

SUPPORTING OUR VETERANS

Texas Democrats believe that Service Members and Veterans should be honored for their service and deserve the benefits they have earned and been promised, regardless of their race, ethnicity, geographic location, income, disability status, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, or immigration status. Texas Democrats believe that Veterans experiencing homelessness or who commit suicide are a national tragedy. We believe that too few Americans understand how the impact of military service, especially experiencing combat and repeated deployments, affects a Veteran's life.

The Texas Democratic Party supports policies and programs that:

- Determine the unmet, entitled needs of Veterans to provide those services when and where needed;
- Address Veteran homelessness through comprehensive Veterans Administration (VA) and community programs;
- Provide focused outreach as well as trauma informed training and treatment to end Veteran suicide;
- Understand that climate change is a national security issue that will impact the military and the world; and
- Engage Veterans to become actively involved in Democratic politics.

Veterans Services

- Expand healthcare for Veterans to include initial assessments of health, mental health, and substance use disorders, followed by periodic reassessments combined with referrals for needed care;
- Specifically address the needs of traditionally marginalized Veterans through specialized training, targeted programs, and effectiveness evaluations;
- Strengthen programs for Service Members and their families leaving Active Duty addressing employment, housing, financial management, healthcare, and earned benefits and entitlements; and
- Prevent the privatization of the VA.

Veterans Homelessness

- Prevent and end homelessness among Veterans through providing a sufficient supply of affordable and permanent supportive housing combined with intensive case management, employment services, and physical and mental healthcare in coordination with the VA's Continuum of Care (CoC) Programs; and
- Identify every Veteran experiencing homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless to connect them with VA programs for homeless Veterans.

Veterans Suicide

- Recognize that every Veteran has fired a weapon, may have experienced trauma, and often was discouraged from seeking mental healthcare, increasing challenges in programs to end Veteran Suicide;
- Increase suicide awareness public service announcements for Veterans addressing behaviors of concern and resources for help;
- Require counties and regions to compile and publish statistics about Veterans who commit suicide to determine the extent of the problem locally and within Texas; and
- Mandate all healthcare providers screen Veterans for suicide and homelessness risk at every contact, document that screening, and make appropriate referrals to VA or community resources.

Veterans and the Environment

- Require the VA to identify potential military toxic exposures, conduct resultant contact tracing, offer appropriate medical treatment, and grant "presumption of exposure" disability ratings; and
- Address the impact climate change will have on military readiness, military installations, and military life, including motivating legislators and Veterans to advocate for necessary environmental modifications.

Veterans Community Engagement

- Advocate for the Rights of Marginalized Populations, including repatriation of Deported Veterans, and protect the rights of immigrant family members; and
- Encourage Veterans to communicate with all their elected officials about legislation and programs addressing the unique needs of Veterans and engage Veterans to apply their leadership skills to restore effective leadership to the country they swore an oath to defend.