



# 2021 POLICY PRIORITIES

## Improve the VA Health Care System & Available Services

### A Protect Access to VA's Specialized Services

Congress must preserve access to VA's specialized services, including the spinal cord injury/disorder (SCI/D) system of care, and provide appropriate funding to ensure continued success. Congress must also ensure proper staffing of VA's specialized services by providing competitive compensation and retention incentives to keep up with the private sector.

### B Expand Access to VA's Long-Term Services & Supports

Congress must conduct oversight of VA's implementation of the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers to ensure consistent eligibility determinations and a fair appeals process. Also, expedite Phase II of the caregiver program expansion to October 1. Furthermore, Congress must maintain a safe margin of community living center capacity by increasing funding for SCI/D-related construction projects.

### C Increase Access to IVF

Congress must repeal VA's ban on IVF and make these services a regular part of the medical benefits package available to veterans and authorize VA to provide assisted reproductive technology, including IVF, surrogacy, and gamete donation at VA for any veterans enrolled in VA health care.

### D Enhance Care for Women Veterans with SCI/D

Congress must ensure VA properly serves women veterans with catastrophic disabilities by considering their unique needs in developing programs and services.

## Improve VA Benefits

### A Strengthen Benefits for Catastrophically Disabled Veterans

Congress must improve their benefits by:

- Increasing the number of times veterans can access the Automobile Allowance Grant & ensure veterans receive Automotive Adaptive Equipment (AAE) reimbursement;
- Allowing veterans with nonservice-connected catastrophic disabilities to receive the same type of AAE as veterans with service-connected disabilities; and
- Raising the amount of VA's Home Improvements and Structural Alterations grants.

### B Enhance Benefits for Surviving Spouses of Catastrophically Disabled Veterans

Congress must ensure survivors of veterans who die from ALS receive the full benefits they are due.

## Improve & Protect Systems & Civil Rights that Support People with Disabilities

### A Strengthen Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA)

Congress must improve access for people with disabilities to air travel by requiring airlines to use airplanes that meet broad accessibility standards, strengthening the Department of Transportation's enforcement of the ACAA, and establishing a private right of action under the law.

### B Promote Increased Compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Congress must support increased compliance with the ADA by increasing tax incentives that help businesses remove access barriers. We also support increased funding for the Department of Justice's (DOJ) ADA mediation program, as well as increased DOJ enforcement of complaints.

### C Preserve & Strengthen Social Security

Congress must strengthen and enhance the Social Security system without harming beneficiaries by implementing a more realistic cost-of-living-adjustment reflective of typical expenses; reducing the tax burden on beneficiaries; making long overdue adjustments in the financing mechanisms for the system; eliminating the five-month waiting period for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI); and removing barriers to work for SSDI beneficiaries.

### D Prioritize Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities

Congress must protect and strengthen disability employment rights; increase tax incentives for employers to hire and retain persons with disabilities; enhance entrepreneurship opportunities for people with disabilities; and improve federal hiring and promotions under Schedule A, veterans preference, and other authorities targeting those with significant disabilities.