

2022 October OCC 2022 Legislative Affairs Liaison Update

This month we are asking you to contact your respective lawmakers to Support Long-Term and Extended Care Services for Veterans. If you are a regular or premium member of MOAA and have not registered on the replacement 'Take Action' webpage, <https://moaa.quorum.us/bills/>. It is easy to do and opens a myriad of legislative issues you can contact your Congressman or Senator about. Progress made on these pieces of legislation could be lost if the 117th Congress adjourns without taking action. Please reach out to your lawmakers and ask them to support the Elizabeth Dole Home Care Act; the Expanding Veterans' Options for Long-Term Care Act; and the Long-Term Care Veterans Choice Act. With less than four weeks left in session for the 117th Congress, lawmakers are running out of time to fund essential legislation – including long-term and extended care services for a growing population of aging and disabled veterans who rely on lifesaving nursing home care and community-based services. While lawmakers were able to come together hours before the September 30 deadline to pass a continuing resolution and prevent a government shutdown, Congress left for the midterms with a lengthy list of unfinished business to deal with on its return, including the National Defense Authorization Act. Legislation designed to support veterans, their caregivers, and family members remains in limbo. This remains a top health care priority for MOAA. Congressional support in funding, resources, and staffing is needed for the VA to accelerate access to essential caregiving and long-term and extended care programs and services. Why should this issue and especially these three key pieces of legislation find a spot on the lame-duck session's to-do list this November? Demographics, for one: While the VA projects an overall decrease in enrolled veterans across all age groups in its health care system, there are certain groups growing at alarming rates who will require care and services. Veterans 65 years and older make up almost half of the population enrolled in VA health care. More than 61,000 veterans are over the age of 85, and they are the fastest growing population in VA's health care system. This group is expected to increase to 387,000 in the next 20 years; the population of enrolled women veterans 85 years and older enrolled is also expected to jump 278% in the same period. Next month we will continue the review of the VA's progress.