



BARACK OBAMA FOR VETERANS

IMPROVE VA MEDICAL CARE

Expand Vet Centers

Vet Centers are often the first line of defense for veterans to get help in their communities by offering counseling for vets and their families, as well as employment assistance, VA claims and benefits information, help for homeless veterans, and social service and health care referrals. Barack Obama will expand and strengthen Vet Centers

Fully Fund VA Medical Care

As president, Barack Obama will fully fund the VA so it has all the resources it needs to serve the veterans who need it, when they need it. The current administration did not adequately plan for the true costs of this war. It has consistently underinvested in healthcare for our heroic veterans. Without assured funding year after year, our veterans are forced to make do with the VA they have rather than the VA they deserve.

Allow All Veterans Back into the VA

When troops serve, they are not divided by income class or priority groups. Yet today the VA is picking and choosing which veterans to serve. Barack Obama is committed to ending the unfair ban on healthcare enrollment of certain groups of veterans, including "Priority 8" veterans who often earn modest incomes. He has voted to end this unfair policy, which has resulted in the VA turning away nearly one million veterans since 2003. As president, one of Barack Obama's first acts will be signing an executive order reversing this ban.

FIX THE VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION

Reduce the Claims Backlog

There are currently more than 800,000 claims pending within the Veterans Benefits Administration. VA error rates have also grown unacceptably high: over 100,000 cases each year contain significant errors. In the Senate, Barack Obama has voted to increase funding to hire needed claims staff. As president, Barack Obama will hire additional claims workers and convene our nation's leading veterans groups, employees, and managers to develop an updated training and management model that will ensure VA benefit decisions are rated fairly.

Build an Electronic VBA

Currently, case files for a veteran seeking compensation are literally stacked on the desks of over-burdened caseworkers. Veterans often have to fill out the same form multiple times. As president, Barack Obama will transform the paper benefit claims process to an electronic system that will be interoperable with the VA's health network as well as military records. This will reduce error rates, improve timeliness, and enhance the overall quality of the claims decisions.

HONOR VETERANS

Update the GI Bill

Barack Obama has been a long-time supporter of the bipartisan legislation signed into law in June 2008 to update GI Bill benefits for the 21st Century. He disagreed with opponents of the bill who claimed it was too generous and too expensive. The new GI Bill will allow veterans who served after 9/11 to receive payments covering tuition up to the cost of the most expensive in-state public school, a monthly stipend equivalent to housing costs in their area and additional benefits, and an extended period of time in which vets could use the benefit.

Combat Homeless Among Our Nation's Veterans

On any given night, more than 200,000 veterans are homeless, more than 20 percent of America's homeless population. The VA's homeless services, however, reach only a quarter of this population. Barack Obama has been a leader in the fight to end homelessness among our nation's veterans. As a senator, Obama successfully passed legislation to expand services for homeless veterans and as president, Obama will establish a national "zero tolerance" policy for veterans falling into homelessness.

Fight Reservist Employment Discrimination

The current process of assisting reservists with employment discrimination complaints is disjointed and managed by multiple federal agencies. Between 2004 and 2006, over 16,000 complaints were filed under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act. As president, Barack Obama will invest additional resources into enforcement and investigation in order to crack down on employers who are not following the letter and spirit of the law.

OBAMA WILL CREATE REAL CHANGE FOR VETERANS

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