



Veterans and Military Families Caucus

Read White & Blue

April 2022

Newsletter

Vol. 2, No. 1

To view this in Browser, go [here](#).

PRIMARIES -- WHO CARES? I CARE. HOW ABOUT YOU?

Hello Members and friends, I want to admit to you that for much of my life I ignored primaries. It felt like too much effort, and what would it matter anyway? I woke up a little in 1980. I was raised Republican but there was NO WAY I was voting for Ronald Reagan. I liked John Anderson, the Independent candidate and I was furious that even though he earned enough primary votes to be in the *League of Women Voters* presidential debates, everyone I knew said, "There's no choice", my first realization Americans are chronically binary.

In 1984 and 1988 I was really excited to be for Jesse Jackson in the primaries. I finally voted for a winning president in 1992 -- even though I'd worked for Jerry Brown in the primaries. You may notice that I am only mentioning presidential primaries! Sad but true most of us just wait for the November election run to pay attention to US Senators, US Congressman, Governors, Attorney Generals, State Representatives, Judges, on and on.

I know, it's a heavy lift. We all have enormous demands on our time and brain. But, I'm sorry to tell you: We must do better. And, we can. Love her or not, AOC - Alexandria Ocasio Cortez (US Rep NY11) taught us that with inspiration and foot power, a novice can knock-off a long term establishment candidate. Her 2018 win was followed by a few other surprises in 2020 and many more challengers who rattled cages. None of us can do EVERYTHING but each of us can do SOMETHING.

I encourage all of us to look at our state [here](#) and find out our primary dates. Texas is curiously??? in March. Twelve are in May, the bulk in June and August, with lonely Louisiana running the primary with the November 8 election. Pick one race to care about, it doesn't even have to be in your state. Send in a bit of money, or make phone calls, or send postcards, or contact people on the ground there and ask what they need. Be AWAKE to the fact that primaries are before the big money. Bet on a young, new horse to shake things up. It's not like we don't need new blood! (How's that for double negatives?)

Democrats Abroad does not weigh in on primary candidates, which is proper. But you can! FIRST go to votefromabroad.org to make sure you're registered and find out when your primary is. Then go to Ballotpedia or some other site to see all the candidates running in your

state. Or listen to friends or relatives. Pick some candidate to care about and do what you can. As Americans overseas, I think we really see that democracy is in trouble.

Be well and keep the faith,

Robin H. Rafaelidys (Co-Editor, Greece)

ADVOCACY

Improve the VA: In the previous newsletter we asked what 3 improvements you would suggest for bringing significant improvements to the VA. How could the VA be reformed to make life better for you as a veteran overseas? Email your suggestions [here](#). Thank you!

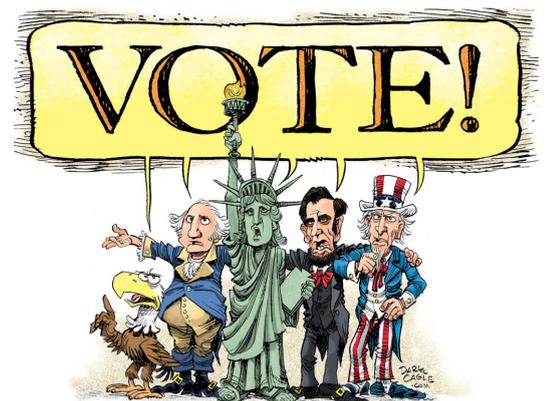
Trouble Using Your GI Bill Benefits? Please reach out to us if you or someone you know is having trouble using the GI Bill benefits at a foreign school or university. We are in contact with congressional offices, urging every senator and representative to immediately address this issue. GI Bill and/or VR&E educational benefits are EARNED benefits, and we will not rest until the Dept. of Veterans Affairs' policies are changed to work in favor of veterans, servicemembers, and military family members - not against them. [Here](#).

Deportation of Veterans: remains a top priority among the Global VMF Caucus for Congress to address the issue of deported veterans. Luckily, the Veteran Deportation Prevention and Reform Act would resolve many of the problems stemming from our nation's veterans being deported, ripping American families apart, sending shockwaves throughout our communities, and mending promises initially made by the Federal Government. VMF urges all Americans to contact their representative to cosponsor and support H.R. 1182 in the House, and contact their senators to cosponsor and support S. 3212 in the Senate.

VOTING...IT IS WHAT WE ARE ALL ABOUT!

- *Have you registered?*
- *Have you requested your absentee ballot?*
- *Can you get involved in GOTV in other ways, maybe learn how to phone bank? Go [here](#).*

More resources about Primaries and Midterms in your state are linked [here](#).



WHAT'S CONGRESS UP TO?

The House Passes Bill to Automatically Enroll Vets in VA Health Care Eligible veterans would be automatically enrolled in the [Department of Veterans Affairs'](#) health care system under the Ensuring Veterans' Smooth Transition, or "EVEST Act". The bill passed with a vote of 265-163, falling largely along party lines, but 44 Republicans joined Democrats. [Here](#) In addition, both chambers are moving forward on legislation addressing veterans' health care needs due to exposure from toxic burn pits. The Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee recently passed S. 3541, the Health Care for Burn Pit Veterans Act, and the House Veterans' Affairs Committee recently passed H.R. 3967, the Honoring Our PACT Act. Keep an eye out for early

March 2022 hearings when Veterans Service Organisations arrive on Capitol Hill to testify on what pro-veteran legislative priorities remain for the rest of the year."

DEMOCRATS ABROAD ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

You can check out DA Activities this month by clicking [here](#).

VETERANS' ISSUES

Click this link to find our VMF Health Care information and resources on our webpage. [Here](#). Here is the link to the webpage for **Transitioning and Jobs**: [Here](#).

SPOTLIGHT

Click [here](#) for Spotlight, "Josephine Baker Inducted Into the Panthéon"

ARTS AND EDUCATION



Click [here](#) for our Podcast & Social Media Recommendations
Click [here](#) for our Poetry Corner
Click [here](#) for our Brain-Zone Quiz
Click [here](#) for our Educational Resources
Click [here](#) for our Film and Book Recommendations

UPCOMING GLOBAL VMF CAUCUS MEETINGS

The Global VMF Caucus Steering Committee meets once a month. All Democrats Abroad members are welcome to attend. The next VMF meeting will be April 9 as per Rotation C. The meeting will begin at 4pm Eastern Daylight Savings Time on Saturday April 9. We will be using WebEx for this meeting, so please [click here](#) to RSVP for the event - we'll email you the meeting link.

To receive the agenda or minutes from our meetings, contact us by [emailing us here](#).



We welcome your input. What's important to you as a veteran, servicemember, or military family member? What would you like to see more of in this newsletter? What are we missing? Any VMF experts you would like us to interview in a live webinar? Please use the link below to send us your input, including any articles, poems, recommendations for books and films, and anything else that is VMF-related: [here](#).

We're In Need of Volunteers!

VMF-Editors@democratsabroad.org



Co-Editors:

Bob Gould (UK, Military Family)
Robin H. Rafaelidys (Greece)

Editorial Staff:

Kee Evans (Guatemala, Military Family)
Tilly Gaillard (France)
Isa Kocher (Turkey, Veteran)
Anthony "Mike" Nitz (Veteran)
Terese Sarno (Germany)

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*"If we really love this country,
if we truly love justice and mercy,
if we fervently want to make this Nation better
for those who are to follow us,
we can at least abjure the hatred that consumes people,
the false accusations that divide us,
and the bitterness that begets violence."*

- Chief Justice Earl Warren
May 29, 1917 - November 22, 1961

