



CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS WITH DISABILITIES

Veterans Task Force 2010 Annual Report

The Veterans Task Force continued its outreach to the community of veteran [VSO] and military service organizations [MSO] to explore issues of common interest and to advocate for legislative and regulatory changes important to veterans with disabilities and their families.

Over the course of 2010, the task force sponsored briefings on the new VA Caregiver Program, VA homeless programs, Veteran Directed Home and Community Based Services, the International Convention on Rights of People with Disabilities and service dogs for veterans with disabilities. In addition to inviting VSO and MSO representatives to attend these briefings, the task force conducted several roundtable discussions with individual MSO and VSO groups to learn more about their legislative and regulatory priorities. Topics covered in these meetings included military family issues, efforts to improve the VA disability claims process and challenges faced by rural and women veterans. Joining with the Employment and Training Task Force, the Veterans Task Force held a briefing on the federal government's Schedule A hiring authority as applied to veterans with disabilities.

The task force produced or contributed to a number of statements and comments during 2010 including:

- A statement for the record of the September 29 House VA Committee hearing on federal contracting and the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP).
- Comments on the Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM) for Section 503
- Comments on the NPRM on Hospital Care for Veterans Released from Incarceration
- A letter in support of HR 5360, legislation to modify the Special Home Adaptation grant program under the VA to assist veterans with blindness. This letter was sent to complement efforts undertaken by the Blinded Veterans Association to press for passage of this bill.

In 2011, the Veterans Task Force will continue to follow issues of concern to military family members and caregivers of veterans with disabilities and plans to explore efforts by the Defense Department and VA to address suicide rates among service members and other mental health matters. Other proposed items for the task force 2011 agenda include: examining the adequacy of compliance by the VA with Section 508 and 504; status and progress of the Veterans Employment Initiative announced by the Obama administration in November 2009; and meetings with the new leadership of the House VA Committee.

The Veterans Task Force typically meets on the second Friday of the month from 10 am to noon.

Co-Chairs

Heather Ansley, United Spinal Association

Karen Bower, Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law

Susan Prokop, Paralyzed Veterans of America

Leonard Selfon, Paralyzed Veterans of America