight of all medical training and research, as well as management of Tricare and responsibility for some shared medical activities across the services. The Tricare Management Activity would form the foundation of the new agency, with additional staff drawn from service medical departments. But the Army, Navy and Air Force would continue to run separate medical departments and retain control of their medical personnel and most sites. The DHA concept is seen as only an incremental step toward the dramatic streamlining and greater efficiencies projected from creating a unified medical command. The DHA has been endorsed by senior medical leaders and awaits final approval of Deputy Defense Secretary Gordon England. Unveiling of the DHA concept surprised several task force members. That's partly because they had just listened to

presentations by think-tank economists on the merits, potential cost savings and challenges for the department of creating a unified medical command. The Army, Navy and Joint Staff had backed a unified medical command, saying it would make medical care more effective and save several hundred million dollars a year. The Air Force opposed the idea, citing a clash of cultures that could weaken medical support of operational missions. [Source: Newport News VA Daily Press Tom Philpott article 10 Sep 07 ++]

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> VIRGINIA VET HOMES: The Virginia Department of Veterans Services dedicated the Sitter-Barfoot Veterans Care Center (SBVCC) located on the campus of the McQuire VA Medical Center in Richmond on 25 SEP. This single-level facility features 160 single-occupancy rooms in three nursing units: two 60-bed skilled nursing care units and one 40-bed secure Alzheimer's dementia unit with enclosed courtyards. The design of SBVCC reflects the latest in health care facility design and research. All rooms are single occupancy to limit the spread of infectious disease and assure residents a level of privacy. Each room has a floor-to-ceiling window, private bath and walk-in shower. The Alzheimer's unit features a wander garden and interconnected hallways allowing residents to move around freely in a safe and secure environment. The facility will provide physical, occupational, and speech therapy, as well as therapeutic recreation, social and spiritual activities, and other amenities such as onsite pharmacy, a fully equipped barber and beauty shop, activity and games rooms, and resident lounges in each nursing unit, courtyard and an outdoor walking trail. Veterans may be admitted as long-term residents, or may also be admitted on a short-term basis for rehabilitation as the transition from hospital care to home. For additional information about SBVCC, contact Robin Davis, Director of Admissions and Marketing, (804) 840-7573, or robin.davis@dvs.virginia.gov

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> Virginia's other home is the Virginia Veterans Care Center (VVCC) which has 240 beds in the facility to provide comprehensive, high quality care with on-site laboratory work, x-rays, dental clinic, physical therapy, respiratory therapy, podiatry care, and many other ancillary health care services. The Salem VA Medical Center is located next door for additional services for those qualified. If you have any questions or would like an information packet sent to you, contact the Admissions Director, Patti Smith at (540) 982-2860 ext. 4052 or by email at Patti.Smith@dvs.virginia.gov. To be eligible for admission, a veteran must have an honorable discharge and must be a Virginia resident at the time of admission. Veterans may also qualify if they were a Virginia resident at the time they entered the military or if Virginia is listed as their official home of record on their military records. [Source: Lynchburg News & Advance article 25 Sep 07 ++]

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> VA BUDGET 2008 UPDATE 07: As they have for the better part of a decade, Congress has failed to pass an on-time budget for VA. The government's new fiscal year begins on 1 OCT, and instead of pressing forward on the VA Appropriations bill, each chamber has passed a stopgap funding measure while will fund VA and the rest of the government through 16 NOV. This means that, in the short term, VA will be funded on last year's level - a level that does not account for the growing numbers of veterans

> seeking care. The stopgap budget they have approved is roughly \$6.7

billion less than what Congress itself has decided what VA needs, and will hamper VA's efforts to recruit and retain the highest quality doctors, > nurses and health care professionals. It will also delay VA's ability to hire and train disability compensation claims processors, impairing VA's ability to manage the ever-growing backlog. The differences between the House and Senate versions are negligible, and the bipartisan support for the bill would ensure its success if it had come up for a vote. Congressional leaders, however, decided to use the broad support for it to attach less politically popular provisions, turning it into a large omnibus bill and delaying its passage.

> Veteran organizations are calling on Congress to end the political games and do what is right for this nation's veterans, especially those wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan. This nation's 24 million veterans are looking to them to do the right thing. [Source: VFW Washington Weekly 28 Sep 07 ++]

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> TRICARE EMPLOYER HEALTH PLANS: Many military retirees who work for defense contractors, airlines, and certain state governments are getting letters from their employers that their health coverage options will change as of 1 JAN. In many cases, it's a notice that the employer will no longer be able to offer a Tricare supplement as one of its health plan options. That's because a provision in last year's Defense Authorization Act (FY2007) bars civilian employers from offering their employees incentives to use Tricare rather than the company's normal health plan. It specifically bars offering employees a Tricare supplement. Congress has no problem with retirees choosing Tricare on their own initiative, since they earned the right to the Tricare benefit through their service. But DoD and Congress developed extensive evidence that many employers - including several state governments - have been consciously working to shift their health care costs to Tricare, sending letters to Tricare-eligible employees urging them to use Tricare rather than the employer's plan. And tens of thousands of Tricare-eligibles across the country have taken up those offers in recent years. This was part of the reason that DoD proposed raising fees for Tricare enrollees by up to \$1,000 a year - to help stem the tide of people opting out of employer-based plans. So far, Congress has agreed that imposing steep Tricare fee hikes isn't the appropriate reaction. But the Armed Services Committees took a dim view of employers who seek to cut their costs at Tricare's expense, and changed the law to try to discourage that behavior.

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> Initially, the law was interpreted as barring any reimbursement that could be used to cover Tricare expenses. That strict interpretation would have barred Tricare-eligibles from participating in company-sponsored cafeteria plans (under which employees can receive a specified amount of cash that can be used to purchase coverage) or plans that pay a flat monthly amount to any employee who elects to use alternative coverage, whether it's Tricare or a spouse's employer plan. At MOAA's urging, the Committees included language indicating that these kinds of initiatives should not be barred because they are not specifically aimed at Tricare. But it's hard to argue that a Tricare supplement isn't Tricare-specific.

> So what can Tricare-eligibles do if they get a letter notifying them that their employer is terminating a company-offered Tricare supplement?

> . The first option is to ask the employer to offer a flat-rate payment in lieu of the supplement. If the company was willing to pay the cost of a supplement, one would think they'd be willing to pay up to the cash

equivalent. But to be allowed under the new law, the payment needs to be non-Tricare-specific. That is, it should be the same amount for an employee who chooses Tricare as it is for an employee who chooses coverage under a spouse's employer plan. Many employers already offer such cash payment plans; it's just a matter of including Tricare-eligibles in them.

> . Another alternative is to enroll in Tricare Prime, if Prime is available in your area.

> [Source: MOAA Leg Up 28 Sep 07 ++]

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> POW VA BENEFITS UPDATE 04: The Department of Veterans Affairs is searching for prisoners of war who may not be getting the benefits they deserve. VA officials estimate that about 25,000 former prisoners of war are still alive today, about 600 from the Vietnam War, 2,100 from the Korean War and the rest from World War II. VA officials believe only about one-third are receiving any VA benefits or health care. VA officials are trying to contact veterans who are not receiving any benefits or health care but who might be eligible. They are also trying to locate the surviving spouses and children of former POWs who might be unaware of the help VA could provide. VA officials said they have the most difficulty tracking down former POWs from World War II because the military used service numbers, not Social Security numbers, for identification. Tracking down a veteran by service number is extremely difficult if they have not had any contact with the VA in years, officials said. In a statement, Veterans Affairs Secretary James Nicholson said meeting the needs of former POWs is "one of VA's highest priorities."

> "They are extraordinary men and women who have endured captivity, suffered extreme deprivation and sacrificed their own freedom to preserve the freedom of all Americans," said Nicholson, himself a Vietnam veteran. Some former POWs may be unaware that available help has expanded over the years. For example, VA provides disability pay for former POWs who suffer strokes or some common heart diseases.

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> To try to contact former POWs, VA officials have been reaching out to veterans' groups and civic organizations in search of leads. They are also encouraging people who know of former POWs to ask them to contact a VA toll-free number to learn about help that may be available. The number is (800) 827-1000.

> A similar effort several years ago resulted in about 1,000 former POWs or their survivors qualifying for VA assistance or increasing their existing benefits, VA officials said. Every VA regional office also has a POW coordinator to help former POWs and their families receive benefits and health care. There are seven medical conditions for which a former POW can automatically receive disability benefits: psychosis; depressive neurosis; post-traumatic osteoarthritis; anxiety; cold-related injuries; strokes or stroke complications; and heart disease and related heart complications. Veterans who were held as POWs for 30 days or longer may be eligible for benefits if they have other conditions. These include: avitaminosis, chronic dysentery, helminthiasis, malnutrition, peptic ulcers, beriberi, cirrhosis of the liver, irritable bowel syndrome, nutritional deficiencies and peripheral neuropathy. In each case, the presence of one of the medical conditions in a former POW will be presumed to have resulted from their military service - qualifying them for disability benefits - unless there is evidence of another cause. Details on benefits and health care for former POWs and their families are available at

<http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/Benefits/POW/index.htm> [Source: AF times Rick Maze article 27 Sep 07 ++]

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> VA HOME LOAN UPDATE 08: In a 30 AUG press release the Government National Mortgage Association (Ginnie Mae) announced that it has eliminated the \$417,000 home loan limit on Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) mortgage loans that can be used as collateral for Ginnie Mae securities. "We expect this change will expand the availability of low-cost financing and increase homeownership opportunities for America's veterans, particularly in high-cost areas, by encouraging lenders to make more VA loans," said Michael J. Frenz, Executive Vice President of Ginnie Mae. Frenz was referring to home loan realities like that in California. Although 10% of the nation's veterans live in California, less than one percent of the VA loans in the Ginnie Mae securities portfolio issued during the last two years were to California veterans because loan limits were below most house prices in the state. This policy change is designed to make it easier for lenders to help veterans and servicemembers use their VA Home Loan benefit to purchase homes valued at more than \$417,000. However the Department of Veterans' Affairs is careful to point out that Ginnie Mae's new policy does not change the current VA Home Loan Guaranty program rules and loan limits. The most attractive feature of the VA Home Loan Guaranty program is that it eliminates the need for eligible veterans and servicemembers to provide cash down payments for homes valued at \$417,000, or less, by guarantying 25% of a home's purchase price. The new Ginnie Mae policy will require borrowers to use the VA Home Loan Guaranty in combination with a cash down payment to guaranty the loan for homes exceeding the VA limit. This means that veterans and servicemembers who wish to purchase homes priced higher than the VA limit, will be required to provide an additional cash down payment to ensure the loan is guarantied for at least 25% of the of the purchase price. For example, a veteran wishing to purchase a home valued at \$600,000 will need to provide a cash down payment of \$45,750 - 25% of the difference between the \$417,000 VA loan limit and the actual purchase price of \$600,000.

[Source: Military.com Terry Howell article 14 Sep 07 ++]

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> GI BILL RATE INCREASE UPDATE 01: Each year in October the GI Bill payment rates increase to meet the growing cost of education. The rate increase effects all GI Bill benefit programs including Active Duty GI Bill Chapter 30, Reserve GI Bill chapters 1606 and 1607, the GI Bill OJT and Apprenticeship program and the Survivors and Dependents Education Assistance (DEA) program. Although the past years have seen larger increases in the payment rates, this year's modest rate increase has pushed the full-time payment rate effective 1 OCT 07 to \$1,101 a month. Thus, the GI Bill will be worth \$39,636 - a total increase of nearly \$1,000 over last year's rate. This total is based on the new monthly full-time student payment rate multiplied by the 36-month limit. For all rates refer to

http://www.gibill.va.gov/GI_Bill_Info/rates/CH30/ch30rates100107.htm.

[Source: Military.com Veterans Report 17Sep 07 ++]

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> KANSAS VET CEMETERY: The Fort Riley cemetery has officially run out of space and Kansas lawmakers are urging the Veterans Affairs Department not to delay funds for a new cemetery. Sens. Sam Brownback and Pat Roberts, both Republicans, asked VA officials 20 SEP to make money available for the new

veterans cemetery before the end of the year. The senators said the timeline for finding money to build the new cemetery already had been pushed back. VA spokeswoman Jo Schuda said the agency's National Cemetery Administration plans to pay for the new cemetery during the next fiscal year, which begins 1 OCT 07, but could not provide more specifics. There is no room to expand the existing cemetery, which is flanked on two sides by roads, with housing and other buildings nearby. Twenty-two burial plots that were reserved before 1975 will be honored, said Fort Riley spokeswoman Alison Kohler. The last two unreserved plots at Fort Riley's cemetery were taken in late SEP. The military base has lost 133 soldiers and airmen in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2003, though not all are buried in the Fort Riley cemetery. About 5,000 veterans and family members have been interred at the cemetery since it opened in the 1850s. Fort Riley already has transferred 90 acres of land to the state for a new cemetery that will be about 10 miles from the old site. Under a 1950 federal law, veterans cemeteries that fill up are replaced with new cemeteries built by VA and then operated by states. Once federal money becomes available, it will take about a year before the new cemetery could open for burials, Kohler said. Meanwhile, eligible veterans can be buried at a different national veterans cemetery such as Fort Leavenworth or at one of three other state veterans cemeteries in Kansas. Kohler said she has heard of people "who are holding urns waiting for the new cemetery to open." [Source: AP Sam Hananel article 21 Sep 07 ++]

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> VA RETRO PAY PROJECT UPDATE 09: Almost 75,000 military retirees with disabilities who were underpaid for months or even years after becoming eligible for one of two concurrent receipt programs have received their retroactive payments, officials in charge of the retro pay program say. Approximately 33,000 pay files still need to be reviewed from a pool of 133,000 potential recipients, said Thomas J. Pamperin, deputy director of the compensation and pension service for the Department of Veterans Affairs. That review is expected to be completed by mid-November, according to the Defense Finance and Account Service. The catch-up payments, necessary because of difficulties implementing the Combat-Related Special Compensation and Concurrent Retirement and Disability Pay programs, so far total close to \$150 million. The average size of payments made by VA has climbed to \$2,100, up from an average of \$1,500 paid to the first 30,000 or so retro pay recipients last fall. When all files have been reviewed, DFAS will turn its attention to a new pool of underpaid retirees. That second group of 12,000 to 16,000 retirees became eligible for CRSC or CRDP between the time the retro pay program began last summer and April of this year, when DFAS finally had computer programs in place to make accurate and timely concurrent receipt payments as retirees become eligible. "This has proved to be an incredibly complex process for all involved" said Pamperin, who leads a team of VA officials that has worked closely with DFAS on the retro pay program for two years.

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> Until CRSC began on 1 JUN 03, and CRDP on 1 JAN 04, all military retirees with service-related disabilities had to accept a dollar-for-dollar reduction in taxable retired pay when they began to receive tax-free VA compensation for their service-related injury or illness. Congress enacted CRSC to allow concurrent receipt for combat-related disabilities. It approved CRDP, under a phased schedule, to benefit retirees with service-related disabilities rated at least 50% disabling. Most of the underpayments being corrected occurred when retirees eligible for CRDP or

CRSC saw their VA disability rating raised. A higher rating means more VA compensation, and that higher amount is payable back to the date the retiree applied for reconsideration of his or her disability award. Pay records of about half of all retirees drawing CRDP or CRSC are being reviewed but the total amount of retro payments needed is far below the \$500 million figure initially projected.

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> The pay review process also is slower than was expected. Last year, DFAS officials predicted that all back payments would be made by the end of SEP 07. The target now is mid-NOV 07. DFAS has the lead in reviewing pay records. VA is making most of the retro payments. Through late AUG, Pamperin said, VA had paid 56,140 retirees a total of \$119 million in back pay. DFAS, on behalf of the Department of Defense, had paid an additional \$28 million to 17,000 retirees. About one of every three pay records reviewed shows no underpayment. That means many more retirees than projected have been properly compensated and will be getting no retro payments after all. DFAS and VA officials notify retirees only if an underpayment is discovered. Most of the remaining 33,000 files are CRSC recipients. Unlike CRDP, which involves an automatic payment, CRSC is paid only to retirees who apply for it. To do so, they must receive their VA disability rating and show that their disabilities are combat-related. DFAS has set up a retro award hot line for retirees with questions about their entitlement to a back payment. The Hotline number is (877) 327-4457. Customer service representatives are available at that number M-F 08-1630. Military retirees can also find periodic updates on the retro pay at DFAS Web site at: www.dfas.mil.

[Source: Stars & Stripes Tom Philpotts article Sep 07 ++]

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> TRDP UPDATE 05: The Tricare Retiree Dental Program is being opened to military retirees living in all overseas locations. However, retirees outside the current coverage areas - the U.S., its territories and Canada - will have to pay premiums for those services, as all retirees do. Monthly premiums in the U.S. generally run between \$30 and \$50 for an individual, \$60 to \$90 for a family of two, and \$100 to \$155 for a family of three or more, depending on where the retiree is located. Delta Dental organizes the TRDP into five regions, with premiums based on the average cost of living in each region. Information on how TRDP premiums will be set overseas was not available. Federal law has never specifically restricted the geographic scope of the Tricare Retiree Dental Program, run under contract by Delta Dental of California, but until now it has served retirees living only in the U.S., Canada, Guam, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The Defense Department decided to expand the program to overseas areas based on requests from retirees and their families who live abroad.

> The change would make about 100,000 retirees and family members who live abroad eligible for the TRDP, according to a notice published in the 16 APR Federal Register. "Expanding the geographic scope of the program will ensure that all Tricare-eligible retirees are eligible for the same dental benefits, regardless of their location," defense officials said in the Federal Register notice. Officials said expanding the TRDP overseas will not increase the government's costs for the program, because it is maintained entirely by enrollees through premium payments. Enrollees also pay for dental costs in excess of the TRDP coverage limits, and the contractor is solely responsible for program costs in excess of annual premium payments. Tricare spokeswoman Bonnie Powell said details are being worked out about

when the expanded service will become available (i.e. possibly by MAY 08).
For more about the Tricare Retiree Dental Program refer to www.trdp.org/.

[Source: The Drifter

<http://www.leatherneck.com/forums/showthread.php?t=46551>

> article by Kelly Kennedy 21 May 07 ++]

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> IOWA VETERANS HOME UPDATE 01: The Iowa Veterans Home in Marshalltown faces a \$10,000 fine over hundreds of alleged medication errors and the reported theft of painkillers and other drugs intended for veterans. State records also show that an aide at the state-run facility was fired this summer for dispensing medications while she was under the influence of drugs. She also was accused of stealing the veterans' medicine to finance her own use of methamphetamine and marijuana, according to state records. Dan Steen, the care center's commandant, said he is appealing the \$10,000 fine imposed by the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals. He said he is confident the appeal will result in "the truth" coming out, and he questioned the decision by state inspectors to levy a large fine against a government-run facility that provides care for 700 veterans. "We just cause these homes to become deeper in the hole," Steen said. "If a home has done something wrong and there is a fine, you know, those are dollars that could have bought electric lifts or other equipment." According to the inspections department, the Iowa Veterans Home has documented hundreds of medication errors at the facility this year. But because the facility has 700 residents, some of whom may receive a dozen medications daily, the overall error rate has remained well below the 5% limit imposed by federal officials.

> Steen says the home's error rate of 0.0176 of 1% is so low that it's close to perfection and is unheard of in the health care field. In July, however, state inspectors visited the Iowa Veterans Home, reviewed its medication policies and practices, and declared that veterans there were in "immediate jeopardy." Within hours, the home changed its medication policies. The inspectors' report alleges that on 28 JUN, the staff gave one veteran 10 medications that were to be administered to another, much heavier resident. The veteran initially refused some of the drugs, which included anti-psychotic drugs and medications for seizures, but he ultimately accepted them. After the error was discovered, a doctor at the home told workers to monitor the veteran through the night. A few hours later, the man turned red and became incontinent and unresponsive, with his tongue protruding from his mouth. The doctor initially wanted to keep the man at the facility but within a half-hour decided to have him taken by ambulance to a hospital. At the hospital, a breathing tube was inserted, and the veteran was moved to the hospital's intensive care unit. About eight hours later, he showed the first signs of becoming responsive. He was discharged from the hospital two days later and was returned to the Iowa Veterans Home. [Source: Register Staff Writer Clark Kaufman article 9 Sep 07 ++]

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> MOJAVE DESERT VETERAN MEMORIAL: The leader of the nation's largest veterans organization criticized a SEP 07 decision by the 9th Circuit Court to remove a cross from a World War I veterans memorial in California's Mojave Desert as the beginning of the slippery slope of extreme secularism. "This is one more prime example of wrong-headed political correctness and one more critical reason why the current Congress must pass the Public Expression of Religion Act," said American Legion National Commander Marty

Conatser. "This is not about freedom of religion. The First Amendment also says Congress shall pass no law prohibiting the free exercise of religion. The cross is an important symbol to millions of veterans, some of whom had to make the ultimate sacrifice for this nation." Referring to the federal Court's 6 SEP decision, Conatser said that across the nation litigation is being brought by the ACLU and other groups attacking the Boy Scouts, the public display of the Ten Commandments and other symbols of America's religious history. "Today's lawyers and judges are outlawing the values and religious symbols that the Founding Fathers revered and proclaimed as the very foundation of the American republic. Today it's a memorial. Tomorrow, these same judges can order the removal of crosses on veterans gravestones, the dismissal of military chaplains and the closure of base chapels."

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> Conatser pointed out that a loophole in the current law allows the ACLU and other groups to collect millions of dollars in attorney's fees from the taxpayers, who, by and large, support the memorials.

> Congress, in 2004, passed legislation that transferred one acre of the Mojave Desert Memorial on which the cross sits to private ownership, in exchange for five acres of land and thereby effectively removing it from federal jurisdiction. But the circuit court decreed that the federal government couldn't exchange federal lands for private lands in order to maintain the cross that has been the center of the Mojave Desert Veterans Memorial for three quarters of a century. The American Legion is spearheading a nationwide effort to develop a grassroots groundswell of support to pass legislation in Congress that would amend federal law to prevent the use of the legal system in a manner that extorts money from state and local governments.

> "Passage of 'The Veterans Memorials, Boy Scouts, Public Seals, and Other Public Expressions of Religion Protection Act of 2007' (PERA) would prevent the ACLU from mugging America's taxpayers in this manner," Conatser said. "I hope all Americans who are angry about this, write their senators and representatives and demand that they pass PERA. The bills, H.R. 725 and S. 415 are languishing in the Judiciary Committees of both chambers. It's time for Congress to make this public law, before other veterans' memorials are literally desecrated at the whim of judges." [Source: AL Public Relations Division msg 10 Sep 07 ++]

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> VA CLAIM BACKLOG UPDATE 11: Sen. Daniel Akaka, Chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee has expressed concern about a report from the Department of Veterans Affairs Inspector General (OIG) that says VA repeatedly understated data on waiting times for injured veterans seeking medical care. Chairman Akaka said that the Inspector General's report demonstrates VA "continues to skew" information reported to Congress that nearly all primary and specialty care appointments were scheduled within 30 days or less. He called the report on patient waiting times "disturbing," especially in light of the fact that a similar report on wait times was issued by the OIG in 2005. The OIG report contradicts VA claims that 96% of all veterans seeking primary care and 95% of all veterans seeking specialty care were seen within 30 days of their desired dates. The OIG found that veterans waited 30 days or less for only 75% of them. Additionally, OIG found VA's electronic waiting lists were incomplete, with 10 facilities understating lists by more than 53,000 veterans, of whom 62% had waited more than 30 days for a scheduled appointment. The chairman noted that VA's underreporting of waiting times and backlog volumes makes it harder to identify problem

facilities and allocate resources effectively. The OIG examined 700 outpatient appointments for primary and specialty care scheduled for OCT 06 at 10 VA medical facilities in the following cities: Atlanta; Birmingham; Columbia; San Antonio; Dallas; Temple, Texas; Cincinnati; Detroit; Indianapolis; and Chillicothe, Ohio. For more info refer to the OIG report at www.va.gov/oig. [Source: NAUS Weekly Update 14 Sep 07 ++]

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> **DISABLED VET LIFETIME TRICARE COVERAGE:** The Bush administration will ask Congress to provide lifetime Tricare coverage to any servicemember discharged as "unfit" due to service-related physical or mental health conditions, said Donna Shalala, co-chair of the President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors. The Tricare change will be one of the most expensive initiatives in a legislative package the White House will send to Congress by the end of SEP 07. The package is to implement key recommendations of the wounded warrior panel, also known as the Dole-Shalala Commission. The Tricare proposal, if enacted into law, would open military health care to a wave of new beneficiaries, potentially as many as 9,000 to 10,000 newly disabled veterans each year plus families. The Dole-Shalala commission report, released in JUL 07, said the Tricare change should apply only to servicemembers separated for combat-related disabilities. But White House officials, at the urging of Defense officials and service associations, have decided to ask Congress to extend lifetime Tricare coverage to all medically discharged veterans. Shalala said the White House will propose that the Tricare expansion be applied retroactively to veterans medically separated since 2001. Shalala didn't mention a specific retroactive date, but Congress two years ago made eligibility for traumatic injury insurance retroactive to 7 OCT 01, the day U.S. forces invaded Afghanistan and began the global war on terrorism.

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> Under current law, members are separated rather than retired if found unfit for duty because of conditions rated below 20 percent disabling. They receive a disability severance award rather than retired pay. Because they are not "retirees," they and their families are ineligible for lifetime Tricare coverage. They can get VA health care, but family members cannot. From 2000 to 2006, an average of 9,600 servicemembers a year were separated as medically unfit with disability ratings of 20% or less, according to statistics gathered by the Veterans' Disability Benefits Commission, which is due to release its report on 3 OCT. Nearly nine of 10 disabled soldiers were separated rather than retired. Sixty-four percent of sailors with disabilities, 73 percent of disabled airmen and 82 percent of disabled Marines also were released with ratings of 20 percent or less. Shalala and her co-chairman, retired Sen. Robert Dole, said six of 34 action steps that their commission recommends requires legislation. They urged lawmakers to enact the White House initiatives this fall if possible. In addition to expanding Tricare, they said, Congress should:

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> 1.) Authorize the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to provide lifetime treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder to any veteran deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan who seeks treatment.

> 2.) Strengthen support for military families caring for wounded warriors by making them eligible for Tricare-provided respite care and aid and attendant benefits.

> 3.) Amend the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) so that families of combat-injured servicemembers see unpaid leave protection extended from the

current limit of 12 weeks to up to 6 months.

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> Dole said, "End the dual Department of Defense and VA disability systems, by giving DOD responsibility only for finding a member unfit for duty. DOD should pay disabled members an immediate lifetime annuity based on rank and years of service. The revised VA disability pay system should include a monthly transition payment, perhaps equal to final military basic pay. That would be replaced after the veteran settles into civilian life with payment to replace reduced earnings tied to their level of disability and payable until age 65. Veterans also should get a lifetime quality-of-life payment to compensate for life effects of their disabilities." The commission gave no amounts for these payments, leaving that for the Bush administration and Congress to decide. Congress shouldn't worry about the cost, Dole added. "My view was if we spent billions and billions and billions of dollars on getting young men and women in harm's way, we ought to spend what it takes to get them back to nearly a normal life as possible." [Source: Stars and Stripes Tom Philpotts article 22 Sep 07 ++]

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> MONTANA VET CEMETERY UPDATE 01: The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has awarded more than \$4 million to begin construction on the Western Montana State Veterans Cemetery in Missoula MT. The money will be used for the first phase of the cemetery's construction and the agency has agreed to pay any additional costs associated with the 23-acre cemetery. Plans call for an operations and equipment building, a local veterans services office and another building with visitor information and restrooms. Groundbreaking is expected this fall. Democratic U.S. Sens. Max Baucus and Jon Tester noted that Missoula-area veterans worked for six years to get funding for the project. Shortly after Tester was named to the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, organizers asked him for help in cutting through some red tape stalling the project. Tester wrote to and met with VA Secretary James Nicholson to ask for help. "I really appreciate it when you sit down with people and they respond appropriately," Tester said this spring in announcing the project's approval. "That means government is working for us." The new cemetery will be open to any veteran who was honorably discharged from the Armed Forces and to his or her spouse. Montana also has state veterans' cemeteries in Helena and Miles City. [Source: Great Falls Tribune article 20 Sep 07 ++]

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> VA DATA BREACH UPDATE 37: Veterans' personal data and health information remain at risk of identity theft because the Veterans Affairs Department has yet to implement several safety measures, government investigators said. The report by the Government Accountability Office, released 19 SEP, comes more than a year after the VA pledged renewed security efforts after the loss of personal information for 26.5 million veterans and active-duty personnel. It found that VA had not yet fully secured access to its computer network and department facilities nor worked to ensure that only authorized changes and updates to VA computer programs were made. Moreover, VA has operated without a chief information security officer JUN 06 to oversee changes and still lacks clear and adequate procedures for quickly notifying veterans when their sensitive data is lost, the report said. "Because these recommendations have not yet been implemented, unnecessary risk exists that the personal information of veterans and others, such as medical providers, will be exposed to data tampering, fraud and inappropriate disclosure,"

investigators said. Responding, VA Deputy Secretary Gordon Mansfield said he generally agreed with the findings but insisted that VA's data security was legally adequate. Many of the recommendations, which were proposed a year ago by the GAO and VA inspector general, were in the process of being implemented, he said. "VA has taken aggressive and proactive measures that are, or were at the time, above and beyond legal requirements, such as mandating encryption of sensitive data accessed remotely or used outside VA facilities," Mansfield wrote.

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> In MAY 06, VA stunned the veteran community when it announced that thieves had stolen a computer hard drive containing millions of names, Social Security numbers and birth dates from a VA employee's Maryland home. The hard drive was eventually recovered intact, but not until after VA suffered blistering criticism from Congress for waiting more than two weeks to call in the FBI. VA Secretary Jim Nicholson, who wasn't immediately informed either, said he was outraged and pledged to make VA the gold standard in data security. "The security regimen at VA has been totally revised," Nicholson, who stepped down 1 OCT, reported to Congress in late SEP. "I believe that this reorganization, and the modification and strengthening of our regulations governing IT, its use, and its security will minimize the risk of a significant data loss in the future." The GAO said 19 SEP, VA had made progress by developing a plan to correct identified weaknesses in its information technology system, requiring security and privacy training for VA employees, and providing regular reports to the VA secretary. But significant gaps remain because responsibility for overseeing VA data security is split among several offices and no clear process exists for the officials to work together. The GAO cited last January's threat of identity theft for 1.8 million veterans and physicians after a backup hard drive with their Social Security numbers went missing from a research site in Birmingham AL. Medical providers involved in the incident were not notified until 85 days after the data loss because VA did not have clear plans in place for coordinating with other agencies, which in this case was the Department of Health and Human Services. "Until VA addresses recommendations to resolve identified weaknesses, it will have limited assurance that it can adequately protect its systems and information," the GAO said. [Source: NavyTimes Hope Yen article 19 SEP 07 ++]

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> SOUTH DAKOTA VETERANS BONUS UPDATE 02: The State of South Dakota is paying a veterans bonus of up to \$500 to certain servicemembers based on monthly service during qualifying dates. Bonuses are available to servicemembers who:

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> -- Were legal residents of the State for at least six months immediately preceding entry into the Armed Forces.

> -- Are currently on active duty or were honorably discharged from the Armed Forces.

> -- Served on active duty during one of the following periods.

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> a. For service between Mar. 4, 1991, and Sept. 10, 2001, payment will be made to those who served in an imminent danger pay area or were awarded the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Southwest Asia Service Medal, Kosovo Campaign Medal or any other United States campaign or service medal awarded for participation in combat operations against hostile forces.

> b. All active duty service between the dates of Sept. 11, 2001, and a date

to be determined qualifies for a bonus payment. This program also allows payment for active duty servicemembers during the Operation Desert Storm dates of Aug. 2, 1990, to Mar. 3, 1991.

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> Application forms may be obtained by writing to: SD Veterans Bonus, 500 E. Capitol, Pierre, SD 57501, or by calling (605) 773-7251. Forms can also be requested by e-mail by writing to john.fette@state.sd.us. Writers should include their service branch and dates of service, street or post office box number, city, State and zip code. South Dakota residents can apply through the nearest county or tribal veterans service officer. [Source: NAUS Weekly Update 21 Sep 07 ++]

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> COLA 2008 UPDATE 07: A steep drop in energy prices heavily influenced the continued decrease in the August Consumer Price Index (CPI), the measure used to determine the annual cost of living adjustments (COLAs) for military retired pay, Social Security, and other federal annuities. On 19 SEP the Bureau of Labor Statistics announced the August CPI value, indicating that inflation decreased 0.2% from the July figure. That means inflation has risen a cumulative 2.1% for the first 11 months of FY2007. Last month it was reported that based on past years' experience, the COLA could be in the 2.3% to 2.5% range for 2008. With continued deflation in August we'll have to modify our prediction. This is the only year during the last three decades that inflation decreased in both July and August. September may bring an increase, but expect a COLA in the 2.0% to 2.3% realm for 2008. The Bureau of Labor Statistics announced that the September CPI value (the final value needed to calculate the 2008 COLA) will be announced on 17 OCT. For more information refer to MOAA's Website <http://moaaonline.org/ct/Odwy1DS1mmnc/>. [Source: MOAA Leg Update 21 Sep 07 ++]

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> MILITARY ID CARDS (RETIREE) UPDATE 01: A single form of identification is no longer sufficient for retiree ID card renewals at issuing sites using updated software for the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System/Realtime Automated Personnel Identification System. Retirees and their dependents need to provide a primary photo form of identification and a secondary non-photo form of identification. Examples of photo IDs: military ID card; driver's license; federal, state or local government ID; U.S. or foreign passport; and foreign national ID. Examples of non-photo IDs: Social Security card; voter registration card; birth certificate; U.S. citizen ID card (INS I-97); school record or report card; clinic, doctor, or hospital record; and a day care or nursery record. ID cards for retirees need updating only if the card was lost, stolen or damaged, or if the retiree undergoes a change in status. Retirees' family members and survivors age 75 or over may receive a permanent ID card. [Source: Armed Forces News 21 SEP 07 ++]

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> VA HEADSTONES & MARKERS UPDATE 01: The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) published a final rule to amend VA regulations applicable to Government-furnished headstones or markers for placement in a national, State veterans, or private cemetery. The final rule specifies that a veteran's spouse or surviving spouse, whose remains are unavailable for burial, and who died after 11 NOV 98 is eligible for a memorial headstone or marker for placement in a national or State veterans cemetery. This final

rule also specifies that a veteran's dependent child, whose remains are unavailable for burial, and who died after 22 DEC 06 is eligible for a memorial headstone or marker for placement in a national or State veterans cemetery. Lastly, this final rule extends for 1 year the authority to provide a Government-furnished headstone or marker for already marked graves of eligible veterans whose deaths occurred on or after 11 SEP 01 for placement in private cemeteries. This final rule is necessary to incorporate statutory amendments into VA regulations. [Source: Federal Record 19 SEP 07 ++]

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> PASSPORT OBTAINMENT UPDATE 02: Congressman John Carter (TX-31) reminded U.S. citizens traveling in the Western Hemisphere that the temporary Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) accommodation allowing U.S. citizens to travel by air using a Department of State (DOS) official proof of passport application receipt ended at midnight on 30 SEP 07. Effective 1 OCT 07 U.S. citizens traveling by air to Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean and Bermuda must present a passport or other WHTI-compliant document to enter or depart from the United States. U.S. citizens who depart the country under the proof of application accommodation prior to 1 OCT will be readmitted with these same documents if returning to the United States after 30 SEP. Currently, citizens traveling by vehicle or on a cruise across the border to Mexico or Canada do not need a passport, but must show government-issued identification. U.S. citizens arriving by land and sea must prove that they are U.S. citizens. This rule may change as early as JAN 08, when the Departments of Homeland Security and State begin to implement the WHTI at land and sea ports of entry. For more information on passport regulations, visit www.dhs.gov. [Source: Federal Record 19 SEP 07 ++]

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> RETIREMENT TAX CONSIDERATIONS UPDATE 02: Taxes on land and the buildings on it are the biggest source of revenue for local governments. They are not imposed by states but by the tens of thousands of cities, townships, counties, school districts and other assessing jurisdictions. The state's role is to specify the maximum rate on the market value of the property, or a percentage of it, as the legal standard for the local assessors to follow. The local assessor determines the value to be taxed. You can't escape property taxes in any state. But you can find significantly low rates in certain parts of the country. Most states give residents over a certain age a break on their property taxes. With some taxes, you'll need a relatively low income to qualify. Forty states provide either property tax credits or homestead exemptions that limit the value of assessed property subject to tax. There may be other tax breaks available, depending on where you live. All 50 states offer some type of property tax relief program, such as freezes that will lock in the assessed value of your property once you reach a certain age, or deferral of taxes until the homeowner moves or dies. They ultimately have to be paid. In addition, counties and municipalities often have their own property tax relief plans. Based on data from the 2002 census, the following five states have the lowest local property taxes per capita/year: Arkansas (\$191), Alabama (\$285), Kentucky (\$376), New Mexico (\$380), and Oklahoma (\$425). The states with the highest local property taxes per capita/year are: New Jersey (\$1,871), Connecticut (\$1,733), New York (\$1,402), and Rhode Island (\$1,369).

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> Property Tax Circuit Breaker - Retirees with low incomes and high housing

costs may face property tax bills that are higher than they can manage. Some states target property tax relief to those homeowners bearing the greatest burden. Property tax reform that takes into account a homeowner's ability to pay, such as a so-called "property tax circuit breaker," can better protect low-income homeowners from rising property taxes that accompany rising property values. Targeted property tax relief avoids sharp reductions in funding for locally provided public services and inequities based solely on date of purchase. A property tax circuit breaker prevents property taxes from "overloading" a taxpayer. Under a typical circuit breaker, the state sets a maximum percentage of income that an eligible family can be expected to pay in property taxes. If property taxes exceed this limit, the state then provides a rebate or credit to the taxpayer. Currently, of the 31 states and the District of Columbia with circuit breakers for homeowners, only six and the District of Columbia permit all households to participate in the program without regard to age.

> Other property tax relief strategies that may be used to target property tax relief include homestead exemptions which exempt a certain amount of a home's value from taxation, credits to rebate a certain percentage of taxes paid, and deferral programs to allow low-income elderly homeowners to defer payment of property taxes until property is sold.

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> Property Tax Swaps - More and more states are cutting property taxes in exchange for increases in sales or other taxes. Idaho, New Jersey, South Carolina and Texas took this step in 2006. In New Jersey the state increased the sales tax by one cent with half of it designated for property tax relief in 2006 and possibly the full amount in future years. Voters in Idaho also approved a one cent sales tax increase that reduces property taxes by \$260 million. South Carolina's Republican governor, Mark Sanford, signed a measure that promises to cut average property taxes by 60% and makes up the revenue by increasing the sales tax by one cent. The revenue will be used to support the Homestead Exemption Fund. In Texas the state lowered property taxes by increasing the taxes on cigarettes and some business activity.

> Best and Worst States: Based on data from the 2002 census, the following five states have the lowest local property taxes per capita/year. They are Arkansas (\$191), Alabama (\$285), Kentucky (\$376), New Mexico (\$380), and Oklahoma (\$425). The states with the highest local property taxes per capita/year are: New Jersey (\$1,871), Connecticut (\$1,733), New York (\$1,402), and Rhode Island (\$1,369).

> [Source: www.retirementliving.com/RLtaxes.html Jul 07 ++]

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> 110th CONGRESS U.S. HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES: Want to call or see you congressman regarding legislation that affects your benefits or well being. Following is an alphabetical listing of all House of Representative's phone numbers and room assignments at the Capital:

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> 1. Members who have died or resigned appear in bold brackets.

> 2. Room numbers with 3 digits are in the Cannon HOB, 4 digits beginning with 1 are in the Longworth HOB, 4 digits beginning with 2 are in the Rayburn HOB. Room assignments are effective January 4, 2007

> 3. Incoming calls: Calls from the public may be made by dialing (202) 22 plus the five-digit number listed in this directory.

> 4. Democrats are indicated in roman; Republicans in italic; Resident Commissioner and Delegates in boldface.

>

> Name Phone
Room

> Abercrombie, Neil, 1st HI 52726 1502
> Ackerman, Gary L., 5th NY 52601 2243
> Aderholt, Robert B., 4th AL 54876 1433
> Akin, W. Todd, 2d MO 52561 117
> Alexander, Rodney, 5th LA 58490 316
> Allen, Thomas H., 1st ME 56116 1127
> Altmire, Jason, 4th PA 52565 1419
> Andrews, Robert E., 1st NJ 56501 2439
> Arcuri, Michael A., 24th NY 53665 327
> Baca, Joe, 43d CA 56161 1527
> Bachmann, Michele, 6th MN 52331 412
> Bachus, Spencer, 6th AL 54921 2246
> Baird, Brian, 3d WA 53536 2443
> Baker, Richard H., 6th LA 53901 341
> Baldwin, Tammy, 2d WI 52906 2446
> Barrett, J. Gresham, 3d SC 55301 439
> Barrow, John, 12th GA 52823 213
> Bartlett, Roscoe G., 6th MD 52721 2412
> Barton, Joe, 6th TX 52002 2109
> Bean, Melissa L., 8th IL 53711 318
> Becerra, Xavier, 31st CA 56235 1119
> Berkley, Shelley, 1st NV 55965 405
> Berman, Howard L., 28th CA 54695 2221
> Berry, Marion, 1st AR 54076 2305
> Biggert, Judy, 13th IL 53515 1034
> Bilbray, Brian P., 50th CA 55452 227
> Bilirakis, Gus M., 9th FL 55755 1630
> Bishop, Rob, 1st UT 50453 124
> Bishop, Sanford D., Jr., 2d GA 53631 2429
> Bishop, Timothy H., 1st NY 53826 225
> Blackburn, Marsha, 7th TN 52811 509
> Blumenauer, Earl, 3d OR 54811 2267
> Blunt, Roy, 7th MO 56536 217
> Boehner, John A., 8th OH 56205 1011
> Bonner, Jo, 1st AL 54931 422
> Bono, Mary, 45th CA 55330 104
> Boozman, John, 3d AR 54301 1519
> Bordallo, Madeleine Z., (Delegate) GU 51188 427
> Boren, Dan, 2d OK 52701 216
> Boswell, Leonard L., 3d IA 53806 1427
> Boucher, Rick, 9th VA 53861 2187
> Boustany, Charles W., Jr., 7th LA .. 52031 1117
> Boyd, Allen, 2d FL 55235 1227
> Boyda, Nancy E., 2d KS 56601 1711
> Brady, Kevin, 8th TX 54901 301
> Brady, Robert A., 1st PA 54731 206
> Braley, Bruce L., 1st IA 52911 1408
> Brown, Corrine, 3d FL 50123 2336
> Brown, Henry E., Jr., 1st SC 53176 1124
> Brown-Waite, Ginny, 5th FL 51002 414

> Buchanan, Vern, 13th FL 55015 1516
> Burgess, Michael C., 26th TX 57772 1224
> Burton, Dan, 5th IN 52276 2308
> Butterfield, G. K., 1st NC 53101 413
> Buyer, Steve, 4th IN 55037 2230
> Calvert, Ken, 44th CA 51986 2201
> Camp, Dave, 4th MI 53561 137
> Campbell, John, 48th CA 55611 1728
> Cannon, Chris, 3d UT 57751 2436
> Cantor, Eric, 7th VA 52815 329
> Capito, Shelley Moore, 2d WV 52711 1431
> Capps, Lois, 23d CA 53601 1110
> Capuano, Michael E., 8th MA 55111 1530
> Cardoza, Dennis A., 18th CA 56131 435
> Carnahan, Russ, 3d MO 52671 1710
> Carney, Christopher P., 10th PA 53731 416
> Carson, Julia, 7th IN 54011 2455
> Carter, John R., 31st TX 53864 408
> Castle, Michael N., At Large, DE 54165 1233
> Castor, Kathy, 11th FL 53376 317
> Chabot, Steve, 1st OH 52216 129
> Chandler, Ben, 6th KY 54706 1504
> Christensen, Donna M., (Delegate) VI 51790 1510
> Clarke, Yvette D., 11th NY 56231 1029
> Clay, Wm. Lacy, 1st MO 52406 434
> Cleaver, Emanuel, 5th MO 54535 1641
> Clyburn, James E., 6th SC 53315 2135
> Coble, Howard, 6th NC 53065 2468
> Cohen, Steve, 9th TN 53265 1004
> Cole, Tom, 4th OK 56165 236
> Conaway, K. Michael, 11th TX 53605 511
> Conyers, John, Jr., 14th MI 55126 2426
> Cooper, Jim, 5th TN 54311 1536
> Costa, Jim, 20th CA 53341 1314
> Costello, Jerry F., 12th IL 55661 2408
> Courtney, Joe, 2d CT 52076 215
> Cramer, Robert E. (Bud), Jr., 5th AL 54801 2184
> Crenshaw, Ander, 4th FL 52501 127
> Crowley, Joseph, 7th NY 53965 2404
> Cubin, Barbara, At Large, WY 52311 1114
> Cuellar, Henry, 28th TX 51640 336
> Culberson, John Abney, 7th TX 52571 428
> Cummings, Elijah E., 7th MD 54741 2235
> Davis, Artur, 7th AL 52665 208
> Davis, Danny K., 7th IL 55006 2159
> Davis, David, 1st TN 56356 514
> Davis, Geoff, 4th KY 53465 1108
> Davis, Jo Ann, 1st VA 54261 1123
> Davis, Lincoln, 4th TN 56831 410
> Davis, Susan A., 53d CA 52040 1526
> Davis, Tom, 11th VA 51492 2348
> Deal, Nathan, 9th GA 55211 2133
> DeFazio, Peter A., 4th OR 56416 2134
> DeGette, Diana, 1st CO 54431 2421
> Delahunt, William D., 10th MA 53111 2454

> DeLauro, Rosa L., 3d CT 53661 2262
> Dent, Charles W., 15th PA 56411 116
> Diaz-Balart, Lincoln, 21st FL 54211 2244
> Diaz-Balart, Mario, 25th FL 52778 328
> Dicks, Norman D., 6th WA 55916 2467
> Dingell, John D., 15th MI 54071 2328
> Doggett, Lloyd, 25th TX 54865 201
> Donnelly, Joe, 2d IN 53915 1218
> Doolittle, John T., 4th CA 52511 2410
> Doyle, Michael F., 14th PA 52135 401
> Drake, Thelma D., 2d VA 54215 1208
> Dreier, David, 26th CA 52305 233
> Duncan, John J., Jr., 2d TN 55435 2207
> Edwards, Chet, 17th TX 56105 2369
> Ehlers, Vernon J., 3d MI 53831 2182
> Ellison, Keith, 5th MN 54755 1130
> Ellsworth, Brad, 8th IN 54636 513
> Emanuel, Rahm, 5th IL 54061 1319
> Emerson, Jo Ann, 8th MO 54404 2440
> Engel, Eliot L., 17th NY 52464 2161
> English, Phil, 3d PA 55406 2332
> Eshoo, Anna G., 14th CA 58104 205
> Etheridge, Bob, 2d NC 54531 1533
> Everett, Terry, 2d AL 52901 2312
> Faleomavaega, Eni F. H., (Delegate) AS ... 58577 2422
> Fallin, Mary, 5th OK 52132 1432
> Farr, Sam, 17th CA 52861 1221
> Fattah, Chaka, 2d PA 54001 2301
> Feeney, Tom, 24th FL 52706 323
> Ferguson, Mike, 7th NJ 55361 214
> Filner, Bob, 51st CA 58045 2428
> Flake, Jeff, 6th AZ 52635 240
> Forbes, J. Randy, 4th VA 56365 307
> Fortenberry, Jeff, 1st NE 54806 1517
> Fortun~ o, Luis G., (Resident Commissioner) PR 52615 126
> Fossella, Vito, 13th NY 53371 2453
> Foxx, Virginia, 5th NC 52071 430
> Frank, Barney, 4th MA 55931 2252
> Franks, Trent, 2d AZ 54576 1237
> Frelinghuysen, Rodney P., 11th NJ 55034 2442
> Gallegly, Elton, 24th CA 55811 2309
> Garrett, Scott, 5th NJ 54465 1318
> Gerlach, Jim, 6th PA 54315 308
> Giffords, Gabrielle, 8th AZ 52542 502
> Gilchrest, Wayne T., 1st MD 55311 2245
> Gillibrand, Kirsten E., 20th NY 55614 120
> Gillmor, Paul E., 5th OH 56405 1203
> Gingrey, Phil, 11th GA 52931 119
> Gohmert, Louie, 1st TX 53035 510
> Gonzalez, Charles A., 20th TX 53236 303
> Goode, Virgil H., Jr., 5th VA 54711 1520
> Goodlatte, Bob, 6th VA 55431 2240
> Gordon, Bart, 6th TN 54231 2310
> Granger, Kay, 12th TX 55071 440
> Graves, Sam, 6th MO 57041 1415

> Green, Al, 9th TX 57508 425
> Green, Gene, 29th TX 51688 2335
> Grijalva, Rau' I M., 7th AZ 52435 1440
> Gutierrez, Luis V., 4th IL 58203 2266
> Hall, John J., 19th NY 55441 1217
> Hall, Ralph M., 4th TX 56673 2405
> Hare, Phil, 17th IL 55905 1118
> Harman, Jane, 36th CA 58220 2400
> Hastert, J. Dennis, 14th IL 52976 2304
> Hastings, Alcee L., 23d FL 51313 2353
> Hastings, Doc, 4th WA 55816 1214
> Hayes, Robin, 8th NC 53715 130
> Heller, Dean, 2d NV 56155 1023
> Hensarling, Jeb, 5th TX 53484 132
> Herger, Wally, 2d CA 53076 2268
> Herseth, Stephanie, At Large, SD ... 52801 331
> Higgins, Brian, 27th NY 53306 431
> Hill, Baron P., 9th IN 55315 223
> Hinchey, Maurice D., 22d NY 56335 2431
> Hinojosa, Ruben, 15th TX 52531 2463
> Hirono, Mazie K., 2d HI 54906 1229
> Hobson, David L., 7th OH 54324 2346
> Hodes, Paul W., 2d NH 55206 506
> Hoekstra, Peter, 2d MI 54401 2234
> Holden, Tim, 17th PA 55546 2417
> Holt, Rush D., 12th NJ 55801 1019
> Honda, Michael M., 15th CA 52631 1713
> Hooley, Darlene, 5th OR 55711 2430
> Hoyer, Steny H., 5th MD 54131 1705
> Hulshof, Kenny C., 9th MO 52956 409
> Hunter, Duncan, 52d CA 55672 2265
> Inglis, Bob, 4th SC 56030 330
> Inslee, Jay, 1st WA 56311 403
> Israel, Steve, 2d NY 53335 432
> Issa, Darrell E., 49th CA 53906 211
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- > Young, Don, At Large, AK 55765 2111

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> VETERAN LEGISLATION STATUS 30 SEP 07: For a listing of Congressional bills of interest to the veteran community that have been introduced in the 110th Congress refer to the Bulletin attachment. By clicking on the bill number indicated you can access the actual legislative language of the bill and see if your representative has signed on as a cosponsor. Support of these bills through cosponsorship by other legislators is critical if they are ever going to move through the legislative process for a floor vote to become law. A good indication on that likelihood is the number of cosponsors who have signed onto the bill. A cosponsor is a member of Congress who has joined one or more other members in his/her chamber (i.e. House or Senate) to sponsor a bill or amendment. The member who introduces the bill is considered the sponsor. Members subsequently signing on are called cosponsors. Any number of members may cosponsor a bill in the House or Senate. At <http://thomas.loc.gov> you can also review a copy of each bill, determine its current status, the committee it has been assigned to, and if your legislator is a sponsor or cosponsor of it. To determine what bills, amendments your representative has sponsored, cosponsored, or dropped sponsorship on refer to <http://thomas.loc.gov/bss/d110/sponlst.html>. The key to increasing cosponsorship on veteran related bills is letting our representatives know of veteran's feelings on issues. At the end of some listed bills is a web link that can be used to do that. Otherwise, you can locate on <http://thomas.loc.gov> who your representative is and his/her phone number, mailing address, or email/website to communicate with a message or letter of your own making. [Source: RAO Bulletin Attachment 30 Sep 07 ++]

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