

# **VVA National Convention (Nov 2021 – Greensboro NC) Preliminary Proposals Summary**

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Note: This document contains only the basic minimal textual extraction summaries from the following two VVA National documents. For the complete details regarding each brief summary of Convention Constitutional Amendment Proposals and each Convention Resolution Proposals listed in this document, please refer to the corresponding VVA National document.

**Note that the Proposed Constitutional Amendments and the Proposed Resolutions that would be most interesting for our chapter member readers have been highlighted in RED & YELLOW colors!**

**Link: VVA National Convention Proposed Constitutional Amendment Proposals 2021**

<http://www.vva1069.org/y2021/pdf/conventionamendments2021.pdf>

**Link: VVA National Convention Proposed Resolution Proposals 2021**

<http://www.vva1069.org/y2021/pdf/conventionresolutions2021.pdf>

## **Constitutional Amendment Proposals:**

There are 19 proposed constitutional amendments. Ten of the proposed amendments are being reported out of the committee for full discussion and consideration by the delegates. Nine proposed amendments are not reported out of the committee. The proposed amendments reported out of the committee are numbered and presented in the order of their relative position in the Constitution, except for proposed amendment – 01, which will be considered first, because the final vote on this amendment will impact four of the other proposed amendments.

## **Proposed Constitutional Amendments – 01 through 08, 10**

All these amendments allow for VVA National and VVA State Councils to conduct virtual meetings and to also conduct other National and State business virtually via internet in the future.

## **Proposed Constitutional Amendment – 09**

**Submitted by:** Milton Omoto

**Proposed Change:** 15 members in good standing may start a new VVA chapter. Current number is 25.

**Reason for Change:** As Vietnam veterans and Vietnam era veterans become older and scarce, and to promote active membership in the VVA, the qualifications to petition for a new chapter must be reduced.

## **BELOW: PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS NOT REPORTED OUT OF THE CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE**

### **Proposed Constitutional Amendment – NR01**

**Submitted by:** Gerald Kolb

**Proposed Change:** The text “Vietnam Veterans of America” shall be replaced with “Vietnam and Other Conflicts Veterans of America, Inc” and hereinafter called the “Corporation”, and shall be located within the District of Columbia.

**Reason for Change:** To gain additional membership

### **Proposed Constitutional Amendment – NR02**

**Submitted by:** Gerald Kolb

**Proposed Change:** The text “Vietnam Veterans of America” shall be replaced with “Vietnam and Other Conflicts Veterans of America, Inc” and hereinafter called the “Corporation”, and shall be located within the District of Columbia.

**Reason for Change:** To ensure conformity additional editorial changes would need to be made anywhere there is reference to Vietnam Veterans of America or Vietnam-era veterans. Vietnam Veterans were shunned by many in America fifty years when joining veterans’ groups. As we are aging, we need to look to the future after we the Vietnam

Veteran, have been laid to rest. We must allow any and future veterans equal membership, so that our programs of helping veterans continues in perpetuity.

#### **Proposed Constitutional Amendment – NR03**

**Submitted by:** Gerald Kolb

**Proposed Change:** The text “Vietnam war” shall be replaced with “America’s wars”.

**Reason for Change:** Needed if organization name change is adopted.

#### **Proposed Constitutional Amendment – NR04**

**Submitted by:** Anthony Cox

**Proposed Change:** Add the following membership criteria to the Constitution: Membership is also open to any descendant of a member of the Corporation or the descendant of a deceased Vietnam veteran who was qualified to be a member of the corporation, provided the descendant can provide proof of such relationship, whether natural, adopted or step. Proof is defined as a VVA membership card or DD Form 214 of their ancestor proving eligible service, and a birth certificate or other vital record proving their relationship to the Vietnam veteran.

**Reason for Change:** We are getting old and slower and have no Auxiliary or other type of membership to continue the corporation as we become too old or pass away. If the Corporation is to continue, it must have younger members.

#### **Proposed Constitutional Amendment – NR05**

**Submitted by:** C. David Guzicki

**Proposed Change:** When the organization decides to vote on the recommendations of working group I and working group II, or a possible name change to our organization or any other decisions which affect our membership, ballots will be mailed out to all Corporation members with a stated deadline to return said ballots, or voting will be done by email.

**Reason for Change:** The vote to decide the future of our great organization may be the most important decision in the 40-year history of VVA. For this reason, I believe every single member of VVA should have a vote on this very important outcome.

#### **Proposed Constitutional Amendment – NR06**

**Submitted by:** Ray Sestak

**Proposed Change:** Add the following text into Constitution: “In order to legally conduct those matters of corporate business deemed absolutely necessary to ensure the continued lawful and necessary operation and existence of the corporation, the Constitution hereby provides the necessary authority for the VVA National Board of Directors to waive the mandatory attendance of delegates at a national convention, and provides the ability to conduct a secure and lawful virtual delegate “show of hands” coordinated through the individual VVA State Council Presidents on such matters. Utilizing existing electronic or virtual capabilities, the State Council Presidents, at the direction of the National Board of Directors, would provide guidance to their respective Chapter Delegates on such matters, and would be relied upon to convey any and all results of such a member poll to the National Board of Directors once accomplished. This process would not be utilized as a convenience, but only implemented in circumstances whereby: 1. the ability of the VVA to conduct a National Convention is prohibited by circumstances beyond VVA control; 2. In situations that directly impact the future existence of the VVA, allowing input of the grassroots VVA membership whose delegates may not be able to physically attend a National Convention.”

**Reason for Change:** As written, the current Constitution of the Vietnam Veterans of America relies solely on a physical show of hands by Chapter Delegates at a Biannual National Convention in order to adopt or deny constitutional amendments or other matters of concern. Considering the consequences of the impact of the current worldwide Coronavirus pandemic, implementing a convention in a timely and safe manner may not be possible, thereby grid-locking the ability of the organization to conduct matters of great importance to its continued existence.

#### **Proposed Constitutional Amendment – NR07**

**Submitted by:** Sam Brick

**Proposed Change:** Add the following text into Constitution: “Notwithstanding Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised, current edition as indicated in Section 4 of the General Provisions of Article IV or any other Section or provision of this Constitution, electronic meetings may be conducted pursuant to this Subsection.” (Plus 4 additional related paragraphs – see proposal document for additional details)

**Reason for Change:** This proposal is to authorize the Conference of State Council Presidents to operate without in person meetings. (See proposal document for additional details)

#### **Proposed Constitutional Amendment – NR08**

**Submitted by:** Sam Brick

**Proposed Change:** Add the following text into Constitution: “In the event a state council president determines it appropriate and the relevant state law relating to not-for-profit meetings, or the relevant state governor determines no in-person or electronic meetings are permissible, a state council meeting may be conducted electronically, or through such scientific technology that provides the opportunity for communication among attendees of an official meeting. Such meetings are hereinafter referred in this Article as electronic meetings. (Plus 24 additional related paragraphs (See proposal document for additional details)

**Reason for Change:** This proposal is to rectify the inability of a state council to operate without in person meetings during certain periods of emergency or other specified conditions as determined necessary by the relevant State Council President. It would permit electronic meetings during such periods. (See proposal document for additional details)

#### **Proposed Constitutional Amendment – NR09**

**Submitted by:** Sam Brick

**Proposed Change:** Add the following text into Constitution: “In the event a state council president or an officer of the Corporation determines it appropriate for all chapters in the state and the relevant state law relating to notfor-profit meetings or the relevant state governor determines not in person or electronic meetings are permissible, a chapter meeting may be conducted electronically, or through such scientific technology that provides the opportunity for communication among attendees of an official meeting. Such meetings are hereinafter referred in this Article as electronic meetings.” (See proposal document for additional details)

**Reason for Change:** This proposal is to rectify the inability of a chapter to operate without in-person meetings during certain periods of emergency or other specified conditions, as determined necessary by the relevant State Council President or an officer of the Corporation. It would permit electronic meetings. (See proposal document for additional details)

## **Convention Resolutions**

**Proposed Resolution:** 15

**Submitted by:** Salvadore Farina

**Issue:** There is sufficient evidence of an association of 4 Hypertension to Agent Orange.

**Proposed Position:** Include Hypertension to the 15 list of presumptive diseases associated to Agent Orange.

**Proposed Resolution:** 2

**Submitted by:** Danny Lee Slaughter

**Issue:** Post Peripheral Neuropathy

**Proposed Position:** Change Peripheral Neuropathy date starting from 1 year after discharge for anybody who has PN included in AO disability.

**Proposed Resolution:** 7

**Submitted by:** Jeff Harbin

**Issue:** Dates of Eligibility for Vietnam Service Medal.

**Proposed Position:** Amend the eligibility dates for the Vietnam Service Medal to include the period between March 28, 1973, and April 29th. 1975.

**Proposed Resolution: 6**

**Submitted by:** Carl J. Cieslikowski

**Issue:** Future membership will decrease because of natural death.

**Proposed Position:** Study what other similar veteran organizations have done to increase membership, i.e., Study what the Daughters of the American Revolution has accomplished to foster membership throughout the centuries.

**Proposed Resolution: 11**

**Submitted by:** George Swift

**Issue:** Maintain Vietnam Veterans of America as a "last person standing organization without changing its name.

**Proposed Position:** Vietnam Veterans of America, its Officers and Board members be prohibited from changing the organization's name and/or creating any new veteran's organization to replace our current one; thus making us a "last person standing" organization.

**Proposed Resolution: 14**

**Submitted by:** Jerry Orlemann

**Issue:** The construction of permanent, supportive housing for Veterans on the West Los Angeles Veterans Affairs (WLAVA) Medical Center campus comprised of approximately 388 acres located in the heart of Los Angeles.

**Proposed Position:** Vietnam Veterans of America supports the continuous progress of the WLAVA Master Plan and the WLA Principal Developer in the construction of approximately 1,691 units of permanent, supportive housing on the WLAVA campus as a home for Veterans.

**Proposed Resolution: 8**

**Submitted by:** James Ulinski

**Issue:** 32,517 Korean Veterans served in Vietnam from 1967 until the end of the war at the request of the U.S. Currently approximately 3,000 Korean American Veterans live in the U.S., but not permitted to join our Vietnam Veterans organization and have a separate organization.

**Proposed Position:** Vietnam Veterans of America should allow our Korean Vietnam American Veterans brothers to become full fledged members of our great organization. They had our backs many years ago and we should have theirs now. None of our brothers should be left behind. It should be noted that our chapter voted unanimously on this proposed convention resolutions.

**Proposed Resolution: 3**

**Submitted by:** James Barnes

**Issue:** Vietnam and other Conflicts of America.

**Proposed Position:** New members.

**Proposed Resolution: 4**

**Submitted by:** Frederick Gasior

**Issue:** Health care and adhering to "Never Again will one Generations of Veterans Abandon Another". Today there are over 2800 Korean American War Veterans who are American citizens. These men and women served alongside and independently in the air, sea and ground of South Vietnam from 1964 to 1973. They were exposed to many perils including Agent Orange related illnesses and disease.

**Proposed Position:** We ask the Vietnam Veterans of America to use their resources to support HR 5590 (KOREAN AMERICAN VALOR ACT) currently in congressional committee. This bill is related to gaining VA healthcare benefits for South Korean Vietnam Veterans who served in Vietnam from 1964 - 1973 and are now American Citizens. These veterans need access for healthcare diagnosis and treatment for alt related illness pertaining to their service in Southeast Asia. All Congressional representatives must be made aware of the importance of supporting this bill.

**Proposed Resolution: 9**

**Submitted by:** Charles Odom

**Issue:** Because of the heightened tensions between political parties in this country many ethnic groups are divided into different camps based on perceived or actual belief systems leading to discord and increased sensitivities and failures to establish meaningful dialogue between races for example. Dealing with this has been a problem within various chapters in the VVA. Many have not established guidelines for their chapters to deal with these issues. I know that many members have taken umbrage with others who may say "All Lives Matter" or "Black Lives Matter" or "White Privilege" or accusations that someone may not be woke enough, when no slight was intended or implied.

**Proposed Position:** I propose that a national committee be formed that would formulate guidelines after discussion and consults with professionals and educators and or representatives of the major ethnic groups. That would help us to mitigate incidents before they escalate and possibly result in animus formed in some of the membership.

**Proposed Resolution: 1**

**Submitted by:** Gene Spanos

**Issue:** Missing In Action world-wide abandoned in place. Vietnam-Laos-1 Cambodia-China-Russia-North Korea-Germany-Japan vs. Improper Use of USA-2 DOD-DPAA solicited JFR - JFI Updates by VVA Staffer.

**Proposed Position:** Whereby; the need to see that all missing in action are located recovered and identified. Whereby, that all MIA gravesites are fully investigated and never walked away from per the ongoing (MEL) Master Excavation Listings country by country.

**Proposed Resolution: 5**

**Submitted by:** Charlie Saulenas

**Issue:** The plan is to simply ask, at all public events where our flag is saluted or our National Anthem sung, for all active service and military veterans to the stand up and be recognized.

**Proposed Position:** Endorse the S.A.F.E. Program and promulgate it for implementation nationwide. The Board of Chapter has approved the newest program to honor our men and women in uniform who do so much to make this world a safer place. This recognition is referred to as the S.A.F.E. (Salute our Armed Forces Everyday) program. The plan is to simply ask, at all public events where our flag is saluted or our National Anthem sung, for all active service and military veterans to stand up and be recognized.

**Proposed Resolution: 12**

**Submitted by:** Robert Chiota

**Issue:** A Recommended Program to increase Public Awareness of Veterans Military service to the United States of America requires devotion to duty and a willingness to sacrifice personal comfort and safety. Inherent in military service are stresses, including traumatic stress for some. Recognition of Veterans and active-duty personnel by fellow-Americans is both deserved and appreciated.

**Proposed Position:** Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc. National Council at the National Convention, Greensboro NC 2-6 November 2021, affirms its commitment to all Veterans of Military service to the United States of America and Endorses the S.A.F.E. Program and its promulgation for implementation nationwide.

**Proposed Resolution: 13**

**Submitted by:** Alec Ghezzi

**Issue:** Ensure that taxpayer-funded medical examinations provided to veterans by VA are adequate.

**Proposed Position:** Vietnam Veterans of America support the following 22 initiatives: (1) Work with BVA, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and Congress to ensure that proper training, resources, and time is provided to examiners employed or contracted by VA. (2) Work with BVA, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and Congress to promote policies that hold individual examiners and contractor scheduling companies accountable when they produce inadequate examinations.

**Proposed Resolution: VBxx**

**Submitted by:** Veterans Benefits Committee

**Issue:** Vietnam Veterans of America's Service Representatives report that the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) often has failed to implement decisions by the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (CAVC), renders poor quality decisions, and continues to create unnecessary delays to claims adjudication.

**Proposed Position:** Vietnam Veterans of America, will continue to urge DVA and Congress to ensure that VBA is timely implementing and following all CAVC decisions that create binding law on DVA and urgently requests Congress to support its national moral and legal obligation to the men and women who served in the defense of our country in the following ways: (see document for full details)

**Proposed Resolution:** VB-12

**Submitted by:** Veterans Benefits Committee

**Issue:** Military retirement pay is offset by the amount of Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) compensation payable.

**Proposed Position:** Vietnam Veterans of America supports federal legislation accompanied by full authorization and appropriations of necessary funds, which will allow concurrent payment of military retirement and Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) compensation as follows: (see document for full details)

**Proposed Resolution:** 10

**Submitted by:** Samuel Brick

**Issue:** The transfer by the VVA or any of its committees, officers, employees, agents, members, or assignees of any and all current and future operational functions of the Vietnam Veterans of America in assisting, processing, and adjudicating veterans in claims against the Veterans Administration for payments for disabilities suffered as a consequence of military service; its desirability, and the need for membership approval.

**Proposed Position:** The VVA shall continue to provide assistance to veterans for the processing and adjudication of claims against the VA for disabilities suffered as a consequence of United States military service. It shall not transfer its functions in this regard to any corporation while continuing to finance such activity and shall not make payments or donations to any organization with the purpose of paying for current claims work.

**Proposed Resolution:** WV-2

**Submitted by:** Women Veterans Committee

**Issue:** Since 1982, Vietnam Veterans of America has been a leader in advocacy and championing appropriate and quality health care for all women veterans. The Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) has made many innovations, improvements and advancements over the past thirty years. However, some concerns remain respective of its policies, care, treatment, delivery mode, and monitoring of services to women veterans.

**Proposed Position:** Resolved, That: Vietnam Veterans of America will continue its advocacy to secure appropriate facilities and resources for the diagnosis, care and treatment of women veterans at all DVA hospitals, clinics, and Vet Centers. We ask the Secretary to ensure senior leadership at all facilities and Veteran Integrated Service Networks (VISN) be held accountable for ensuring women veterans receive appropriate care in an appropriate environment. We ask that each VISN have a woman veteran collaborating with each meeting. Further, we seek that the Secretary ensures: (see document for full details)

**Proposed Resolution:** WV-5

**Submitted by:** Women Veterans Research

**Issue:** Specific issues pertinent to women veterans must be adequately researched.

**Proposed Position:** Vietnam Veterans of America asks the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct several studies specific to women veterans and that Congress pass legislation to mandate such studies if the Secretary does not act:

**Proposed Resolution:** WV-6

**Submitted by:** Women Veterans and Veterans Benefits

**Issue:** Women Veterans underutilize veterans benefits in comparison with male veterans.

**Proposed Position:** The Vietnam Veterans of America will continue its advocacy to secure benefits for all eligible veterans. VVA asks the Secretary to ensure: (see document for full details)

**Proposed Resolution: WV-8**

**Submitted by:** Military Sexual Trauma (MST)

**Issue:** Currently, instances of sexual assault in the military must be reported through the chain of command. This precludes impartial decision making and creates a biased judicial system for the victim. The creation of a separate and independent office to address such crimes would remove barriers to reporting and provide additional protection and safety for the victims.

**Proposed Position:** VVA will pursue legislation that reassigns complaints of military sexual trauma by service members and all alleged perpetrators outside of their immediate chain of command.

**Proposed Resolution: HC-2**

**Submitted by:** Veterans Health Care Committee

**Issue:** The Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) and Veterans Health Administration (VHA), is responsible for providing health care to veterans with service-connected disabilities and others as determined by eligibility rules established by Congress. Concerns continue regarding quality of health care, access, and eligibility for services.

**Proposed Position:** Vietnam Veterans of America maintains that veterans who have sustained injuries or illnesses during and/or as a result of their military service have the right to the highest quality medical and mental health services for treatment of those injuries and illnesses.

**Proposed Resolution: HVC-xx**

**Submitted by:** Homeless Veterans Committee

**Issue:** Funding and support of the VA HGPS Program has proven to be a most effective tool in addressing veteran homelessness.

**Proposed Position:** Urges the Department of Veterans Affairs, Homeless Grant and Per Diem Program to provide payment for services rather than the reimbursement for services it presently provides for transitional housing. (see document for full details)

**Proposed Resolution: HVC-1**

**Submitted by:** Homeless Veterans Committee

**Issue:** The number of homeless veterans is very fluid. However, nationally it is accepted that 23-30% of the total homeless population or approximately 37,252 are homeless veterans according to 2020 Point-in-Time (PIT) count conducted by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. While federal agencies acknowledge these statistics, they have yet to identify these veterans as a Special Needs Population. Veterans make up a significant percentage (23-30%) of the homeless population in America. Homeless veterans are due a Fair Share of the available federal dollars for programs and services funded in the United States.

**Proposed Position:** Vietnam Veterans of America, urges the Presidential Interagency 36 Council on Homeless to recognize homeless veterans as a Special Needs Population. Further, we urge Congress to require all entities/agencies, including non-profit or governmental, that receive/utilize federal program funding dollars, to report statistics on the number of veterans they serve, their residential status, and the services needed.