

Advocacy in Action 2026



Capitol Hill LOGISTICS

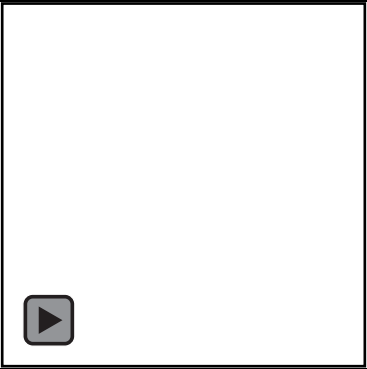
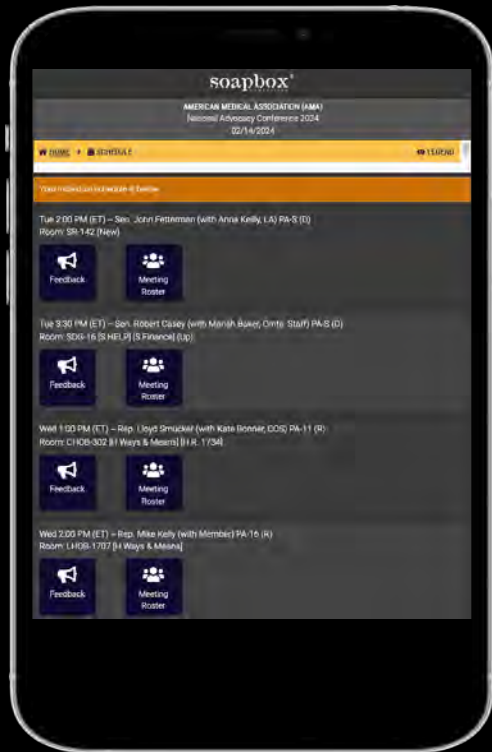
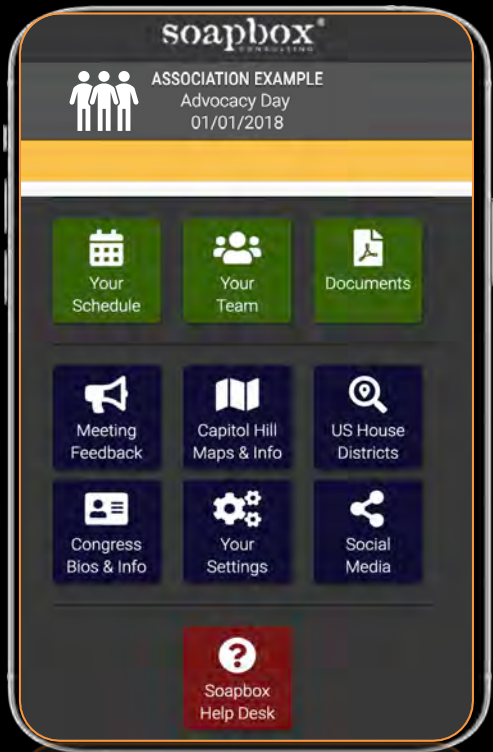
2026




» Thank you for being here



SOAPBOX MOBILE TOOL



YOUR PRINTED SCHEDULE

 Example

1 Kandi Sweet
NAPDQ
Garden Village, TN
Primary district: TN-08
Alt. district (if applicable): NA-00

2 Mobile Tool Code: ABCD8630 (www.sboxmobile.com)
Help Desk: Soapbox Help Des (202) 362-5910 **3**

4 Your Team: TN Team 01
Michael Smith (TN-02)
Lance Anderson (TN-08)
Kandi Sweet (TN-08)

5 Monday, January 1, 2025

6 12:00 PM (ET) – Sen. Bill Hagerty (with Luke Harris, LA) TN-S (R)
Room: SR-251

11:00 – Sen. Marsha Blackburn (with Jon Adame, LD) TN-S (R)
Room: SD-357 (Up) [S. 67]

1:00 PM (ET) – Rep. Tim Burchett (with Member) TN-02 (R)
Room: LHOB-1122 [H.Transp & Infrastruc] [H.R. 1234]

2:00 PM (ET) – Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (with Daniel Tidwell, COS) TN-03 (R)
Room: RHOB-2187

3:00 PM (ET) – Rep. David Kustoff (with Member) TN-08 (R)
Room: CHOB-560 (New) [H.R. 1234] [CAU]

6 Key Committees:
[S Environ Pub Wkks] - Environment & Public Works
[S HELP] - Hlth, Edu, Labor, & Pensi
[H.Energy & Cmrvce] - Energy & Commerce
[H.Transp & Infrastruc] - Transp & Infrastruct
[H.Leadership] - House Leadership
[S.Leadership] - Senate Leadership

(Printed 1/18/2025 2:26:50 PM)

Staff Titles:	Additional Info:	Office Numbers:	Co-Sponsor/Caucus:
COS: Chief of Staff LD: Legis. Director Cmie. Staff: Committee Staff LA/HLA: Legis. Assistant LC: Legis. Correspondent	[New] – New to 118th Congress [Up] – Senator up for re-election [Ret.] – Not running for re-election	SH-xxx Hart SD-xxx Dirksen SR-xxx Russell CHOB-xxx Cannon LHOB-1xxx Longworth RHOB-2xxx Rayburn	[H.R.0000] – House bill co-sponsor [S.0000] – Senate bill co-sponsor [Cau] – Caucus member [LTR] – Signed Discl. Colleague Letter

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1 NAME/DISTRICT

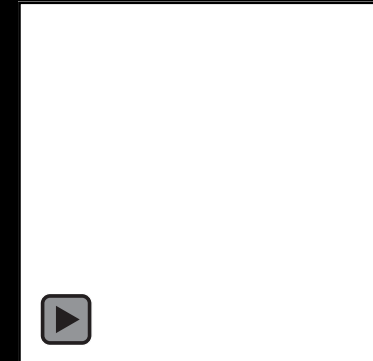
2 MOBILE TOOL CODE

3 LIVE HELP DESK

4 YOUR HOUSE TEAM

5 MEETINGS

6 COMMITTEES CO-SPONSORS (NEW)



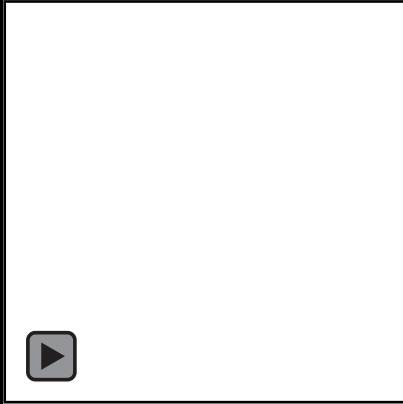
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2:00 PM (ET) – Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (with Daniel Tidwell, COS) TN-03 (R)
Room: RHOB-2187

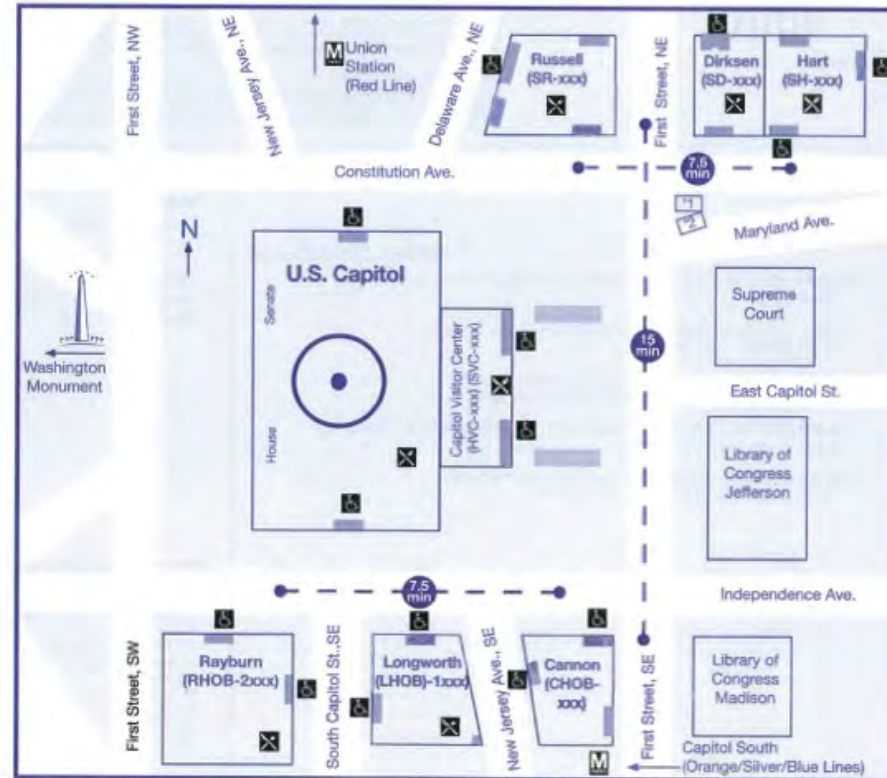
3:00 PM (ET) – Rep. David Kustoff (with Member) TN-08 (R)
Room: CHOB-560 (New) [H.R. 1234] [CAU]

6

YOUR MAP OF CAPITOL HILL



Map of Capitol Hill



Senate Office Buildings

SH-xxx Hart
SD-xxx Dirksen
SR-xxx Russell

House Office Buildings

CHOB-xxx Cannon
LHOB-1xxx Longworth
RHOB-2xxx Rayburn

Capitol Visitor Center

HVC-xxx House Side
SVC-xxx Senate Side

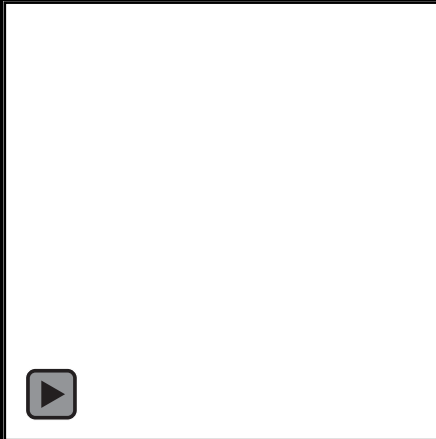
*1 Reserve Officers Building
*2 United Methodist Building

Estimated walking times

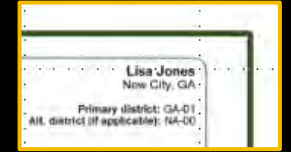
- Entrance
- Wheelchair Access
- Food/Dining

soapbox®
20 Years of History

Schedule Distribution & State Check-In



STATE/GROUP LEADERS



REACH INTO ENVELOPE AND DISTRIBUTE
INDIVIDUAL SCHEDULES BY NAME



- ✓ PUT **UNCLAIMED SCHEDULES** BACK IN ENVELOPE
- ✓ PUT A **BUSINESS CARD** FROM ANYONE WHO DID NOT GET A SCHEDULE INTO THE ENVELOPE
- ✓ GATHER ANY OTHER **QUESTIONS, CHANGES OR CANCELLATIONS**, AND ...



RETURN YOUR ENVELOPE (EVEN IF EMPTY)
TO THE SOAPBOX HELP DESK FOR CHECK-IN

Advocacy in Action Overview

Terry Waters

Associate Director Government Relations



Team Assignments

Next Steps:

Review your Team Assignments

Coordinate Senate Meetings

Hill Day Schedule



- 5:45 AM: Breakfast Begins
- 6:30 – 6:45 AM: Load Buses
- 7:30 AM: Group Photo
- 8:00 AM: Buildings Open – Meetings Begin

MOAA Lounge and HQ – Top of the Hill Club



- 1 Constitution Ave. NE
Washington, DC 20002
- MOAA Lounge and Break Area
will be on the fifth floor
- Lunch Service – 11 AM – 1:30
PM

Hill Day Schedule (cont.)

- Buses depart from Top of the Hill Club at end of day
- Loading times
 - 4:00 PM
 - 4:30 PM
 - 5:00 PM
- **AiA Dinner: 6:00 PM at Hilton in Commonwealth Hall.**



Team Materials

- **Team Folders**
 - Team Packet
 - One Page Leave Behinds
 - Key Info Addendum
 - Thank You Cards
 - MOAA Membership Brochures
- **The Hill Newspaper**

New Materials

- **Lawmaker Dossiers**
 - Team Leader Resource



Sen. Mike Crapo (R-ID)
Room 239, Dirksen Senate Office Building, 100 Constitution Avenue, NE, Washington, DC 20510-1205
 (202) 224-6142

STAFFERS

- Molly Carpenter, Legislative Director
- John Hoehne, Chief of Staff
- Susan Wheeler, DC Chief of Staff

COMMITTEES

- Senate Committee on Finance
- Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
- Senate Committee on Budget
- Joint Committee on Taxation
- Senate Subcommittee on Energy, Natural Resources, and Infrastructure (Senate Committee on Finance)

BIOGRAPHY

Sen. Mike Crapo is a 5th term Senator in the US Congress who represents Idaho and received 60.7% of the vote in his last election. He is the Chair of the Finance committee, the Ranking Member of the Taxation committee, and a member of the Banking and Budget committees.

He works most frequently on Economics and Public Finance (81 bills), Law (78 bills), Public Lands and Natural Resources (77 bills), Intergovernmental relations (69 bills), and Science, Technology, Communications (63 bills). He has sponsored 306 bills in his last thirty-three year(s) in office, voting with his party 90.8% of the time, getting 10.78% of his bills out of committee, and 3.27% of his sponsored bills enacted.

Sen. Crapo most frequently cosponsors James Risch (R-ID) (98 bills), John Barrasso (R-WY) (60 bills), and John Cornyn (R-TX) (46 bills). He most frequently votes with Bernie Moreno (R-OH) (98.93%), Jon Husted (R-OH) (98.79%), and Ashley Moody (R-FL) (98.06%).

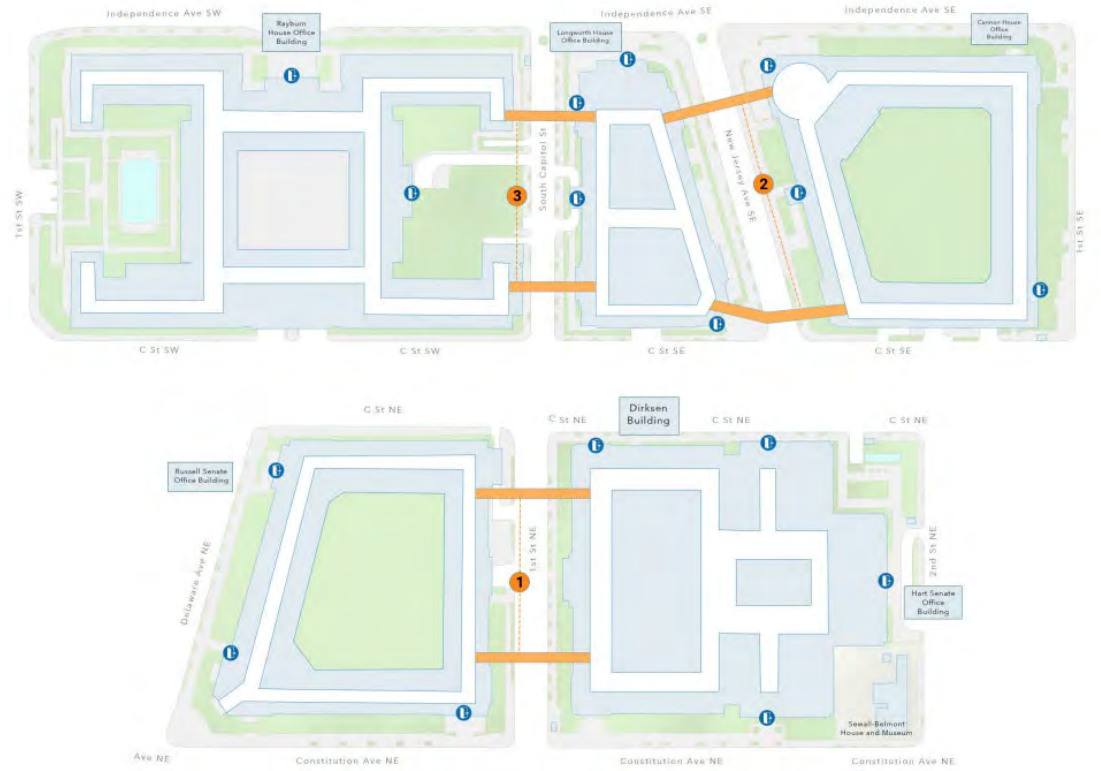
Before entering politics, Sen. Crapo was a public official. He received his undergraduate degree from Brigham Young University (UT) and a none degree from Idaho Falls High School (ID).

BILLS

If no bills are listed in this section, then this lawmaker has not cosponsored any MOAA-endorsed legislation in this Congress.

<p>US S. 3168: Shutdown Fairness Act Introduced in Senate</p>	<p>US S. 1032: Major Richard Star Act Introduced in Senate</p>
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- **Capitol Hill Tunnel Connections**



Hill Day – Lawmaker Meetings

- **Best Practices:**
 - Be Flexible
 - Assign Roles
 - Begin with introductions and talking points
 - Take Notes
- **“Drop Bys”**
- **Senate Meetings**

Hill Day – Lawmaker Meetings (Cont.)

- After Meetings:
 - Follow up with “Thank You” Notes
 - Submit Report via Soapbox Platform
- Other Reminders:
 - Resources available: www.moaa.org/legisleaders
 - Hydrate, wear comfortable shoes, be careful of the heat!

Emergency Contacts

- **Schedule Changes / Running Late**
 - Soapbox Helpdesk – 202-362-5910
- **Logistic Issues:**
 - Johonna Nuby – 703-838-8162
- **Advocacy Issues / Other :**
 - Terry Waters – 571-286-0337
 - Brenden McMahon – 959-444-0726



Questions?



Advocacy in Action Photography

Mike Morones
Senior Multimedia Producer



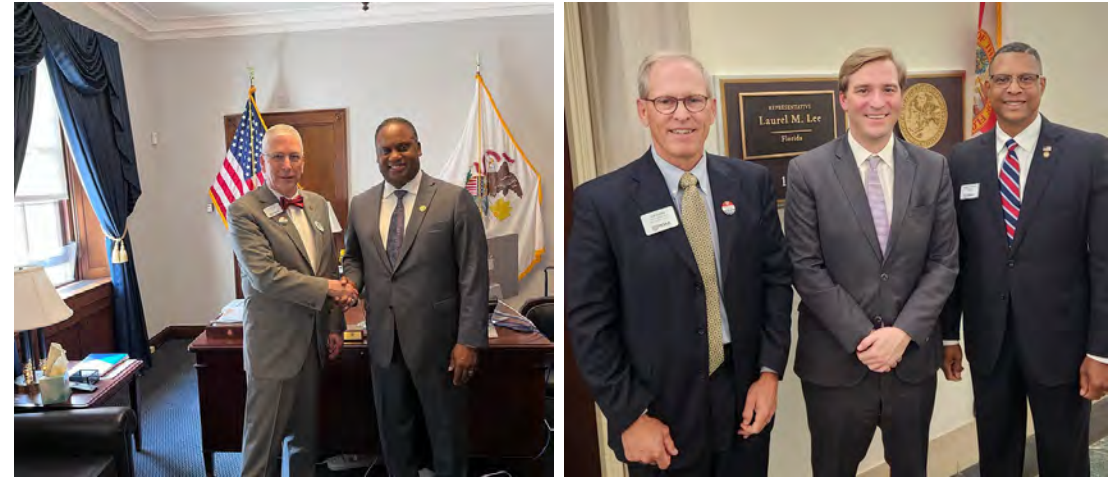


Location, Location, Location

- **Sense of place is important:** Try to take a team photo or selfie with the Capitol or other spots that shout Washington D.C. as your backdrop. It lets people know that you are where decisions are made.

Pictures Or It Didn't Happen!

- **Grip 'n grins:** Easiest photo to take - great for Chapter/Council use too.
- **Don't be afraid to ask for a photo:** Lawmakers and staff usually don't mind and may take it for you.
- **PRO TIP:** Ask before the meeting starts, "Is it ok if I snap a photo while we're talking?" They may say OK or suggest pics after the meeting.
- Take a few pictures to ensure eyes are open and no awkward expressions.



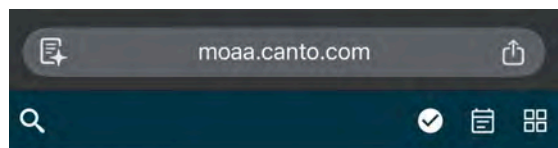


Put the ACTION in AiA

- Pictures of interaction are great but arguably the hardest to take.
- Fill the Frame with Significant Matter
- Move around for a better composition.
- This is where asking ahead of time is important.
- MOAA Staff – I’m counting on you for many of these since our members will be engaged with their lawmakers.

File Early and Often!

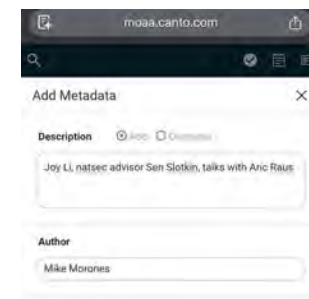
- Send a picture whenever you have a free moment, during breaks, etc.
- Please include as much caption info as possible – who's in the photo is critical, especially MOAA members and lawmakers. Include your name in the Author field so I know who to credit.



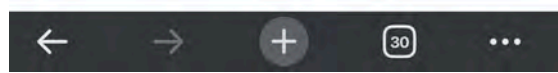
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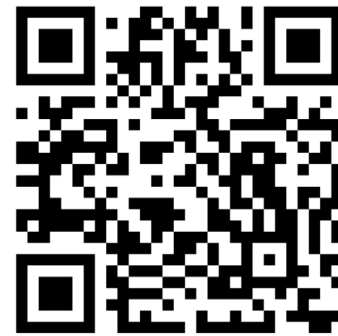
Upload Link is empty.



Reset Skip Apply



Upload Photos Here:



MOAA.org/AiA2026



The Big Picture

- Prioritize Lawmaker Meetings on Schedule
- MOAA staff will organize by height – we will have signs to orient you.
- TWO still photos:
 - Group with space (for magazine)
 - Group without space.
 - No banner photo this year.
- THREE video clips:
 - Group shouts **NEVER STOP SERVING.**
 - Group shouts **PEOPLE OUTRANK EVERYTHING**
 - Gens. Kelly & Waldhauser step forward, deliver lines, participants shout **NEVER STOP SERVING.**



Questions?



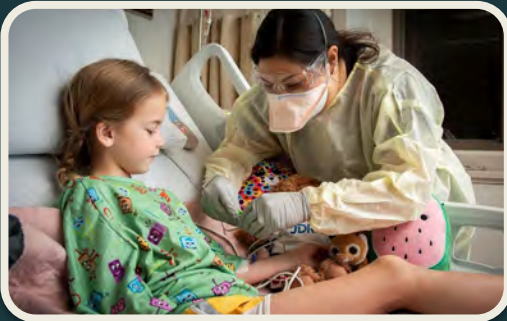


Intermission

Training Resumes in 10 Minutes



AiA 2026 - Topics



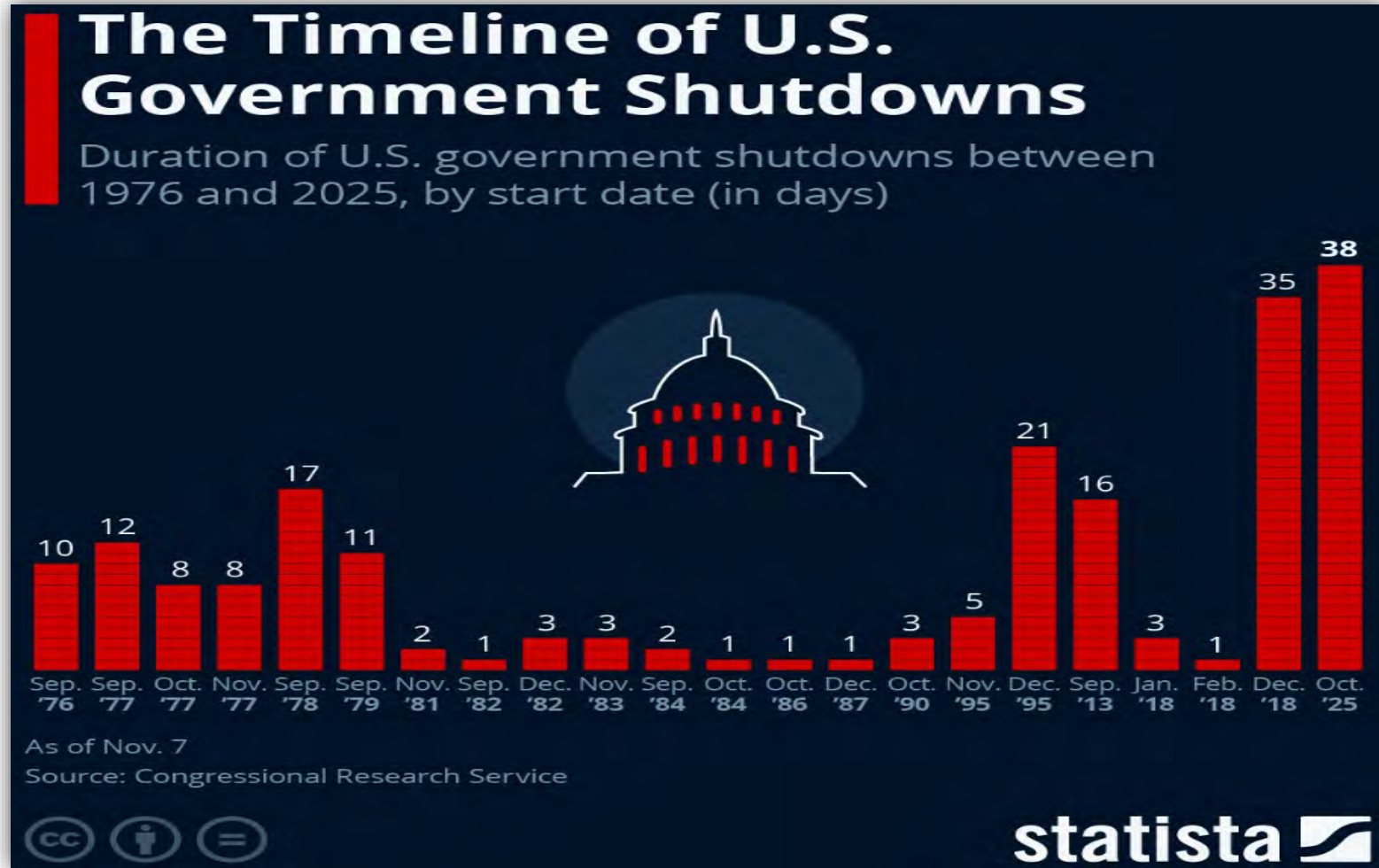
**Shutdown
Fairness
Act**

**Military
CARE Act**

**GUARD
VA
Benefits
Act**

**Major
Richard
Star Act**

Shutdown Fairness Act



The Issue

Government shutdowns and continuing resolutions are recurring

Financial strain **impacts readiness**

Guard and Reserve **training is suspended, harming readiness**

Servicemembers must continue working during shutdowns without guaranteed pay

Shutdown Fairness Act



S. 3168 - Sen Ron Johnson (R-WI)
H.R. 7137 - Rep Dusty Johnson (R-SD)

- Guarantees continued pay and readiness for Armed Forces during Government Shutdowns
- Provides a permanent solution to recurring funding disruptions

Potential Objections

Reluctance to carve out individual groups from shutdown impacts, preferring to treat all federal workers equally

Concern that we are asking to guarantee money that hasn't been appropriated yet

Key Talking Points

Pass the Shutdown Fairness Act

Cosponsor the bill – if your member hasn't signed on, we're asking them to do so today

Extend these protections to NOAA Commissioned Corps officers



Questions?



Military CARE Act

Military Care Access, Reporting, and Evaluation Act

H.R. 6796 – Rep. Horsford (D-NV-4), Rep. Kiggans (R-VA-2), Rep. Houlihan (D-PA-6) & Rep. Bacon (R-NE-2)

Military CARE Act

- Establishes a **standardized digital platform** to report and track access-to-care issues
- Routes complaints to appropriate patient advocate for resolution
- Sends data to DHA to identify and address systemic problems
- Improves transparency, accountability, and oversight across the MHS



Validated Access to Care Challenges



“Timely access to quality care has been a long-standing problem.”

Access to Care – Still Relevant Today


Search Sections MilitaryTimes News Pay & Benefits Flashpoints Education & Transition Pentagon & Congress Off Duty Veterans Military Honor Subscribe

Pentagon & Congress

Health care access a top complaint among troops, top enlisted leaders tell lawmakers

By Karen Jowers Thursday, Feb 12, 2026

f X B in link email



United States Senate Committee on Armed Services ABOUT SUBCOMMITTEES HEARINGS COMMITTEE ACTIONS

BACK TO HEARINGS

SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING

TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY FROM THE SENIOR ENLISTED LEADERS ON SERVICEMEMBER AND FAMILY QUALITY OF LIFE.

Date: Wednesday, February 11, 2026
Time: 03:00pm
Location: Room SR-222 Russell Senate Office Building

SASC Personnel Hearing – Feb 11, 2026*

United States Senate Committee on Armed Services ABOUT SUBCOMMITTEES HEARINGS COMMITTEE ACTIONS

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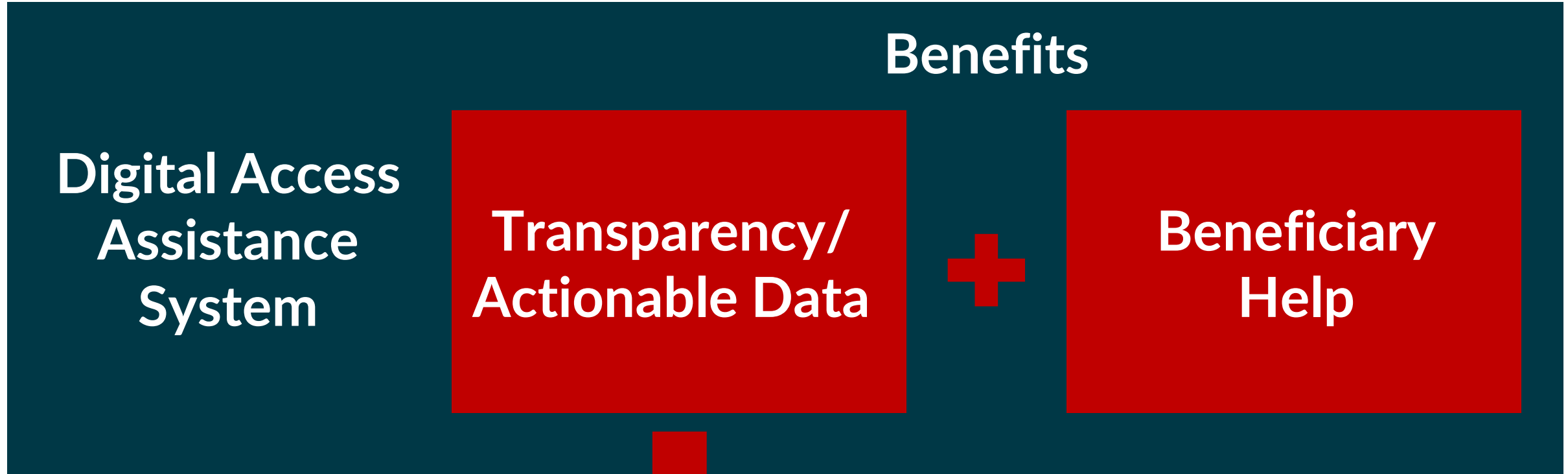
*<https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/hearings/to-receive-testimony-from-the-senior-enlisted-leaders-on-servicemember-and-family-quality-of-life>

Military CARE Act

Key Talking Points:

- **Two benefits** from digital access assistance platform
- **Two reasons** this is particularly important now

Benefits: How does the Military CARE Act help?



- *A data set that does not exist today*
- *Insights on specific access problems*

Reasons: Why is the Military CARE Act needed now?

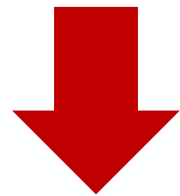
MHS is Destabilized



Restrictive TRICARE Policy

Pre-2018

TRICARE plan changes allowed



2018 to Present

TRICARE plan changes limited to Open Season or with a Qualifying Life Event



Potential Questions/Objections

Don't we already have ICE/surveys?

How will more data help?

What is the CBO score?

Key Talking Points

Cosponsor the Military CARE Act

Improve MHS access through greater transparency, accountability and oversight

Give servicemembers and families a reliable way to report and track access issues



Questions?



GUARD VA Benefits Act

Governing Unaccredited Representatives Defrauding
(GUARD) VA Benefits Act

H.R. 1732 – Rep. Pappas (D-NH-1) &
Rep. Fitzpatrick (R-PA-1)

The Issue

Filing a VA disability claim is complex and can be a difficult process

Expanded eligibility under the PACT Act increased demand for claims support

Veterans are increasingly targeted by unaccredited, for-profit claims consultants

These bad actors charge thousands of dollars for help that is legally available for free

Current Law

- Federal law: Only VA-accredited individuals may help with disability claims:
 - Veteran Service Organization Representatives
 - Accredited attorneys and claims agents
 - No one may charge for helping with an initial claim

Accreditation requires:

- Training
- Ethical standards
- Continuing education
- VA oversight of fees and conduct (for appeals)

How Predatory Actors Slip Through

In 2006, Congress removed VA's authority to penalize unaccredited fee-chargers

Result: a regulatory vacuum with no federal enforcement

Today, for-profit companies claim to "coach" or "consult" veterans

They exploit loopholes by saying they are not "representatives"

Marketing Tactics

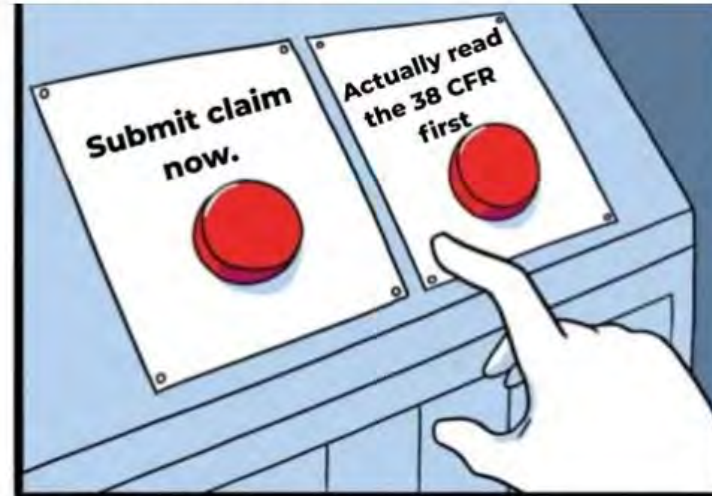
A Facebook post from the page 'vamedicalbenefits'. The post features a large graphic with the text: 'YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE TO FIGHT TO GET FAIR COMPENSATION FOR YOUR SERVICE.' The words 'TO FIGHT TO GET FAIR' are highlighted in red. Below this, it says 'We'll take care of you VA Claim!' and shows an American flag and a soldier. At the bottom, there is a VA Medical Benefits logo and a caption: 'vamedicalbenefits You served your country! now let us serve you! Getting the benefits you deserve shouldn't be a battle. We're here to make your VA claim process smooth and stress free.'

VA Claims Insider
February 25 · 🌐

If you haven't mastered the art of the 38 CFR, you can either start studying now, or you can get educated from one of our Veteran Coaches.

Oh - and our Veteran Coaches educated over 1300 Veterans last year to 100% ratings. Either way, we're rooting for you.

Get started using the link in the comments below!



“Disclaimers”

PUBLIC DISCLAIMER SUMMARY

VETCOMM US provides educational support to help veterans understand the VA benefits process through video courses and workbooks. Our goal is to equip veterans with the knowledge and confidence to file a more complete and accurate VA claim than they might without this guidance.

VETCOMM US is not an Accredited Veterans Affairs (VA) Agent nor is it affiliated with the VA in any way.

VETCOMM US does not contact the VA on behalf of any veteran client, yet provides assistance to help our course-educated clients navigate the VA's Claim Filing Online System process, answer questions and help them accurately provide the information the VA is requesting.

VETCOMM US is not a law firm, medical provider, VSO, or VSR, and the information contained on all marketing media, website, communications, or correspondence of any kind is NOT legal advice or a guarantee of receiving a favorable rating award or increase by the VA.

VETCOMM US adheres to the Federal Law (38 U.S.C. 5901) and does not act as legal counsel on behalf of our clients in preparation or filing of any specific claim nor do we require the use of a Power of Attorney.

VETCOMM US operates under the Amended Statute of the Federal Law (TITLE 38 – VETERANS' BENEFITS – USCODE-2022-title38-partIV-chap59-sec5905 – 2006 Amendment to 38 U.S.C. § 5905) as the 2006 Amendment removed the "VA Accreditation" requirement for unaccredited actors assisting veterans in filing their VA benefits claims.

VETCOMM US has successfully assisted thousands of veterans with initial claims and increased rating claims, provides donations and support to veteran charities and other veteran support organizations, and is proactively lobbying in Washington, D.C. to reduce the difficulties veterans have applying for their OWED VA benefits. See our Terms and Conditions for more information about VETCOMM US policies.

Who is at Risk?

Predatory
claims
practices
harm:

- Recently separated servicemembers
- PACT Act-eligible veterans
- Aging veterans
- Caregivers and survivors

Risks include:

- Thousands lost in unnecessary fees
- Incorrect or unethical claims advice
- Privacy and identity theft concerns

What the GUARD VA Benefits Act Does

- The GUARD VA Benefits Act would:
 - Restore VA's enforcement authority by reinstating criminal penalties for unaccredited fee-charging
 - Crack down on deceptive and predatory practices
 - Create nationwide protection, not a patchwork of state laws
 - Reinforce that VA benefits belong to veterans – not third-party profiteers

What this is *NOT*

- Clearing up misconceptions:
 - ✘ Does not limit veterans' ability to seek help
 - ✘ Does not restrict accredited attorneys or VSOs
 - ✘ Does not slow down claims processing

Potential Objections

Accreditation is too slow or restrictive

States are already addressing this issue

Veterans should have freedom of choice

Bottom Line



MOAA strongly supports the GUARD VA Benefits Act to protect veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors from predatory claims practices.

3 Key Talking Points

Protect

Protect Veterans from Financial Exploitation

Restore

Restore Accountability and Integrity in the VA Disability Compensation System

Do Not Legitimize

Do Not Legitimize Illegal Behavior

Talking Point #1: Protect Veterans from Financial Exploitation

- Veterans are paying thousands of dollars to unregulated companies for services accredited agents and VSOs provide at no cost
- These fees divert taxpayer-funded disability compensation away from veterans and their families

Talking Point #2: Restore Accountability and Integrity in the VA Disability Compensation System

- Current law clearly limits who may charge fees – but VA lacks enforcement authority
- Restoring enforcement protect veterans and preserves trust in the VA disability system
- Federal action ensures consistent national standards rather than a patchwork of state laws

Talking Point #3: Do Not Legitimize Illegal Behavior

- Unaccredited claims consultants are charging fees contrary to congressional intent
- Allowing or legitimizing these practices rewards those who ignored law
- Veterans deserve protection, not a system that retroactively excuses illegal behavior
- The right solution is reinstating criminal penalties for bad actors



Questions?



Major Richard Star Act

H.R. 2102 – Rep. Bilirakis (R-FL-21) &
Rep. Raul Ruiz (D-CA-25)

S. 1032 – Sen. Blumenthal (D-CT) & Sen.
Crapo (R-ID)

Current Situation

~54,000 combat-injured veterans forced to medically retire before the 20-year mark are forced to forfeit a portion of their earned retirement pay

This occurs because VA disability compensation offsets retirement pay dollar-for-dollar

What the Star Act Does



Allows eligible combat-injured retirees the option to receive both full military retirement pay and VA disability compensation

Ends the unfair offset that penalizes combat-injured veterans forced to medically retire

Recognizes vested retirement pay and disability compensation as separate, earned benefits

Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) – A Partial Fix

Provides tax-free compensation for certain combat-related disabilities

Is not automatic and requires a separate application and service-level approval

Does not fully restore lost retirement pay

Star Act CRDP vs CRSC Example

E6 w/ 14 years Medically Retired in 2010 at 100%, VA Rating 100%, CR 60%
 2026 Medical Retired Pay at 75% = \$3,584 month // YOS = \$1,673 month
 2026 VA Comp = \$4,158 per month // 2026 CR = \$1,566 per month
 CRDP nets \$1,284 more per year = \$107/month

*CRSC comp can only get veteran to YOS comp or combat rating whichever is less.

	CRDP	CRSC
Med Mil Retired Pay	\$3,584	\$3,584
VA Waiver (for CRDP to = YOS)	- \$1,911	- \$4,158
Full/Net Retired Pay	\$1,673	\$0
VA Compensation	\$4,158	\$4,158
CRSC Check (Max \$1,566 vs \$1673)	N/A	*\$1,566
Take Home (without taxes)	\$5,831	\$5,724

Star Act CRDP vs CRSC Example

E6 w/ 14 years Medically Retired in 2010 at 100%, VA Rating 100%, CR 40%
 2026 Medical Retired Pay at 75% = \$3,584 month // YOS = \$1,673 month
 2026 VA Comp = \$4,158 per month // 2026 CR = \$883 per month
 CRDP nets \$9,480 more per year = \$790/month

*CRSC comp can only get veteran to YOS comp or combat rating whichever is less.

	CRDP	CRSC
Med Mil Retired Pay	\$3,584	\$3,584
VA Waiver (for CRDP to = YOS)	- \$1,911	- \$4,158
Full/Net Retired Pay	\$1,673	\$0
VA Compensation	\$4,158	\$4,158
CRSC Check (Max \$883 vs \$1673)	N/A	*\$883
Take Home (without taxes)	\$5,831	\$5,041

Potential Objections

It costs too much

Allowing concurrent receipt violates the "no double dipping" principle

CRSC already addresses this issue

3 Key Talking Points

Cosponsor the Major Richard Star Act

Impact on the future of the All-Volunteer Force

Bring the bill to the Floor for a Vote

Talking Point #1: Cosponsor the Bill

- Cosponsoring the Major Richard Star Act sends a clear message of support to combat-injured retirees
- Additional support will signal to leadership that the Star Act is a priority for lawmakers and their constituents

Talking Point #2: Impact on the Future of the AVF

- Today's servicemembers are watching how combat-injured retirees are treated
- Servicemembers are among the military's strongest recruiters
- When the system fails veterans, this erodes trust and reduces the willingness to encourage the next generation to serve

Talking Point #3: Bring the Bill to the Floor

- Cosponsorship alone is not enough – leadership must schedule a floor vote
- This bill has the support needed to pass if given the opportunity
- Delays perpetuate an inequity that Congress has the power to fix now

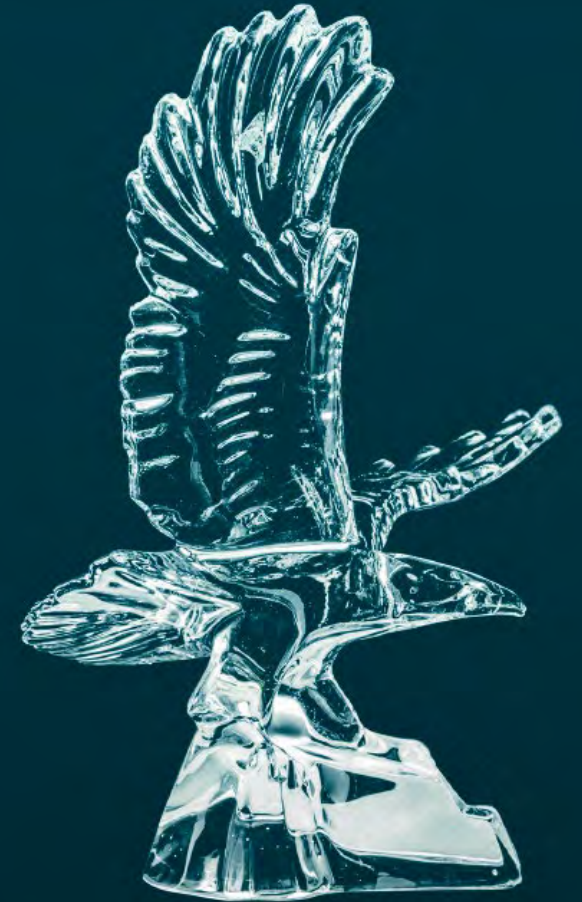


Questions?



Next - Honoree Ceremony

- Dirksen Building
- Light buffet to be served at the event as well as at Hilton
- **No Videos, No Accessing Dias**
- Buses depart at 4:00 PM



**HONOREE CEREMONY
AND RECEPTION**

Washington, D.C. | April 14, 2026



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