**PVA Applauds VA’s Progress on Promoting Access to Voter Registration**

A recent report, **Strengthening Democracy: A Progress Report on Federal Agency Action to Promote Access to Voting,** reviewed federal agencies’ progress in meeting the goal to expand citizens’ opportunities to participate in the electoral process. On March 7, 2021, the Administration issued an Executive Order (EO) 14019 on Promoting Access to Voting. The EO directed federal agencies to consider ways to expand opportunities for citizens to register to vote, obtain information, and participate in the electoral process.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) committed to conducting a veteran’s survey, assist homeless veterans with voter registration, develop a website with nonpartisan information about voter registration and elections, and work on a pilot program for VA health facilities to be designated as voter registration sites in Kentucky, Michigan, and Pennsylvania. The report found VA to be one of only three federal agencies that are on track to meet its goals. Overall, the report found VA met its benchmark commitment, had timely progress on implementation of its goals, and engaged in other effective activities. However, it concluded that VA has yet to achieve its full potential. To further its progress, the report recommended VA continue to work closely with these states, and additional states, to designate VA facilities as voter registration sites. PVA is encouraged by the action VA has taken to meet the EO and looks forward to possible broader expansion of voter registration opportunities building upon the pilot program’s success.

PVA has been working directly with the VA on improving access to voting since the Veterans Health Administration Directive was introduced in 2019. PVA’s Chapters and national service officers have sought support from the VA Voluntary Service Office to ensure our members who are inpatients and residents receive information on voter registration and voting. Due to the complications of spinal cord injury and related disorders, some PVA members are in VA medical centers or long-term care facilities for extended periods of time. Even so, they must have continued access to the ballot.

In addition, PVA has a long history of voter access advocacy including support for passage of the Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Help America Vote Act. These laws guarantee polling place physical accessibility and require accessible voting systems, such as one accessible polling booth per polling place for people with physical disabilities and those who are blind or have low vision. To learn more on VA’s voter registration opportunities, please visit [How Veterans Can Register To Vote | Veterans Affairs (va.gov)](https://www.va.gov/initiatives/vote/)