

Veterans Town Hall and Resource Fair

February 20, 2026



House Ethics: Congressional vs. Campaign Activity

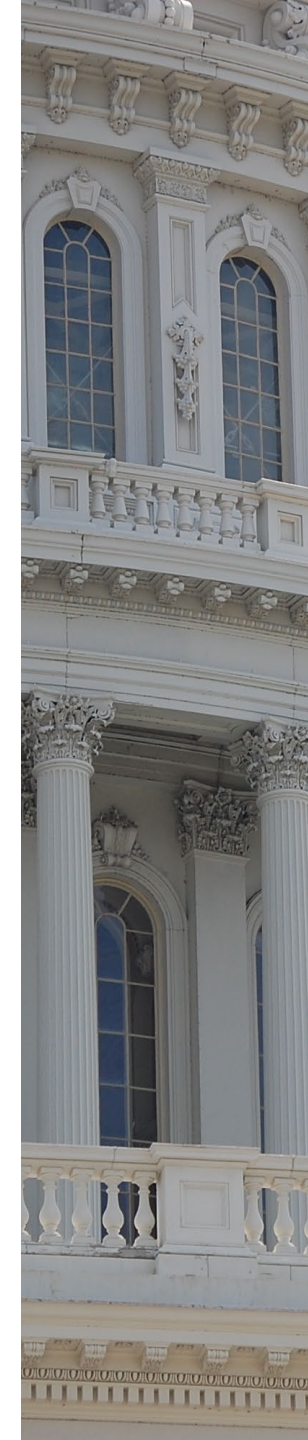
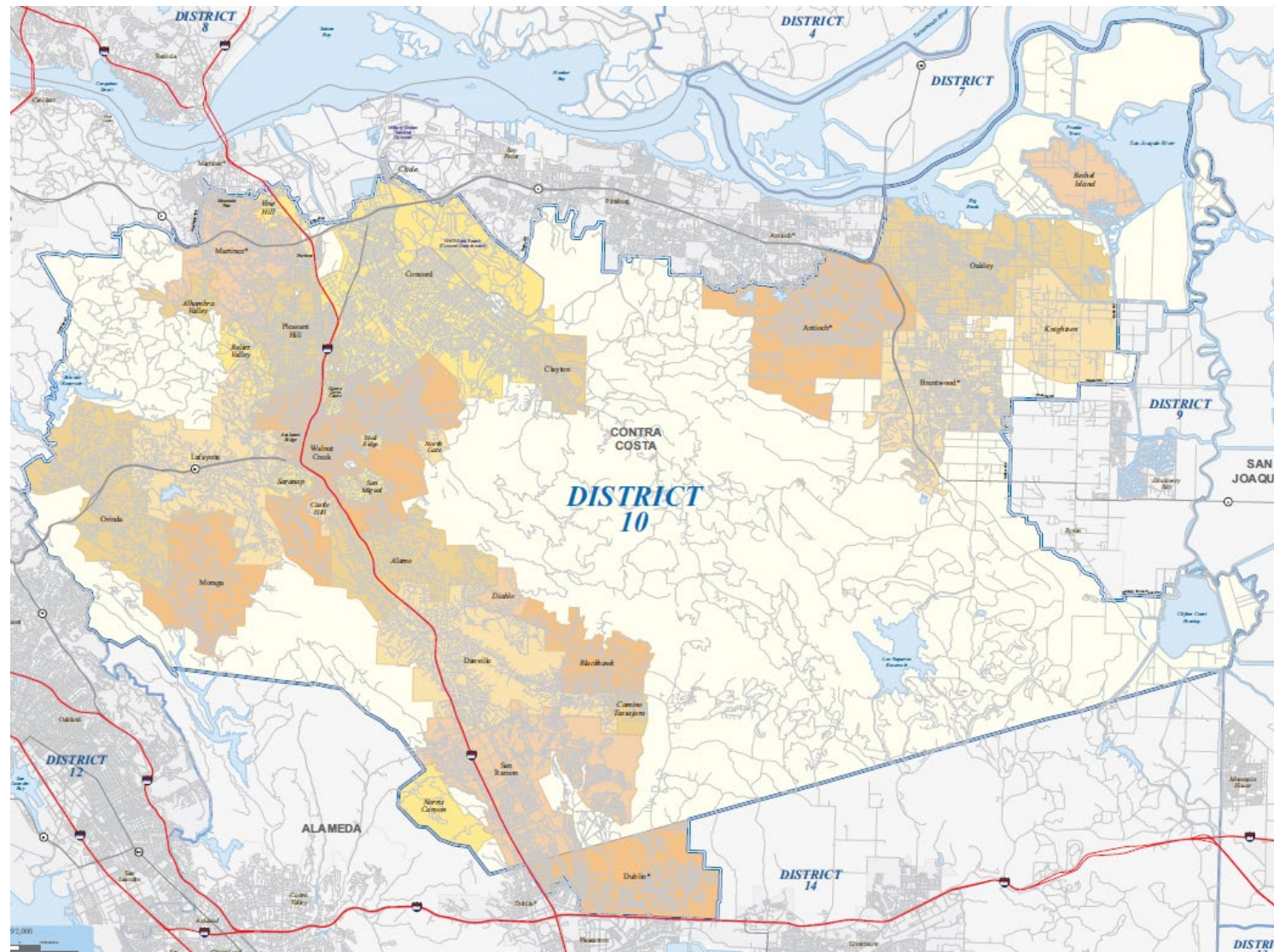
- Members of Congress are governed by the House Code of Official Conduct, which includes standards for whether, how, when, and where Members may engage in campaign activity.
 - This town hall is being hosted in my official capacity as Representative for California's 10th District, not as a candidate in a campaign. Therefore, House Rules prevent me from:
 - Solicitating, receiving, and accepting campaign contributions.
 - Making political endorsements.
 - Directing attendees to websites, resources, or events created or operated by a campaign or any campaign-related entity, including political parties and campaign committees.

You can learn more about the House Code of Official Conduct and how it relates to this event here:



California's 10th Congressional District

CA-10 includes most of Contra Costa and part of Alameda County



Veteran Statistics

- There are approximately 18.6 million veterans in the U.S. (approximately 6% of the U.S. population)
 - There are an estimated 24,331 veterans living in California's 10th Congressional District.
- Over 9 million veterans are enrolled in the VA health care system.
 - 5.6 million veterans receive disability compensation through the VA.
- 73% of veterans have received benefits through the VA.
 - 64% of veterans believe the VA provides adequate support.
 - 3.74 million veterans have home loans through the VA Home Loan program.
- In 2020, approximately 5.2 million veterans experienced a behavioral health condition, highlighting the critical need for continued investments in behavioral health care for veterans.
 - Fewer than 50% of veterans in need receive any mental health treatment.



Veterans and Mental Health

- An estimated 41% of veterans are in need of mental health care services each year.
- Substance use disorder (SUD) affects veterans at a higher rate than the general public, with an estimated 14% of veterans experiencing SUD.
- Suicides among veterans have increased from 23.2 per 100,000 in 2001 to 35.2 per 100,000 in 2023.
 - California has ninth lowest veteran suicide rate of any state.
- A 2022 survey found that 80% of veterans were satisfied with VA mental health care, but more must be done to ensure that those who need treatment are able to access it.

Life has its challenges.

**As a Veteran,
you don't
have to solve
them alone.**



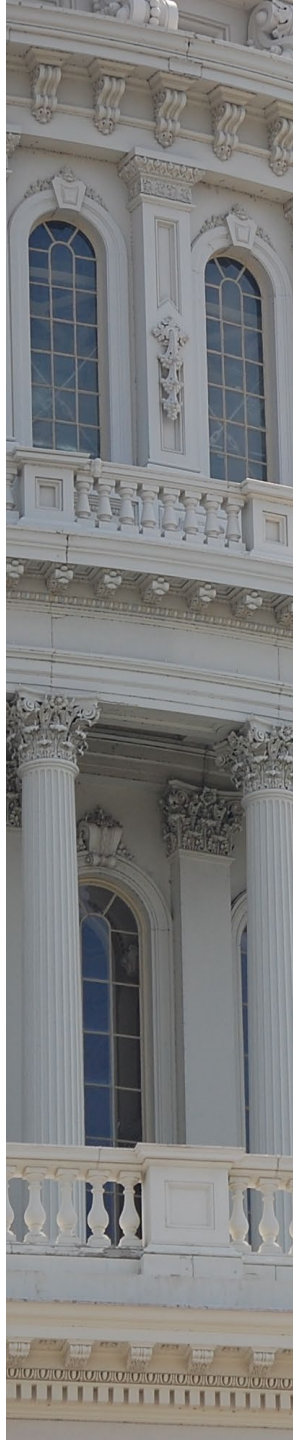
Visit [VA.gov/REACH](https://www.va.gov/REACH) for resources or Dial **988** then Press 1 to reach the Veterans Crisis Line.

Don't wait. Reach out.

VA

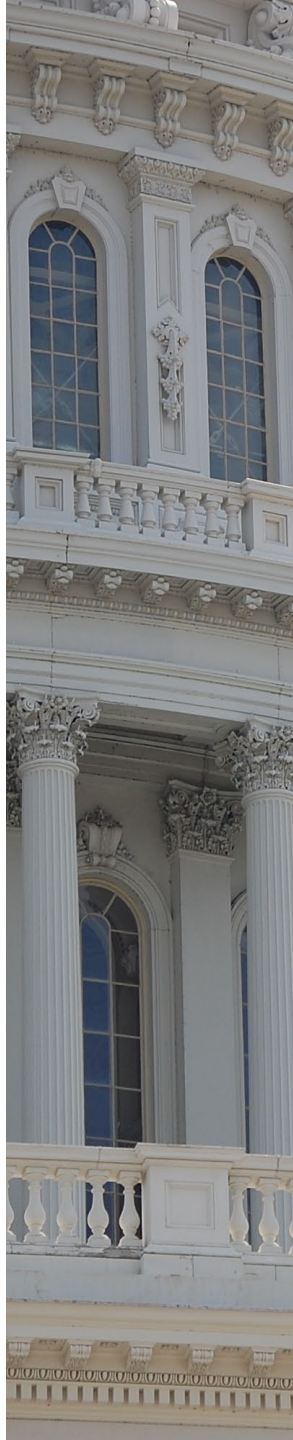


U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs



Recent Laws Supporting Veterans

- The Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act: Directs the VA to provide a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for disability and survivor benefits, beginning in December 2025, equal to that applied to Social Security benefits. The COLA was set at 2.8%.
- The Wounded Warrior Access Act: Requires the VA to establish a program for veterans to access their claim files electronically.
- The Medal of Honor Act: Increases the monthly special pension for living Medal of Honor recipients from \$1,406.73 to \$8,333.33 and the monthly special pension for survivors of Medal of Honor recipients to \$1,406.73
- The VA Home Loan Program Reform Act: Creates a program at the VA to provide support for veterans who have fallen behind on mortgage payments.



Honoring our PACT Act: Implementation Update

- Became law in August 2022 after passing the House with Congressman DeSaulnier's support.
- Expands eligibility for VA health care and benefits for veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange, burn pits, and other toxic substances.
 - Adds over 20 medical conditions for which a veteran's service is presumed to have caused their illness.
- Since the PACT Act became law:
 - 3,069,117 total PACT Act related benefits claims completed.
 - 539,630 veterans newly enrolled in VA health care under the PACT Act.
 - 6,615,532 toxic exposure screenings conducted for veterans.
- The VA continues to review PACT Act claims. From October to December 2025, pending claims decreased from 269,362 to 247,511.
 - The VA must do everything in its power to approve claims in a timely manner.



Other Vets Support Initiatives Supported by Rep. DeSaulnier

Congressman DeSaulnier supports the following bills, which have not yet become law:

- **Major Richard Star Act (H.R. 2102)**
 - To allow for concurrent receipt of disability compensation and retirement pay for disabled veterans with fewer than 20 years of service.
- **Sgt. Isaac Woodard, Jr. and Sgt. Joseph H. Maddox GI Bill Restoration Act (H.R. 1725)**
 - To address discrimination against Black WWII veterans by extending access to VA home loans and post-9/11 GI Bill educational benefits to certain survivors of these veterans.
- **SERVICE Act (H.R. 2829)**
 - To shorten the timeline for receiving student loan forgiveness from 120 payments to 96 payments for those participating in the PSLF program. This includes VA nurses.



Service Providers at Today's Resource Fair

Representatives from the following organizations are in attendance today to provide information on the resources they offer to veterans:

- **Veterans Benefits Administration**
- **VA Northern California Healthcare District**
- **Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 75**
- **Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 1525**
- **Contra Costa County Veterans Service Office**
- **National Cemeteries Administration**
- **Joy Bound**



Contact Our Office

Walnut Creek District Office

3100 Oak Road
Suite 110

Walnut Creek, CA 94597

Phone: (925) 933-2660

Fax: (925) 933-2677



Facebook: RepMarkDeSaulnier



X: @RepDeSaulnier

Antioch District Office

4703 Lone Tree Way
Antioch, CA 94531

Phone: (925) 754-0716

Fax: (925) 754-0728



Instagram: @RepDeSaulnier



Bluesky: @RepMarkDeSaulnier

Washington, DC Office

2134 Rayburn House Office
Building

Washington, DC 20515

Phone: (202) 225-2095

Fax: (202) 225-5609



Website: desaulnier.house.gov

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