



NEVER STOP SERVING

TIMELY TOPICS

Capitol Area Chapter
Military Officers Association of America
Chapter Website: www.cacmoaa.org

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May Program

Adam Swager, Public Affairs Specialist with the Battle Creek Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center is our speaker for the May program. He will focus on important issues the VA is dealing with nationally, at the local level and issues currently making their way through Congress. He will also give us some hints and shortcuts for navigating the Veterans Affairs website.

May 2024 CAC MOAA DINNER Meeting

When: Thursday, 9 May 2024

Our dinner meeting will take place at Coral Gables, located at 2838 East Grand River Avenue, East Lansing, MI, Thursday, 9 May. Social hour begins at 5:30 and dinner begins at 6:30. The meal is buffet style which includes: Chicken Orange with Honey Glaze, Beef Sirloin Tips in Mushroom Gravy, Whipped Potatoes, and Broccoli with Caesar Salad. There is Apple Crisp for dessert. Cost is \$28. Please RSVP by

Monday, 6 May to www.cacmoaa.org or contact: Tony Kruckeberg at (517) 575-9386, or email at

armyblkhawk@yahoo.com



Advocacy in Action: MOAA Members Rally on Capitol Hill

Advocates from across the nation brought MOAA's message to Capitol Hill on Wednesday on behalf of not just their fellow MOAA members, but the entire uniformed services community. That message included an ongoing effort to support combat-injured veterans, helping young servicemembers and their families cover housing costs, and protecting the earned TRICARE For Life benefit. These issues made up Advocacy in Action (AiA), MOAA's annual spring campaign, and were delivered to the doorsteps of hundreds of legislators by their constituents, with support from MOAA National staff.

"Days like today show the strength of MOAA -- what this organization can do." Lt. Gen. Brian T. Kelly said after the event. "Our members bring a powerful message, and it's an honor to work alongside them on days like this, and on their behalf not just today, but the other 364 days of the year."

The day's final event featured remarks from Rep. Chrissy Houlahan (D-Pa.), the ranking member on the House Armed Services Committee's Quality of Life Panel. The panel's report, released just days before AiA, included several of MOAA's legislative priorities in support of military families, including the AiA push to restore the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) to 100% of rental and utility costs. "Your presence really underscores the importance of the work that you do here -- advocating for the issues that matter the most, specifically for our military community," Houlahan, a former Air Force officer, told the group. "I do very much appreciate you being here ... because your work helps inform us. It informs our committees, it informs the members themselves about the issues that you care about. My staff and I remind ourselves all the time that the squeaky wheel gets the grease -- if you see something, you need to say something".

(Cont. from previous page)

"There's literally nothing wrong with lobbying," Houlahan added. "There's nothing wrong with advocating for the things that you need. That's important ... because I don't know your stories."

The representative also briefed attendees on the progress of the Quality of Life Panel's report toward becoming law as part of the annual National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), along with other military and veterans issues.

Houlahan was far from the only lawmaker to connect with MOAA throughout the day, with dozens of advocacy teams meeting legislators and staffers throughout the capital. "The delegations have been very supportive of what we're doing," said first-time attendee Brig. Gen. Paul Loiselle, who recently retired from the Army National Guard and serves as vice chair of MOAA's Southern Maine Chapter. "They've been very plugged in."

The work hasn't been limited to in-person visits. MOAA members have sent more than 15,000 messages to legislators on these three topics in the weeks since their announcement using our [Legislative Action Center](#). And with the annual NDAA coming together in the halls of Congress in the near future, those messages will resonate louder than ever.

Brooke Johnson, a member of MOAA's Currently Serving Spouse Advisory Council who took part in her first AiA event, said she's moved eight times during her husband's 16 years of service in the Air Force, often struggling to find suitable housing for a family of three. "We've never gotten to live on base," said Johnson, whose family is in the majority of the military that relies on BAH when navigating the off-base housing market. According to a recent Blue Star Families survey, more than 70% of such families pay at least \$200 more a month toward housing costs than they receive in their monthly housing allowance. This can force some tough decisions. She said she hoped her AiA work would "leave it better than we started" for military spouses and families -- sentiments echoed by Matrice Williamson, also making her first AiA trip. A mother of a veteran and a U.S. Naval Academy student and the wife of a career Marine officer, Williamson has made 16 moves during her husband's three decades in uniform. The AiA experience on Capitol Hill will help her "be in the know" when discussing service and recruiting concerns with parents and other influencers, Williamson said, allowing her to "be the mom who can give encouragement to the parents to encourage their son or their daughter to serve." The hundreds of Capitol Hill office visits served as the highlight of a week that included a meeting of MOAA's board of directors, an April 16 recognition ceremony honoring [2024 award recipients](#), and an April 18 seminar for MOAA council presidents. However, the conclusion of the annual advocacy visits does not mean the work on these priorities will slow. "AiA isn't a capstone event -- it's another step in a MOAA advocacy process that's [lasted 95 years](#)," said Col. Dan Merry, USAF (Ret), MOAA's director of Government Relations. "We need our members to remain active, not just by sending their own messages to lawmakers, but by [sharing the action center link](#) and spreading the word through their communities and their professional networks. These legislators need to hear from their constituents, especially in an election year."

Learn More:

[Support the Major Richard Star Act](#)
[Support the BAH Restoration Act](#)
[Protect TRICARE For Life](#)
[MOAA.org/AiA](#)

****REMINDER****

Bring your cleaned and bagged bottles and cans to our next meeting to support chapter initiatives!

Executive Board Meeting

Thursday, 2 May 2024 @ 11:30 am - 1:00 pm @ Piazzano's restaurant, 1825 N. Grand River Ave, Lansing

2024-2026
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Membership

For membership inquiries please use this link: www.cacmoaa.org. For eligibility or other questions regarding membership please contact Bruce Bahr at (517) 526-2406. **Why join?** <https://youtu.be/42YD9d8W15Q>

CAC Mission Statement

Our mission is to support legislative and charitable initiatives at the local, state, and national levels to enhance our families, communities and country.

Support our Scholarship Program with a Kroger Card!!

We continue to increase our enrollment in the Kroger Community Rewards Program! Thank you for all of your support in signing up and shopping with Kroger. For those interested in beginning the program, our chapter non-profit organization number is: JR311, use this number when contacting Kroger for admission to the program and Kroger will donate a portion of your purchase to the CAC MOAA chapter scholarship fund.

Veterans Crisis Line

The Veterans Crisis Line connects veterans in crisis and their families and friends with qualified, caring Department of Veterans Affairs responders through a confidential toll-free hotline, online chat, or text. Veterans and their loved ones can call (800) 273-8255 and press 1, chat online, or send a text message to 838255 to receive confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Support for deaf and hard of hearing individuals is available.

Your local Capitol Area Chapter and National MOAA are nonpartisan groups representing all members regarding legislative issues and current events affecting you and your community! For more information regarding issues that affect you and your family members please use this link: <http://takeaction.moaa.org> or call (800) 234-6622/(703) 549-2311

Newsletter

Help the chapter reduce newsletter costs by requesting an email version in lieu of a printed copy. If you are able to and would like to get this via email, or if you need some help with it, contact me at moaaeditor@gmail.com or call (517) 526-2406