

Proposed State Legislative Priorities

L-1. Veteran Mental Health, Suicide Prevention, and Access to Care

Ensure full implementation of HB 114, passed during the 2025 Regular Session, which transferred certain veteran mental health programs and plans to the Texas Veterans Commission to improve coordination, access, and outcomes for veterans and their families. HB 114 requires TVC to administer veteran mental health programming, including peer-to-peer counseling, suicide prevention training, veteran jail diversion services, mental health first aid coordination, and community mental health grant programs.

Ensure continued implementation of HB 671, passed during the 2023 Regular Session, which requires the Texas Veterans Commission to conduct a veteran suicide prevention campaign and establish a dedicated website providing suicide prevention information for veterans.

Identify barriers to accessing mental health care and support legislation, funding, and administrative action that improves access to mental health resources for all Texas veterans. Monitor agency recommendations and legislative reports for additional statutory changes needed to improve, enhance, or complete implementation of HB 114 and HB 671.

L-2. Statewide Veteran Resource Database

Ensure full implementation of SB 1814, passed during the 2025 Regular Session, which requires the Texas Veterans Commission to establish and maintain an electronic database containing contact information for consenting service members who will be discharged or released from active duty within 12 months. The database is intended to allow approved state agencies and local veteran service organizations, including county veterans service offices, to provide information regarding state and local benefits and resources available to veterans.

Monitor implementation of SB 1814 and support any legislation needed to improve, enhance, fund, or complete the database, including access by qualified veteran service organizations and county veterans service offices.

L-3. Hazlewood Act Protection

Defend the Hazlewood Act and the current status of its legacy provisions.

Oppose legislation or administrative action that would reduce, restrict, or weaken the Hazlewood Act benefit or its legacy provisions for eligible Texas veterans and their families.

L-4. Charitable Bingo Protection and Regulation

Ensure charitable bingo continues to operate under effective, efficient, and fair regulation by the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation. During the 2025 Regular Session, SB 3070 abolished the Texas Lottery Commission and transferred the administration of the state lottery and the licensing and regulation of charitable bingo to TDLR.

The Texas VFW supports bingo legislation that benefits its Post and Auxiliary bingo license holders and protects charitable bingo as an important source of support for veteran, community, and charitable programs.

The Texas VFW opposes:

- (a) eliminating licenses for bingo material manufacturers and distributors, which could shift higher regulatory risk and compliance burdens onto volunteer-based charities; and
- (b) changes to lessor licenses or charitable bingo hall requirements that could negatively affect existing charitable bingo halls and the organizations that rely on them.

L-5. State Veterans Cemeteries

Advocate for two new State Veterans Cemeteries, with priority consideration for Northeast Texas and the Rio Grande Valley, and support the use of available federal and state funds to accomplish that goal.

A new State Veterans Cemetery in Lubbock is currently under construction as a result of advocacy efforts in previous legislative sessions. The Texas VFW should continue to work with, and be consulted by, the Texas Veterans Land Board regarding planning, funding, site selection, and future expansion of State Veterans Cemeteries.

L-6. Alternative Treatment Modalities and Non-Opioid Options

Advocate for increased access to alternative modalities to pharmaceutical opioids and antidepressants for veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress, traumatic brain injury, chronic pain, substance use disorder, depression, and related conditions.

The Texas VFW supports:

Expanding the Texas Compassionate Use Program, Texas' medical marijuana program, and making it more accessible and affordable for eligible veterans.

Defending and sustaining the legality of hemp-based products while supporting responsible and reasonable regulation of the hemp industry.

Supporting continued research into the effectiveness of psychedelic-assisted treatment, including MDMA, psilocybin, ibogaine, and other emerging therapies, for post-traumatic stress, traumatic brain injury, opioid use disorder, depression, and related conditions. The Texas VFW supports continued implementation of HB 1802, passed during the 2021 Regular Session, and SB 2308, passed during the 2025 Regular Session. SB 2308 authorizes state matching funds for FDA-approved ibogaine clinical drug trials related to opioid use disorder and other behavioral health conditions, especially those affecting veterans.

Expanding access to service dogs for veterans. Ensure continued implementation and expansion of HB 2951, passed during the 2023 Regular Session, which established a Texas Veterans Commission service dog pilot program for certain veterans, including veterans with military service-related post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, or military sexual trauma.

L-7. County Veterans Service Offices and Claims Shark Protections

Support legislation that assists and strengthens County Veterans Service Offices, including funding, training, staffing, technology, outreach, and coordination with the Texas Veterans Commission and accredited veteran service organizations.

Support legislation banning or restricting "claims sharks" and other predatory companies or individuals that charge veterans improper or unlawful fees for preparing, filing, or pursuing VA disability claims.

Support enforcement tools, consumer protections, and public education efforts that ensure veterans are directed to accredited representatives, accredited VFW Service Officers, County Veterans Service Officers, or other lawful sources of assistance.

L-8. Protection of VFW Posts During Emergency Orders

Ensure VFW Posts and other qualified veterans service organizations are not forced to close due to emergency orders issued by the Governor when those organizations are otherwise operating lawfully and providing services to veterans and their communities.

Support legislation similar to HB 558, filed during the 2023 Regular Session, and HB 2702, filed during the 2025 Regular Session, to prohibit certain limitations on the operation of organizations that benefit veterans during a declared state of disaster. The House analysis for HB 2702 identified that many VFW Posts operate under liquor licenses and were forced to close during the COVID-19 pandemic due to a 2020 executive order affecting businesses earning 51 percent or more from alcohol sales.

Continue to advocate for passage of a “VFW bill” that protects the ability of Posts to serve veterans, members, families, and communities during declared emergencies.

L-9. Texas Military Forces, Licensing Portability, and Military Families

Support legislation that benefits the Texas Military Forces, including the Texas Army National Guard, Texas Air National Guard, and Texas State Guard.

Support professional license portability for service members, veterans, and military spouses. Ensure that service members and spouses may continue to practice under a license issued by another jurisdiction when permitted by law, and support legislation that reduces unnecessary barriers to employment for military families relocating to or within Texas.

Support legislation that improves readiness, retention, employment, education, family support, and quality of life for members of the Texas Military Forces and their families.

L-10. Cost-of-Living Adjustments for State Employees

Support cost-of-living adjustments and fair compensation for state employees, including the thousands of veterans employed by the State of Texas.

Support legislative and budgetary action that helps state agencies recruit and retain qualified employees, including veterans, and ensures that compensation keeps pace with rising costs of living.