



January 16, 2026

Dear Members of the Iowa Legislature,

On behalf of Iowa's leading veteran service organizations (VSOs), thank you for your leadership and commitment to Iowa's veterans.

We write to you today to request your support for an urgent and meaningful investment in Iowa's veteran community. For several decades, Iowa's VSOs have provided critical assistance to veterans navigating the complex federal VA claims process with services funded solely through our membership dues. However, declining membership due to the aging of our World War II, Korean, and Vietnam War soldiers has dramatically reduced the resources available to maintain the trained staff necessary to serve veterans effectively.

Meanwhile, the demand on our services is growing. The passage of the federal PACT Act has increased both the volume and complexity of claims. Veterans today are surviving more severe injuries and are experiencing new types of exposure-related conditions, requiring more in-depth support and expertise to successfully secure the benefits they have earned.

To meet this growing need, we respectfully request your support and endorsement of the creation and ongoing funding of the Iowa VSO Matching Grant Program as proposed in [HF 1000](#) during the 2025 legislative session. This bill, which passed the House unanimously, would establish a \$250,000 matching grant program to help eligible VSOs expand staff capacity and better serve Iowa veterans through the federal claims process. These funds would be fully accountable with certification of their use and measurable impact on veterans served.

This request is not just about organizational sustainability – it is about improving the quality of life for Iowa's veterans. While no amount of compensation can restore what some have lost through military service, timely and accurate benefit decisions can provide much needed support and dignity. Furthermore, additional federal dollars brought into Iowa through successful claims translate into increased local spending and state revenue. Iowa's VSOs are best positioned to help veterans through this process.

Currently, Iowa's VSOs receive no state or federal support for these services, despite serving all Iowa veterans. This modest investment by the state would leverage the existing, time-tested, and trusted infrastructure to ensure veterans are receiving the benefits they deserve.

We firmly believe this modest annual appropriation of \$250,000 could represent the most impactful state investment in Iowa's veterans in decades. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to further discuss this proposal and the urgent need it addresses. Also, please reach out if we can support you with an introduction to your local veterans' organizations to discuss with them as well. Thank you for your continued support of Iowa's veterans and for your thoughtful consideration of this request.



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Darrin L. Alderson".

Darrin L. Alderson
Department Commander



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Becky Dirks Haugsted".

Becky Dirks Haugsted
Department Commander



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Daniel J. Gannon".

Daniel J. Gannon
Legislative



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kevin Reece".

Kevin Reece
Department Commander



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "R.W. Lincoln".

Ryan W. Lincoln
Commandant



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Gregory H. Paulline".

Gregory H. Paulline
President



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jim O'Brien".

Jim O'Brien
Advocacy Director



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jim Jones".

Jim Jones
President