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## **2024 Veterans Legislative Symposia Report June 28, 2024**

1. Purpose: This report presents recommendations gathered from Nevada's Veterans Community for consideration by the Governor and by Nevada State Legislature.

### **2. Background**

a. The Nevada Department of Veterans Services (NDVS) partnered with Nevada's United Veterans Legislative Council (UVLC) to host a Veterans Legislative Symposia in March and early April of 2024.

(1) 67 participants representing 16 different veterans' organizations attended the 23 March 2024 Reno Symposium.

(2) 61 participants representing 16 different veterans' organizations attended the 6 April 2024 Las Vegas Symposium.

b. The purpose of Nevada's Veterans Legislative Symposia is to bring together representatives from the Nevada veteran's community to develop legislative recommendations for the upcoming legislative session. The results of these symposia are compiled into a report and presented to the Governor and to members of the Nevada Legislature, as well as our veterans and their families.

c. While the purpose of the Symposia is to identify issues that might be addressed by the State of Nevada Legislature, issues are often raised that can be addressed by the Governor or by State of Nevada Agencies. These issues are referred to the appropriate State authority. Additionally, any Federal issues raised by participants are presented to members of Nevada's Senators & Congressional delegation for their review and consideration.

d. The symposia both started with opening remarks by NDVS Director Mary Devine and Deputy Director of Benefits Lisa Maciel, who explained the symposia's purpose and agendas. In Reno, participants also heard Senator Lisa Krasner, and State Assemblymembers Angie Taylor, Phillip K. "PK" O'Neil, and Ken Gray. Las Vegas participants heard from Assemblymembers Brittney Miller, Claire Thomas, Shondra Summers-Armstrong, and Reuben D'Silva. The participating state legislators

provided invaluable insight regarding how veterans could effectively participate during the upcoming session. Additionally, Las Vegas attendees were introduced to Congressional Representatives Eric Cardona, Daniel Carranza, and Alanna Simpson.

e. The opening portion of both symposia concluded with remarks by ULVC Chairman Andy LePeilbet, who invited the audience to consider participation in the UVLC, and how the impact of joint action can positively impact legislative outcomes.

f. Following the opening sessions, the floor was opened to veterans to present their individual or organizational issues or concerns. In advance of the Symposia, recommendations were gathered from the Interagency Council on Veterans Affairs (ICVA), the Nevada Veterans Services Commission (VSC), and the Women Veterans Advisory Committee (WVAC) for consideration at the symposia. During the symposia, additional recommendations were made by participants. All these recommendations were prioritized by attendees; each attendee was given 15 stickers to vote with, allowing the ability to vote on a wider variety of issues.

### 3. 2024 Veterans Legislative Symposia Outcomes:

a. In total, 85 combined federal and state issues were identified and prioritized across both symposia; some issues were identical between the Reno and Las Vegas events.

b. 69 state issues were identified and prioritized across both symposia. (Enclosure A)

c. 42 federal issues were identified and prioritized and will be referred to Nevada's Federal Delegation for consideration. (Enclosure B)

d. There were several common themes that emerged from the recommendations. These themes, in priority order, are as follows:

**THEME 1:** Improve outreach to veterans, military service members, their families, and external stakeholders across the state of Nevada to increase awareness of benefits and resources (healthcare & mental health for example) available with special attention to Nevada's underserved populations (homeless, justice involved veterans, women, LGTBT+, rural, etc.); "Ask the Question". Educate communities & enforce regulations on unaccredited/for-fee claims assistance. Create community groups/coalition for homeless veterans; increase stand-downs across the state.

**THEME 2:** Additional State of Nevada benefits including exemption from real property and DMV taxes, state tax holidays for National Guard members, add free airport parking for veterans regarding disability rating without a logo on a plate, and provide additional accommodations/access on public lands. Hire additional Veterans Service Officers for claims/benefit assistance across the state. Implement rent control for military/service-connected veterans.

**THEME 3:** Expansion of VA Healthcare in rural Nevada, recognition of hyperbaric treatment at the VA, additional research/therapies for mental health treatment, heated aqua pools at VA medical facilities for physical therapy, dental extractions for necessary implants, and increase in clothing allowance from the VA to allow for seasonal changes with the use of prosthetics. Establish veteran adult day health facilities, establish additional veteran long term-care facilities with priority in northeastern Nevada. Expansion of programs for MST/mental healthcare. Expand rights for women veterans with military sexual trauma and provide additional resources for suicide prevention.

**THEME 4:** Expansion of education benefits for veterans with service-connected disabilities, children/survivors of service-connected veterans, National Guard/reserve members.

**THEME 5:** Improve veteran, service member, and spouse related hiring practices to ensure sustainability of the workforce, including accessibility to licensure and reciprocity for existing licenses. Reduce barriers for veterans trying to start and run their own businesses, such as licensing, funding, availability of education, and availability of meaningful contracts, complete comprehensive studies on contract disparities.

**THEME 6:** Expand pension eligibility, removing the "1-day" war-time era requirements, increase federal benefits for national guard & dependents, reduce timeline for VA claims processing, provide additional accommodations/access on public lands, and provide retroactive payments for MH/MST. Implement/expand programs to eliminate eviction/foreclosure before being forced into homeless shelters.

**Theme 7:** Increase recognition of Nevada veterans & families by recognizing Gold Star family members, continued support of "Missing in Nevada" missions, and establishment of Veterans/Military Museum in Nevada. Recognize Women's Military History Month annually/permanently in March of each year in Nevada.

**Theme 8:** Improve the road conditions for access to the Northern Nevada Veterans Cemetery, add a weekend burial option, and eliminate fees for spouses of veterans.

Finally, some of the issues raised by participants did not have broad support by participants, but they might be representative of issues or concerns of veterans not present; so, while they may not be statistically relevant, they are worth reviewing. For additional information, please contact NDVS Director Mary Devine at [devinem@veterans.nv.gov](mailto:devinem@veterans.nv.gov) or NDVS Deputy Director of Benefits Lisa Maciel at [maciell@veterans.nv.gov](mailto:maciell@veterans.nv.gov).

**Enclosed:**

- A: 2024 Veterans Legislative Symposia Results, State Issues
- B: 2024 Veterans Legislative Symposia Results, Federal Issues

**ENCLOSURE A**

**2024 Veterans Legislative Symposia (State Issues)**

69 Issues for Consideration by the Governor, State Legislature, and Federal Representatives

<b>Item #</b>	<b>Priority #</b>	<b>Issue Raised by Nevada State Veterans</b>
1	1	<i>Penalize/enforce regulations for unaccredited claim agents charging veterans; Require that all people working on claims, and those claiming to be VSO reps, be certified through the VA*</i>
2	2	<i>Codify State of Nevada's veteran hiring program to ensure long-term sustainability of state workforce</i>
3	3	<i>The State of Nevada should reduce barriers to occupational licensing for military, veterans, and their spouses</i>
4	4	<i>Housing/outreach/equality for homeless veterans, free meals, standdown events</i>
5	5	<i>NRS 417.123 (Ask the Question) to include Pact Act* (NDVS will contact civilian support organizations); outreach for all widows/survivors to ensure entitlement</i>
6	6	<i>Women veterans rights for MST and suicide prevention care</i>
7	7	<i>Create property tax/vehicle tax exemption categories for all veterans</i>
8	8	<i>Reduce or eliminate business license fees for veteran owned businesses</i>
9	9	<i>Hire and train more Veterans Service Officers (VSOs)</i>

<b>10</b>	10	<i>Housing allowance/discounts (HOA/Utilities/COLA) for Veterans/military personnel</i>
<b>11</b>	11*	<i>Eliminate the fees for spouse interment at state veterans memorial cemeteries</i>
<b>12</b>	11*	<i>Limit property tax increase for all Veterans to 1%, or eliminate property tax for Veterans altogether (may include first responders)</i>
<b>13</b>	12	<i>Federal funding for a Northeastern Nevada state veterans' home</i>
<b>14</b>	13*	<i>Request for disabled veterans to get free parking at Nevada airports with a placard OR a plate</i>
<b>15</b>	13*	<i>Make recognition of women's military history month a permanent annual recognition in March of each year</i>
<b>16</b>	14	<i>Need more long-term care facilities (250 beds each, or to accommodate an additional 800-100 beds)</i>
<b>17</b>	15*	<i>Consider offering a weekend burial option at Nevada State Veteran Memorial Cemeteries</i>
<b>18</b>	15*	<i>Veterans &amp; Children to receive same service-connected discount off of higher education (5-year residency requirement)</i>
<b>19</b>	16	<i>Due to unaffordable housing, increase funding for HUD-VASH and its vouchers, increase funding grants and per diem payments, and work to combat homelessness (Pilot Program); more low-income housing</i>
<b>20</b>	17*	<i>Include veterans as a protected status for employment (NRS 613.330, 207.300, 207.310)</i>
<b>21</b>	17*	<i>Continue support of the incarcerated veterans' initiatives to include NDOC reentry program</i>
<b>22</b>	17*	<i>100% Tax exemption for Nevada's 100% SCD (owner occ/primary res); join 1 other states</i>
<b>23</b>	18	<i>Survivor benefits should be the same as veteran benefits</i>
<b>24</b>	19	<i>Collect and gather data from organizations/partners; submit military/veterans' data to NDVS</i>
<b>25</b>	20*	<i>Veteran business expansion, larger contracts; why are there limitations for bidding on larger contracts? (state contracts)</i>
<b>26</b>	20*	<i>Concerns over housing and veterans being forced into homeless shelters (CRRC) <a href="https://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/Crrc.asp">https://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/Crrc.asp</a></i>

<b>27</b>	20*	<i>Recommend NDVS continue implementation of VIS database with increases partners to identify veterans; this includes promotion of veteran's use of the database</i>
<b>28</b>	20*	<i>New Plate #20 (Do Not Give Up Veteran's Plate w/branch of service) with a handicap icon on it (Keep original plate and ADD handicap icon)</i>
<b>29</b>	21*	<i>Partnership w/NV if service members die on state AD orders, offer education assistance up to Bachelors' Degree (federal provides education for survivors through DEA)</i>
<b>30</b>	21*	<i>Expand research into and offer more therapies for Mental Health issues</i>
<b>31</b>	21*	<i>Address suicide rate for women</i>
<b>32</b>	22	<i>Establish a Veterans/Military Museum in Nevada</i>
<b>33</b>	23*	<i>Disparities studies in contracts, qualitative data on demographics, feasibility on veteran program, women contracts, financial analysis</i>
<b>34</b>	23*	<i>Construct and operate veteran adult day health care facilities</i>
<b>35</b>	24*	<i>Spousal tuition waiver, transference of benefits (GI Bill and otherwise) to families, paying for veterans' families (children, dependents, spouse) to pass down the waiver, and enhance reserve tuition assistance</i>
<b>36</b>	24*	<i>The State of Nevada should create, expand, and support programs designed to connect isolated veterans and their families to benefits/services</i>
<b>37</b>	24*	<i>Continue support of Missing in Nevada missions at both Nevada State Veterans Memorial Cemeteries</i>
<b>38</b>	25	<i>TAPS program enhancement (info out of state veterans relocating back to Nevada)</i>
<b>39</b>	26	<i>Concern over location of Grant Sawyer Memorial, considering relocation</i>
<b>40</b>	27*	<i>Improve road conditions for roads connected to the veteran's cemetery</i>
<b>41</b>	27*	<i>Nevada state agencies should increase awareness of medical and mental health care for service members, veterans, and families by the VA through public and private providers</i>

<b>42</b>	27*	<i>Support for all veterans in prison, especially women veterans; support with transition, job training, trades training, Rebel Rebound, etc.</i>
<b>43</b>	28*	<i>Special accommodations/accessibility for public lands (state and federal parks)</i>
<b>44</b>	28*	<i>Community outreach groups for homeless veterans, improved training, outreach, accessibility, and understandable resources</i>
<b>45</b>	28*	<i>Veterans Treatment Court needs mentors: lack of mentorship and needs more mentor training</i>
<b>46</b>	28*	<i>Nevada state agencies should submit information regarding veteran and service member programs, services, and events to NDVS</i>
<b>47</b>	28*	<i>Spanish speaking NDVS website</i>
<b>48</b>	28*	<i>Allow a percentage of large gaming tags from lottery to be offered to veterans</i>
<b>49</b>	29*	<i>Deal with/enforce against out-of-state or fraudulent veterans' organizations, and verify that veterans' organizations are certified non-profit</i>
<b>50</b>	29*	<i>Enhancement of benefits while guardsmen are on state (non-federal) active-duty orders (healthcare/life insurance)</i>
<b>51</b>	29*	<i>Outreach regarding NDVS and Veteran services offered to LGBTQ+, women veterans</i>
<b>52</b>	30	<i>Push for NDVS and State overall to encourage community councils for Veterans</i>
<b>53</b>	31*	<i>Service member &amp; veteran support/empowerment (MST)</i>
<b>54</b>	31*	<i>Innovate and improve communication with veterans and their families to bring awareness on laws and benefits</i>
<b>55</b>	32	<i>Fund travel for WVAC members for one in-person committee and for one member to attend a national conference each year</i>
<b>56</b>	33	<i>Increase access to information for veterans/NV Advocates; further dissemination of information</i>
<b>57</b>	34*	<i>TAP outreach guard/reserves</i>
<b>58</b>	34*	<i>Improve reciprocity for out of state licenses and certifications</i>

<b>59</b>	35	<i>Enhancements of benefits for guard/reservists (TAP, GI Bill, HAA)</i>
<b>60</b>	36*	<i>Tuition Waiver beyond retirement from National Guard</i>
<b>61</b>	36*	<i>Expand Outreach to rural areas &amp; suicide prevention efforts to SMVF throughout the state within NDVS</i>
<b>62</b>	36*	<i>Make Sales Tax Holiday a floating holiday for National Guard members</i>
<b>63</b>	37*	<i>Establish share agreement between NVNG and DPBH to synthesize survey data and analyze suicide ideology among NVNG service members</i>
<b>64</b>	37*	<i>Revise NRS 417.320 to reimburse WVAC members for any travel to include a subsistence allowance, as well as actual expenses for transportation</i>
<b>65</b>	38	<i>Due to nationwide housing and HOA costs, it would be good to improve the quality and accessibility of veteran's discounts and housing allowances (Cap rent at 25% of monthly income, HOA fee removals, ID for military/legal representation)</i>
<b>66</b>	39	<i>Recognize Service Members of Gold Star Families once or twice a year by name or by photograph</i>
<b>67</b>	40	<i>Continue funding the 2-1-1 Nevada line</i>
<b>68</b>	41*	<i>Partnerships with other organizations (city, county, state)</i>
<b>69</b>	41*	<i>Distribution list for volunteers to participate in legislative events</i>

*\* Item numbers indicated with an asterisk were tied for the position.*



## ENCLOSURE B

### 2024 Veterans Legislative Symposium (42 Federal Issues)

Item #	Priority #	Issue Raised by Nevada State Veterans
1	1	<i>Penalize/enforce regulations for unaccredited claim agents charging veterans; Require that all people working on claims, and those claiming to be VSO reps, be certified through the VA*</i>
2	2	<i>Housing/outreach/equality for homeless veterans, free meals, standdown events</i>
3	3	<i>Women veterans rights for MST and suicide prevention care</i>
4	4*	<i>Housing allowance/discounts (HOA/Utilities/COLA) for Veterans/military personnel</i>
5	4*	<i>Adjust HR6023 to provide retroactive payments for MH/MST</i>
6	4*	<i>Hyperbaric Treatment to be recognized by the VA</i>
7	5	<i>Expand VA care in rural areas</i>
8	6	<i>VA should provide dental extractions so that necessary implants/transplants can occur</i>
9	7	<i>Federal funding for a Northeastern Nevada state veterans' home</i>
10	8	<i>Need more long-term care facilities (250 beds each facility)</i>
11	9	<i>More funding for women's clinics to help promote and enhance quality of life</i>
12	10	<i>Due to unaffordable housing, increase funding for HUD-VASH and its vouchers, increase funding grants and per diem payments, and work to combat homelessness (Pilot Program); more low-income housing</i>
13	11	<i>Include veterans as a protected status for employment (NRS 613.330, 207.300, 207.310)</i>

<b>14</b>	12	<i>Survivor benefits should be the same as veteran benefits</i>
<b>15</b>	13	<i>Collect and gather data from organizations/partners; submit military/veterans' data to NDVS</i>
<b>16</b>	14	<i>Concerns over housing and veterans being forced into homeless shelters (CRRC) <a href="https://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/Crrc.asp">https://www.va.gov/HOMELESS/Crrc.asp</a></i>
<b>17</b>	15*	<i>Partnership w/NV if service members die on state AD orders, offer education assistance up to Bachelors' Degree (federal provides education for survivors through DEA)</i>
<b>18</b>	15*	<i>Expand research into and offer more therapies for Mental Health issues</i>
<b>19</b>	15*	<i>Address suicide rate for women</i>
<b>20</b>	15*	<i>Suicide connected disability to be grandfathered into GI bill</i>
<b>21</b>	16	<i>GI Bill prior to 2000, service-connected disabilities of 10% or more grandfathered into GI Bill</i>
<b>22</b>	17	<i>Disparities studies in contracts, qualitative data on demographics, feasibility on veteran program, women contracts, financial analysis</i>
<b>23</b>	18	<i>Spousal tuition waiver, transference of benefits (GI Bill and otherwise) to families, paying for veterans' families (children, dependents, spouse) to pass down the waiver, and enhance reserve tuition assistance</i>
<b>24</b>	19	<i>TAPS program enhancement (info out of state veterans relocating back to Nevada)</i>
<b>24</b>	20	<i>Improve/reduce timelines for VA claims</i>
<b>25</b>	21	<i>Support for all veterans in prison, especially women veterans; support with transition, job training, trades training, Rebel Rebound, etc.</i>
<b>27</b>	22*	<i>Special accommodations/accessibility for public lands (state and federal parks)</i>
<b>28</b>	22*	<i>Increase to clothing allowance for seasonal changes and prosthetics, and heated pool for aqua therapy at VA medical center for physical therapy</i>
<b>29</b>	23*	<i>Deal with/enforce against out-of-state or fraudulent veterans' organizations, and verify that veterans' organizations are certified non-profit</i>

<b>30</b>	23*	<i>Enhancement of benefits while guardsmen are on state active-duty orders (healthcare/life insurance)</i>
<b>30</b>	24*	<i>Increase in federal benefits for National Guard &amp; dependents</i>
<b>32</b>	24*	<i>Raise Dependents Indemnity Compensation (DIC) to 55% of veteran's benefits and remove wartime service requirement</i>
<b>33</b>	25*	<i>Service member &amp; veteran support/empowerment (MST)</i>
<b>34</b>	25*	<i>Innovate and improve communication with veterans and their families to bring awareness on laws and benefits</i>
<b>35</b>	26	<i>TAP outreach guard/reserves</i>
<b>36</b>	27*	<i>Enhancements of benefits for guard/reservists (TAP, GI Bill, HAA)</i>
<b>37</b>	27*	<i>Transfer of GI Bill to dependents (after separation from service)</i>
<b>38</b>	27*	<i>Heated pool for aqua therapy at VAMC for physical therapy</i>
<b>39</b>	28	<i>Remove 1 day of wartime service requirement for VA Pension</i>
<b>40</b>	29	<i>Revise urinalysis policy and procedures at the DoD level to remove being observed</i>
<b>41</b>	30*	<i>Due to nationwide housing and HOA costs, it would be good to improve the quality and accessibility of veteran's discounts and housing allowances (Cap rent at 25% of monthly income, HOA fee removals, ID for military/legal representation)</i>
<b>42</b>	30*	<i>Better connect the VA and civilian systems for documents/records, and expand time allowed in community care</i>

\* Item numbers indicated with an asterisk were tied for their position.