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Interim Policy Resolutions

National Association of Counties (NACo)

2024 Legislative Conference



TABLE OF CONTENTS

AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS	1
INTERIM RESOLUTION ON SECURING REIMBURSEMENT FOR RURAL EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES.....	1
INTERIM RESOLUTION ON BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH MULTI-COUNTY "GOOD FOOD FOR ALL" INITIATIVES	1
INTERIM RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE PRESERVATION OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES VIABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY IN AREAS OF PROPOSED ALTERNATIVE ENERGY PRODUCTION	1
INTERIM RESOLUTION ENCOURAGING CONGRESS TO PASS H. R. 5764 ("SUPPORT WATER-EFFICIENT STRATEGIES AND TECHNOLOGIES ACT OF 2023"), WHICH WILL AMEND THE FOOD SECURITY ACT OF 1985 TO INCREASE PAYMENTS FOR DROUGHT-RESILIENT OR WATER-SAVING PRACTICES AND TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL PAYMENTS FOR PERENNIAL PRODUCTION SYSTEMS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.....	2
COMMUNITY, ECONOMIC & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT.....	3
INTERIM RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF EXPEDITING WORK AUTHORIZATION PROCESS.....	3
FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS.....	3
INTERIM RESOLUTION ON FY 2025 APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT.....	3
INTERIM RESOLUTION ON HOME REAUTHORIZATION.....	3
ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY & LAND USE	5
INTERIM RESOLUTION ON GROUNDWATER RESOURCE ASSESSMENT.....	5
INTERIM RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY TO DEVELOP A NEW GRANT PROGRAM, BASED ON THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE PILOT PROGRAM.....	5
INTERIM POLICY RESOLUTION SUPPORTING BEACH NOURISHMENT BILL	6
FINANCE, PENSIONS & INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS	7
INTERIM RESOLUTION ON PROTECTING LOCAL CONTROL AND FIDUCIARY RESPONSIBILITY	7
HEALTH.....	8
INTERIM RESOLUTION ON ENSURING TIMELY DEATH CERTIFICATE SIGNATURES BY U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS CLINICIANS.....	8
INTERIM RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF FEDERAL FUNDING FOR DOULA AND.....	8
SOCIAL SUPPORT SERVICES AND TRAINING	8
INTERIM RESOLUTION ON TRICARE REIMBURSEMENT ADEQUACY	9
INTERIM RESOLUTION ON ENHANCING THE MENTAL HEALTH PARITY AND ADDICTION EQUITY ACT OF 2008.....	9
INTERIM RESOLUTION ON STUDYING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VA BENEFITS AND VETERAN SUICIDE PREVENTION	9
INTERIM RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF INITIATIVES TO ELIMINATE HEPATITIS C	10
INTERIM RESOLUTION ON STRENGTHENING AND SUSTAINING THE HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE IN THE UNITED STATES.....	10
HUMAN SERVICES AND EDUCATION.....	11
INTERIM RESOLUTION SUPPORTING SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION ACTIONS TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO SOCIAL SECURITY CARDS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE	11
INTERIM RESOLUTION ON COMBATING PREDATORY PRACTICES IN VETERANS SERVICES.....	11
INTERIM RESOLUTION ON IMPROVING CARE AND ACCESS TO BENEFITS FOR	11

MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA.....	11
INTERIM RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE MAJOR RICHARD STAR ACT (H.R. 1282/S.344)	12
INTERIM RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF FEDERAL FUNDING FOR SOCIAL MEDIA SAFETY EDUCATION AND TRAINING	12
INTERIM RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF IMPROVEMENTS TO FEDERAL CHILD WELFARE PROGRAM.....	13
JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY	14
INTERIM RESOLUTION ON ENSURING EQUAL ACCESS TO AND IMPROVING RETENTION FOR VETERANS COURT TREATMENT PROGRAMS	14
INTERIM RESOLUTION ON PREVENTING THE EXPIRATION OF THE AFG AND SAFER GRANTS.....	14
INTERIM RESOLUTION ON URGING THE REMOVAL OF SPECIFIC INELIGIBLE COST LANGUAGE IN FEMA PUBLIC ASSISTANCE AND PROGRAM GUIDE	14
INTERIM RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF CODIFYING THE SHELTER AND SERVICES PROGRAM (SSP).....	15
PUBLIC LANDS.....	16
INTERIM RESOLUTION SUPPORTING REQUIRED INFRASTRUCTURE, PUBLIC FACILITIES, AND ITS MAINTENANCE WITH SUSTAINABLE FUNDING.....	16
TELECOMMUNICATIONS & TECHNOLOGY	17
INTERIM RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF REAUTHORIZATION OF THE FIRSTNET AUTHORITY	17
INTERIM RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE AFFORDABLE CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM.....	17
INTERIM RESOLUTION OPPOSING LEGISLATION THAT PREEMPTS LOCAL AUTHORITY IN BROADBAND DEPLOYMENT INITIATIVES AND CABLE FRANCHISE AGREEMENTS.....	17
INTERIM RESOLUTION URGING TECHNICAL SUPPORT FOR COUNTY ADOPTION OF FEDERAL WEB POLICY ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS	18
TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE	19
INTERIM RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF FULL ENFORCEMENT OF THE JONES ACT.....	19
INTERIM RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF FUNDING TRANSPORTATION PLANNING IN RURAL COMMUNITIES WITH MAJOR RECREATION.....	19
INTERIM RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF HIGH-SPEED RAIL FUNDING.....	19

AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Interim Resolution on Securing Reimbursement for Rural Emergency Medical Services

Issue: Reimbursement rates to rural emergency medical service (EMS) providers from Medicare, Medicaid and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) have failed to keep up with inflation and rising costs of medical care, causing rural EMS providers and the communities they serve to experience a shortage of care. Additionally, rural EMS providers are not compensated for other services, such as Treatment in Place (TIP) and Transport to Alternative Provider (TAP) services.

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) supports an increase in reimbursement rates for EMS providers from Medicare, Medicaid and the Department of Veterans Affairs to offset inflation and increasing medical costs, and the permanent implementation of COVID-19 era reimbursement to EMS providers for delivering Treatment in Place (TIP) and Transport to Alternative Provider (TAP) services.

Approved | February 12, 2024

Interim Resolution on Building Community Through Multi-County "Good Food For All" Initiatives

Issue: Empty grocery shelves during the pandemic underlined the need for well-resourced, regional-scale food supply networks that complement global supply chains.

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges county-led, sub-regional "Good Food For All" initiatives to attract financial resources needed to (1) make locally produced, nutritious food more widely available; (2) promote community revitalization, and; (3) create jobs that can't be outsourced. This policy responds to consumer demand that's driving a marketplace redesign to shorten the geographic distance between farm and fork.

Additionally, NACo urges Congress to allocate increased federal funding to support new, beginning and underserved producers interested in growing and selling food to markets in local communities, including policies that can leverage non-federal funding sources to support local production of healthy foods.

Approved | February 12, 2024

Interim Resolution Supporting the Preservation of Agriculture and Natural Resources Viability and Sustainability in Areas of Proposed Alternative Energy Production

Issue: Alternative energy development and the maintenance of working agricultural lands are increasingly in competition with one another, with county land use and natural resource management authorities often coming under threat.

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) to pass laws and regulations that can

1 encourage the adoption of alternative energy development siting practices that maintain working
2 agricultural lands and protect local decision-making authorities regarding land use.

3
4 NACo further urges Congress to acknowledge the intense competition for natural resources that these
5 facilities pose to agriculture production and local municipal users, most notably for water, and take action
6 to ensure that future alternative energy development takes place in accordance with wishes of the local
7 community.

8
9 NACo supports efforts that work to integrate alternative energy production into existing farming
10 production practices which will promote the sustainability and long-term viability of American agriculture
11 production and our rural communities which thrive by providing food to the world with pride.

12
13 **Approved | February 12, 2024**

14
15 **Interim Resolution Encouraging Congress to Pass H. R. 5764 (“Support Water-Efficient Strategies**
16 **and Technologies Act of 2023”), Which Will Amend the Food Security Act of 1985 to Increase**
17 **Payments for Drought-Resilient or Water-Saving Practices and to Provide Additional Payments for**
18 **Perennial Production Systems, and for Other Purposes**

19
20 **Issue:** The WEST Act would support the agriculture practices more commonly used in dry areas for
21 farmers to have resources available to continue growing the food necessary for our nation to prosper. The
22 legislation will make perennial production systems eligible for supplemental payments within the
23 Conservation Stewardship Program.

24
25 **Proposed Policy:** The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress to pass the Protect the
26 WEST Act (H. R. 5764) will amend the Food Security Act of 1985 to increase payments for drought-
27 resilient or water-saving practices and to provide additional payments for perennial productions systems,
28 and for other purposes.

29
30 **Approved | February 12, 2024**

COMMUNITY, ECONOMIC & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Interim Resolution in Support of Expediting Work Authorization Process for Asylum Seekers

Issue: Individuals that are seeking asylum in the United States are subject to a 150-day waiting period after submitting their asylum claim to apply for an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) (also referred to as a work permit). During this waiting period, many asylum seekers must rely on counties and non-profits within their communities to provide their basic needs as they are legally unable to work.

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress and the administration to take actions to shorten the current waiting period for asylum seekers who are applying for an EAD. By shortening this arbitrary waiting period, asylum seekers will be able to contribute more quickly to the workforce, local economy, and assist businesses that are struggling with workforce shortages. Furthermore, it will reduce the need for them to rely on supportive services from counties and lessen the chances of these individuals working in illegal and underpaid settings.

Approved | February 12, 2024

Interim Resolution on FY 2025 Appropriations for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Issue: Support Fiscal Year 2025 appropriations for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress to support the following levels of funding for core U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) programs in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill: no less than \$4.2 billion in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) formula funding; no less than \$2.5 billion in formula funding for the HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME); \$3.5 billion for Homeless Housing Assistance grants, including at least 20% of funds directed to ESG as allowed by statute, plus an amount to fully fund expiring supportive housing and Shelter Plus Care rent subsidy contracts; expansion of the Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) Program in addition to full funding for existing project-based and tenant-based contracts; \$50 million for HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) and \$500 million in Section 108 Loan Guarantee authority.

Approved | February 12, 2024

Interim Resolution on HOME Reauthorization

Issue: Support the reauthorization of the HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) in order to strengthen county production of affordable housing for rent or homeownership.

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress to pass HOME reauthorization legislation and allow for increased federal funding assistance to support affordable housing development.

1 **Approved | February 12, 2024**

ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY & LAND USE

Interim Resolution on Groundwater Resource Assessment

Issue: Groundwater depletion is a significant issue, but available data and analytical tools are insufficient and coordination among agencies is inadequate to inform policies necessary to serve the public's needs. Counties need better data to inform local decisions about development planning, land management, infrastructure investments, and support for agriculture and drinking water supplies.

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Federal Government agencies with responsibilities to research and assess groundwater availability and sufficiency for public purposes (including the United States Geological Survey, Bureau of Reclamation, National Air and Space Agency and Environmental Protection Agency). This resolution does not recommend further authority to the federal government with respect to water rights. The intent is to recommend to:

- Significantly increase coordination among themselves and with state agencies with like responsibilities
- Quantify and characterize available groundwater nationwide inclusive of fractured rock systems and predict likely supplies (water access data);
- Develop more robust modeling and analytical techniques and identify gaps in available data to better inform policies necessary to ensure continued availability and sufficiency of water necessary to support public health and food production;
- Encourage Congress to adequately fund these agencies for these purposes.

Approved | February 12, 2024

Interim Resolution Requesting the Department of Energy to Develop a New Grant Program, Based on the U.S. Department of Defense Community Infrastructure Pilot Program

Issue: The operation of Department of Energy (DOE) facilities creates housing, transportation, and related infrastructure and workforce stressors on counties throughout the country which require additional funding resources. These stressors also affect the ability of the DOE facilities to meet their missions.

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges the DOE to develop a new grant program, based on the Department of Defense (DOD) Community Infrastructure Pilot Program (DCIP), which would:

- 1) Define eligible infrastructure projects that directly benefits the operations and/or workforce of the DOE facility;
- 2) Includes but is not limited to transportation, affordable, workforce, and other identified housing and housing infrastructure, K-12 and higher education, fire, emergency response, water, wastewater, telecommunications, electric, gas, or other utility projects;
- 3) Require the applicant to detail the specific stressors resulting from the proximity of the DOE facility to the community, including environmental, workforce, traffic, transportation, gentrification and inequity that will be addressed directly through the project, and;
- 4) Be applicable to impacted county, municipality, and tribal governments that surround DOE facilities.

1 **Approved | February 12, 2024**

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Interim Policy Resolution Supporting Beach Nourishment Bill

5 **Issue:** The Army Corps of Engineers (Army Corps) policy requiring perpetual public access and use
6 easements on private property in order to be eligible for federal participation in Congressionally
7 Authorized Storm Damage Reduction Projects. This policy decision puts public and private infrastructure
8 at risk, impacts local economies, and negatively impacts critical environmental habitats for federally
9 endangered species. Additionally, this policy results in the loss of tens of millions of dollars in cost-share
10 to local governments and endangers future eligibility for disaster-related funding.

11

12 **Proposed Policy:** The National Association of Counties (NACo) supports the inclusion of a provision int
13 the 2024 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) Section 103(d) of the Water Resources
14 Development Act of 1986 (33 U.S.C. § 2213(d)(1) to clarify Army Corps policy is consistent with the
15 law concerning the provision of land, easements, rights-of-way, relocation, and dredged material disposal
16 areas by a non-federal project sponsor (e.g., county) and ensure the Army Corps' policy fulfills the goals
17 of storm damage reduction projects in Florida and other impacted states.

18

19 **Approved | February 12, 2024**

FINANCE, PENSIONS & INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Interim Resolution on Protecting Local Control and Fiduciary Responsibility

Issue: There is an ongoing coordinated national effort by special interest groups to restrict and eliminate local control over pensions, municipal bonds, and government funds by passing anti-local control and anti-free-market legislation and resolutions at the national and state levels. These policies threaten county governments' ability to deliver services to meet their own community's needs by restricting access to essential data and regulating local government.

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress and the Administration to oppose anti-local control and anti-free-market policies such as the Fair Access to Bank Act 2023 and H.J. Res.30 2023. The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress and the Administration to support policies that provide for local governments' ability to invest and borrow as they self-determine, which must include continued access to free capital and credit markets. Furthermore, NACo urges Congress and the Administration to oppose legislation and policies which don't support free enterprise and restrict local governments from fulfilling their elected duties to act as careful stewards of taxpayer resources.

Approved | February 12, 2024

HEALTH

Interim Resolution on Ensuring Timely Death Certificate Signatures by U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Clinicians

Issue: Delays and refusals by VA doctors to sign their patient’s death certificate is preventing veteran families from planning funerals, receiving member benefits, timely cremation or burial, and accessing appropriate financial records and assets.

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress and the Administration pass legislation directing VA primary clinicians or other clinic providers to sign death certificates within 72 hours for veterans in their care whose deaths do not fall under the medical examiner/coroner (ME/C) jurisdiction. This policy should direct VA clinicians who are uncertain about cause of death to use their best medical judgment to certify a reasonable cause of death or contact the health district physician director in the district where the death occurred to obtain guidance in reaching a determination as to a cause of death and document the same. Failure to comply with this directive should result in the assessment of civil monetary penalties and/or temporary suspension of medical license.

Approved | February 12, 2024

Interim Resolution in Support of Federal Funding for Doula and Social Support Services and Training

Issue: Health and Human Services officials and stakeholders reported that the Covid-19 pandemic worsened factors contributing to maternal health disparities, like access to care, cardiovascular problems and other underlying conditions, which contributed to a 78 percent overall increase in maternal mortality rates in the U.S. between 2000-2020. The maternal death rate for Black or African American (not Hispanic or Latina) women was 44.0 per 100,000 live births in 2019, then increased to 55.3 in 2020, and 68.9 in 2021. In contrast, White (not Hispanic or Latina) women had death rates of 17.9, 19.1, and 26.1, respectively. According to a 2021 report from the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecologists, “continuous one-to-one emotional support provided by support personnel, such as a doula, is associated with improved outcomes for women in labor. Doulas can provide individually tailored, culturally appropriate, and patient-centered care and advocacy; however, only about 6% of women who give birth receive doula care.

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges the Federal Government and Congress to assist counties by providing funding for 1) Increased Doula services and training and certification; 2) Support community-based organizations in building and diversifying the doula workforce; 3) Increase education/technical assistance to encourage counties and states to implement Medicaid coverage for doulas and sufficient reimbursement rates to ensure expanded access to Doula care for Medicaid enrollees, along with the extension of Medicaid postpartum coverage; to ameliorate maternal health outcomes for all women and address racial disparities in maternal health, mortality, and morbidity.

Approved | February 12, 2024

Interim Resolution on Tricare Reimbursement Adequacy

Issue: For counties with a strong military presence and a high number of retired military, most are dependent on Tricare for their health insurance. Tricare reimbursement levels and supplemental funding opportunities directly impact community access to care and significantly impact local health capacity and resiliency.

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) supports federal legislation and health financing reform to provide adequate funding to support access, continuity of care and direct provision of health care services for military members, retirees and their families; as well as needed support to critical access hospitals who serve this population.

Approved | February 12, 2024

Interim Resolution on Enhancing the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008

Issue: Mental health and substance use treatment providers are critical resources for county government and enhancements to existing federal policies would improve the commercial payer environment while expanding coverage for older Americans.

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) supports efforts to add Medicare and Tricare-delivered services to be subject to the payment parity intent of the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA).

Approved | February 12, 2024

Interim Resolution on Studying the Relationship Between VA Benefits and Veteran Suicide Prevention

Issue: Currently, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), in its National Suicide Prevention Annual Report only analyzes how many veterans who die by suicide had recent interactions with the VA through medical or mental health appointments. However, suicide prevention goes beyond just mental health practices and can include economic and material supports. A more comprehensive understanding of the role that the full range of VA benefits play in preventing veteran suicide would inform better data-driven policy decisions to address this national crisis.

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress and the Administration to take legislative and regulatory action to study the upstream factors that best prevent veteran suicide, including examining the relationship between VA benefits and suicide outcomes. This includes veterans' use of disability compensation, education and employment benefits, home loans and foreclosure assistance, and housing assistance programs as part of its analysis in the annual suicide prevention report. The VA should analyze this data to identify which benefits have the greatest impact on preventing suicide and make recommendations for incorporating these findings into its ongoing suicide prevention strategy.

Approved | February 12, 2024

1 **Interim Resolution in Support of Initiatives to Eliminate Hepatitis C**
2

3 **Issue:** It's estimated that annually, local jails and prisons see about 30 percent of individuals infected with
4 the Hepatitis C virus (HCV). While scientific advancements have enabled quick diagnosis, treatment, and
5 cure of Hepatitis C, these benefits are not reaching a substantial number of justice-involved individuals
6 who are chronically infected.
7

8 **Proposed Policy:** The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges legislative and regulatory action
9 that 1. accelerates the development of point-of-care diagnostic tests to make it possible to test and treat
10 HCV in a single visit; 2. Provides access to treatment for underserved populations including specifically
11 justice-involved populations; and 3. Implements a comprehensive public health effort to engage, inform,
12 identify, and treat people with HCV.
13

14 **Approved | February 12, 2024**
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16 **Interim Resolution on Strengthening and Sustaining the Healthcare Workforce in the United States**
17

18 **Issue:** Nationwide, the healthcare system faces a shortage of healthcare workers, including nurses
19 and specialized doctors, which may jeopardize access to high quality, equitable care for patients and
20 communities.
21

22 **Proposed Policy:** The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges the federal government to
23 work collaboratively with local and state governments to create a pipeline of healthcare workers to
24 address the national shortage by (1) funding programs aimed at creating opportunities for high
25 school and post-secondary students to explore career opportunities in the medical field and
26 encourage language access planning and workforce development programs, (2) designating
27 scholarships and grants for students enrolled in degrees and licenses related to the medical field,
28 including dentistry and mental and behavioral health, (3) outreaching to communities of color to
29 encourage multi-lingual and diverse candidates from communities who typically do not have access
30 to health care, and (4) identifying public funded medical systems throughout the nation to create a
31 pipeline of healthcare workers with the goal of expanding and strengthening the health care
32 workforce system.
33

34 **Approved | February 12, 2024**

HUMAN SERVICES AND EDUCATION

Interim Resolution Supporting Social Security Administration Actions to Improve Access to Social Security Cards for Children and Youth in Foster Care

Issue: A lack of consistent process and record requirements in regional Social Security Administration (SSA) offices has resulted in significant delays in obtaining Social Security cards for children and youth in foster care.

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges SSA to develop and distribute a standardized set of requirements for state and county child welfare agencies pursuing Social Security cards for children and youth in foster care and to provide a singular point of contact at each regional SSA office for issue resolution.

Approved | February 12, 2024

Interim Resolution on Combating Predatory Practices in Veterans Services

Issue: Veterans navigating the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits system should never bear the burden of paying for initial claim representation. In 29 states, counties realize this principle by using primarily local dollars to train and hire accredited CVSOs who are dedicated to helping veterans access their service-connected benefits free of charge. Unfortunately, in the wake of the PACT Act's historic passage, non-accredited, for-profit businesses are increasing their efforts to prey on vulnerable veterans, using legal loopholes to charge exorbitant "consulting fees" for claims assistance.

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress and the Administration to take legislative and regulatory action to protect veterans from predatory claims representatives, including reinstating criminal penalties for companies that charge fees for unsanctioned claims work and coordinating across agencies and levels of government to identify and prosecute predatory claims to the fullest extent of the law. Additionally, we call on our federal partners to authorize and fund resources to expand and develop the CVSO workforce to ensure all veterans can quickly access qualified assistance with their benefits claims.

Approved | February 12, 2024

Interim Resolution on Improving Care and Access to Benefits for Military Sexual Trauma

Issue: Military Sexual Trauma (MST), which refers to sexual assault or sexual harassment occurring at any point during an individual's military service, is reported among 1 in 3 female veterans and 1 in 100 male veterans in the VA healthcare system. Unfortunately, accessing the proper services and supports can be a difficult and retraumatizing process for victims. Reforms are needed to ensure military sexual trauma (MST) survivors' access to care and benefits, as well as bolster MST claims processing.

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) calls on Congress and the Administration to pass legislation that improves the process through which veterans, including former Guard and Reserve members, can file claims and receive counseling and care for Military Sexual Trauma.

Approved | February 12, 2024

Interim Resolution Supporting the Major Richard Star Act (H.R. 1282/S.344)

Issue: Currently, Veterans who were medically retired because of injuries incurred in combat or combat-related training are only eligible for their full retirement pay from the Department of Defense (DOD) and disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) if they served for 20 years and have a disability rating of 50 percent or higher. Otherwise, medically retired Veterans who were injured in combat see their DOD retirement reduced dollar-for-dollar by their VA disability compensation. This unfair forfeiture financially punishes our most severely combat wounded Veterans and their families.

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urge Congress to ensure that Veterans whose military careers were cut short due to combat-related injuries are no longer subject to an offset reducing their VA disability compensation and DOD retirement pay.

Approved | February 12, 2024

Interim Resolution in Support of Federal Funding for Social Media Safety Education and Training

Issue: The U.S. Surgeon General issued a warning on May 23, 2023, stating that “there are increasing concerns among researchers, parents and caregivers, young people, healthcare experts, and others about the impact of social media on youth mental health” with such concerns including anxiety, eating disorders, depression, and suicide. Social media is additionally used to facilitate cyberbullying, privacy invasion, fraud, human trafficking, sexual harassment, sexual predation, the sale of illegal narcotics, hate, and disinformation.

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges the Federal Government and Congress to assist counties by providing funding for 1) social media safety education to make youth and students aware, in an engaging and age-appropriate way, of some of the most serious social media-related dangers and how to protect themselves from these threats; 2) the provision of evidence-based educational outreach for parents and caregivers focused on raising awareness around the various social media-related dangers and providing practical steps parents can take to protect their children; 3) school administrators and parent associations to develop or enhance in-school and out-of-school social media safety policies and guidelines; 4) high-quality research regarding the evolving social media-related threats to the safety and welfare of K-12 students; 5) the provision of social media safety education and other interventions for foster youth, who may be at significantly higher risk for social media-related harms.

Approved | February 12, 2024

Interim Resolution in Support of Improvements to Federal Child Welfare Program

Issue: Federal law provides support to states and counties to serve families in the child welfare system. Some of that support is from programs funded under Title IV-B of the Social Security Act. While a relatively small amount of funding, IV-B programs do not have federal eligibility rules and may be used for a range of services, including child protection, supporting, preserving and reuniting families and to promote and support adoption. Title IV-B is pending reauthorization.

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) supports a reauthorization of Title IV-B child welfare programs that increases funding and county flexibility by minimizing the different programmatic requirements to enable counties to blend and braid those funds with other programs to meet the needs of families in their communities. Those flexibilities would include eliminating or giving counties more ability to meet the even distributions requirements which must be spent in four service areas in the Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) program.

NACo supports funding in Title IV-B to make new and sustainable investments in a high-quality child welfare workforce, including incentives to increase pay to fill worker shortages, boost retention, and keep caseloads manageable. To support those workers who operate in highly stressful environments, NACo also urges investments in mental health and wellbeing initiatives. Finally, NACo urges federal support to enable counties to replace their legacy IT infrastructure to better serve families and the caseworkers who depend upon the systems daily.

Approved | February 12, 2024

JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Interim Resolution on Ensuring Equal Access to and Improving Retention for Veterans Court Treatment Programs

Issue: Veterans Courts operate in counties throughout the country to provide treatment and support to veterans struggling with substance abuse or mental health issues. There is a need for comprehensive data collection on the effectiveness of Veterans Court treatment programs, as well as ensuring that referrals to Veterans Courts are determined in a fair and equitable manner. Women veterans who are incarcerated, as well as racial and ethnic minorities, are too often overlooked within the justice system. Also, some veterans who otherwise would qualify for Veterans Court live in a jurisdiction where such a court has not yet been established, thereby denying them the ability to get the support they need to avoid incarceration.

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress and the Administration to take legislative and regulatory action to ensure that all veterans have equal access to Veterans Court treatment programs, or in areas where a Veterans Court program does not exist, another specialized program such as a Drug Court. NACo also supports incentive programs for local governments to improve retention rates in these programs along with improved data collection which can improve the effectiveness of these specialized courts.

Approved | February 12, 2024

Interim Resolution on Preventing the Expiration of the AFG and SAFER Grants

Issue: Congress should act to prevent the expiration of the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) program and the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) program.

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) supports federal legislation to extend the AFG and SAFER grant programs past a current statutory termination date of September 30, 2024.

Approved | February 12, 2024

Interim Resolution on Urging the Removal of Specific Ineligible Cost Language in FEMA Public Assistance and Program Guide

Issue: FEMA Public Assistance and Program Guide prohibits funding for projected loss of useful service life of a facility.

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges FEMA to remove paragraph B of Section XXI of the Public Assistance and Program Guide.

Approved | February 12, 2024

1 **Interim Resolution in Support of Codifying the Shelter and Services Program (SSP)**
2

3 **Issue:** Counties across the country are managing the need for temporary shelter, food, transportation and
4 acute medical care for migrants who are awaiting the results of their immigration proceedings. This can
5 impose a costly burden on counties. The Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) and
6 U.S. Custom and Border Protection’s (CBP) Shelter and Services Program (SSP) is critical to offsetting
7 the financial burden that is placed on counties as they assist with the safe, orderly, and humane release of
8 migrants from short-term holding facilities.
9

10 **Proposed Policy:** The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress to pass legislation to
11 codify the Shelter and Services Program (SSP) to ease the fiscal burden that is placed on counties
12 receiving influx of migrants, and to ensure they can continue to provide vital services to migrants while
13 maintaining the public welfare of their communities.
14

15 **Approved | February 12, 2024**

PUBLIC LANDS

Interim Resolution Supporting Required Infrastructure, Public Facilities, and its Maintenance with Sustainable Funding

Issue: In recent years and especially the post-pandemic era, use of public lands for recreational and tourism related activities has significantly increased exponentially, creating increased demand on aging infrastructure, personnel and land managers, and jeopardizing public safety which subsequently has increased demand on County resources to help mitigate negative impacts from increased visitation and, in some cases, subsidize applicable federal responsibility.

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress to prioritize required infrastructure, construction and maintenance of public facilities for the necessary resources to USFS, BLM, NPS, and FWS, and other federal agencies that provide access to, hold jurisdictional responsibility or other administrative or specialized service to federal recreational public lands that impact adjacent counties from increased recreation and tourism related activities. In addition, NACo requests that Congress establish regulatory requirements and prioritize federal land managers to coordinate and create formal partnerships with county partners on mitigation, search and rescue and other public safety efforts on federal lands.

Approved | February 12, 2024

TELECOMMUNICATIONS & TECHNOLOGY

Interim Resolution in Support of Reauthorization of the FirstNet Authority

Issue: The authorization for the FirstNet Authority is scheduled to sunset in 2027, and current authorizing statute does not recognize a different agency to continue the work of the FirstNet Authority. Without FirstNet Authority, the national broadband public safety network upon which counties and first responders have relied would no longer be authorized or funded by Congress.

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress to pass H.R. 3366, a bill “to amend the Middle-Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 to reauthorize the First Responder Network Authority”, which would remove the 2027 sunset date and re-authorize the First Responder Network Authority.

Approved | February 12, 2024

Interim Resolution in Support of the Affordable Connectivity Program

Issue Statement: The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) is an essential component to ensuring that high-speed internet access is affordable and accessible for every county resident. The ACP’s current funding source is set to expire by May of 2024, and without a re-appropriation and reauthorization of the program, over 23 million households will lose access to this benefit and risk losing their broadband internet access as a result.

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress to pass The Affordable Connectivity Program Extension Act, a bi-partisan and bi-cameral bill, in order to continue funding the ACP without lapse to avoid the de-enrollment of 23 million households from the monthly benefit.

Approved | February 12, 2024

Interim Resolution Opposing Legislation That Preempts Local Authority in Broadband Deployment Initiatives and Cable Franchise Agreements

Issue Statement: The U.S. House of Representatives introduced legislation in April of 2023, The American Broadband Deployment Act of 2023 or HR. 3557, which would enact a series of preemptions on local authorities pertaining to the rights-of-way, zoning process, and fee structure associated with broadband deployment initiatives which would cause undue financial burden. The legislation, if enacted, would also severely limit counties’ ability to negotiate and enact new cable franchise agreements.

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress to reject H.R. 3557 and firmly oppose any legislation that undermines the autonomy of local governments and their role in broadband deployment initiatives. It advocates for the preservation of local authority to make informed decisions about the deployment, expansion, and management of broadband infrastructure tailored to the unique needs of their communities.

Approved | February 12, 2024

Interim Resolution Urging Technical Support for County Adoption of Federal Web Policy Accessibility Standards

Issue Statement: Counties are committed to upholding premier web accessibility standards to allow all residents to fully access critical services and information. However, proposed federal requirements could impose penalties on local governments that are seeking to achieve web accessibility but lack the technical resources or staffing to meet timelines for compliance. As a result, counties could become subject to significant civil litigation in the absence of a supportive program to help local governments conform to requirements within a set period of time.

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges the Department of Justice to establish technical and financial resources dedicated to supporting under-resourced local governments who would like to achieve web accessibility conformity but lack the resources or funding to do so, and to issue an expanded waiver criteria to allow those counties, upon submission of a request documenting hardship reasons for additional time, be granted such time. NACo further urges the Department of Justice to apply the updated WCAG 2.1 Level AA standard to new content on county websites and digital assets, and to protect counties from civil litigation for a limited period while counties adjust to requirements pertaining to third party content hosted on government websites. Finally, NACo urges the Department of Justice to enable free or low-cost federal audits of web accessibility for county government websites, which can be administered by the Department directly or by a separate federal agency or third-party organization in contract with the Department, to provide feedback and recommendations on a county-by-county basis.

Approved | February 12, 2024

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Interim Resolution in Support of Full Enforcement of the Jones Act

Issue: The Jones Act is, at times, skirted by offshore developers by chartering foreign vessels manned by foreign crews to conduct work within U.S. waters where U.S. vessels are available, preventing coastal and near-coastal county residents from accessing important jobs in the maritime industry in areas where few other employment opportunities may exist.

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) supports and urges full enforcement of the Jones Act by the Customs and Border Protection and the United States Coast Guard to ensure counties have access to good paying jobs and American built, supported, and operated maritime transportation systems. NACo further urges Congress to ensure adequate funding is provided to the agencies for full and proper enforcement.

Approved | February 12, 2024

Interim Resolution in Support of Funding Transportation Planning in Rural Communities with Major Recreation

Issue: Transportation planning funding shortfalls exist within rural counties with major recreation sites and trip volumes.

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges increased federal funding for Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs) or directly to counties neighboring Federal lands to address rural counties' unique transportation challenges near major national recreation sites. NACo advocates for funding allocation based on experienced traffic volumes, not just year-round population. NACo further encourages Congress to include dedicated transportation planning funds in the next infrastructure and/or appropriations bill to support the goals of RTPOs consistent with Title 23 CFR Part 450.

Approved | February 12, 2024

Interim Resolution in Support of High-Speed Rail Funding

Issue: Current high-speed rail services are insufficient in the U.S and non-existent in the majority of the largest urban areas throughout the U.S. An increase in funding for high-speed rail infrastructure and transportation is necessary.

Proposed Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges the development of a more comprehensive high-speed rail transportation network and the allocation of appropriate funding for the replacement, repair, upgrade, and development of current and needed infrastructure, and for the acquisition of fast trains to connect urban and rural settings throughout the nation.

Approved | February 12, 2024