



26 April 2021

Honorable State, Veterans, & Military Affairs Committee Members,

The Veterans of Foreign Wars Colorado supports HB21-1116 (Purple Heart Recipient Free State Park Access) legislation. We ask that you support and vote yes on HB21-1116.

The Purple Heart as the nation's oldest military award which bears the profile of President George Washington is only awarded to those who were wounded or killed in any military action against an enemy. Active Duty service members and military veterans who have received the Purple Heart have clearly put themselves in harm's way in order to protect the United States of America way of life. We feel this bill helps pay tribute to our wounded heroes who deserve this dignity and helps Colorado's Purple Heart recipients hold their head high with your generosity.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars history dates to the Colorado State Capitol where in 1899 a group of U.S. Soldiers of the Spanish-American War and the Philippine Insurrection from around the country founded the VFW. Our legacy and strengths around the world keep us focused on our membership.

To familiarize yourself with the Veterans of Foreign Wars in Colorado, there are 22 thousand VFW and VFW Auxiliary members, and nearly 1.5 million located in more than 6,700 Posts worldwide. In Colorado there are approximately 400K Veterans and of course with family members that veteran centric population is much more. Interesting enough, through our surveys we found that 99% of the veteran and family member population is registered and vote in local and national elections.

Our voice was instrumental in establishing the U.S. Department of Veterans Administration, development of the national cemetery system, in the fight for compensation for Vietnam vets exposed to Agent Orange and for veterans diagnosed with Gulf War Syndrome. We have a long list of legislative successes. The most recent triumph was the passage and enactment of the Deborah Sampson Act, a bill that requires the Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure that gender-specific services are continuously available at every VA medical center and community-based outpatient clinic. Moreover, the legislation directs the VA to discover and fix processes to reduce barriers to care.

Our legislative concerns and priorities are many while they are straight forward and always for the benefit of the Military, Veterans, and their Family members. We feel Veterans, and military quality of life issues must be a priority of our State legislature, U.S. Congress, and the Administration.

The Congressionally chartered Veteran Service Organizations colloquially known as the Big Six are the Disabled American Veterans; Veterans of Foreign Wars; American Legion; Paralyzed Veterans of America; Amvets; and Vietnam Veterans of America, we all advocate for Military, Veteran, and their family members. With that it is important to note that none of the Big Six endorse candidates and we are all nonpartisan in our legislative activities.

Your support on HB21-1116 is important to our membership and their family members and we ask that you vote yes on the Purple Heart Recipient Free State Park Access bill.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob M Kidd Sr".

Robert M. Kidd, Sr., State Commander
Department of Colorado
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S.

VFW Department of Colorado Headquarters 1400 Carr Street, Lakewood, CO 80214
Office: 303-421-1630 Fax: 303-421-1727
Website: <https://vfwco.org> E-Mail: vfw@vfwco.org