

November 2022



## AREA VI AUXILIARY LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Hello Everyone; This Legislative Update is prepared for Area VI Auxiliary, Area VI Enlisted Association, Associate Members, Spouses, Retirees, families and friend. The Area VI Auxiliary Legislative Update is to provided updated information on Active Call-To-Actions from EANGUS.

This the first Issue of the Area VI Auxiliary Legislative Update. If there is anything that needs corrected, changed or added please forward to [rablab1999@gmail.com](mailto:rablab1999@gmail.com). Suggestions and recommendations are welcome and encouraged.

### **Answering the Call-To-Actions:**

[Procedures on how to Answer the Call-To-Action](#)

Legislation Center:

[About the Legislative Action Center and Auxiliary](#)

[Legislative Chair](#)

[The most current Call-To-Actions currently working are found on \(page 4\):](#)

Supporting information on each Call-To-Action provided by EANGUS (found on EANGUS website)

## Answering The Call-To-Action Instructions

Provided below are the instructions that will help you understand the complete process and why it is important to support the Call-To-Action.

After you receive [The Call-To-Action](#), forward this information to the members in your state and encourage them to answer the calls. This can also include associate members, neighbors, friends and other family members. You can answer the call once a day if you want. Remember, the easiest way is to download and use Voter Voice on your phone or on your computer go to: <https://www.votervoice.net/mobile/EANGUS/Campaigns>. Or <https://eanqus.org/legislative-action-center/>

Provide a copy of the response from EANGUS, and any responses you receive from the legislators by forwarding them to your state legislative chair (in this case the Auxiliary Area VI Director Richard A. Bryant). This can also include contacts you make at the state level as long as it has to do with the National Guard.

For those of you who are new to the Auxiliary, we keep a record by state of the number of letters, emails, phone calls, visits and responses. The state numbers are turned into the area legislative director, in this case the (Auxiliary Area VI Director Richard A. Bryant) who in turn sends figures to the national legislative chair, Margie Holcomb. Her report is then sent to the EANGUS Legislative Director, Kevin Hollinger.

We need to support these legislative efforts to gain benefits for the Guard, plus work to keep the benefits that have already been earned. I do receive at times a comment from individuals, indicating that they will not or do not support a certain Call-To-Action.

Yes you are right, you Can't tell them what to do, but you can provide the information to them and it is up to the individual to answer the Call-To-Action or not. If you need further assistance contact Richard A. Bryant, Area VI Auxiliary Director, NM at [rablab1995@gmail.com](mailto:rablab1995@gmail.com).



# Legislative Action Center

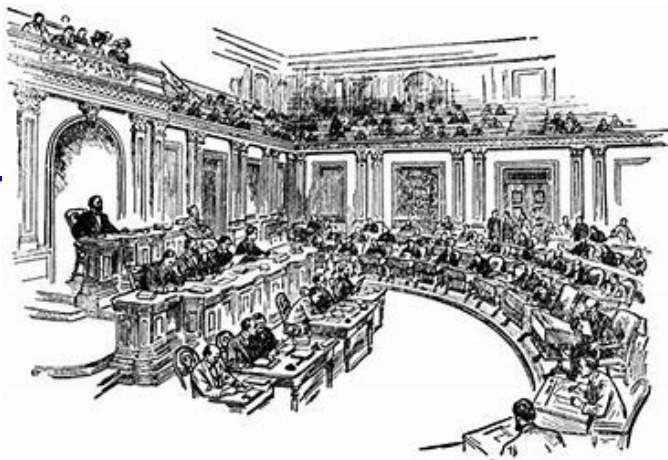


- ⇒ *EANGUS speaks with your US Representatives in the House and Senate on a daily basis. Our agenda focuses on you – members of the Army and Air National Guard. However, we can't do it all alone. We need you to contact your respective Congressmen and Senators to voice your opinions and concerns on issues that affect your National Guard careers and benefits.*
- ⇒ *The Legislative Committee works with the EANGUS Auxiliary President, Area Directors, State Presidents and Area Legislative Points of Contact to inform the state auxiliaries of legislative issues and the recommended action to be taken in support of the Guard and their families.*
- ⇒ *The committee recognizes states and individuals for their legislative activity with an awards program at the national conference.*

*Current Legislative Chair: Trayce Young ,*

*email:*

[trayce.young@lrsd.org](mailto:trayce.young@lrsd.org)



**Please join us by reaching out to your Senator and member of Congress to vocalize your support,**

**go to:**

**<https://www.votervoice.net/mobile/EANGUS/Campaigns>.**

**Or <https://eangus.org/legislative-action-center/>**

**and respond**



# Legislative Action Center

## **Current Call-To-Actions:**

**Clicking** on each one below will take you to the Position

[Suspension of Discharges for Vaccine Refusal \(Page 5\)](#)

[Major Richard Star Act \(Senate\) \(Page 6\)](#)

[Major Richard Star Act \(House Side\) \(Page 7\)](#)

[Space Force Reserve Component Importance \(Page 8\)](#)

[Equity for Guard and Reserve Act \(Page 9\)](#)

[Guard and Reserve GI Bill Parity Act \(Page 10-11\)](#)

**The following Position Papers will provide information to support each of the seven Call to Actions.**

## Suspension of Discharges for Vaccine Refusal

Brought to my attention by several members of the Area VI Auxiliary and Enlisted Association more information was needed to understand what the [Suspension of Discharges for Vaccine Refusal](#) is about.

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During the EANGUS National Conference held in Little Rock, Arkansas, in August 2022, a delegate from the Alabama National Guard Association made the following motion from the floor of our General Session:

**Motion:** Alabama would like to make a motion that EANGUS request the Department of Defense to suspend discharging unvaccinated service members until a Supreme Court ruling can be made on the issue of mandatory implementation of experimental medicine. This motion was amended and recommended being referred to the Executive Council.

**Discussion:** The motion was subsequently reviewed by the EANGUS Executive Council, and a majority of the council supports the following. The basis for this motion is to protect our force structure and combat capability consistent with the 2001 and 2004 Federal Court rulings that ended mandatory military vaccinations for Anthrax and the many Federal Court rulings that currently exist to suspend mandatory vaccinations on personnel working in various industries across this nation. Making our troops decide between getting the COVID-19 vaccine or their careers is wrong and unconstitutional and violates trust in the document they have all sworn to defend. We predict that if there is no compromise on this issue, it will continue to breach the trust of senior subordinate relationships. In addition, it will critically interrupt the military services' force structure and combat readiness.

After consulting with numerous commissioned and enlisted unit leaders across the country, EANGUS is inclined to believe that the Department of Defense's response to COVID-19 refusals is inappropriate based on current statistical knowledge and should stop all discharges immediately to protect force structure. If the Supreme Court rules that requiring mandatory vaccination of U.S. military forces is constitutional in the future, DOD can reintroduce its position at that time. EANGUS respectfully calls for Legislation to stop discharges and the stoppage of pay of all uniformed and civilian personnel due to their personal decision to refuse the COVID-19 vaccine. If there continues to be no compromise on this issue, we will lose thousands of good, competent, and qualified Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines. In addition to that loss, we will continue to interrupt senior subordinate relationships within all ranks of military service in an environment where recruiting has already proven to be an unprecedented challenge.

For more information regarding this issue or any other National Guard issues, please do not hesitate to contact Kevin Hollinger, Legislative Director, at [kevin@eangus.org](mailto:kevin@eangus.org) or contact him directly at (202) 670-1826



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**Major Richard Star Act (SENATE)**

The Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States (EANGUS), on behalf of nearly 450,000 Guardsmen across the 50 states, three territories, and the District of Columbia, urges the 117th Congress to pass the "Major Richard Starr Act."

Military retirees with 20 or more years of service qualify for retirement pay based on their dedicated service to our nation. These retirees may also qualify for disability compensation for any injuries caused or aggravated by their military service.

In 2004, EANGUS successfully advocated Congress implement concurrent receipt for retirees rated 50 percent disabled or more significant. However, remaining to be approved are 40% disabled and below and those unable to complete 20 years of service due to service-connected injuries or illness. There are approximately 210,000 of these individuals, known as Chapter 61 retirees. Some retirees who suffered from injuries incurred in combat are eligible for Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) which mitigates some loss in pay due to the offset. There are approximately 42,000 of these individuals.

EANGUS has long argued that retired pay and V.A. service-connected disability compensation are fundamentally different benefits granted for various reasons. Military retired pay is an earned benefit for vested years of service. Service-connected disability compensation is for injury. To deny retired pay because of a disability is an injustice.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that eliminating full concurrent receipt would cost more than \$30 billion over ten years. An incremental approach chips away at the total cost by eliminating subsets of the population still awaiting concurrent receipt of both pays.

The veterans most needed are those with combat injuries and less than 20 years of service. The Major Richard Star Act would provide total offset relief. This also reduces the number of people still awaiting total concurrent receipt. It commensurately minimizes the cost of total concurrent receipt for all retirees who should keep their retired pay and disability compensation.

For more information on the Major Richard Star Act or any other National Guard issues, please do not hesitate to contact Kevin Hollinger at [kevin@eangus.org](mailto:kevin@eangus.org) or contact him direct at (202) 670-1826

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*Safeguarding the Soldiers and Airmen of the National Guard, and their Families*



## Major Richard Star Act (House Side)

### **This is the Second Message from this Call-To-Action:**

The Senate Armed Services Committee has approved the Senate version of the annual NDAA (S.4543). The Senate bill will go to the Senate floor for approval. Senators Jon Tester (Mont.) and Michael Crapo (Idaho) will file a Senate floor amendment to add a provision to this "Must-Pass" bill to expand concurrent receipt.

In the House, the concurrent receipt legislation titled the "Major Richard Star Act" (H.R. 1282) currently has 314 cosponsors. House rules allow a Member of Congress to file a motion with the House Clerk to place their legislation on the Consensus Calendar once their legislation has accumulated 290 cosponsors. Suppose the legislation maintains at least 290 cosponsors for 25 legislative days, and the committee of jurisdiction does not report the legislation to the House floor. In that case, it will be placed on the Consensus Calendar, allowing House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to bring legislation to the House floor for a vote. EANGUS argues that retired pay is for years of arduous military service paid by the Department of Defense, while disability pay is for lifelong injury paid by the V.A. To reduce retirement pay because of a disability is an injustice.

EANGUS is asking you to help push our position within Congress! Please forward the attached message to your Congressional Representatives, Vice-President, and the President.

For more information regarding the Major Richard Star Act (H.R. 1282) or any other National Guard issues, please do not hesitate to contact Kevin Hollinger at [kevin@eangus.org](mailto:kevin@eangus.org) or contact him direct at (202) 670-1826



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### Space Force Reserve Component Importance

Space is critical to national security, and military space missions cannot be executed without the National Guard and reserve component. As Congress and the Department of Defense consider new options for enhancing operations in the space domain, the national guard and reserve component must be included within the Space Force's operational structure. Ensure the reserves and national guard are fully resourced to support all space operations facets and are fully incorporated as a functional reserve component of the Space Force.

The space domain is now a contested operational environment. The Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 National Defense Authorization Act created the U.S. Space Force as the sixth armed service to further develop the space domain's United States combat capabilities. As with all other warfighting domains, the Space Force must have a surge-to-war power, and the only way to get that is from the reserve component.

The National Guard has been a part of the space missions since 1996. Nearly 3,000 reservists, National Guardsmen, and civilians perform space operations across more than 16 space support units in multiple states and countries. These service members are highly experienced, and many work as leaders in the space industry.

Locations of space units within the national guard and reserves have proven to help recruit employees from the space industry. National Guard and reserve component space servicemembers are also highly sought-after as civilian employees due to the experience they received during their military service. The reserve and National Guard will prove vital to the Space Force's capacity because the reserve component will fill a critical gap. The reserve component has been a part of space for quite some time, so removing their space mission would remove a significant knowledge base vital to Space Force's mission.

It is integral to the Total Force mission that reserve-component servicemembers continue to bring their critical expertise to the space mission and the Space Force. Creating a Space reserve component would provide the Space Force with combat surge capabilities in the space domain.

The former Chief of the National Guard Bureau, General Joseph Lengyel, testified in March 2020 that reserve component forces under the proper military service achieve readiness. "I believe that one of the best things about [the National Guard] is we mirror the culture of our parent service. So, there is only one standard to be a soldier in the Army. There is only one standard to be an airman in the Air Force. There will be a standard to be a space warrior in the...Space Force and I believe that it is important that the space capability currently in the National Guard should move into the Space Force."

The reserve component has always been a complement to active duty. They bring a unique ability to recruit industry specialists who would not be interested in serving full-time capacity. Reserve component service members would ensure that Space Force stays at the leading edge of technology. We know how valuable the reserves are in every other branch, so we know that Space Force must create and reserve components.

Don't hesitate to contact the EANGUS Legislative Director Kevin Hollinger at (202) 670-1826 or email at [kevin@eangus.org](mailto:kevin@eangus.org) for further information.

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### ***Guard and Reserve GI Bill Parity Act***

The Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States (EANGUS), on behalf of nearly 450,000 Guardsmen across the 50 states, three territories, and the District of Columbia, urge the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee and the Senate to pass G.I. Bill parity for the National Guard and Reserves during the 117th Congress.

As you know, H.R. 1836 - Guard and Reserve GI Bill Parity Act passed the House of Representatives on January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2022, with a decisive bipartisan vote of 287-135. This bill aims to eliminate most of the confusion over which types of duty allow the Guard and Reserve members to qualify for federal education benefits. H.R. 1836 enables all days in service, including weekend drills, annual training, and specific state active duties such as 502(f), to count toward the Post- 9/11 GI Bill.

Additionally, there is a Senate version of National Guard GI Bill parity, S.2644 – the Guard, Reserve, and Active-Duty Department of Veterans Affairs Educational Assistance Parity (GRAD) Act.

The Guard and Reserve GI Bill Parity Act and GRAD Act have come during an unprecedented time for the National Guard and Reserve Component. In the last 20 months, the National Guard and Reserves have activated more than 200,000 servicemembers for domestic missions to provide pandemic relief, combat wildfires, secure the U.S.-Mexico border, and protect the U.S. Capitol after January 6th protests. Many of these missions are ongoing, with no clear end in sight.

Unlike our Active Component peers, a day in the National Guard or Reserve does not always equal one day of service: regular weekend training days and annual training do not count toward benefits. As wars wind down, federal deployments abroad have decreased, making it much more difficult for Reserve Component Servicemembers to earn federal benefits, including the GI Bill, despite frequent rotations for missions at home and regularly scheduled training.

We must ensure these Servicemembers have the same benefit under Post 9/11 GI Bill as their active-duty counterparts. We are optimistic the House and Senate can come to a bipartisan agreement on these two pieces of legislation and provide what will be the most consequential change to the post 9-11 GI Bill, specifically for the Reserve Component, since the inception of the program.

For more information on this or any other issues concerning the National Guard, don't hesitate to contact EANGUS's legislative and military policy director, Kevin Hollinger, at (202) 670-1826 [kevin@eangus.org](mailto:kevin@eangus.org).

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### **Burial Equity for Guards and Reserves Act**

EANGUS urges the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress to support S. 2089/H.R. 3944, "Burial Equity for Guards and Reserves Act of 2021", as a cosponsor. This legislation would ensure all Reserve Components and the National Guard members are eligible to be buried in state veterans' cemeteries, so long as their service was terminated under conditions other than dishonorable.

Under current law, only guardsmen and reservists who have been called to active duty are allowed to be buried in state veterans' cemeteries that receive federal funding through the Department of Veterans Affairs (V.A.) Veterans Cemetery Grants Program. Our offices have heard directly from constituents who served in the National Guard and Reserve Components and believed that existing restrictions on the Department's grant program fail to acknowledge their contributions to our nation's service. Over the past two years, we have witnessed thousands of Guardsmen and Reservists serve their country while responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and other domestic emergencies, including natural disasters and civil unrest. This is in addition to the services these individuals are prepared to provide should they be called upon for Active Duty.

In response to a Request for Information (RFI) on the Department's Eligibility Considerations for the Veterans Cemetery Grants Program, the V.A. received dozens of comments, including those from leaders of state veterans' cemeteries from across the country, indicating that they support efforts to expand eligibility for burial in a state veterans cemetery to additional members of the National Guard and reserve components. The leadership of the National Guard and state veterans' cemeteries in our states have indicated that they strongly support this change in eligibility to ensure that those who served to receive the proper burial that they deserve.

It is clear that both our constituents and other stakeholders alike agree that the current overly restrictive eligibility requirements fall short of the respect that our Guardsmen and Reservists have earned. We urge you to include language to ensure that all reservists and National Guardsmen are eligible to be buried in state veterans' cemeteries, so long as their service was terminated under conditions other than dishonorable.

Second, we respectfully request that you include the language from the Burial Equity for Guards and Reserves Act that would end the V.A.'s existing practice of punishing state veterans' cemeteries that bury the spouses, minor children, or unmarried adult children of those service members by conditioning federal grants on a cemetery's compliance with existing burial eligibility criteria. Under our legislation, the Secretary could not prohibit funds from being used to inter any member of a reserve component of the Armed Forces whose service was terminated under conditions other than dishonorable, any member of the Army or Air National Guard whose service was released under conditions other than dishonorable, any member of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) whose death

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occurs while a member of the ROTC and the spouses of those members described above—allowing the Federal government to punish states for determining eligibility for their cemeteries overreaches on what should be a decision left to the states.

Thank you for considering our request. We appreciate your efforts to advance this legislation and ensure that Congress sends the message that it is committed to providing respect and recognition for those Guardsmen and Reservists who swear an oath to defend this country.

For more information regarding the Equity for Guards and Reserve Act for the National Guard or any other National Guard issues, please do not hesitate to contact Kevin Hollinger at [kevin@eangus.org](mailto:kevin@eangus.org) or contact him direct at (202) 670-1826

SIDE BY SIDE WE  
STAND WITH PRIDE

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**EIGHT STATES ONE TEAM**