



DEMOCRATS ABROAD

Veterans and Military Families Caucus

Read White & Blue

July 2022

NEWSLETTER

VOL. 2, NO. 4

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website,
click [here](#)



“The gun lobby’s interpretation of the Second Amendment is one of the greatest pieces of fraud, I repeat the word fraud, on the American People by special interest groups that I have seen in my lifetime.”

— Warren Burger, Chief Justice of Supreme Court (1969-1986)

PBS News 1991

Editor’s Message—

Greetings! As we went to press, two landmark rulings came down that are causing a furor—**A law that limited who can get a permit to carry a gun in public in NY was overturned** and the right for women to make decisions about their personal health care with the **overturn of Roe v. Wade** ending the right to legal abortions.

I hope everyone is listening and will act! We must not allow the radical element of our population to make decisions that affect all of us. They will not stop with banning legal abortions. They will march forward to take away same sex marriages and the right to privacy and who knows what else! Their desires know no bounds. It is interesting that Justice Thomas left one item, **interracial marriage**, off his hit list.

How do we stop this rampage on our rights? We VOTE and get all our acquaintances to vote! That is where the power is!

We recently celebrated the 247th birthday of the U.S. Army, our nation's first militia. Recently militia has become a very hot word since the Second Amendment of the Constitution declares "*A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.*"

Why would anyone think that the word "Militia" refers to individual citizens? Chief Justice Burger stated "*The very language of the Second Amendment refutes any argument that it was intended to guarantee every citizen an unfettered right to any kind of weapon he or she desires.*" (Associated Press, Bill of Rights article, 1991)

Justice Burger continued that "*The real purpose of the Second Amendment was to ensure that state armies, the militia, would be maintained for the defense of the state.*"

Do you wonder how many people clinging to the Second Amendment have done any military service? Visualizing the U.S. Army as a militia puts the definition of this word into perspective. Hiding behind the Constitution to advance personal agendas is unacceptable.

In a **Huffpost article** by Amanda Terkel the title says it all: *You're 18. You Can't Rent A Car, Hit The Club Or Buy Cigarettes — But You Can Get An AR-15*. Besides the items mentioned, you can't buy alcohol, and can't gamble, but you can buy an assault weapon.

Why should people-young, old, middle age-have to fear leaving the house to go to church, go shopping, go to school or just go out for a walk? Certain sages of the Supreme Court however voted to overturn the NY law that limited possession of firearms in NY with Justice Clarence Thomas stating "*New York's proper-cause requirement violates the Fourteenth Amendment by preventing law-abiding citizens with ordinary self-defense needs from exercising their right to keep and bear arms in public.*" Carrying a gun should not be a necessity. There is no need for anyone to possess an assault weapon or any kind of military equipment.

We have made some progress with a bi-partisan Gun Safety bill (**Bipartisan Safer Communities Act**) that President Biden signed into law on June 25th but this is just a first step. Ask yourself why every single U.S. Senator is not on board with keeping our citizens safe from guns. How can this attitude be justified?

The questions to be answered: Is it time to take another lawsuit to the Supreme Court and make sure the 2nd Amendment is interpreted correctly? Is it also time to end lifetime appointments to the Supreme Court? With the Supreme Court ruling that **Maine's tuition assistance program must cover religious schools** this could be considered three strikes.

The Bill of Rights was adopted in 1791. The Constitution should be a living document that is updated sensibly—of course we need the majority to make sure changes are sensible! How do we make sure we have the majority? We get out the vote! We can no longer allow the radical element of the population to set the rules and terrorize everyone. Politicians must listen to their constituents.

Take a few moments to look over this information from the BBC News on **America's gun culture - in seven charts**. What can you do? As always, contact your **U.S. Senators** and everyone else you can think of including governors. You also could combine forces with **Students Demand Action** and **Moms Demand Action**. Help people register to vote, especially those who have just turned 18 or will be 18 for the 2022 election.

"We need to restore the protections of Roe as law of the land. We need to elect officials who will do that. This fall, Roe is on the ballot. Personal freedoms are on the ballot. The right to privacy, liberty, equality, they're all on the ballot." —President Joe Biden
(Read President Biden's entire June 24, 2022 **speech**.)

This is a tremendous challenge but we can succeed!
Get Out The Vote!
Terese Sarno, Editor



ADVOCACY

24/7 Confidential Crisis Support for Veterans

You don't have to be enrolled in VA benefits or health care to connect. Call 1-800-273-8255, Chat online, Text 838255

Access free, confidential support 24/7, 365 days a year. Connect with a real person qualified to support Veterans. The Veterans Crisis Line serves Veterans, service members, National Guard and Reserve members, and those who support them.

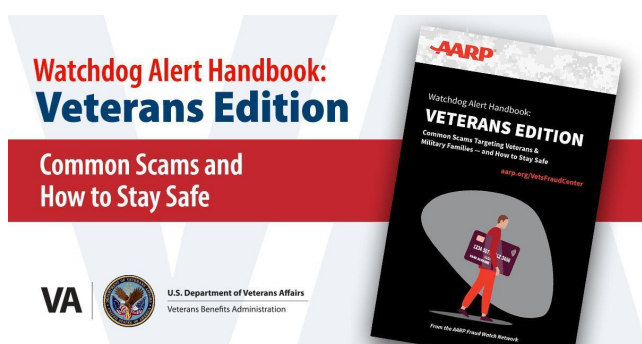
The Veterans History Project (VHP)

Veterans in Medical, Emergency Fields Sought for Oral History Collection

How to Participate

VHP Fieldkit Companion Video

[Search the Digital Collection](#)



For this excellent handbook, [click here](#).

Blue Star Museums offer free admission to active duty military and **families**, including National Guard and Reserves all summer through September 5. **Details here**

Tranquility Point Veterans Retreat Cross Hill, SC

Free for veterans and others with PTSD who apply and are accepted.

4th of July Military Discounts 2022



JULY is National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month

July is extra special for veterans because of **National Hire A Veteran Day**.



July 4 - Independence Day Our 245th birthday! **Recipe** for Red, White, and Blue Sundae

July 7 - Abortion Rights: Litigation, Legislation, and Liberation 7-8pm EDT Zoom ACLU

July 16 - VMF Meeting 16:00 EDT Webex [Login](#) Password: dems Meeting #:23151492714

July 17 - Anniversary of John Lewis's passing "Do not get lost in a sea of despair. Be hopeful, be optimistic. Our struggle is not the struggle of a day, a week, a month, or a year, it is the struggle of a lifetime. Never, ever be afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble." - [John Lewis](#)

July 21 - [Anniversary of the Creation of Veterans Administration](#)

July 25 - [National Hire A Veteran Day](#)

July 26 - [National Disability Independence Day](#) celebrates Americans with Disabilities Act.

July 27 - [National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day](#)

July 28 - [Buffalo Soldiers Day](#) celebrates the first Black American Army regiments.

July 29 - [Anniversary of the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps](#)

Check upcoming **DA Activities** [here](#).



YOUR VOTE IS YOUR VOICE!

*"The only thing that can stop a bad politician
with a vote is a good citizen with a vote."*
—Jocelyn Benson, Michigan Secretary of State

Request your absentee ballot at [Vote From Abroad](#).



VOTERS* WHO RECEIVED THEIR
BALLOT ELECTRONICALLY WERE
OVER 1.7X
MORE LIKELY
TO VOTE SUCCESSFULLY
*IN HIGHER-OBSTACLE COUNTRIES



ELECTRONIC BALLOT RETURN
REDUCES OBSTACLES
BUT ONLY 59%
OF VOTERS WHO COULD USE IT* DID SO
*THEIR STATE ALLOWS ELECTRONIC RETURN

Make Way For Voters

State Election Guide: Primary Elections

July 2022:

July 19: MD

July 26: NC Non-Partisan State Primary Runoff

August 2022

August 2: AZ, KS, MI, MO, WA

August 4: TN

August 6: U.S. Virgin Islands

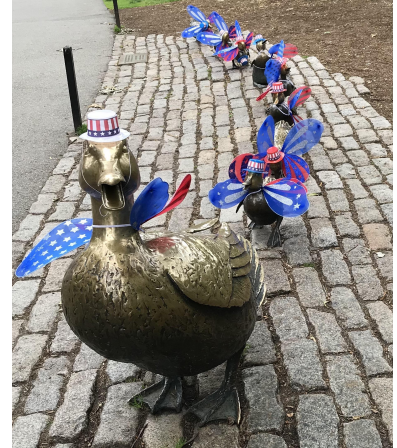
August 9: CT, MN, VT, WI; MN-CD 1

August 13: HI

August 16: AK, WY; AK-U.S. House

August 23: FL; OK-Runoff Special Election, if needed; NY-Congressional Primary.

August 27: Guam



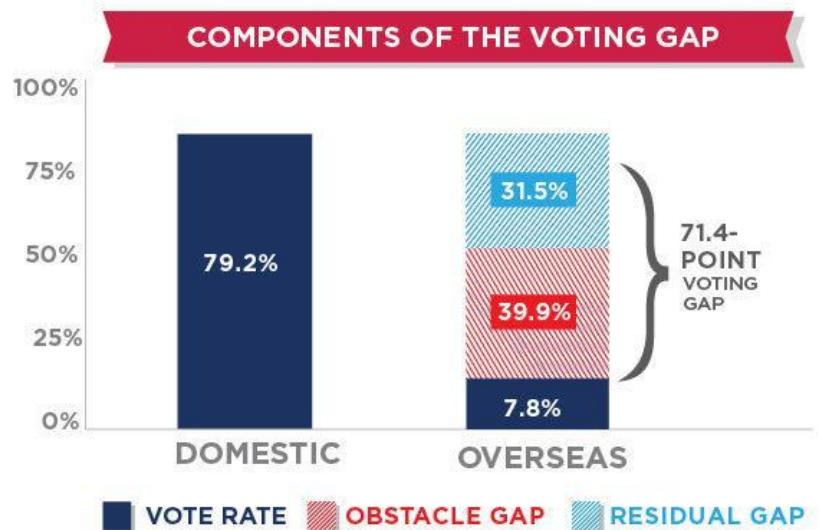
Voter Registration Training How to fill out FPCA forms and help others to vote.

Phone Banking Overseas Voters: Join phone banking training sessions on Zoom!

12 Battleground States: Help us in AZ, CA, FL, GA, MD, ME, MI, NC, OH, PA, TX, & WI.

VOTING QUESTIONS? Email: help@votefromabroad.org

Compared to people living in the United States, citizens living abroad are much less likely to vote in federal elections. FVAP calls the difference the voting gap. While some overseas citizens don't want to vote, in 2020 over half of the gap between domestic and overseas voting rates could be attributed to real or perceived obstacles overseas citizens encountered while trying to vote that domestic voters do not face. (from FVAP)



2022 Primary Elections by state and territory

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about absentee voting

What's Congress Up To?

Senate passes historic bill to help veterans exposed to burn pits during military service

Thursday, June 16, 2022 a bipartisan majority in the Senate (84-14) passed S. 797, the **PACT Act!** House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has pledged to send it quickly to President Joe

Biden after the House votes on it. The bill is an amended version of **H.R. 3967**, the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act that originally passed the House on March 3, 2022.

Bills Signed: S. 1760, S. 1872, S. 2102, S. 2514, S. 2533, S. 2687, S. 3527, S. 4089, and S. 4119

On June 7, 2022, President Biden *signed several bills into law* which benefit the veterans' community. These included the Making Advances in Mammography and Medical Options for Veterans Act - legislation that makes a number of changes to VA's mammography screening and access to medical care - is now the law of the land. The Strengthening Oversight for Veterans Act - legislation which temporarily authorizes the VA's Office of Inspector General to issue subpoenas in certain circumstances - is also law.

H.R. 7375 – important legislation for the overseas-based student veterans and military families community who are currently facing barriers in using their ***GI Bill*** educational benefits passed the House of Representative on May 17, 2022. This legislation would require the Dept. of Veterans Affairs (VA) within 90 days of enactment to update its pitifully-outdated electronic payment system so that foreign universities could receive electronic tuition payments, and thus allow student veterans, once again, to enroll without problems and start, continue or complete their VA-approved education programs.

Of note: The VA's Asset and Infrastructure Review (AIR) Commission report has made recommendations to Congress on the closure of certain medical centers and outpatient clinics, **VA's Manila Regional Office and Outpatient Clinic**: This is the only VA medical facility located outside of the 50 states and U.S. territories that was not included in the Commission's closure report, and therefore will remain open and continue providing

Aviator Cancer Bill Would Push VA to Study Toxins Inhaled by Air Crews and Assess Links to Cancers Just like the fighter pilots they supported, many troops who fueled, armed, and maintained warplanes have ***been diagnosed with cancer***. A new bill introduced this month would require the VA to identify cancer incidences throughout the aviation community, as well as what toxins were involved, and whether there could be a **link between their illness and cancer**. Go **here** for more information.

VETERANS' ISSUES

For the new OPM login, go **here**.

For the new TSP login, go **here**.

Medicare Enrollment/Disenrollment Deadline Extended

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services is providing equitable relief to individuals who could not submit premium-Part A or Part B enrollment or disenrollment requests in a timely manner due to challenges contacting Social Security by phone after January 1, 2022, you will be granted additional time, through December 30, 2022. This relief applies to the 2022 General Enrollment Period, Initial Enrollment Period, and Special Enrollment Period.

New ICE directive: Veteran status will be considered in deportation cases.

VA motto remains focused on men

VMF Health:

Women Veterans Health Care - The Women Veterans Call Center.
Questions? Call (+1-855-829-6636), text, **chat online**.



VA Telehealth Services: For access to the care you need, go [here](#).

How to File a TRICARE **Overseas Claim**

File Claims Online-**Secure Claims Portal Login**

TRICARE **Philippines-overseas beneficiaries**

TRICARE **Medical Claims**

My HealtheVet's Account Types

Education

VA education benefits for survivors and dependents

Veteran Rapid Retraining Assistance Program (VRRAP) Did you lose your job because of the pandemic? You might qualify for education and retraining.



Click [here](#) for our Spotlight: Memorial Day Events
Click [here](#) for our Podcast & Social Media Recommendations
Click [here](#) for our Poetry Corner

Click [here](#) for our Film and Book Recommendations

Click [here](#) for our Brain-Zone Quiz

Click [here](#) for our Educational Resources

Click [here](#) for our Virtual Museum

SUGGESTION BOX



Do you have a VA Healthcare question?

Send it to: VMF-Editors@democratsabroad.org

Please [join](#) our caucus to show your support of the U.S. military!

GLOBAL VMF CAUCUS MEETINGS

The VMF Caucus meets once a month.

All Democrats Abroad members are welcome!

Next VMF meeting: July 16, 2022, 16:00 EDT, Webex [Login](#)

Password: dems Meeting Number: 2315 149 2714

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Connect with us on



[Join](#) the VMF caucus!

"Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well
or ill, we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet

any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe,
to assure the survival and success of liberty."

—John Fitzgerald Kennedy

