



The United Veterans Coalition of Colorado

700 Colorado Blvd. #747 Denver, CO 80206

http://www.uvcoc.org

November 2020

Newsletter

Vol. 4 No. 11



PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Dennis Orr

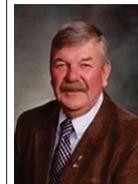
Only two more months before we leave 2020. I think for most of us we look forward to the New Year and want to see this year only in the rear view mirror. The year started so promisingly...

One thing the pandemic has given us (besides more weight than we wanted) is our ability to reach out statewide and be effective. Zoom has been the bright shining star for us. Even when we are able to meet in person, we will still use Zoom.

I am appointing Pat Hammond as our Regional VP for the Central Western Slope. She is a Veteran Service Officer residing in Eagle. Please congratulate Pat on her appointment.

The Silent Auction begins this month and we can still use more items. Please participate and find some really cool things that will add to enjoyment (boy, do we need THAT).

I recently had some Veteran Portraits done by Cliff Lawson. Cliff provided the filming of



Dennis Orr, the President of the United Veterans Coalition of Colorado (UVC), has just announced that long time and dedicated State Senator Larry Crowder has accepted President Orr's Invitation to join the UVC and has agreed to serve as Regional Vice President for a good part of the area he represented in the Colorado Senate for many years. Please join us in welcoming the Senator to the UVC.

our Banquet at no charge and did a magnificent job. It was an enjoyable sitting with Cliff and the portraits are really special.

Below are the goals for the UVC and, as you can see, we are doing well with number 2 but need to work on Numbers 1 & 3.

- 1. To activate and represent its member organizations,

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- Officers
President
Dennis Orr 303-870-7953
1st Vice President
Dick Young 720-300-3356
2nd Vice President
Tony Jones
Recording Secretary Karen Hone
Treasurer Paul Gremse
VP Regional Rep
Senator Larry Crowder
VP Regional Rep San Luis Valley
Richard Nagley
VP Regional Rep Pikes Peak
Bob McLaughlin
VP Regional Rep Grand Junction
R.J. Andrews
Roving Ambassador
Terri Clinton
Committees
Federal Legislative Chair
Dennis Churgovich
State Legislative Co-Chairs
William "Robby" Robinson
Shelly Kalkowski
State Legislative Liaison
Dan Jablan
Communications Chair
Geri Adams
Membership Chair
Dick Wilson
Vice-chair Greg Hay
Nominating Committee
James Craig, Past President
Banquet
Mgr Karen Hone
By-laws Chair Les Kennedy
Nominating Chair Frank McCurdy
UVC Newsletter
Ida Tholen
idatholen@gmail.com

In This Issue

P1 UVC President P2 1st VP/Banquet Auction P3 Legislative P4 Communications Committee P5 VA P6 Veteran Suicide/Federal Legislative



1st Vice President  
Dick Young

## WE NEED YOU! YES, YOU

The UVC's Fund Raising Committee is about to launch their 2021 Fund Raising Drive. You are needed to help raise the money for the launch of the UVC CLEARINGHOUSE. This will be a major help to our veterans and all of our Member Organizations throughout the state. It will be one place that any entity can go to and find out what programs, meetings, events, and classes, all aimed at our Veterans, are going on in their area or statewide.

Three different levels are being set up and we need at least five UVC Volunteers to work in each of these area \$100 to \$500; \$500 to \$2500; and \$2500 and above.

Pick your level. Material and a "how to" session will be held on what to say, how to approach, and how to close the donation. You may have your own list already.

Contact Carlos Peralta ([legupost87@hotmail.com](mailto:legupost87@hotmail.com))  
The future of UVC depends on all of us joining in the effort to raise the money we need for the United Veterans Coalition of Colorado to the best strongest volunteer entity helping veterans in the United States. Do it today!

The next UVC Member Meeting will be  
November 10th at 9:00 a.m. on Zoom

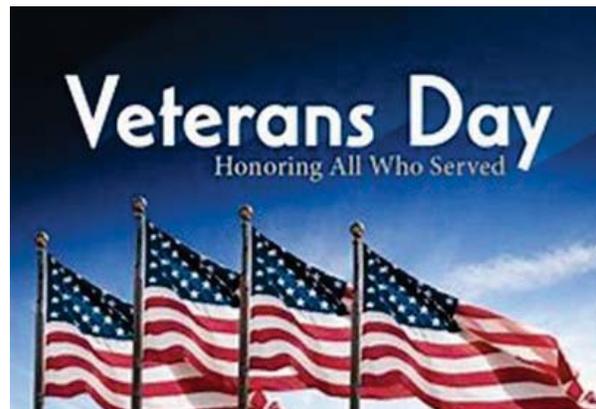


### UVC BANQUET SILENT AUCTION

The UVC banquet committee is excited to announce that we have moved our silent auction into a holiday auction! This auction will be carried out online so can be conveniently accessed from your smartphone or computer. The auction runs from November 30th until December 10th and there will be some great items so start your holiday shopping with us and help support the efforts of the UVC.

The auction will be entirely online through BidBeacon. This link will take you to some basic instructions to get ready to bid. <https://bidbeacon.com/bid-beacon-quick-start-guests/?fbclid=IwAR0r5HPZ1l-Uznz8hW52aZ-g7Fc0546w5DFcijkNgZ8xwUj6MIGjAttvO3l>

You can download the app onto your phone or use it on your desktop via your browser. The auction will not be visible until November 30th but there will be some great items for you to see then. Checking in regularly on your phone or desktop you can see how your items are doing. You can also receive notifications if you have been outbid. We will share this information again once we get a little closer to the start date, but please mark your calendars and plan to be part of this fun online auction that supports UVC's critical efforts.





State Legislative Committee  
 Robby Robinson, Co-Chair  
 Shelly Kalkowski, Co-Chair  
 Dan Jablan, Legislative Liaison



## Colorado 2020 Pre-election Report

### Overview

There are several critical ballot issues and key seats that will determine how challenging the landscape will be for us moving forward in the coming years.

### Legislature

Democrats swept the House, Senate, and Governor's office in 2018. In the Colorado House, Democrats substantially increased their majority by four seats to a 41-24 advantage. In 2020, all 65 seats are up for election. At this point in the election it appears there may be two opportunities for Republicans to gain seats, however they will also likely lose at least one seat. This will keep Democrats in a strong position and keep committees heavily weighted Democratic.

The House is likely to see its biggest battle after Election Day. A three-way battle for House Majority leader is likely to cause fractures within the caucus. Republicans will also see a new leader as current Minority Leader Patrick Neville announced he will not seek re-election to the leadership post.

In the Senate, Democrats hold a 19-16 majority and 18 of the 35 seats are up for election in 2020. There are six competitive seats which will determine the make-up of the Senate: two held by Republicans; two held by Democrats; and two open, previously Republican, seats. Despite the anti-incumbent sentiment of the country, it is likely the

incumbents will hold their seats in the Senate. One open Republican seat will likely stay in Republican hands and the other open seat will likely flip to the Democrats making the Senate composition 20-15.

### Ballot Initiatives

Colorado's state-wide 2020 ballot will have eleven measures for voters to decide on November 3<sup>rd</sup>. Three of those measures could have a dramatic impact on the 2021 legislative session.

Proposition 116 would cut the state income tax rate from 4.63 percent to 4.55 percent. Estimates are this would decrease the state's revenue by \$170 million. This decreased revenue would follow the \$3.3 billion dollar hole in the state budget legislators had to fill in June.

Amendment B would change the statutory ratio of commercial and personal property taxes known as the "Gallagher amendment." Currently in statute, residential property taxes are limited to 45 percent of the tax base with commercial property taxes making up the additional 65 percent. In years of economic downturn, such as 2020, where commercial property does not increase as quickly as residential or decreases in value this statutory ratio causes a rate change to the taxpayer. While it decreases the rate for the taxpayer, it also reduces the revenue to the

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Gerri Adams, Chair  
Communications Committee

### United Veterans Coalition Committees: Call to Action

The UVC Committees listed below are ***actively seeking new members***, so if you are interested in making a real difference, please contact the listed chair(s) directly. We look forward to welcoming you to "Team Veteran."

#### Membership

Dick Wilson, Chair

[captinwilson@comcast.net](mailto:captinwilson@comcast.net)

cell: 720-347-7106

Solicit and encourage organizations that support service veterans to join UVC.

#### Fundraising

Carlos Peralta, Chair

[Legionpost87@hotmail.com](mailto:Legionpost87@hotmail.com)

Actively pursue grants from corporations and foundations that have prioritized veterans' issues. Plan, organize, and run all fundraising efforts for UVC, except the Annual Banquet.

#### Communications

Geri Adams, Chair

[Jorgensen.geri@gmail.com](mailto:Jorgensen.geri@gmail.com)

Cell: 303-807-7064

Maintain the UVC website, develop & distribute the newsletter, broadcast State and Federal

### United Veterans Coalition's Affiliate and Associate Organization Members

The UVC is working hard to be of greater service and to bring more value to our Affiliate and Associate Organization members.

With that in mind, the UVC is happy to include, upon approval of the UVC Communications Committee, a limited number of notices of events and announcements in our monthly newsletter in a special Calendar of Events section for our Affiliate and Associate Organization Members.

If you have an interest in promoting an event or passing on information to the UVC Members, please send a brief two-three line description of the event along with a link that will direct viewer traffic to your own website.

Please send that information to the UVC Communications Committee by emailing UVC Newsletter Editor Ida Tholen at [uvcnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:uvcnewsletter@gmail.com) and/or Geri Adams, Communications Committee Chair at [Jorgensen.geri@gmail.com](mailto:Jorgensen.geri@gmail.com)

The UVC newsletter goes out to the Membership monthly at the first of the month and requests for submissions need to be received by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to publication.

Thank you so much for your interest and we hope to help you spread the word to the Veteran community on events and services that will enrich their worlds.



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration  
Eastern Colorado Health Care System

#### MAIL-IN DEERS ID CARD REQUESTS

Individuals who are unable to report in person to a DEERS Office can request an ID card via mail. Examples of persons who are unable to report to the place of issuance to obtain an ID card are individuals who live far from a military facility, and:

- Are physically handicapped or incapacitated;
- or
- Have no means of transportation; or
- Are hospitalized or ill.

#### For Retirees and 100% Disabled American Veterans:

- Passport-style photo in front of a white background (glasses are ok, no hats); and
- Copy of 2 forms of identification from the list of acceptable identity documents;
- 100% Disabled American Veterans also need copy of DD 214 and letter from VA showing 100% service connected disability rating

#### For Dependents:

- Signed and notarized Form DD 1172-2 (contact DEERS office to have this form emailed to you)
- Passport-style photo in front of a white background (glasses are ok, no hats)
- Copy of 2 forms of identification from the list of acceptable identity documents >p9 deers

#### Mandatory Screening Process

There is now a mandatory screening process for all Veterans, caregivers, visitors, employees, and contractors to gain entry to any of our sites of care. You can access this digital screening tool by texting **SCREEN** to **53079**. You may also access the screening tool by going to [www.va.gov/covid19screening](http://www.va.gov/covid19screening). The digital screening tool will need to be completed each time you present to a location. It is recommended that you access the screening tool prior to arriving and that you retain (screen shot, leave open the internet tab, etc.) the final screen indicating an “OK to proceed” (pictured right) as **this will need to be shown to the onsite screeners**. There will still be screeners at all sites of care to help if additional assistance is needed or if you do not have access to a cell phone or the internet at home.



In a special ceremony, on September 24, 2020, VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System (VA ECHCS) Police Officer Jason Sullivan was presented with the Valor Award. The Valor Award—the highest honor a VA employee can be awarded—was presented to Sullivan in honor of his courageous actions that saved a Veteran’s life in September 2019. The Valor Award is issued only by the Secretary of VA. In the history of VA ECHCS, this award has only been issued twice before. To learn more about Officer Jason Sullivan and his heroic actions, please see [AuroraTV’s](#) coverage of the event [here](#).

## Colorado Veteran Suicide

Article Submitted by Kathy Noll  
Navy Nurse Corps Association

Suicide is a major public health problem nationwide. Colorado stands out having the 10th highest suicide rate in the country.

Unfortunately, veterans are disproportionately affected by suicide. Veterans and active duty members account for 20 percent of all suicides in Colorado, but make up only nine percent of the state's population. This statistic accounts for about 200 Colorado veterans dying from suicides every year. These deaths are someone's loved one.

Veterans have had different life experiences than non-veterans and studies show that vets often are reluctant to seek mental health. They report poor mental health less frequently than non-veterans. Reasons cited for their less frequent mental health reporting is shame, denial, difficulty talking about it, or thinking others will not be sympathetic to their conditions.

Barriers to mental health services for anyone can be cost, proximity to services from where they live, insurance coverage, and long wait times for appointments. These are similar obstacles for both veterans and non-veterans. But the most striking and significant difference in seeking mental health care for veterans is the stigma they perceive when seeking this care.

While the rate of veteran suicide is high, there is hope for prevention. The US Department of Veteran Affairs has announced veteran suicide prevention as its top priority. Its National Strategy has an emphasis on community-building for veterans transitioning to civilian life and improving veterans' connection to



Dennis Churgovich, Chair  
Communications Committee

A number of bills on the UVC Federal Legislative Committee watch list became law during the month of October.

The President signed the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act on October 17, 2020. This bill, introduced by Senator Cory Gardner, designates "988" as a National Suicide Hotline. Colorado Representatives Diana DeGette, Ed Perlmutter, Joe Neguse, Jason Crow, Scott Tipton, and Doug Lamborn sponsored the House of Representatives version of the bill, HR 4194.

The Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans' Mental Care Improvement Act of 2019 was signed into law on October 17, 2020, and is Public Law No. 116-171. The legislation is named in honor of the late Commander John Scott Hannon. Commander Hannon, a retired Navy SEAL, committed suicide in February 2019. This law will give the VA the authority to hire more mental health professionals and have at least one suicide prevention coordinator at every VA hospital.

The Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act became law on October 20<sup>th</sup> and is Public Law No. 116-176. This law directs the Department of Veterans Affairs to increase the rates of veterans' disability compensation, additional compensation for dependents, the clothing allowance for certain disabled veterans, and indemnity compensation for surviving spouses and children. The percentage increase in benefits shall be the same as the cost-of-living increase for Social Security recipients.

The VA High Altitude and Suicide Research Act was incorporated into The Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans' Mental Care Improvement Act of 2019. *>p 10 fed legis*



A New Life for the Bull Rider  
*Monte Apodaca Memorial Fund*

Army SP5 Monte Apodaca sadly lost his life in a farming accident on August 8, 2020. As a Sharpshooter M-16 and Marksman M-14 in the Army, Monte was awarded the National Defense Service Metal. As a Veteran himself, Monte Apodaca's true passion was involving himself in service to our Veterans. Monte first became involved with *Run for the Wall* in Williams, AZ in 2000. He immediately found comfort among his brothers and volunteered his help for the next 14 years. Monte served as a Road Guard for RFTW for 8 of those years. During his service with RFTW, Monte had the High Honor of laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Some of his other passions were as follows:

Monte's other service roles included the North East Regional Planning Organization (NERPO), David Westphall Veterans Foundation: Board Member and Volunteer Life Member since 1998, Patriot Guard Rider: Ride Captain for 3 years, Wellness and Healing of Angel Fire: Volunteer for veterans suffering from PTSD, Vietnam Veterans State Park: Volunteer, Veterans Memorial: Volunteer and Secretary for the planning and designing of the Veterans Memorial in Mora, NM, Honor Flights for WWII Veterans: Meet & Greet Volunteer in Colorado, Folds of Honor: Volunteer and participant in Annual Golf Tournament

Monte was laid to rest at the Angel Fire State Veterans Cemetery on August 26th, 2020. He was escorted from Mora to Angel Fire by more than 25 Patriot



Guard Riders. He was given Full Military Funeral Honors and committal service with an Honor Guard from Ft. Bliss, TX and an Honor Guard from Santa Fe, NM.

Losing Monte has left his wife devastated. A GoFundMe fundraiser has been set up for his wife Linda Apodaca. She is hoping to raise enough to relocate to the Denver area and join her family. She is hoping for a successful fundraising effort. Linda is hoping to "raise more money than I personally need so I can donate to many of the organizations Monte and I are passionate about. Thank you all for reading about my Monte. Thank You in advance for any donation you can make. Nothing is too small so please help me start a new life. God Bless you all, Linda Apodaca, The Bull Riders' Wife."

<https://gf.me/u/vyb4gi>

WebEx Wednesdays – November 4, 2020 – Link below

2 p.m. to 3 p.m. MDT

[Join Meeting - Click HERE](#)

First Wednesday of every month

Meeting number (access code): 199 915 3146

Meeting password: uiPTcpZ3\$73

Join by phone: 1-404-397-1596 USA Toll Number

Lakewood, Colo. – Please join the virtual WebEx Wednesday event hosted by Colorado's Veterans Benefits Administration's Public Contact Team on Wednesday, November 4, 2020 from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. This event serves our Colorado community in the safest way possible and expands communication with Veterans, stakeholders and beneficiaries. In addition, this November, we honor our nation's Veterans with this year's theme "Vision: Veterans in Focus". We must continue to put Veterans first and maintain a vision for the future and we are embracing that ethos with the rollout of our new virtual services.

The purpose of the WebEx Wednesday series is to provide VBA benefit related information to any stakeholder or agency that works with Veterans. This month's topics include Military Sexual Trauma, Direct Deposit Changes, Veterans Day and a Q&A portion. Veterans can join using a computer via the WebEx link or by phone. This benefit resource event will continue to be offered the first Wednesday of every month to the public. Individual inquiries will be handled using secure and private exchanges separate from the WebEx meeting.

Full link <https://veteransaffairs.webex.com/veteransaffairs/j.php?MTID=m2129772a8083add29efe907f7f4c4ca>

Dial in phone number: 1-404-397-1596

Access Code: 199 915 3146

>president

speaking with one unified voice.

2. To work with public policy makers to ensure proper support for veterans' issues and concerns.

3. To inform/educate Colorado citizens about the needs and the high value contributions of veterans and military members and their families.

To that end, we propose setting up the UVC Clearinghouse since one of the major problems faced by Veterans is where to find information on a variety of subjects like Preventing Veteran Suicide. A few years back our 1<sup>st</sup> VP, Dick Young, RADM, USN, (Ret), had come up with a map that showed all American Legion Posts, VFW Posts, MOAA Chapters, VA Facilities, etc. It was a great start but, like all other internet sites, it needed to be kept updated. Any Clearinghouse function we set up will also need to be kept updated.

Your UVC is looking to fundraising as a means of financing the set up and maintenance of the UVC Clearinghouse. We will be approaching you for your ideas and suggestions. Please contact Dick Young, Tony Jones and/or myself if you have such ideas and suggestions.

Since we are now on Zoom for our meetings we have gained much better statewide reach allowing us to better speak with one unified voice for our veteran organizations and veterans.

We will need your eager assistance in achieving these goals.

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Legislation updates and other events, & provide regular updates to member organizations.

### State Legislative Committee

Shelly Kalkowski & Robby Robinson, Co-Chairs

[Shelly.kalkowski@ccoc-moaa.org](mailto:Shelly.kalkowski@ccoc-moaa.org)

[Robby2rob@msn.com](mailto:Robby2rob@msn.com)

Cell: 303-916-0982

Provides advocacy for a unified Veteran Service Organization (VSO) position at the State Capitol and to a limited extent in Washington, DC. All actions are nonpartisan, espousing no political affiliation with or preference for any particular party or candidate.

### Federal Legislative Committee

Dennis Churgovich, Chair

Cell: 216-965-7802

Seeks to identify those key federal issues and initiatives that are supported by all primary member

organizations and to keep the general membership informed on the status, and if necessary, advocate with the Colorado Congressional Delegation.

**For more info, go to UVC's website:**

[www.uvcoc.org](http://www.uvcoc.org)



>deers

Email all items to [Jessica.Olsen@state.co.us](mailto:Jessica.Olsen@state.co.us). Once received, the ID card will be printed and mailed back for a signature. The signed ID card must be returned to the DEERS office to be laminated. Once done the completed ID card will be returned. For questions please call 970-257-3762.

health care.

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>suicide

### Reference:

Veteran Suicide: A Growing Problem in Colorado, published August 29, 2019/Updated December 19, 2019

[www.coloradohealthinstitute.org/research/veteran-suicide-growing-problem-colorado](http://www.coloradohealthinstitute.org/research/veteran-suicide-growing-problem-colorado)

On July 16, 2020, the FCC adopted rules to establish 988 as the new, nationwide, 3-digit phone number for Americans in crisis to connect with suicide prevention and mental health crisis counselors. This does not go into effect until July 16, 2022

During the transition to 988 Americans should continue to contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline by:

Dialing: **800-273-8255** and pressing #1  
**www.veteranscrisisline.net**, or texting  
**838255**.



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This law directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct a study on the connection between living at high altitude and suicide risk factors among veterans.

The Vet Center Eligibility Expansion Act is now law. This law amends title 38, United States Code, to furnish Vet Center readjustment counseling and related mental health services to certain individuals.

The Veterans Care Quality Transparency Act became Public Law No. 116-177 on October 20, 2020. The law requires the Government Accountability Office to report on memoranda of understanding and memoranda of agreement entered into by the Department of Veterans Affairs with non-VA entities relating to suicide prevention and the provision or coordination of mental health services.

**Military Calendar Holidays Events Observances**

<https://militarybenefits.info/military-calendar-holidays-events-observances/>

**November**

Entire Month National Veterans & Military Family Month

Entire Month Warrior Care Month

Entire Month National Family Caregivers Month

November 1 Daylight Savings Time Ends

November 5-9 National Veterans Small Business Week

November 10 Marine Corps Day/Birthday

November 11 Veterans Day

November 11 Armistice/Remembrance Day

November 26 Thanksgiving Day

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state putting additional pressure on the state budget.

Proposition 118 would create a paid family leave program. This program would provide paid family leave for most workers (with some exceptions) for 12-weeks. The program would be

funded by contributions from the employers and employees and would be administered by the state. The projected price tag for the first year of the program is \$1.2 billion increasing state spending by \$524 million.

If Proposition 116 passes, Proposition 118 fails, and Amendment B passes the decreased revenue and increased spending required will dramatically impact any issue with a fiscal impact to the state during the 2021 session. It will make most of our specific state legislative goals and objectives unachievable during the upcoming session. In several cases, our best hope is to remind legislators that we will continue to pursue those goals in future years when hopefully the State economy (and revenues) have recovered.

**Summary**

The 2020 election appears to be setting up for a more progressive Colorado. Which will help some and change the business climate for others.

