

MOAA Advocacy in Action

7-10 APRIL 2025

Hyatt Regency Crystal City, Arlington VA

Attendees: Larry Miller, President; Pat Miller, Surviving Spouse Liaison

Purpose: Represent MOAA-NH (NH01) at the annual AiA event and deliver and present MOAA priorities to NH CODELs.

1. Day 1: AiA kicked off Monday, 7 April, with a Council/Chapter Presidents Registration and Icebreaker.
2. Day 2: Partner Presentation and AiA Training
3. Day 3: AiA on the Hill

1. Five topics were presented:

1. **Military housing:** MOAA seeks to improve funding and condition transparency for unaccompanied housing by requiring an annual, publicly available report, which will highlight areas that require the most attention from both DoD and Congress.
2. **#Toxic exposure:** MOAA will advocate for Congress to pass legislation that shortens the time veterans must wait before their toxic exposures are acknowledged and conceded by the VA.
3. **#Spouse employment:** The Work Opportunity Tax Credit program was established to support populations who face significant barriers to employment, and adding a military spouse target group is long overdue. Passing the Military Spouse Hiring Act will provide another important lever needed to address the critical issue of spouse unemployment.
4. **Access to care:** MOAA seeks a digital Military Health System (MHS) assistance platform allowing beneficiaries to report access-to-care challenges and receive help navigating the MHS, including reporting requirements to increase visibility on barriers to access so fixable issues can be addressed.
5. **#Support for caregivers:** MOAA strongly supports the reintroduction and enactment of the Veteran Caregiver Reeducation, Reemployment, and Retirement Act. This legislation acknowledges caregivers' invaluable contributions while addressing the significant economic and emotional burdens they face. By offering education, employment, and retirement opportunities, the legislation empowers caregivers to achieve financial security while potentially reducing the federal government's long-term economic burden.

The topics were divided into two categories, DoD and Support related. The NH Chapter was given Topics #2 and #5, Support. All attendees presented Topic #3. So, only three of the five topics were presented to the NH CODELS. Pat Miller, Surviving Spouse Liaison, presented #3 and Larry Miller presented #2 and #5. This year MOAA contracted with a private firm, Soapbox, to plan and arrange scheduled meetings with CODELs. MOAA directed Soapbox to only schedule meetings with CODELs that were committee members, thus reducing the number of meetings and presentations. However, all of NH CODELs are committee members. MOAA assigned Sara Ferris, MOAA IT Specialist, as our guide and assistant for the duration of the visits. Sara is a MOAA full time Board member. Larry and Pat met with three of the principals, Rep Chris Pappas, Rep Maggie Goodlander, and Senator Maggie Hassan. Senator Shaheen was unavailable for a meeting, however MOAA material was dropped off for her consideration. We were appreciative of the those CODELs who met with us, considering they each had a busy schedule with budget voting.

Leading up to the event MOAA published a letter in the, 9 April, HILL newspaper (thehill.com), MOAA's Mission: Service Through Strength. The open letter underscored MOAA's determination to protect, preserve, prevent and defend these issues. As such, I kicked off each presentation with a concern over budget cuts that could possibly impact veterans earned benefits. MOAA stands ready to challenge any and all budget cuts to veteran benefits.

The MOAA Awards Ceremony was held Tuesday, 8 April, at the Capital Hill, Senate Dirksen room. The following individuals were recognized:

1. Rep. Don Bacon (R-Neb) and Rep. Chrissy Houlahan (D-Pa) each received the Arthur T. Marix Congressional Leadership Award
2. Ellie Bender (HASC) and Nikitha Rai Shah (Sen. Andy Kim (D-N.J.)) each received the Col Paul W. Arcari Meritorious Service Award.
3. Distinguished Service Awards were presented to USAA and The Bob Woodruff Foundation.

The AiA ended Thursday, 10 April, a Council President Seminar with a VP panel presentation and a follow on working session.