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## STATE LEVEL LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

Did you know MOAAJAVC and the other virtual chapters belong to MOAA's award-winning Council of Virtual Chapters? Our Council has been at the forefront of growing virtual chapters to over 1200 members strong encompassing many different career field such as judge advocates, nurses, chaplains, and public health officers.

In addition to organizing and leading virtual chapter member participation at national events like this year's Advocacy in Action on Capitol Hill, the Council is championing a focus on legislation at the statehouse, as well. MOAA's geographic chapters have a long history of advocating for benefits and improvements for military members, veterans, and families at the state level. Among the notable achievements are reducing or eliminating state taxes on retirement pay, education benefit improvements, and veteran and spouse hiring initiatives.



By LoneStarMike - Own work, CC BY 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=9909150>

The Virtual Council is collaborating with an increasing number of MOAA state councils to highlight opportunities for virtual chapter members to engage in state level advocacy over the next year.

If you have an interest in helping MOAA bring a

strong statehouse advocacy presence in your local area, please reach out and let us know. MOAAJAVC is always ready to assist. If you are interested in finding and joining your local geographic chapter, we encourage you to do so and stand ready to help get you in touch with their membership committee. Reach out at [moaajavc@gmail.com](mailto:moaajavc@gmail.com)

## MAY 27, 2025 CHAPTER MEETING

Our next chapter meeting will be Tuesday 27 May at 8pm EST/ 7pm CST/ 6pm MST/ 5pm PST on Zoom.

We will welcome Col Brian Anderson MOAA's Senior Director for Career Transition and Member Services.

Col Anderson will discuss the wide range of career assistance, networking, and education benefits and advantages MOAA members are eligible for. It will be a highly useful talk especially if you are considering making a career change!

Join Zoom Meeting  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81653054968?pwd=phuJrDZRISFh8bqaWoZlbB6i1Zjc3O.1>

Meeting ID: 816 5305 4968  
Passcode: 440185



The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) is the country's leading nonpartisan organization protecting the rights of military servicemembers and their families.

To them, we have made the same promise that they have made to their country:

*Never Stop Serving.*

Join MOAA at:

<https://www.moaa.org>

Want to take action? Do it with a mouse click at:

[www.moaa.org/takeaction](http://www.moaa.org/takeaction)

## MOAA Strengthens Ties With Pentagon Officials to Advance State-Level Advocacy

*By: Jen Goodale*

MOAA council and chapter leaders met with key DoD representatives recently to explore ways to deepen coordination on issues affecting servicemembers and their families.

Members of MOAA's State Legislative Exchange Forum spoke with Lee Kelley, acting deputy assistant secretary of defense for [Military Community and Family Policy](#) (MC&FP), and Geraldine Valentino-Smith, director of the Defense-State Liaison Office (DSLO). Discussions focused on how MOAA's 400-plus nationwide councils and chapters could enhance MC&FP's advocacy impact — particularly as DSLO continues to advance key legislative goals in all 50 states.

Valentino-Smith praised MOAA state leaders: "Who's influencing the legislators? MOAA members have relationships with state lawmakers who trust their expertise," she said. "This should complement our efforts."

Each year, DSLO publishes a list of [10 state legislative initiatives](#) that serve as focal areas for the regional liaisons. In turn, legislative

leaders within MOAA's councils and chapters are empowered to work these initiatives at the local level. This engagement helps expand the reach of DSLO, which has just [eight regional liaisons](#) who each cover no less than five states each.

MOAA forum leaders expressed appreciation for MC&FP's efforts and shared concerns about potential cuts to quality-of-life programs that support military families. Kelley highlighted the direct ties between MC&FP programs and readiness of the total force — along with DSLO, MC&FP oversees child and youth programs; morale, welfare, and recreation efforts; and casualty and mortuary affairs.

### Shaping Longer-Term Priorities

Valentino-Smith acknowledged the challenges presented by DSLO's battle rhythm, which involves identifying legislative priorities for each calendar year. While many priorities are retained in follow-on years, approximately four new priorities are added annually.

DSLO is working on a process to identify priorities that will span a two-year period to allow regional liaisons and supporting organizations, like MOAA, to achieve more progress, Valentino-Smith indicated.

This proposed change was well-received by MOAA leaders, as new issues typically may require nearly a full year worth of research and lawmaker-education efforts. MOAA leaders also stressed the desire to be proactive rather than reactive, which a two-year cycle would enable.

### Get Involved

Bringing MOAA State Legislative Exchange Forum leaders to the Pentagon signals an enhanced effort to find opportunities for our councils and chapters to engage with all levels of the process. We appreciate all those who have worked tirelessly on behalf of MOAA and the greater military and veteran community to advocate for changes and improvements at federal and state levels.

If you are a MOAA affiliate legislative leader and looking to get involved, email [chapters@moaa.org](mailto:chapters@moaa.org).

## SPOTLIGHT: THE AMERICAN LEGION

Founded by an Act of Congress after World War I, The American Legion fiercely advocates for the unique needs of every generation of veterans, service members, and their families who pledge to protect our nation.

Today, they are committed to destigmatizing mental health support, offering peer-to-peer resources, and empowering everyone to Be The One in the fight to end veteran suicide.

The Legion has hundreds of posts nationwide serving as community centers for military members, veterans, and families. For more information check out:

[www.mylegion.org](http://www.mylegion.org)

## What the Proposed \$1 Trillion Defense Budget Means for Servicemembers, Families, and Retirees

By: MOAA Government Relations Staff

The first-ever proposed \$1 trillion defense budget includes \$150 billion in new spending that addresses key MOAA priorities, including \$2.9 billion to restore the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) and end the need for servicemembers to pay 5% of their anticipated housing costs out-of-pocket.

The House Armed Services Committee's budget reconciliation draft would also fund improvements to unaccompanied housing, address child care and spouse employment concerns, and add \$2 billion to the DoD health care budget, along with the temporary BAH increase.

The legislation passed the panel April 29 by a 35-21 margin and heads to the House Budget Committee, but as it moves forward under the budget reconciliation process, the final bill remains uncertain while Congress seeks to capture \$1.5 trillion in spending cuts across the government.

Other key provisions addressing MOAA priorities found in the \$150 billion spending increase:

### Active Component

**Unaccompanied Housing Funding:** Over \$1.2 billion in increases for facilities sustainment, restoration, and modernization.

**Tuition Assistance:** A

\$100 million boost to tuition assistance programs.

**Temporary Lodging Expense (TLE) Expansion:** \$590 million to extend the time to house-hunt from 14 to 21 days.

### Families

**Child Care Fee Assistance:** As DoD continues to find solutions to address child care shortages, the bill includes \$100 million to provide fee assistance to more military families.

**Military Spouse Licensure:** The development of interstate compacts is a key component of ensuring military spouses working in licensed or credentialed fields can PCS across state lines with minimal interruptions. The bill includes \$10 million for continued efforts to enhance license portability.

### DoD Health Care

**Defense Health Program (DHP) Funding Increase:** DHP will see \$2 billion more in funding, designed to address challenges across the military health system. However, the funds will not address TRICARE parity gaps or otherwise expand the military health care benefit.

### What Is Budget Reconciliation?

Budget reconciliation is a limited, but expedited, legislative process for Congress to align spending with the budget resolution.

In early April, Congress adopted a budget resolution agreeing to a reduction in federal spending. Now, lawmakers are using the budget reconciliation process to conform with the budget resolution they passed.

This process can only be used to pass provisions that directly affect federal spending, revenues, or the debt limit – discretionary spending remains subject to the annual appropriations process. Additionally, this process cannot be filibustered, meaning a simple majority is needed in the Senate. And any adjustments cannot be in perpetuity – no permanent changes for issues like concurrent receipt, for example, can be made through this process. Even with these guardrails, lawmakers have a lot of latitude to reshape spending for the next decade.

The \$150 billion increase in defense spending has answered the call on many MOAA priorities, which will have positive effects for servicemembers, their families, and retirees.

However, the potential impact on the network of services our community relies on through other departments and agencies remains uncertain. MOAA will continue advocating for improvements to our community's quality of life while striving to preserve the benefits we have earned.

*“The legislation passed the panel April 29 by a 35-21 margin and heads to the House Budget Committee, but as it moves forward under the budget reconciliation process, the final bill remains uncertain while Congress seeks to capture \$1.5 trillion in spending cuts across the government.”*



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Chapter Website  
<https://moaajavc.org>

### Who We Are

*We provide opportunities for career networking, professional education, and advocacy. Our organization is non-geographic and can go with you worldwide anywhere you are stationed.*

*The Military Officers Association of America Judge Advocate Virtual Chapter is here for you. Membership is free and is open to current and former judge advocates on Active Duty, Reserve, Guard, Retired, or Honorably Separated.*

*As an affiliate of the nationwide MOAA organization, we actively participate in non-partisan advocacy on issues of key importance to military members, veterans, and their families.*

*Join us at:*

*MOAAJAVC@gmail.com*

## AFTER THE JAG CORPS: Navigating Your Career Progression

*After The JAG Corps: Navigating Your Career Progression*, is a podcast for separating and retiring Judge Advocates. CAPT Tom Welsh talks to former Judge Advocates and others to learn about their respective career journeys after military service and gain insights into marketing the skills developed while in uniform. The Podcast is available on Apple, Google, and Spotify and is published each Saturday morning. In this episode, we hear from Steven Arango, who recently went from serving as a judge advocate in the U.S. Marine Corps to associate attorney at Jenner and Block.

[https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/147-steven-arango-from-the-halls-of-montezuma-to-big-law/id1602234623?](https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/147-steven-arango-from-the-halls-of-montezuma-to-big-law/id1602234623?i=1000705957694)

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## UPCOMING EVENTS IN MAY

### MOAA's Executive Career Transition Accelerator Seminar

30 May 8:30 - 3:30pm

MOAA's Executive Career Transition Accelerator seminar prepares transitioning servicemembers, veterans, military spouses, and surviving spouses for a successful military-to-civilian transition, foreseen and unforeseen career pivots, and advancement in their professional careers.

The interactive seminar -- which can be attended virtually or in-person -- begins with an instructional block on how to activate a resilient mindset that will serve you throughout the ups and downs of your transition (and any other life circumstance!).

With guidance from MOAA experts, you will learn how to:

- Build a stronger and broader network to accel-

erate your job search.

Employ the best strategies for using recruiters and executive search firms.

Maximize your self-marketing tools, including your résumé and LinkedIn profile.

Prepare for your next interview, or your next salary and benefits negotiation.

You will also have the chance to practice your 30-second elevator pitch, and to participate in a mock interview.

During a working lunch, attendees will hear from a panel of successfully transitioned senior officers and talent acquisition professionals from a range of industries and sectors who share their experiences and insights.

<https://www.moaa.org/content/events/transition-and-career/accelerator-career-seminar-may-2025/>

### The Role of Judge Advocates General in Providing Legal Advice to the Military

28 May 12 - 1:30pm

Please join the ABA Standing Committee on Law and National Security at the Army and Navy Club in Washington D.C. for a conversation with Rear Admiral James E. McPherson (Ret.), 39th Judge Advocate General of the Navy and former General Counsel and Under Secretary of the Army, and John Bellinger III, former Department of State Legal Adviser and Legal Adviser to the National Security Council.

They will discuss the function of the "TJAGs" and the JAG Corps in providing legal advice and issues raised by the recent firings.

<https://events.americanbar.org/event/6960d7e4-0c96-4f83-879a-56b63372fc57/summary>