

*“Keeping faith with those who serve must  
always be a core American value  
and a cornerstone of American patriotism.  
Because America’s commitment to its  
servicemen and women begins at enlistment,  
and it must never end.”*

BARACK OBAMA

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THE OBAMA-BIDEN PLAN  
*to*  
**SUPPORT  
NEW MEXICO  
MILITARY  
FAMILIES**



# Thank you for your service to this nation. This pamphlet lays out Barack Obama and Joe Biden's positions on military families and veterans and provides resources that may be useful for our military and veteran families.

Our military is built on families. Half of our troops are married. We know that our military families are enduring repeated and uncertain deployments. Spouses on the home front struggle with the loss of emotional support, increased household responsibilities, and real economic challenges. Many couples experience marital difficulties that get worse as deployments continue. Challenges continue after troops come home, when married couples try to pick up where they left off, and service members struggle to reintegrate to life at home. Barack Obama and Joe Biden understand that active-duty troops decide whether to re-enlist based largely on how their families are faring. That is why he is committed to investing in services to support them. Barack Obama and Joe Biden also understand that our sacred trust with our military families does not end when they leave uniform, which is why he has pledged to build a 21<sup>st</sup> century Department of Veterans Affairs.

## ACTIVE-DUTY FAMILIES

### *Create a Military Families Advisory Board*

An Obama-Biden Administration will create a Military Families Advisory Board of experts and family representatives to identify and develop actionable policies to ease the burden on spouses and families.

### *Support Family Readiness Groups*

Family Readiness Groups are networks of volunteer spouses who offer day care, legal help and counseling to other spouses. In 2005 alone, Army volunteers logged 632,897 hours of service. An Obama-Biden Administration will provide better support for these networks, including services and training and paid support staff.

### *Work to Bring Pay Parity*

Military pay has lagged behind civilian wages. In the White House, Barack Obama and Joe Biden will make the military pay more in line with that of the private sector. Estimates of this pay gap range from 7 percent to 15 percent.

### *End Stop Loss*

Barack Obama and Joe Biden will end the policies that allow a service person to be forced to remain on active duty after his or her enlistment has expired.

### *Establish Regularity in Deployments*

Barack Obama and Joe Biden support plans to increase the size of the Army by 65,000 troops and the Marines by 27,000 troops to allow units to retrain and re-equip properly between deployments and decrease the strain on military families.

### *Care for Our Wounded Warriors*

Obama led a bipartisan effort to remedy both the immediate and more systematic shortcomings that led to deplorable conditions at hospitals like Walter Reed. The Senate passed legislation based on several Obama proposals to improve medical outpatient facilities, slash red tape, reform the disability review process, strengthen mental health care support, and add needed healthcare benefits for family members. The Senate also passed legislation to provide these family members with a year of job protection so they don't have to choose between caring for a loved one and keeping their jobs.

## Improve Mental Health Treatment

Service members returning from Iraq and Afghanistan are coming home with record levels of combat stress, but our military and VA medical systems are not adequately providing for them. Barack Obama and Joe Biden will improve mental health care at every stage of military service:

- **RECRUITMENT:** Recruiting more mental health professionals; improving screening; and guaranteeing that if the military determines on the front end that an individual is fit to serve, that person will not be denied benefits later because of a "preexisting" condition.
- **ACTIVE DUTY:** Placing more mental health professionals with troops as they train, deploy, and return; fighting the stigma of psychological injury; and offering more counseling to family members.
- **RETURN TO CIVILIAN LIFE:** Requiring individual post-deployment mental health screenings; recruiting more VA mental health professionals; making PTSD benefits claims fairer; and expanding Vet Centers in rural areas.

## GUARD/RESERVE FAMILIES

### *Help Military Spouses Cope with Deployments*

When guardsmen or reservists are activated, their spouses have to make a tremendous transition to balance work and family obligations. An Obama-Biden Administration will extend job protection for their spouses to allow them to take time off work to care for family and get their affairs in order.

### *Let Our Reservists Train and Rest Between Deployments*

Uncertain and repeated deployments have strained Guard and Reserve families. Barack Obama and Joe Biden will ease this deployment tempo by beginning an immediate redeployment of troops from Iraq and increasing the size of the military. This will allow units to retrain properly and decrease the strain on military families.

### *Fight Guard/Reserve Employment Discrimination*

Federal law protects guardsmen and reservists from job discrimination, but the process is ineffective. A complaint can take months to resolve, leaving veterans vulnerable. An Obama-Biden Administration will invest additional resources into enforcement and investigation in order to crack down on employers who are not following the letter and spirit of the law.

## VETERAN FAMILIES

### *Ensure a Seamless Transition*

Obama will demand that the military and the VA coordinate to provide a truly seamless transition for servicemembers from active duty to civilian life. His administration appointees to the DOD and VA would place veterans at the center of all care and recovery plans.

### *Expand Vet Centers*

Vet Centers provide vets and their families mental health care, substance abuse counseling, vocational and employment assistance, VA benefits information, and social services. Barack Obama and Joe Biden will expand and strengthen Vet Centers.

### *Update GI Bill*

Obama has been a long-time supporter of the bipartisan legislation signed into law in June 2008 to update GI Bill benefits. It will cover tuition up to the cost of the most expensive in-state public school, plus a monthly housing stipend and additional benefits. The bill enables transfer of education benefits to spouses or children.

### *Fully Fund VA Medical Care*

Veterans face delays and long wait times in seeking VA health care appointments. Barack Obama and Joe Biden will fully fund VA healthcare so it can serve the veterans who need it, when they need it.

### *Make the VA a Leading Edge of National Health Reform*

An Obama-Biden Administration will make the VA a leader of national health care reform so that veterans get the best care possible. This includes efforts to improve electronic records interoperability, expand effectiveness research, promote wellness programs, and instill more accountability for performance.

### *Strengthen VA Specialty Care*

Barack Obama and Joe Biden will expand specialty care within the VA, including additional polytrauma centers as well as centers of excellence for Traumatic Brain Injury, PTSD, vision impairment, prosthetics, spinal cord injury, aging, women's health, and other specialized rehabilitative care.

### *Reduce the Claims Backlog*

There are more than 840,000 claims pending at the VA. Barack Obama and Joe Biden will hire additional claims workers and ensure adequate training and accountability for each claims adjudicator so VA benefit decisions are rated fairly and consistently.

## RESOURCES

As president, Barack Obama will work to increase the support you receive. However, there are many services already available to you:

### RESOURCES FOR MILITARY FAMILIES

#### *Military-Wide*

MILITARY ONESOURCE  
Department of Defense (DoD)  
www.militaryonesource.com

MILITARY HOMEFRONT  
Military family support services  
www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/

MILSPOUSE.ORG  
Spouse employment, education, and relocation information.  
www.milspouse.org

MILITARY SPOUSE CAREER CENTER  
www.military.com/spouse

*Branch-Specific*  
NAVY LIFELINES  
www.lifelines.navy.mil/lifelines/index.htm

MY ARMY LIFE, TOO  
www.Myarmylifetoo.com

MARINE CORPS FAMILY TEAM BUILDING  
www.mccssc.com/mcftb/index.html

AIR FORCE CROSSROADS  
www.afcrossroads.com/?site=redirect

CANNON AIR FORCE BASE FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER  
(575) 784-4228  
www.cannon.af.mil

KIRTLAND AIR FORCE BASE AIRMAN & FAMILY READINESS CENTER  
(505) 846-0741  
www.kirtland.af.mil

*Outside Organizations*  
MILITARY SENTINEL  
Designed for military families to report fraud & abuse  
www.consumer.gov/military

MILITARY SPOUSE JOB SEARCH  
www.militaryspousejobsearch.org/msjs/app/

GIVE AN HOUR  
Free mental health professionals  
www.giveanhour.org

### RESOURCES FOR VETERAN FAMILIES

#### *VA Medical Centers*

1501 San Pedro Drive, SE  
Albuquerque, NM 87108-5153  
(505) 265-1711 or (800) 465-8262

#### *Outpatient Clinics*

Alamogordo: 1410 Aspen  
(505) 437-7000

ARTESIA  
1700 W. Main St.,  
(505) 746-3531

CLOVIS  
921 East Llano Estacado  
(505) 763-4335

ESPAÑOLA  
620 Coronado St., Suite B  
(505) 753-7395

FARMINGTON  
1001 W. Broadway, Suite C  
(505) 326-4383

GALLUP  
320 Hwy 564  
(505) 722-7234

HOBBS  
1601 N Turner 4<sup>th</sup> fl.  
(505) 391-0354

LAS CRUCES  
1635 Don Roser  
(505) 522-1241

LAS VEGAS  
1235 8th St.  
(505) 425-6788

RATON  
1275 S. 2nd St.  
(505) 445-2391

SANTA FE  
2213 Brothers Road, Suite 600  
(505) 986-8645

SILVER CITY  
1302 32nd St,  
505-538-2921

TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES  
1960 North Date Street  
(505) 894-7662

#### *Vet Centers*

ALBUQUERQUE  
1600 Mountain Road NW  
(505) 346-6562

FARMINGTON  
4251 E. Main Suite B  
(505)-327-9684

LAS CRUCES  
230 S. Water Street  
575-523-9826

SANTE FE  
2209 Brothers Road, Suite 110  
(505) 988-6562

#### *Veterans Benefits Administration*

ALBUQUERQUE REGIONAL OFFICE  
500 Gold Avenue, S.W.  
Albuquerque, NM 87102  
1-800-827-1000

#### *US Department of Labor Veterans' Employment & Training Services*

(505) 346-7502  
www.dol.gov/vets

AMERICAN LEGION  
(505) 247-0400  
www.nmamlegiondept.org

AMVETS  
(505) 588-7414

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS  
(505) 294-6193  
www.davmembersportal.org/nm

PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA  
(505) 247-4381  
www.ziapva.org

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS  
(505) 258-1147  
www.nmvfw.org

#### *Veteran Service Organizations*

AMERICAN LEGION  
(505) 247-0400  
www.nmamlegiondept.org

AMVETS  
(505) 588-7414

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