



# COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL OF VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

900 EAST MAIN STREET  
RICHMOND, VA 23219

*Air Force Association*  
*American Legion*  
*AMVETS*  
*Association of the United States Army*  
*Disabled American Veterans*  
*Fleet Reserve Association*  
*Korean War Veterans Association*  
*Legion of Valor of the U.S., Inc.*  
*Marine Corps League*  
*Military Order of the Purple Heart*  
*Military Officers Association of America*  
*Military Order of the World Wars*  
*National Association for Uniformed Services*  
*Navy Seabee Veterans of America*  
*Non-Commissioned Officers Association*  
*Paralyzed Veterans of America*  
*Reserve Officers Association*  
*Roanoke Valley Veterans Council*  
*Veterans of Foreign Wars*  
*Vietnam Veterans of America*  
*Virginia Army/Air National Guard Enlisted Association*  
*Virginia National Guard Association*  
*Women Marines Association*

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## **Position Paper 2016-03** **Virginia Veteran and Family Support Services**

1. **Objective:** Provide increased funding to ensure that veterans and their families, especially those affected by stress related conditions and traumatic brain injuries, have access to a network of community-based services for healthcare, behavioral healthcare, rehabilitative services and other critical support.
2. **Background:**
  - a. The Virginia Wounded Warrior Program (VWWP) was established in law by the 2008 Virginia General Assembly to ensure that services to veterans and their families are readily available in all areas of the Commonwealth.
  - b. Now known as the Virginia Veteran and Family Support (VVFS) program, it monitors and coordinates behavioral health, rehabilitative, and support services for veterans and their families and addresses a myriad of health and wellness issues such as housing, financial assistance, employment, primary healthcare and other community services.
  - c. Virginia is home to approximately 781,000 veterans and is expected to rise to 790,000 veterans in 2020. Included in this population are over 300,000 who served since September 11, 2001. The Virginia National Guard and Reserve components have been called upon as never before to deploy to combat zones.
  - d. The challenges of the current conflicts are enormous. Data indicate that 38% of Soldiers and 31% of Marines report psychological symptoms. Among members of the National Guard, the figure rises to 49%. Psychological symptoms are significantly higher among those with repeated deployments.
3. **Discussion:**
  - a. Virginia should do everything in its power to attend to those who have been defending our liberties and who may need services and community support because of stress related injuries and/or traumatic brain injuries resulting from military service.
  - b. The VVFS vision for the future remains “*Enhancing the quality of life for Virginia’s veterans, service members and their families.*” This simple yet powerful statement is intended to provide guidance for the continued success and expansion of the VVFS, ensuring that the on-going focus is always Virginia’s veterans and families who have sacrificed their personal safety and needs to ensure freedom and liberty for all.
  - c. In FY15 VVFS delivered a total of 7,774 individual services to veterans and their families. The success of the program indicates that demand for services is expected to continue to rise, especially as the population of service members from Iraq and Afghanistan, and other areas return from deployment and renew their daily lives with their families, employment, activities and community participation. It is expected that the impact of the wars will continue to be felt for decades, just as previous wars have affected the health and well being of service members and their families. It is critical that the Commonwealth continue to recognize and address these concerns.
  - d. **Recommendation:** That the Governor and General Assembly support increased funding for Virginia Veterans and Family Support services as a priority in the development and approval of the FY17-18 budget.