

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 18, 2026

6pm Virtual Meeting

Agenda

The Department of Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Committee meeting was called to order at 1811 by David Cook of the 6th District. David Cook was appointed as secretary from the 6th District. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and the invocation was given by Darell Bishop of the 5th District.

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| 1. | Call to Order | Chairman |
| 2. | Pledge of Allegiance | Chairman |
| 3. | Appoint Secretary | Chairman |
| 4. | Roll Call of Committee Members | Chairman |

Dist.	Name	Substitute	Present	Absent	Voucher
1	Randy Roberts		x		
2	Mike Homan		x		
3	Mike Blackwell		x		
4	Jerry Perry		x		
5	Darell Bishop		x		
6	David Cook, Chairman		x		
7	John Tepper			x	
8	Jeff Holaday			x	
9	Joseph Ball	William Ditterband	x		
10	Bob Rhodes		x		
11	Steve Wainwright			x	
12	Suzette Heller		x		
13	Leroy Brinkhoff			x	
14	Bob Carson			E	
Total			9	5	

5. Introduction of Guest: VBA Coordinator Bill Genochio

6. Reading of previous minutes: motion by Jerry Perry 4th District 2nd Randy Robert 1st District motion passed.

7. District Reports:

1st None

2nd auxiliary annual visit in June to Dayton VA

3rd None

4th None

5th None

6th None

7th None

8th None

9th None

10th None

11th None

12th None

13th None

14th None

8. Unfinished Business

Veterans Courts: Use of Funds. Bishop D 5 mentioned purchasing challenge coins to give out to each Court. David Cook Union County Veteran Treatment Court. Suzette Heller mentioned that coins should be supported by local post and not through the VA&R. Justice Estrap testimony about incarcerated veterans, no way to identify who is a veteran. Working on a new system to acknowledge to show incarcerated veterans.

- i. Review Veteran Treatment Court Guidelines. No changes
- ii. Appoint 3 VA&R Commission members as directed by guidelines. Suzette Heller 12th District, Randy Roberts 1st District and Jerry Perry 4th District volunteered to sit as the VTC commission. Suzette Heller will reach out to Justice Kennedy to request list of VTC in the State. Darell Bishop informed that Elyria has treatment Court, William Ditterbrand shared that Willoughby has veteran treatment court.

9. New Business:

Update on Various Bills: These Bill have all been introduced into the 2025-2026 119th Congress.

- i. **H.R.71 Health Care Freedom Act: (2/6/2025 referred to the Subcommittee on Health – Veterans’ Affairs)** Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to implement a three-year pilot program to improve the ability of veterans who are enrolled in the VA health care system to access hospital care, medical services, and extended care services through the covered care system by providing such veterans with the ability to choose health care providers. Under the bill, the *covered care system* includes VA medical facilities, health

care providers participating in the Veterans Community Care Program (VCCP), and eligible entities or providers that have entered into a Veterans Care Agreement.

- ii. **H.R.333: Disabled Veterans Tax Termination Act: (2/11/2025 referred to the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs – Armed Services: Veterans’ Affairs)** This bill modifies provisions related to military retired pay. Specifically, the bill authorizes veterans with a service-connected disability of less than 50% to concurrently receive both retired pay and disability compensation. The bill also makes qualified disability retirees with less than 20 years of retirement-creditable service eligible for concurrent receipt, subject to specified reductions in retired pay.
- iii. **H.R. 303 Retired Pay Restoration Act: (2/11/2025 referred to the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs – Armed Services: Veterans’ Affairs)** This bill allows the receipt of both military retired pay and veterans' disability compensation with respect to any service-connected disability. Under current law, only individuals with service-connected disabilities rated at 50% or more receive both without offset.

Individuals who were retired or separated after at least 20 years of military service due to a service-connected disability shall be eligible for the full concurrent receipt of both veterans' disability compensation and either military retired pay or combat-related special pay.

- iv. **H.R.2164: (House Veterans Affairs 2/3/2026 referred to House Committee on Veterans Affairs)** This bill requires the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to begin the process of entering into an agreement with the Montgomery County Land Bank not later than 30 days after the date on which the land bank makes an offer to transfer at no cost a specified parcel of land in Dayton, Ohio, to the VA to expand the Dayton National Cemetery.
- v. **H.R.2102 Major Richard Star Act: (House – Armed Services, Veterans Affairs 04/04/2025 referred to Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs)** To amend title 10, United States Code, to provide for concurrent receipt of veterans’ disability compensation and retired pay for disability retirees with combat-related disabilities, and for other purposes. Discussion: Suzette Heller spoke with National 10 billion grant to upgrade community health for veteran weeding through the requestors, Suzette Heller informed us on the awareness s of community care in Ohio. Work with State Legislation for veterans to have access to networks to include access to virtual appointments. William Genochio asked to produce agenda to wrap up this year’s agenda to inform next year’s commission.

Property tax exemption issue is dangerous to Veteran Service Commission (VCS), Law enforcement, and fire Fighter. Advise campaign against the property tax with other VCS. Jerry Perry mentioned zero property tax for veterans S.B. No. 92. Commission was advised there are two different bills regarding property tax exemptions. County Commissioner can double property tax for disability and veterans.

10. **Awards:** Start looking now for nominations for VA&R awards:

Department Awards: Veterans Affairs Award, Al Shaefer Award

National Awards: VAVS National Advisory Committee (NAC) Volunteer of the Year, VA Physician of the Year, VA health Care worker of the Year, Certificates of Application to Outstanding VA Officials, William F. Lenker Award.

William Genochio informed Suzette Heller that he has been unable to find anything that stipulates health care workers for awards and to send nomination to the VA&R commission.

11. **Gifts for Yanks Report:** Darell Bishop no report past month will inform once received. Mike Homan legion meeting 2nd district raised \$8,990 and his post gave \$1,500. Jerry Perry Post 49 money needs to be spent by May 31. David Cook \$172 from squadron 79 to GFY
12. **DSO Report:** William Genochio gave update on the DSO team and that Cuyahoga County has moved to their new location at 3950 Chester Ave. Cleveland, OH. 44144 Phone: 216-698-2600
13. **Resolutions:** Resolution 26-01 Military Service in Honduras: *(Introduced Dec 4, 2025, sent to committee)* American Legion urges Congress to authorize the Armed Forces Expeditionary or similar award to veteran who served in Honduras between 1981 and 1992.
14. Good of the Legion: Jerry Perry informed that Grove City has a new CBOC. Suzette Heller advised of new CBOC.
15. Closing Prayer: Darell Bishop
16. Salute to the Colors
17. Adjourn, Meeting was adjourned at: 1858