



ADVOCACY BULLETIN

Volume 6, Issue 4

July, August 2011

Inside this issue:

MSCPVA Bill Support	2
Budget Debate	2
Complete Streets Act	3
Feature of the Bulletin	3

The True Cost of War

The Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs convened the hearing "Examining the Lifetime Costs of Supporting the Newest Generation of Veterans" on July 27, 2011. The hearing was designed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the full cost of war, which extends far beyond the initial deployment of veterans. The veterans returning from the Afghanistan and Iraq wars are facing numerous challenges, challenges that were frequently overlooked during previous wars, such as Traumatic Brain Injury and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. The costs of war also include the economic costs that returning veterans face because of high unemployment rates and problems with access to healthcare. Because

of medical advances, veterans who would have previously died during combat are surviving in record numbers. The "costs of war" panel described a more precise view of what the price actually is in modern day America for those who serve. The panel illuminated many to the costs incurred by veterans surviving modern warfare and the true value of their service.



Highest Suicide Rate Among Veterans in July

Suicide is an increasing problem for our veterans, and a record number of suicides were reported in the month of July, 2011. Although the stigma regarding mental health treatment has been reduced, it is still of concern and can be an impediment for veterans who need help. MSCPVA recognizes this tragedy and has included a link to the Veterans Crisis Line on the website under the Advocacy Resource Library. The Veterans Crisis Line offers veterans or family members the opportunity to seek resources through an online chat or through phone. The Veterans Crisis Line can be accessed at: <http://www.veteranscrisisline.net/> or 1-800-273-8255.

MSCPVA Supports the Following Bills:



- H.R. 1154, the “Veterans Equal Treatment for Service Dogs Act,” would allow service dogs on VA property
- H.R. 1855, the “Veterans’ Traumatic Brain Injury Rehabilitative Services’ Improvements Act of 2011,” would expand the scope of service for veterans with Traumatic Brain Injury to include maintenance and maximization of health.
- H.R. 2074, the “Veterans Sexual Assault Prevention Act,” would require the VA to develop comprehensive policies to track and report sexual assault and other assaults that occur at VA medical facilities
- H.R. 1263, the “Service members Civil Relief Act,” would give surviving spouses of veterans killed while serving options to circumvent foreclosure, sale, and seizure of property.



Budget Debate Continues in Washington

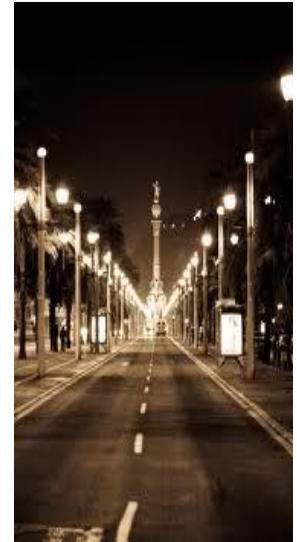
With an initial \$1 Trillion in spending cuts set to occur within the next ten years and another \$1.5 Trillion in cuts also slated to occur within the next ten years, the Department of Defense is considering what programs are crucial and what programs can be downsized or eliminated. The consideration is difficult, yet necessary, given the countries focus on spending reduction.

As consideration is given to program cuts, the Mountain States Chapter of Paralyzed Veterans of America would request that thoughtful consideration be given to the service of America’s veterans. Veterans use VA systems of care in order to acclimate to civilian life. Given the high numbers of OEF and OIF veterans returning from war, now is not the time to cut crucial programs that ensure some quality of life for those who have endured the highest cost of war. Now is the time to secure funding for healthcare and programs that will assist veterans as much as possible as they return to the United States of America.

The Complete Streets Act

According to Transportation for America, more than 47,700 pedestrians were killed from being struck by vehicles during the last ten years. Transportation for America likens the number of deaths to, "the equivalent of a jumbo jet full of passengers crashing roughly every month." In addition to fatalities, 688,000 pedestrians were injured by vehicles during the same time period, leading law makers to question the safety of our streets, which is why the Complete Streets Act of 2011 (H.R. 1780 / S. 1056) was introduced in May.

The Complete Streets Act seeks "To ensure the safety of all users of the transportation system, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, children, older individuals, and individuals with disabilities, as they travel on and across federally funded streets and highways." The bill was introduced by Representative Doris Matsui (D-HI), Steve LaTourette (R-OH), and Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) and has 15 bipartisan cosponsors. The Mountain States Chapter of Paralyzed Veterans of America would like to thank all those supporting The Complete Streets Act, which will make travel safer for those in wheelchairs and would like to urge all Representatives and Senators from Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, and Montana to support this crucial piece of legislation.



Organization Feature of the Bulletin:

The mission of the Rocky Mountain MS Center is to improve the lives of people with multiple sclerosis (MS) and their families through care, support, education and research.

The Rocky Mountain MS Center offers a comprehensive care approach that maximizes and enhances the brain's ability to protect and repair itself. They also promote quality of life for patients and their families through support and enrichment programs. They empower patients, families and health care providers by sharing information via publications, workshops, and on-line resources. They are also leading the way in research to assure that prevention remains a focus of the "silent" but ongoing brain damage that results from disability.

The ultimate goal of the Rocky Mountain MS Center is to change the way people think about and treat MS in order to protect the futures of those living with the disease.

**To learn more
about the work
of the Rocky
Mountain MS
Center, visit
their website at:
[http://
www.mscenter.
org/](http://www.mscenter.org/) or call
800-557-7030**

The Paralyzed Veterans of America is a congressionally chartered veterans' service organization formed in 1946, which specializes in assisting and promoting a full lifestyle for veterans affected by spinal cord injury or disease.

The Mountain States Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America (MSCPVA) is one of 34 chapters and serves members in the Rocky Mountain region of Colorado, Montana, Wyoming and Utah.



MSCPVA.ORG

Board of Directors, FY11

James Sack
President

Diane Marsh
Vice-President

Maureen Ludwig
Treasurer

Alan Jones
Secretary

Richard Yoder
Director

Daniel Spotts
Director

Roland
McCutcheon
Director

Dennis Gordon
Director

Mark Shepherd
Ex Officio

Administrative Staff

Mark Shepherd
Executive Director

Jessica Sweeney
Government Relations
Director

Donna DeBaca
Program Manager

Lenna Gregory
Administrative Assis-
tant

Chapter Office:
12200 East Iliff
Avenue #107; Aurora,
CO 80014

Phone:
303-597-0038

Toll Free:
800-833-9400

Fax:
303-597-0039

Email:
Info@mscpva.org

National Service Office

Marco Rossi
National Service Of-
ficer III

Joni St. Pierre
National Service Of-
ficer

National Service Office:
155 Van Gordon
Street
Suite 356
Lakewood, CO 80228

Phone: 303.914.5590
Toll Free:
800.795.3588
Fax: 303.914.5593