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The VFW Department of Virginia is very much aware of the problem with the lack of funding for the **Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Program** in the budget approved last week. We are tracking it and other issues important to Virginia veterans and VFW members.

The budget was finalized and approved by the Virginia General Assembly last week (with support from Republicans and Democrats) and signed by Governor Youngkin. We are committed to fighting for more money for VMSSDP and will continue to work to protect the benefits all veterans have earned and, where appropriate, fighting for new ones. We will work on VMSSDP for the remainder of this year and work with legislators and Governor Youngkin to secure more funding in the next legislative session, which starts in January 2025.

Unfortunately, the VMSSDP funding issue has become very partisan, and a few individuals have been personally attacking the Governor and legislators. Partisan, personal, or disrespectful attacks on policymakers are counterproductive, especially when the VFW is advocating on several different important issues.

While everyone has the right and are encouraged to express their views, in order to keep our non-profit status, the VFW must be non-partisan and work with all. We must remain out of the business of name calling and attacking politicians. I understand the frustration and restraint can, at times, be difficult and challenging. But personal attacks, especially those which misuse the VFW's good name, should be toned down and members frustration should be focused on respectful messages encouraging policymakers to increase funding in the next legislative session.

Furthermore, attacks on policymakers can backfire and harm the VFW's efforts to secure future VMSSDP funding and other important issues we are working on.

The VFW continues to defend against attacks on regulated charitable gaming, which many VFW Posts rely on for their survival. We are also fighting to stop so called "skill" slot machines from being permitted in every neighborhood convenience store, bar, and restaurant in Virginia. For almost 5 years, the manufacturers of these gambling machines operated despite being banned by the state. The presence of these gambling machines in every neighborhood could drastically harm income to Virginia's VFW Posts. Hurting VFW income hurts programs that support veterans as well as charities in our communities that we support. It's also a matter of fairness--while VFW's charitable gaming was heavily regulated and following the rules, skill companies knowingly operated without oversight or regulation. We continue to advocate for a veto of SB212.

We advocated for strong legislation to stop Claim Sharks in the Commonwealth during this session. Our Veterans deserve to keep all their earned benefits in their pockets for themselves and their families.

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We will continue to go to the State Capitol to make our presence known on multiple issues, including VMSPD. We intend to work on funding for the remainder of this year and work with the legislators and the Governor to secure more funding in the January 2025 legislative session.

Members should refrain from personally attacking lawmakers or the Governor, which will backfire on us. If they still choose to post personal or partisan attacks, they should not use VFW's good name in those attacks.

Thank you for your concern about VMSPD and the many issues of concern to Virginia's veterans and VFW members.

Please reach out to me with any concerns.

Official:



Ed Mann
State Adjutant

By Order of:



Gary W Adams, Jr.
State Commander