



United Veterans Committee of Colorado

2009 State and Federal Goals and Priorities

The following document contains the 2009 UVC State and Federal Legislative Goals and non-legislative Organizational Priorities. The numbering does not reflect a priority order.

A. State Legislative Goals:

1. Monitor and protect all moneys in the Veterans Trust Fund so that funds are used consistent with the purposes specified in statute. Support a freeze of the VTF spending ratios at 55/45%.
2. Support funding for the programs administered by the Dept. of Military and Veterans Affairs, including: (a) an incentive-based funding increase for the County Veterans Service Officer Program; (b) increase funding for veterans and families mental health services; (c) sufficient funding for administration, maintenance and operation of the Veterans' Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado
3. Support capital construction and controlled maintenance funding for all State and Veterans Nursing homes.
4. Support funding to restore the historic buildings at the State Veterans Center at Homelake, and for the operation, maintenance, administration and expansion of the Homelake cemetery.
5. Support needed action for the planning, funding and construction of a domiciliary care , and other related veteran health care facilities to be located on the vacant land south and north of the existing State Veterans Nursing Home at Fitzsimons (Aurora), as endorsed by the State Board of Human Services, the State Board of Veterans Affairs and United Veterans Committee.
6. Support funding for programs serving veterans that are administered by the Department of Human Services, the Department of Labor and Employment, and other State agencies.
7. Support legislation to expand the existing property tax exemption for 100% totally and permanently disabled veterans to allow the continuance of the exemption for a surviving spouse.
8. Support legislation that establishes a statewide "One-Stop Information Center", an information and referral directory system for government and recognized non-government organization provided veteran services and support.
9. Support legislation that removes Trinidad from the State Veterans Nursing Home "505" fund.
10. Support permanent and sufficient inclusion of military and veterans history in new Colorado History Museum design.

B. Federal Legislative Goals:

1. Support funding for the construction of a new "stand alone" Denver Veterans Administration Medical Center at Fitzsimons, including a comprehensive Spinal Cord Injury Center, consistent with the support of Colorado's congressional delegation and veteran leaders.
2. Support mandatory funding to enable the provision of a full range of medical and health care services in a timely manner for veterans in Colorado, and the full funding of the VA health care system.
3. Support efforts to assure that "lifetime medical care" is provided to eligible veterans and retirees in military hospitals or VA facilities.
4. Support efforts to authorize and fund the construction of a National Veterans Cemetery in El Paso County.
5. Encourage each Colorado U.S. Senator and Representative to establish and regularly consult with a military/veterans affairs committee.
6. Support the establishment within the VA of an Office of Veterans' Benefits for Widows and other Survivors of military veterans.
7. Support legislation to eliminate the "disabled veterans tax" (concurrent receipt).

8. Support legislation to repeal the requirement to deduct VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) from the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) when the veteran's death is service-connected and the survivor is qualified to receive both.
9. Support an amendment to the U. S. Constitution to protect the American flag.
10. Support legislation for Federal Employees' Health Benefits Program options for retired military personnel.
11. Support legislation to improve ongoing veterans benefits to individuals who served in combat situations in the United States Merchant Marine, as identified for members of the armed forces by other federal statutes.
12. Support all necessary funding, adequate personnel resources, and any additional administrative measures needed by the VA to reduce the current excessive backlog of veterans awaiting decisions on claims for health care, compensation, and other benefits for which they are entitled.
13. Support legislation that allows federal and military retirees to pay health insurance premiums with pretax income and allow a deduction for TRICARE supplemental premiums.
14. Support legislation that would repeal Government Pension Offset and Windfall Elimination Provisions for government and military retirees.
15. Support legislation that requires certain bonuses be paid to a member of the armed forces who is retired or separated due to a combat-related injury that they would otherwise be entitled to.
16. Support provision of certain medical services from approved VA providers to veterans residing in rural areas of Colorado.

C. State Organizational Priorities

1. Support the recommendations from the strategic planning efforts conducted by the Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs.
2. Explore and secure additional sources of funding for the Veterans Trust Fund.
3. Support the recommendations of the 2007 Final Report of the Commission on State and Veterans Nursing Homes related to the facilities at Florence, Homelake, Rifle, Trinidad, Walsenburg and Fitzsimons.
4. Take appropriate steps as approved by the UVC to obtain funding support to employ a qualified Executive Director/Secretary and to meet other organizational obligations to serve our membership.
5. Initiate a cooperative effort with casino operators to provide funding and services to address unmet needs of veterans and their families.
6. Strengthen accountability and administrative effectiveness at the State and Veterans Nursing Homes to ensure the highest quality of care for veterans and their families, including measures to assure proper management and oversight of the Central Enterprise Fund (505 fund).
7. Support the "Salute our Troops" license plate, with proceeds to support families of service men and women and veterans.
8. Support efforts to fund the Colorado Veterans Monument Preservation Trust Fund to ensure the timely and ongoing maintenance of the Monument and surrounding park area west of the Capitol.
9. Seek solutions, funding sources and partnerships to serve homeless veterans.
10. Identify effective means and funding sources to provide transportation to needed health care for veterans from rural areas (e.g. to VA hospitals in Denver, Grand Junction, Cheyenne & Albuquerque).
11. Support efforts to maintain and strengthen the provision and enforcement of veterans' preference in employment, especially for veterans recently returned from active military duty.

D. Federal Organizational Priorities

1. Support the establishment of Community Based Outreach Clinics by VISN 19 to provide medical services to veterans living in rural areas of Colorado.
2. Support the establishment of a Congressional Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs.
3. Support full funding for commissaries.