

Buckeye Banner

Spring 2025



Paralyzed Veterans of America

Buckeye Chapter



President's Report	3
Executive Director's Report	4
Senior Benefits Advocate	5
PVAction Force	7
Sports & Recreation	10
Caregivers Program	13
Members' Birthdays	17
Washington Update	18
Advertise With Us	23
Emergency Assistance	25

OUR MISSION

The Paralyzed Veterans of America, Buckeye Chapter strives to improve the quality of life of honorably discharged Veterans who have spinal cord injury, dysfunction or illness including but not limited to multiple sclerosis and ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease) through advocacy, medical research, sports and recreation, education and communication.

UPCOMING DATES

March 17th: St. Patrick's Day

April 10-12th: Buckeye Games

April 20th: Easter

May 26th: Memorial Day

Chain of Command

BPVA Officers

Milton Young, President	miltony@buckeyepva.org
Vacant Vice President	
Holly Koester, Secretary	hollyk@buckeyepva.org
Robert Morris, Treasurer	robertm@buckeyepva.org

Board of Directors

Douglas Beckley, Board Member	dougb@buckeyepva.org
Larry Bostic, Board Member	larryb@buckeyepva.org
Tiffany Davison, Board Member	tiffaneyd@buckeyepva.org
Paul Mann, Board Member	paulm@buckeyepva.org
Lucas Meyer, Board Member	lucasm@buckeyepva.org

National Director

Douglas Beckley	dougb@buckeyepva.org
-----------------	----------------------

Membership Director

Vacant

Sports Director

Paul Mann	paulm@buckeyepva.org
-----------	----------------------

Executive Director

Betsey Kamm	betseyk@buckeyepva.org
-------------	------------------------

Associate Executive Director

Sarah Hoffman	sarahh@buckeyepva.org
---------------	-----------------------

Senior Benefits Advocates

Aaron Stevens, Cleveland	aarons@buckeyepva.org
Michael Yaskowiak, Cleveland	michaely@buckeyepva.org

DISCLAIMER

The Buckeye Banner is a publication of the Buckeye Chapter, PVA, and is meant to inform its readers of Chapter activities, legislation, and other matters of concern to veterans and/or members of the disability community. The opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of BPVA, its Officers, Board Members, the Editor, or production staff.

PARALYZED VETERANS
OF AMERICA
BUCKEYE CHAPTER

2775 Bishop Road, Suite B,
Willoughby Hills OH 44092

(216) 731-1017 - (800) 248-2548

**FOLLOW US
ON SOCIAL**

MEDIA 

KEEP UP WITH OUR LATEST UPDATES!



@BuckeyePVA



Paralyzed Veterans of
America, Buckeye Chapter



Paralyzed Veterans of
America -- Buckeye Chapter



@PVABuckeye

President's Report

When Things Don't Go Our Way

Thomas Edison made many attempts and inventing a working light bulb with setback after setback. Yet he was confident he hadn't failed even once. He has simply found 10,000 ways not to make a light bulb. That's a great perspective when you face adversity in the effort toward any worthwhile goal, failure has to be considered part of the process. Failure in achieving a particular result isn't really failure if it's another step on the way toward the goal. It can be a vital part of your journey. As a person with a disability don't get discouraged when you fail. In fact consider it a normal part of learning. Too many people treat it as a dirty little secret and wear a mask to cover it up. Successful people have learned to be comfortable trying something that doesn't work. Success isn't about whether you fail, it's about how you get up and persevere through all your mistakes and adversity. If you persist, even your failures can turn into a valuable part of your life story. That may be able to help others overcome their failures. Though my body may be weak and my spirit may grow weak, my faith in God remains the strength of my heart and he is mine forever.

Till the next time God Bless and be safe.

Milton Young

Milton Young, President





Executive Director Report



Happy (almost) Spring, Buckeye PVA Members!

By the time you read this some of you will have made your plans to attend the Buckeye Wheelchair Games. If I haven't already, I look forward to meeting you!

Our chapter is a sports powerhouse, and we are very proud of that. I wanted to let you know that we also recognize that not everyone is an athlete and that we are also interested in fostering engagement and personal satisfaction through other activities for members. These could include art, music, poetry, photography—any number of things. If you have any skills in these or other areas or interests that might lead to ideas for activities of this kind, please feel free to call or email me with them.



We are always interested in your feedback whether for praise or opportunities for improvement. It may be our 53rd year but we are continuously learning and always looking to see how we can do better. Please keep the channels of communication open and let us know what you think.

Betsey Kamm

Betsey Kamm

Executive Director

betseyk@buckeyepva.org

216-731-1017



Benefits Update

By: Aaron Stevens



REAL ID

Passed by Congress in 2005, the Real ID Modernization Act enacted the 9/11 Commission's recommendation that the Federal Government "set standards for the issuance of sources of identification, such as driver's licenses."

This means that certain federal agencies, like the Transportation Security Administration or the Department of Homeland Security, won't be able to accept state issued forms of identification without the Real ID seal. This includes:

- Accessing certain federal facilities
- Boarding federally regulated commercial aircraft
- Entering nuclear power plants

I don't think many of us will be trying to access entry into nuclear power plants, but I know for sure the vast majority of us will want access to federal facilities and airplanes. So keep in mind you will not be allowed entry to these if your identification is not Real ID compliant.

According to the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles, U.S. travelers must be Real ID compliant to board domestic flights and access certain federal facilities starting May 7, 2025. Ohio BMV said to consider renewing early if you want to have a driver's license or identification card that is federally compliant. Requesting or renewing a Real ID can be done on their website.

What You Need to Know:

- **REAL ID Identification:** Ensure your driver's license or state ID is REAL ID-compliant. Look for a star in the upper right corner of the card.
- **Alternative Options:** If you do not have a REAL ID, you can still travel by using an alternative form of identification for domestic travel such as a U.S. passport, military ID, or other TSA-approved IDs.
- **Check Your Status:** If you're unsure if your ID is REAL ID-compliant, check with your state's Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) for more information on how to obtain one.
- **Plan Ahead:** If you need to upgrade your ID, please allow sufficient time to obtain a REAL ID before your travel date.
- **Review REAL ID FAQs:** REAL ID FAQs | Homeland Security

For more detailed information, you can visit the TSA website at REAL ID | Homeland Security. In addition, you can always contact your local PVA National Service Officer for further guidance.



PRESIDENT SIGNS VETS SAFE TRAVEL LEGISLATION



On January 4, President Biden signed an amended version of the VETS Safe Travel Act (H.R. 7365). This bipartisan legislation, introduced by Rep. Paul Gosar (R-AZ) and Sen. Todd Young (R-IN), provides free access to TSA Pre✓® for certain eligible veterans who otherwise meet the requirements of the program. Prior to passage in the House, the bill was amended to limit eligibility to veterans with service-connected disabilities. In order to be eligible, the veteran must meet all of the requirements for TSA Pre✓® and be service connected for limb loss, paralysis, or permanent blindness and as a result use a wheelchair, prosthetic limb, or other assistive device to aid with mobility.

About George Music Company

Welcome to Akron's finest entertainment company. We are a locally owned family operated company serving the Northeast Ohio area since 1933. We offer the absolute finest, most up-to-date equipment available along with providing a strong dedication to the success of our customers. Our State of the art entertainment solutions are specifically tailored to meet our customers' individual needs.



George Music Company provides the latest in digital internet jukeboxes, NGX Jukeboxes, Touch Tunes Jukeboxes, skill games and amusement machines to bars, taverns, pubs, restaurants, bowling alleys, universities, and social clubs. We install and service Internet Jukeboxes in Bars, Taverns, Fraternal Organizations, anywhere. Delivery and setup is also available (call for details). George Music Company only provides service on what we sell. We also sell used coin-operated machines for the home.

As you can see, we are the premier amusement supplier in the Akron and surrounding area. To increase revenue and keep your customers entertained and satisfied, call George Music Company and find out how you can add excellent entertainment equipment to your establishment.

Call (330) 923-9868 or
toll free at 1-800-492-9507



PVAction Force



PVAction Force is a national grassroots advocacy network. It is free and open to all Americans to take part in writing to your members of Congress on important issues with something as simple as one click. This tool is not reserved for PVA members alone. Anyone interested in the issues we support can act. In fact, the more voices we have taking action on issues, the more Congress will listen. We intend to use every tool at our disposal to raise awareness on the issues important to PVA. That's why we need you to share information about PVA's work with your families, friends, caregivers, co-workers, social media followers, everyone!

Sign up on our [VoterVoice platform](#) and make sure you are getting updates on new campaigns we have launched, blog posts keeping our advocates up to date on news and information, and a quarterly newsletter highlighting some of the noteworthy news happening in the Government Relations realm. We need your voice to help expand our grassroots effort. If a campaign is of personal significance to you we would love to hear your story. Life experiences are what drive policy into becoming law and we need your voice make an impact. Reach out to Grassroots Advocacy Manager Lisa Elijah at LisaE@PVA.org and help spread the word on issues Congress needs to pay attention to.

votervoices.net/PVA/home

Kelly Brush Foundation



IMPORTANT NEWS:

THE KELLY BRUSH FOUNDATION ("KBF") ACTIVE SPORTS EQUIPMENT SPRING 2025 GRANT APPLICATION CYCLE IS NOW OPEN!!!

DEADLINE TO APPLY IS APRIL 30th!



The Kelly Brush Foundation provides FREE grant funds to individuals with Spinal Cord Injury to purchase Adaptive Sports Equipment! The Kelly Brush Foundation's SPRING 2025 "ACTIVE FUND" Grant Cycle is officially OPEN for applications! HURRY... The Application Deadline is APRIL 30th, 2025!! If approved, you'll receive a Grant Voucher via email mid-June for your equipment of choice!

APPLYING ONLINE IS EASY!

Email us at Support@HowiRollSports.com today for your required vendor quote & for assistance with the application process!



Study Participants Needed



VANE OHS IRB
Effective Date: July 29, 2024

This research is being conducted by the Cleveland VA Medical Center



FootSafe

Smart foot sensor to prevent power wheelchair user foot and leg injuries

Power wheelchairs help Veterans get around, but they can cause injury if the Veteran's foot or leg falls off the footplate and they cannot feel it

Who can participate?

- Adults with or without SCI/D who use power wheelchairs

What do I have to do?

- One 3-hour session driving your power wheelchair with FootSafe under your feet

**Contact: Katie Schwartz, Study Coordinator:
 216-293-1953 or
 216-791-3800 x64273**

FootSafe

Smart foot sensor to prevent foot and leg injuries in power wheelchair users

Seeking engagement panel participants!

Power wheelchairs help Veterans get around, but they can cause injury if the Veteran's foot or leg falls off the footplate and they cannot feel it.

We want to know your experiences and perspectives on this problem.

Who can participate?

Veterans with SCI/D, their caregivers/family and seating specialists

What do I have to do?

- Discuss risk factors for foot and leg injuries and how to prevent them
- Design a course to test FootSafe
- Look at FootSafe data from testing FootSafe in power wheelchairs and help us determine which foot and leg displacements are highest risks for injuries.



©Steven Mitchell, OTR/L, ATP

PVA Wheelchair Rugby Tournament

Hello Buckeye PVA members, I haven't written much about my rugby season this year. I thought you may want to hear about the National PVA Wheelchair Rugby Tournament. It was held this year again in Louisville Kentucky. Last year it was one of the largest tournaments with sixteen teams. This year the PVA added four more teams to make it even larger with twenty. Most of the top players in this country were there, including team USA captains Chuck Aoki and Sarah Adams. I was at the tournament with my team, the Oscar Mike Militia. Fellow BPVA member, Chuck Scott, was there playing with the Ohio team, the Buckeye Blitz. The tournament was separated into three divisions, one, two, and three. Division one was made up of eight teams split into two pools, the other two divisions were made up of six teams, playing in a round robin format. All the teams played five games. The Militia and the Blitz both played in division III, on the third floor of the complex. We played at the University of Louisville student rec center on the third floor. The goal of the PVA's involvement with the growth of wheelchair rugby is to empower the disabled community, increase awareness of adaptive sports, and to improve the quality of life for adaptive athletes with spinal cord, injuries and disease diseases, such as MLS and MS. The Militia did well, going four and one and taking second place. This was the first tournament of this scale for the Ohio team, but they still pulled out a win, or two. This was an excellent opportunity to watch my sport on the highest level. We had a small snowstorm Sunday morning, which caused a little craziness at the Louisville airport that afternoon. That left some rugby players sleeping in the airport for the night. Which you may have seen on the news, or social media. I rode down once the snow cleared up. I got to experience a ride with a view. I encourage you to take the trip down to watch if the tournament is held there next year. Louisville has a lot to offer, including top level horse racing, and some bourbon that is world renown. I hope to see you at the Buckeye Wheelchair Games in April. If not, I hope to see you at one of our other functions!

Hope you're having a wonderful day,

Paul Mann

Paul Mann, Sports Director and Board Member





Choose to Succeed



Upcoming in April 11-13, 2025 are the Buckeye Wheelchair Games, at the SPIRE Institute in Geneva, Ohio. In July 17-22, 2025 are the National Veteran Wheelchair Games in Minneapolis, Minnesota. I've wondered, as this will be my 4th time to attend a National Veteran Wheelchair Game in person, what must I do to succeed?

I recently heard a message of a woman, many of you may know of, named Florence Chadwick. Florence was a phenomenal swimmer, setting many records in her sport. On July 4, 1952, Florence had decided she would attempt to do something no woman had ever done. She was going to challenge the channel that runs between the Catalina Island and Palos Verde on the California coast. The Channel separates California from the Channel Islands archipelago, which is now part of Los Angeles County, and the island, which is 22 miles long, 8 miles wide at its widest point. Catalina Island is located about 21 miles off the shore of Palos Verde, California where Florence was to swim to.

Florence began her swim in the icy, shark-filled waters, where heavy fog set in, so much that at times, she couldn't even see the boats that ran near her to protect her from the sharks that had frequented her many times. Finally, from the cold, the fatigue, but greatly from the fog and inability to see her destination, she gave up, climbed into the boat where she was shown she was but a half mile from the California shore. Afterwards, she was interviewed, and she said, all she could see was the fog, if she had only seen the shore, she would have made it.

Two months later, she made the attempt again. Even though the weather was bad, fog had set in again, the water was still as cold, and there were still sharks, she kept her mind focused on the shore, even though she couldn't physically see it. She made the swim on her second attempt, with no issues.

When interviewed, the second time, she said that she learned the real meaning of faith. She quoted the Bible verse Hebrews 11:1: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." She couldn't see the shoreline either time, but the second time she kept her eye on the prize, in her mind, and finished her swim. She had faith in God and faith in herself that she could accomplish her goal.

Choose to Succeed cont..

I want to challenge everyone even considering going to the Buckeye Wheelchair Games or the National Veteran Wheelchair Games to keep your eye on the prize. Have faith that you can accomplish your goals. You may not take the gold, silver or bronze medal, but you can prove to yourself and others that you will do the best that you are able, and that is success. You went, did the best you could, had fun and proved to yourself that success is not just winning.



There are almost 1000 men and women at the National Veteran Wheelchair Games, and not everyone takes home a medal. But doing your best, supporting other team-members, showing pride in being an adaptive participant is the goal. Most importantly, showing the world that a “disability” is only a small part of what you are, not who you are and definitely it does not have to be your frame of mind. Success can be different for many people, but for all people, it should be doing the best you can, and finding joy in the journey, not just the destination. Not just because I am an Army Veteran, or an Incomplete Quadriplegic, go to the games and go in life, and “Be all that you can be”.

Sincerely,

Larry Bostic

Larry Bostic, Board Member



Caregivers



Elizabeth Dole Foundation

CARING FOR MILITARY FAMILIES

Veterans with spinal cord injuries (SCI) have experienced a dramatic change in their lives, which can significantly impact their livelihood and social relations. According to the National Spinal Cord Injury Center, there are approximately 18,000 spinal cord injuries per year, which equates to 54 cases per one million people in the United States. Regardless of the severity, many still play sports, drive, have occupations inside and outside the home, and live life to their fullest potential.

Caregivers of SCI veterans provide specialized skilled assistance, such as stretching to lessen the effects of spasticity, turning the person to prevent pressure sores and wounds, addressing and treating chronic muscle and nerve pain, and other care as needed for optimal health and well-being. Caring for a veteran with a spinal cord injury can be a rewarding experience; although there are many challenges, there are also triumphs.

In addition to routine caregiving, SCI caregivers address accessibility while planning and seeking proper accommodations. They wear many hats as they fulfill their responsibilities; it is a noble sacrifice. As with all caregivers, they are vulnerable to the risk of depression, burnout, and physical ailments. Understanding SCI resources benefits them by providing knowledge, skills, and support.

An excellent resource for caregivers is facingdisability.com, which has a wealth of information, including videos on SCI caregiving and numerous organizations that assist caregivers and veterans. A short list of the many contributors to the website are the following organizations:

ARCH National Respite Network and Resource Center - A National Respite Locator providing access to respite and crisis care services

Autonomic Dysreflexia (AD) - The Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation provides SCI wallet cards. These cards contain important personal information in case of an emergency, helping responders be aware of the treatment needed beyond their paralysis.

Backbones - A support network where people with spinal cord injuries and their families can unite by telephone, in person, or virtually. This forum includes questions and answers.

BrainandSpinalCord.org - Besides spinal cord information, this website provides legal and financial information.

Family Caregiver Alliance - This organization offers caregiver webinars, classes, events, and workshops and provides self-care resources for those caring for SCI patients.

Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregivers - Advocates for caregivers and provides support, education, and research-based solutions to address their difficulties

SCI Caregivers are empowered when they have the proper tools and resources. May you be strong and courageous as you care for yourself and your veteran.

Be well,

Jeanette Ezell

Ohio Dole Caregiver Fellow



2025 BWG Sponsors



Presenting Sponsors(in-kind)

SPIRE Academy

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Facilities in Ohio

Elite Sponsor

American Legion Post #134 Circleville

Gold Sponsors

MobilityWorks

KC Koester & Sharon Hammer

American Legion Post #407 Doylestown

VFW Post #1380 Lancaster

VFW Post #2800 Dayton

VFW Post #870 Richwood

VFW Post #943 Ashtabula

Silver Sponsors

VFW Post #1066 Barberton

VFW Post #1069 Fairfield

VFW Post #2629 Aurora

VFW Post #Norwalk in cooperation with Firelands Veterans
for the Preservation of Patriotism

VFW Post #951 Columbia Station

Bronze Sponsors

American Legion Post #91

Cleveland Baker's Local No.19 CER Fund

KeyBank

VFW Post # 1055 Ravenna

VFW Post #1500 Willoughby

VFW Post #3863 Eastlake

VFW Post #6941 Wellington

Sponsor an Athlete

American Legion Post #112 Madison

AMVETS Vermilion

The Kendall Foundation

Todd Nigh Builder

VFW Post # 1067 Ashland

Veterans Affairs Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers

Eligibility Criteria Fact Sheet



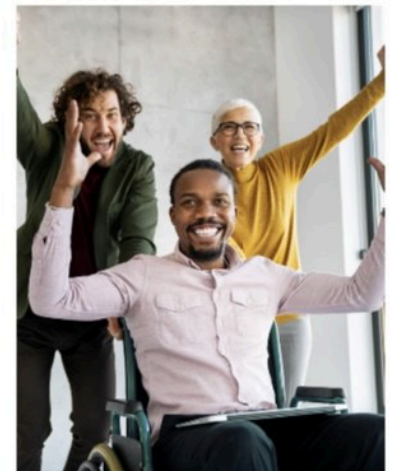
The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) offers enhanced clinical support for Family Caregivers of eligible Veterans.



Veteran Eligibility Requirements:

A Veteran or Service member may be eligible for a Family Caregiver if all of the following requirements are met:

- 1 The individual is either:
 - A Veteran; or
 - A member of the Armed Forces undergoing a medical discharge from the Armed Forces.
- 2 The individual has a serious injury (including serious illness) incurred or aggravated in the line of duty in the active military, naval, or air service.
 - For purposes of PCAFC, serious injury means any service-connected disability that: (1) Is rated at 70 percent or more by VA; or (2) Is combined with any other service-connected disability or disabilities, and a combined rating of 70 percent or more is assigned by VA.
- 3 The individual is in need of in-person personal care services for a minimum of six (6) continuous months based on any one of the following:
 - An inability to perform an activity of daily living;
 - A need for supervision or protection based on symptoms or residuals of neurological or other impairment or injury; or
 - A need for regular or extensive instruction or supervision without which the ability of the Veteran to function in daily life would be seriously impaired.
- 4 It is in the best interest of the individual to participate in the program.
- 5 Personal care services that would be provided by the Family Caregiver will not be simultaneously and regularly provided by or through another individual or entity.
- 6 The individual receives care at home or will do so if VA designates a Family Caregiver.
- 7 The individual receives ongoing care from a Primary Care Team or will do so if VA designates a Family Caregiver.



To apply online, visit

<https://www.va.gov/family-member-benefits/comprehensive-assistance-for-family-caregivers>

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs



Family Caregiver Eligibility Requirements

A Family Caregiver must:

- 1 Be at least 18 years of age.
- 2 Be either:
 - The eligible Veteran's spouse, son, daughter, parent, stepfamily member, or extended family member; or
 - Someone who lives with the eligible Veteran full-time or will do so if designated as a Family Caregiver.
- 3 Be initially assessed by VA as being able to complete caregiver education and training.
- 4 Complete caregiver training and demonstrate the ability to carry out the specific personal care services, core competencies, and additional care requirements.

In addition, there must be no determination by VA of abuse or neglect of the eligible Veteran by the caregiver.



Stipend Levels:

The amount of the monthly stipend the Primary Family Caregiver is eligible to receive, is determined based on information gathered during VA's evaluation of the Veteran's personal care needs.

Level One: The Primary Family Caregiver's monthly stipend is calculated by multiplying the monthly stipend rate [Office of Personnel Management (OPM) General Schedule (GS) Annual Rate for grade 4, step 1, based on the locality pay area in which the eligible Veteran resides] divided by 12 multiplied by 0.625.

- For example, the GS rate at grade 4, step 1, in Dallas, Texas, for 2022 was \$34,916 annually.
- Thus, the monthly stipend amount for a Primary Family Caregiver of an eligible Veteran in Dallas, Texas, at this rate (\$34,916, divided by 12 multiplied by 0.625) was approximately \$1,818.54 in 2022.

Level Two: If VA determines the eligible Veteran meets the definition of "unable to self-sustain in the community" for the purposes of PCAFC, the designated Primary Family Caregiver's monthly stipend is calculated by multiplying the monthly stipend rate (OPM GS Annual Rate for grade 4, step 1, based on the locality pay area in which the eligible Veteran resides) divided by 12 multiplied by 1.00.

- For example, the GS rate at grade 4, step 1, in Dallas, Texas, for 2022 was \$34,916 annually.
- The 2022 monthly stipend amount for a Primary Family Caregiver of an eligible Veteran in Dallas, Texas, at this rate (\$34,916, divided by 12 multiplied by 1.00) was approximately \$2,909.67

Veterans and caregivers can find their local CSP Team by:



Calling the VA Caregiver Support Line **1-855-260-3274**
(Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 10 p.m. ET; Saturday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 pm ET) Toll free



Using the CSP Teams locator at
www.caregiver.va.gov/support/New_CSC_Page.asp

To apply online, visit

<https://www.va.gov/family-member-benefits/comprehensive-assistance-for-family-caregivers>



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

MEMBERS BIRTHDAYS

March

John Brooks James Trzop **Jazmine Elahee**

Scott Currie **Gregory Baugh** James Dunbar **Jay Hefferson**

Jeffrey Fisher David North **Bernard Pugh** Bernard Smith

William Stone **Robert Wright** Michael Winstead **Corbin Stacey**

Robert Brown Michael Shaw **Jerome Casey** Clarence Johnson

David Conner **Peter Murphy** Ralph Wischer **Paul Ladikos** **Dwayne Ezell**

Robert Dilallo Michael Stutler **Christopher Powers** Jerome Lee

Karla McKinney **Randal Walker** Terry Dear **Phillip Thompson**

Kevin Pullen Cristy Bostic **Harold Wheeler**

Karen Bond **Michael Murphy**

Darrel McCauley Herbert McKinley

Clifford Medred **Christopher Wynn** Curtis Pender

Sherman Hartley Jason Broz **Kim Caswell**

Michael Weinman **Jacob Davis** Jean Reynolds

Richard Bell Leo Kelly **Ronnie Tucker** Chauncey Downs

Annette Harris **Robert Hyatt** Adam Harmon

Joseph Gibson Brandon Starkey **Robb Goe**

Marvin Dryer **Ben Kilar** James Kranak

Dennis Goens Armone Moore **Richard Tuttle**

Joshua Davis **Cory Anderson** Douglas Sullivan

Roger Linder Richard Sesso **Christina Stewart**

April

David Jacobsen Larry Engle **Michael Dexter**

Angela McBride **Samuel Zachariah** Jacqueline Tyler

Robert Bernlandt George Pasipanki **Diego Lugo**

Thomas Durbin **Jacob Bernecker** Douglas Mcpherson

Charles Schretzman John Schmoll **Jared McClung** Nathan Collins

James Michael **Ronald Kohus** John Rothermel **La Vonn Scott** James Hard

Fred Layfield Thurman Trowbridge **Willie Gray** Curtis Fatyol

Mark Dunford **Mark Hasson** Scott Law **Geary Burke** Molly Higham

Phillip Osborn Paul Lanier **John Wright** Andrew Adams

Marie Ann Bohusch **Murl Muenchau**

John Suru Dean Byers **David Lowe**

Jerome Perry **Michael Wood** Marc Boyes

May



Issue 3 • Volume 33

February 18, 2025

Washington Update

Check out the [PVAction Force](#) page to view alerts and a list of key legislation.

IBVSOs Release VA Budget Recommendations

While Congress remains focused on finalizing funding for the current fiscal year, The Independent Budget veterans service organizations (IBVSOs)—PVA, DAV, and VFW—are looking to the future. On February 13, the IBVSOs released, “[The Independent Budget Recommendations for the Department of Veterans Affairs for Fiscal Years 2026 and 2027](#).” The report serves as a comprehensive roadmap to ensure the VA is fully funded and capable of carrying out its mission to serve veterans and their families, both now and in the future.

For fiscal year (FY) 2026, the IBVSOs are recommending \$166.4 billion for the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), which would enable the department to continue to provide timely and high-quality care. The Independent Budget (IB) report details specific funding levels and targeted increases for VHA programs, including a \$2 billion increase to strengthen long-term services and supports to meet the specialized needs of disabled veterans and their caregivers; a \$1.4 billion boost to fill health care vacancies; and a \$1 billion increase to cover the projected growth of new veterans seeking VA care.

For the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), the IBVSOs recommend a total of \$6.5 billion for FY 2026—a roughly \$1 billion increase over the projected FY 2025 levels—and \$296 million for the Board of Veterans’ Appeals. The VBA increases include a \$200 million rise to bring down the backlog of over 235,000 pending claim

decisions; \$10 million more to support the Veteran Readiness and Employment program due to an unprecedented number of applications; and a \$32 million increase to implement VA’s Transition Assistance Program (TAP) 6.0, to increase in-person TAP classes and ensure adequate staffing.

The IBVSOs also continue to call for improvements in funding VA infrastructure projects. Specifically, we call on Congress to significantly increase funding to nearly \$10 billion—a threefold increase over FY 2025. For FY 2026, the IBVSOs recommend a total of \$5.1 billion for the major construction account to increase staffing and begin reducing the VA’s growing infrastructure backlog.

Update on Efforts to Reduce the Size of the Federal Government

PVA continues to monitor efforts to reduce the size of the federal government and the effect these efforts will have on the VA and other federal agencies that serve veterans with disabilities. Most recently, on February 13, 1,000 VA probationary employees were fired, including those who support veterans benefits and services. It’s unclear what the short and long-term effects will be on VA programs, benefits, and services. We will continue to advocate for the VA and other agencies to have the resources required to serve the needs of paralyzed veterans and their families, caregivers, and survivors.

PVA.org

@ParalyzedVeterans

 Paralyzed Veterans of America

 @PVA1946

 @PVA1946

Reintroduction of PVA Priority Legislation

With the new Congress underway, legislation is slowly being reintroduced, including several bills in line with [PVA's 2025 Policy Priorities](#).

First, Representative Julia Brownley (D-CA) reintroduced the Veterans Infertility Treatment Act of 2025 ([H.R. 220](#)), which authorizes in vitro fertilization (IVF) to be included in the medical benefits package offered by the VA. In order to access VA's IVF benefit, you must have a service-connected infertility diagnosis which is very difficult to prove. H.R. 220 would allow veterans enrolled in VA care to access IVF services if they are struggling with infertility.

Next, Representative David Valadao (R-CA) and Representative Morgan McGarvey (D-KY) have reintroduced the Veterans Accessibility Advisory Committee Act ([H.R. 1147](#)), which would create the Advisory Committee on Equal Access at the VA. The purpose of the committee would be to address physical barriers, identify websites that are inaccessible, improve access to medical equipment, and remove other barriers veterans may face throughout the VA and in accessing its services.

Finally, Representative Brad Sherman (D-CA) has reintroduced the Housing Unhoused Disabled Veterans Act ([H.R. 965](#)), which would allow more disabled veterans to access housing resources from agencies like the Department of Housing and Urban Development by ensuring their VA disability compensation is not considered earned income. Veterans struggling with housing insecurities are often barred from non-VA resources because they are considered to earn above the Average Median Income. This bill would remove that impediment to veterans accessing needed services.

PVA Comments Emphasize the Need for Air Travel Consumer Rights for Passengers with Disabilities

PVA recently submitted comments to the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) [advance notice of proposed rulemaking](#) (ANPRM) on air travel consumer rights during delays and cancellations. An ANPRM is not a proposed rule. Instead, a federal agency may publish an ANPRM when it needs more information or data to determine whether a rule is needed, what the proposed regulations should include, or to gather ideas. [PVA's comment](#) reinforced the unique circumstances that affect passengers with disabilities, especially wheelchair and scooter users, during delays and cancellations, that are not experienced by passengers without disabilities.

Because of these additional burdens, PVA recommended DOT expand the requirements for the remedies offered to passengers with disabilities and others in their travel party.

Former Representative Doug Collins Confirmed as the New VA Secretary

The Honorable Douglas A. Collins was sworn in as the 12th secretary of the VA on February 5, shortly after the Senate confirmed him for the position by a vote of 77-23. Secretary Collins represented Georgia's rural Ninth Congressional District for nearly a decade before attempting an unsuccessful run for the Senate. He has served in the military since 2002 and is currently a colonel in the Air Force Reserve.

In his [message](#) to veterans and VA employees, Secretary Collins pledged to take great care of America's veterans by first putting them at the center of everything VA does. He also promised to deliver timely access to care and benefits to those who are eligible to receive them, celebrate the vast majority of VA employees who do a great job every day, and hold employees accountable when they fall short of the mission. He pledged to also challenge the status quo in order to find new and better ways of helping VA beneficiaries. We look forward to working with Secretary Collins in the coming months on ways the department can better meet the needs of our members.

Section 504 Subject of Pending Federal Lawsuit

Seventeen states filed a lawsuit in a federal district court in Texas asking the court to get rid of [Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#). Section 504 prohibits disability discrimination by federal, or federally funded, programs, services, and activities. In the case, [Texas v. Becerra](#), the states are challenging [new regulations](#) published in 2024, that clarified antidiscrimination requirements for covered medical providers, services, and programs. These new regulations included requirements for accessible medical diagnostic equipment, facility accessibility, the use of mobility assistive devices, and more. Not only are the states asking the court to get rid of these new regulations, but also Section 504 as a whole.

If the court gets rid of Section 504, people with disabilities will lose their civil rights established by a law passed over fifty years ago. Right now, the case is currently pending before the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas. In the meantime, advocates

in the 17 states party to the case are being asked to contact their state attorney generals to ask them to drop out of the case. More information is available [here](#).

Bipartisan Stop the Wait Act Reintroduced

On February 2, the bipartisan Stop the Wait Act ([H.R. 930](#)) was reintroduced in the House by Representatives Lloyd Doggett (D-TX) and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA). It was referred to the Committees on Ways and Means and Energy and Commerce. This bill directs the Social Security Administration to phase out the five-month waiting period to receive Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits. The bill would also allow individuals who are uninsured or unable to afford health insurance to immediately receive Medicare coverage, ending the 24-month waiting period for Medicare.

PVA supported Stop the Wait in the 118th Congress and will continue to support it in the 119th. As an organization representing veterans with significant disabilities who benefit from these programs, we believe the waiting periods imposed for SSDI and Medicare are an undue burden on people who desperately need these supports.

NEWS OF NOTE

PVA Capitol Hill Visits

Your PVA government relations team has been hard at work in the new Congress. Our legislative team has had several meetings on Capitol Hill with new members of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee to establish relationships and to inform them of PVA's priorities. We have also had several meetings with VA committee staff in both the House and Senate to remind them of the needs of our members.

HVAC Holds Hearing on the Biden-Harris Legacy

On January 22, the House Veterans' Affairs Committee (HVAC) held an oversight hearing titled, "[VA First, Veteran Second: The Biden-Harris Legacy](#)." Subcommittee Chairwoman Jen Kiggans (R-VA) chaired the hearing to examine the Biden-Harris administration's failure to hold VA employees accountable for allegations of sexual harassment, misconduct, patient safety concerns, employee concerns, and other allegations that have directly impacted veterans' care at the VA. Witnesses for the

hearing included: Mr. Ted Radway, Acting Assistant Secretary, VA, Office of Accountability and Whistleblower Protection; Ms. Tracey Therit, Chief Human Capital Officer, VA, Veterans Health Administration (VHA); Dr. Mark Upton, Deputy to the Deputy Under Secretary for Health, VA, VHA; Mr. David Case, Acting Inspector General/Deputy Inspector General, VA; and Mr. Donald Sherman, Executive Director and Chief Counsel, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington.

EO Subcommittee Holds Oversight Hearing

On February 11, the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity (EO) conducted its first [oversight hearing](#) of the new Congress to examine the current state of VA's Education Service to ensure that the delivery of benefits is streamlined, effective, and meets veterans' needs. Mr. Ken Smith, the acting Executive Director of Education Service, and Mr. James Ruhlman, Deputy Director of Education Service, testified on behalf of VA. The hearing highlighted the need for implementation of improvements and the expectation of increased communication between Congress and the VA.

Surveys, Webinars & Committee Activities

Preparing to Advocate During PVA's Annual Testimony

Join us on February 20 at 3:00 PM ET as we prepare for PVA National President Robert Thomas' testimony before a Joint Session of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees. We will start off with a warm welcome from President Thomas, followed by a breakdown of [PVA's 2025 policy priorities](#) by Chief Policy Officer Heather Ansley and National Legislative Director Morgan Brown. Registration for the webinar can be found [here](#).

In the meantime, we need your help in pushing our priorities forward. Sign [PVA's SCI/D System of Care petition](#) and count your voice during the hearing.

REMINDER: Survey to Assess Accessibility During the 2024 General Election

PVA National is conducting a survey on accessible voting. The study aims to learn more about the voting experience of people with disabilities in the 2024 general election. The feedback received from this survey will inform our efforts to educate members as they face accessibility barriers in voting. This information will provide valuable insight and guide preparation for future webinars and other resources related to voting accessibility. To take the survey, please click [here](#).

Veterans' Committee Activities

Please visit the [House](#) and [Senate](#) Veterans' Affairs Committee webpages for information on previous and upcoming hearings and markups.

Who is eligible to participate in the program?

Must be a BPVA Member in good standing for a minimum of 90 days to participate. The Committee has the option to make exceptions for extenuating circumstances.

What is the acceptable time period before the program becomes available for use?

The BPVA member must be hospitalized for a minimum of one week.

What is the acceptable distance for mileage reimbursement?

The mileage reimbursement will be given to visitors for travel to a VA hospital in the State of Ohio for the well-being of members who are hospitalized. Beginning and ending travel must be in the State of Ohio.

How much is the reimbursement?

Reimbursement will be at a rate of .20 per mile. Mileage will be determined via MapQuest based on the submission of the visitor of the beginning and ending address. Chapter will reimburse up to 2 trips per month with a \$2,000 cap per year.

Reimbursement request containing the name of the member, name and address of the visitor, the date of visitation and the origin of the trip must be submitted by the 20th of the following month, with payment at the end of month. Request for reimbursement will only be valid for one calendar month following travel.

How will reimbursement be paid?

Reimbursements will be via check.

What locations are included in the program?


Reimbursement will be for Ohio VA hospitals only.

MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT



MAXIM HEALTHCARE SERVICES

**You Served Us;
Now Let Us
Serve You.**



Maxim Healthcare Services offers a variety of home care services that allow veterans to receive care in the comfort of home. We serve veterans with ALS, brain injuries, spinal cord injuries, tracheostomies, ventilators and more.

We work with the VA, TRICARE and CHAMPVA to serve veterans and their families.

Contact us today!
www.maximhealthcare.com



ADVERTISE WITH BUCKEYE PVA

Looking to get your information out to the Paralyzed Veteran Community? Look no further than advertising with Buckeye PVA in the Buckeye Banner! The Buckeye Banner is published quarterly and is filled with event updates, special offers for our Paralyzed Veterans, and even ads for companies and products built to improve the lives of our members! If you would like to advertise in the Buckeye Banner, ads must be purchased by September 30, 2025! Artwork for ads must be submitted to the Buckeye Banner Editor, Sarah Hoffman 1 month prior to publishing date of each newsletter. If you do not have the artwork for your ad, artwork can be created by Editor for an additional charge.

Advertising Rates for the Buckeye Banner:

1 Full Page Color for 1 fiscal year* (4 issues).....	\$3,500
1 Full Page B/W for 1 fiscal year* (4 issues).....	\$3,000
1 Half Page Color for 1 fiscal year* (4 issues).....	\$2,000
1 Half Page B/W for 1 fiscal year* (4 issues).....	\$1,500
1 Quarter Page Color for 1 fiscal year* (4 issues).....	\$1,000
1 Quarter Page B/W for 1 fiscal year* (4 issues).....	\$750

1 Full page Color for 1 quarterly issue**.....	\$1,000
1 Full page B/W for 1 quarterly issue**.....	\$850
1 Half page Color for 1 quarterly issue**.....	\$600
1 Half page B/W for 1 quarterly issue**.....	\$475
1 Quarter page Color for 1 quarterly issue**.....	\$400
1 Quarter page B/W for 1 quarterly issue**.....	\$300

***Ads purchased for an entire fiscal year are up for renewal on September 30th. Ads can be updated throughout the year and issues are released the first week of December, March, June and November**

****Ads purchased for 1 quarterly issue must be submitted 30 days prior to release dates**

Please contact Sarah at sarahh@buckeyepva.org or by telephone at 216-731-1017 to advertise with Buckeye PVA today!

Connect With What Matters



Being there makes a difference

It could be a simple trip to the mall, a ride to the movies or just a visit to friend's home. The little things in life can make a big difference. It's why MobilityWorks® has been helping veterans connect with who and what matters most since 1997. Veterans have unique needs so we treat each of them as individuals. First of all, we listen. Then, we work together to find the best solution.

MobilityWorks considers it a privilege to help our nation's veterans. Every day we work with local VISNs and service organizations to make the process of securing accessible vehicles, lifts and driving equipment for veterans as easy as possible.

MobilityWorks has more than 90 locations across the country with the largest selection of accessible vehicles and adaptive solutions:

- Converted minivans and full-size vans, and SUVs — Chrysler, Dodge, Ford, Honda and Toyota
- Pre-owned accessible vehicles
- The latest in adaptive technology including transfer and turning seats, scooter lifts and hand controls
- Complete maintenance and service on adaptive driving equipment, lifts and conversions
- Daily, weekly and long term rental vans
- Financing options to fit your personal needs
- 24-hour roadside assistance with wheelchair transportation

MobilityWorks is committed to serving you. Contact us today so we can evaluate your needs and find a solution that best fits your lifestyle.



Certified Mobility Consultants Provide Comprehensive Needs Analysis



Scooter lifts, turning seats, and driving accessories

Akron

810 Moe Dr.
Akron, OH 44310
330-247-6295

Bedford Heights

5040 Richmond Rd.
Bedford Heights, OH 44146
440-305-8995

Columbus / Plain City

7233 Industrial Pkwy
Plain City, OH 43064
614-289-8138

Dayton

214 Valley St.
Dayton, OH 45404
937-998-1716

Sharonville

11755 Mosteller Rd.
Sharonville, OH 45241
513-686-1151

Toledo

1020 Laskey Rd.
Toledo, OH 43612
419-476-4166

www.mobilityworks.com



Emergency Assistance Program

Paralyzed Veterans of America, Buckeye Chapter has available an Emergency Assistance Program.

This program helps members of the Buckeye Chapter who may find themselves in financial distress causing possible eviction from their homes, disconnection of utilities or the inability to pay for their food.

Members must be in good standing for a minimum of 90 days prior to qualifying for consideration. Application for help is limited to twice yearly or up to a maximum of \$500 per year. This is a confidential process. Payments must be made directly to the vendor. Please contact the Chapter office for more details. (800) 248-2548 or (216) 731-1017

VA Emergency Care

In most instances, Veterans are eligible to receive VA authorized emergency care at an in-work facility if the VA is notified of the emergency event within 72 hrs. Veterans so not need to check with the VA before going to an emergency department in the community or calling an ambulance and, during an emergency, veterans are encouraged to seek medical attention without delay.

To simplify and streamline this emergency care notification process, VA established a national emergency contact center. This center allows community providers to report instances of a Veteran presenting to a community emergency department and offers simplified access to VA for care coordination, eligibility determination, and payment authorization information.

For more information please visit:
https://www.va.gov/vaforms/medical/pdf/10-10143g_Non-VA_Hospital_Emergency_Notification_Fill.pdf

For more information about care coordination, documentation submission, eligibility, claims and payments visit:
https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/providers/infor_EmergencyCare.asp

Veteran Information	Treating Facility Information
Name	National Provider Identifier (NPI)
Social Security Number	Name
Date of Birth	Address
Address	Point of Contact (POC) Name
Date Presenting to Facility	POC Phone#
Date of Discharge	POC Email Address
Admitted? (YES/NO)	Note: POC will receive VA authorization decision info
Chief Complaint/Admission DX and/or Discharge DX	

Please cut around the dotted line to keep this important information with you at all times

Paralyzed Veterans Disaster Relief Fund

Paralyzed Veterans members who suffer demonstrable losses after a natural disaster, can file for financial assistance through Paralyzed Veterans Disaster Relief Fund. The fund offers a grant of up to \$1,500 and was established to give recovering members a jump start toward the road to recovery, whether that means replacing lost food and clothing, repairing a damaged roof, or restoring a flooded basement back to livable conditions.

Funds will only be provided to Paralyzed Veterans of America members.

Funds may be granted for:

- Transportation
- Temporary shelter
- Food
- Modifications for accessibility
- Prosthetic appliances
- Medical supplies

The funds will not be provided if other assistance has been provided to pay for the items in the request (insurance, FEMA, etc.). Funds will also not be approved to cleanup, fix, or replace damages not related to the member's primary dwelling.

A maximum of \$1,500 per individual will be granted. However, additional funding may be provided in extreme circumstances, upon review on a case-by-case basis. Each application will be evaluated for need. Maximum disbursements will not be made in all cases.

Please contact your local Paralyzed Veterans of America chapter to apply for relief. Once an application is received it will be reviewed by the Chapter President or designee, and the National Service Officer, and you will be contacted for a transfer of funds.

PVA was founded on a promise that we would never leave a fallen comrade behind. We still live by that ethos to this day. We are here to help you in this time of need.



HOME | FAQ | CONTACT | CALL US 877-900-VETS (877-900-8387)

DONATE YOUR VEHICLE

To Help Support Paralyzed Veterans of America

GIVE TODAY

EASY PROCESS

FREE TOWING

TAX BENEFITS

PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA VEHICLE DONATION PROGRAM

Since 1946, Paralyzed Veterans of America has been on a mission to change lives and build brighter futures for our seriously injured heroes. We've had a single-minded mission—to empower our brave men and women to regain what they fought for: their freedom and independence.

They returned to a grateful nation, but also to a world with few solutions to the challenges they faced. They made a decision not just to live, but to live with dignity as contributors to society. They created Paralyzed Veterans of America, an organization dedicated to veterans service, medical research and civil rights for people with disabilities.

Have an old car taking up space in your driveway? Donate it to Paralyzed Veterans of America!

HOW IT WORKS

1.



Call or complete the online donation form.

Our helpful Donor Support Team is available 7 days a week.

2.



Schedule your free and convenient pick-up.

In most cases, your vehicle can be picked up just about anywhere in the U.S. within 72 hours of completing the donation form.

3.



Receive a donation receipt. That's it!

Vehicle donations are tax-deductible. You'll receive a donation receipt within 30 days of the sale of the vehicle.

**PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA
BUCKEYE CHAPTER**

2775 Bishop Road - Suite B
Willoughby Hills, OH 44092

Non-Profit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Cleveland, OH
Permit 4318

Help Us Serve America's Veterans



buckeyepva.org

Health Care Access, Benefits, Advocacy, Sports, Recreation, Education are just a few of the programs your tax-deductible contributions help support.

For more information, call (800) 248-2548

Or visit www.buckeyepva.org

