



January 20, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden,

On behalf of the more than 350,000 members of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), I congratulate you on your election victory. MOAA, as the largest military service organization and fourth largest veterans service organization, is proud to represent officers from all uniformed services, past and present, to advocate for the interests of all servicemembers.

MOAA looks forward to working with the Biden-Harris Administration to continue supporting our national defense and those who serve and have served. In these challenging times, we urge the administration to commit to transparency and collaboration with military and veterans service organizations. MOAA stands ready to support efforts to assist servicemembers, veterans, their families, and survivors whenever you ask.

In addition to urging a collaborative relationship, I write to share areas of immediate concern where the administration can quickly exert influence through executive actions. We hope that you will encourage your departments and agencies to implement the following changes.

Department of Defense

- **Full Pay Raise** – Include a full servicemember pay raise in the President’s FY 2022 Budget request in line with the Employment Cost Index ([2.7% for FY 2022](#)).
- **No TRICARE Fee Increases** – Include no proposals for TRICARE fee increases in the administration budget request. Such fees unfairly shift health care costs to military beneficiaries.
- **Reconsider Medical Billet Cuts** – These plans to eliminate approximately 18% of medical billets could have negative impacts on medical readiness and beneficiary access to care.
- **30-Day Reserve Component Orders** – Require the use of federal orders in increments over 30 days for members of the reserve component activated to help with future COVID-19 support or vaccination efforts.
- **Military Installation Modernization** – Direct DoD to include military installation family housing, child care facilities, barracks, and facility buildings as part of the designated strategic support area that requires modernization, and to explore predictive maintenance sensors that detect moisture and mold problems that have cost taxpayers billions in construction and health care.

- **Plan the Future of Our National Cemetery** – Direct DoD to designate a location for the next national cemetery that affords full military honors once Arlington National Cemetery reaches capacity, and grandfather those currently eligible.
- **Improve Dependent GI Bill Transfer Process** – Review the service obligation process and inter-department communication for GI Bill transfers to dependents. [Administrative errors](#) are leading to dependents being required, unfairly, to pay back GI Bill payments.

Department of Veterans Affairs

- **Address Agent Orange Presumptives** – Add hypertension to the list of Agent Orange-connected diseases. It has met the same scientific standard as bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, and Parkinsonism, all of which were added via the FY 2021 NDAA.
- **Restore the 48-Hour Review Period** – the VA’s decision to rescind this review will lead to more errors in claims, clog the appeals process, and ultimately harm veterans. Multiple veterans service organizations, including MOAA, [have joined in this effort](#).
- **Support Death Certificate Review of Veterans Who Pass from COVID-19** – The survivors of veterans with underlying service-connected conditions who died from COVID-19 are at risk of their Dependency and Indemnity Compensation being denied. The VA policy for COVID-19 deaths should be updated to require an additional medical screening if any service-connected disabilities are not listed as principal or contributory causes of death.
- **Waive Dependent Debt for GI Bill Administrative Errors** – Direct the VA to waive dependent GI Bill debts stemming from [administrative errors](#) that led to servicemembers failing to complete obligated service.
- **Delay VA Debt Collection** – All such collection by the VA should stop until the pandemic is over.
- **Reinstate Public Facing Disability Benefits Questionnaires (DBQs)** – The removal of these documents limits a veteran’s ability to independently submit a doctor’s medical evidence in a format consistent with VA requirements. Provide a public portal for access to the DBQ forms.
- **Pause VA Contract Exam Changes** – MOAA seeks this delay to address whether these changes would negatively affect exam quality and timeliness. The GAO and VA’s Office of the Inspector General have expressed similar concerns.

Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

- **Restart Military Lending Act Supervisory Compliance Exams** – Monitoring compliance is necessary for this act to work the way it was intended.

Department of Education

- **Support Defrauded Students** – Rescind the 2019 borrower defense rules that limit the ability for defrauded students to get their tuition reimbursed.
- **Fix Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF)** – Simplify the PSLF process for those who have met the public service requirement to have student debts repaid. Servicemembers who

have served on active duty since the creation of the program need to have their service recognized.

Department of Labor

- **Track Military Spouse Unemployment Rates** – Require the Bureau of Labor Statistics to create methods to better quantify this issue at the heart of financial security for many military families.
- **Improve Military Spouse Licensure** – Require the Department of Labor to prioritize state-level technical assistance training to educate occupational licensing boards on current military spouse licensure laws and compacts.
- **End Forced Arbitration** – Support rulemaking to end forced arbitration for Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act disputes.

Department of Homeland Security

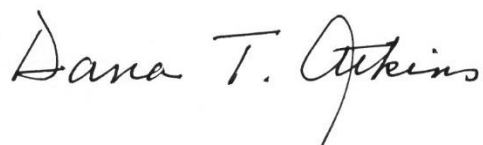
- **Preserve Parole in Place (PIP)** – Allow PIP to continue for the families of military members and veterans, and direct the United States Customs and Immigration Services (USCIS) to process applications for those in removal proceedings and adjudicate all PIP applications within 60 days.
- **Support Servicemember and Veteran Naturalization** – Ensure servicemembers have access to expedited paths to citizenship by:
 - Rescinding DoD memos requiring O-6 certification of honorable military service.
 - Restoring Basic Training Naturalization through a USCIS directive.
 - Directing USCIS to expedite processing of all servicemember and veteran applications.
 - Directing USCIS to provide resources to assist qualified members of the armed forces to navigate the application and naturalization process (as outlined in Public Law 115-91, Section 530).

Department of Treasury

- **Coordinate Stimulus Payments with the VA** – Simplify and expedite the process for veterans who aren't required to file income taxes to receive future payments. Veterans with service-connected disabilities and survivors receiving Dependency and Indemnity Compensation [faced uncertainty](#) about the status of past payments; this experience was frustrating to many because the VA had all the information required for an accurate payment. Fixing this process will ensure our most vulnerable receive support quickly.

In closing, I want to personally thank you for your persistent leadership to care for nation's veterans and their families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dana T. Atkins". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "D".