

Rep. Van Orden Receives VFW Congressional Award

Wisconsin lawmaker recognized for continually placing veterans, service members first

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WASHINGTON — The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) presented its 2025 Congressional Award to Rep. Derrick Van Orden (R-WI) for his relentless advocacy on behalf of veterans and service members.

“In Representative Van Orden, we have found a devoted, passionate and determined advocate for our military and veteran communities,” said VFW Commander-in-Chief Al Lipphardt. “His resolve for accountability and action on some of our most pressing issues is clear, and we could not be more thrilled to have him in our corner not only as a member of Congress but also as a VFW Life member.”

Presented annually since 1964, the VFW Congressional Award is given to one member of the House or Senate for significant legislative contributions on behalf of veterans and military personnel. Past recipients include strong national security and veterans' advocates, such as Sen. Bob Dole (R-KS), Rep. G.V. “Sonny” Montgomery (D-MS), Sen. John McCain (R-AZ), Sen. Daniel K. Inouye (D-HI), Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Rep. Joe Wilson (R-SC), and Sen. Jon Tester (D-MT), among many others. Last year's award went to Rep. Mike Levin (D-CA) who now serves on the House Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies. Levin previously held the position of Ranking Member on the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity.

Rep. Van Orden was first elected to the House of Representatives in 2022. Quickly assuming the role of Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, he got to work addressing topline veteran and service member issues like the military Transition Assistance Program (TAP) and veteran suicide prevention. As the originating sponsor of the VFW-supported TAP Promotion Act, he relentlessly advocates for service members’ equal access to VA-accredited claims

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

406 W. 34th Street
Kansas City, MO 64111
Office 816.756.3390
Fax 816.968.1157

WASHINGTON OFFICE

200 Maryland Ave., N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002
Office 202.543.2239
Fax 202.543.6719

info@vfw.org
www.vfw.org

representatives in TAP classrooms. Moreover, he co-authored last year's bipartisan House Concurrent Resolution commemorating the VFW's 125th Anniversary and even proudly wears his VFW cap while presiding over VFW-attended hearings. In addition to his duties as the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee Chairman, he also serves on the House Armed Services Committee and House Agriculture Committee.

Before coming to Congress, Rep. Van Orden was a U.S. Navy SEAL and retired as a Senior Chief Petty Officer after serving 26 years and completing multiple combat deployments, thereby earning his VFW membership eligibility. He maintains his Life membership at Thomas Rooney VFW Post 1530 in La Crosse, Wisconsin.

"We are eager to continue working with Rep. Van Orden and his staff to ensure we get to the root of economic-related barriers facing veterans and transitioning service members," said Lipphardt. "His tenacity and resistance to accepting the status quo resonates deeply with our members, and we are proud to bestow upon him this year's Congressional Award."