

**A servicemember's experience in uniform dictates their experience with the VA.** Yet from 2012 to 2021, the VA approved 11–20% fewer initial disability claims for reserve component members than their active-duty counterparts — a disparity consistent across every branch, rank, race, sex, and service period. ROA's 119th Congress veterans' priorities close those gaps.

**PRIORITY EXPAND PACT ACT TO 9/11 PENTAGON SURVIVORS**

Servicemembers ordered back to the Pentagon beginning September 12, 2001, were exposed to asbestos, lead, mold, dioxins, and crystalline silica. Lt. Col. Susan E. Lukas (USAFR, Ret.) — diagnosed with tracheomalacia — represents many veterans the WTC Health Program does not reach.

**ASK** Establish a presumption of service connection for Pentagon-based servicemembers on and after 9/12/2001.

**PRIORITY PROHIBIT FORCED ARBITRATION UNDER USERRA & SCRA**

USERRA claims dropped from 1,675 in 2011 to 862 in 2021, even as mandatory arbitration coverage surpassed 55% of nonunion workers. DoL and DOJ have both recommended amending USERRA to prohibit forced arbitration. ROA supports the *Justice for Servicemembers Act*.

**ASK** Reintroduce and codify the Justice for Servicemembers Act in the 119th Congress.

**PRIORITY IMPLEMENT THE DD FORM 214-1**

Inaccessibility of consolidated separation documentation prevents many reserve component members from accessing earned VA benefits — with no recourse to appeal or retroactively correct the record. Full, uniform implementation of the DD Form 214-1 as an RC-tailored service-record document closes a longstanding discontinuity between DoD and VA systems.

**ASK** Direct timely, service-wide implementation of DD Form 214-1 with VA system interoperability.

**REFORM FEDERAL VETERANS' HIRING PREFERENCE**

Confer veteran status — for purposes of federal hiring preference — on reserve component members after 180 cumulative days on active duty, rather than 180 consecutive days. RC members bring specialized skills, leadership, and adaptability that expand the qualified candidate pool for federal roles.

**ASK** Amend 5 U.S.C. § 2108 to count cumulative active service toward veteran status.

**ADDRESS THE VA WORKFORCE & NURSING CRISIS**

VHA reported 2,959 severe occupational staffing shortages — Medical Officers and Nurses leading the list. ROA proposes a national nursing strategy, Medicare funding for academic nurse education, expanded HRSA throughput, and a Health Care Workforce Commission.

**ASK** Authorize a Health Care Workforce Commission; require specialized VBA training on RC claims.

**REFORM TAP FOR THE RESERVE COMPONENTS**

Build on Section 571 of the FY 2025 NDAA: amend TAP eligibility to 180 cumulative days (including IDT/ADT); allow a structured waiver for members already counseled; add RC-specific items to the prepreparation checklist; and fully integrate military spouses through Chairman Van Orden's *ETS Act*.

**ASK** Reintroduce and codify the ETS Act with ROA's DRIVE Plan amendments.

**EXPAND THE VA HOME LOAN PROGRAM TO THE RC**

Active-duty members count every duty day toward VA Home Loan eligibility; reserve component members cannot. Excessive debt is the leading reason for security clearance denial — a national-security as well as a parity issue. The *Expanding Home Loans for Guard and Reservists Act* closes the gap by counting 30+ consecutive ADT days.

**ASK** Reintroduce and codify the Expanding Home Loans for Guard and Reservists Act in the 119th Congress.

**ESTABLISH A RESERVE COMPONENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE UNDER THE JEC**

The VA–DoD Joint Executive Committee oversees joint policy and program decisions for servicemembers and veterans — yet RC voices are absent from its structure. A dedicated RC Executive Committee under 38 U.S.C. § 320 would give reserve forces a consistent, authoritative voice.

**ASK** Direct establishment of a Reserve Component Executive Committee in time to shape the JEC's post-2027 strategic plan.

**ACHIEVE GI BILL PARITY FOR THE RESERVE COMPONENTS**

Reserve members' standard annual service (24 IDT + 15 ADT days) doesn't count toward Post-9/11 GI Bill eligibility — an active-duty counterpart earns credit for the same mission. Pair this with the *MGIB-SR Tuition Fairness Act*, which extends in-state tuition protections to MGIB-SR enrollees.

**ASK** Codify the Guard & Reserve GI Bill Parity Act and the MGIB-SR Tuition Fairness Act.

**PASS THE GRAVE ACT & RESTORE VA ACCOUNTABILITY**

Current law restricts VA-furnished headstones and grave markers to RC members who were retirement-eligible, on non-training active duty, or killed during training. The *GRAVE Act* ends this disparity. ROA also supports H.R. 472 / S. 124, the *Restore VA Accountability Act of 2025*.

**ASK** Codify the GRAVE Act and the Restore VA Accountability Act of 2025.