

President Biden's Announcement on Veteran's Medical Debt Will Lift a Burden from Veteran Families

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Administration Removes Barriers to Cancellation of VA Medical Debt

WASHINGTON - In tonight's State of the Union Address, President Biden may speak on today's announcement that the Veterans' Administration (VA) will simplify the process for claiming medical debt forgiveness for veterans. Advocates at the National Consumer Law Center (NCLC) issued the following statements:

"Administrative mazes and endless paperwork stop low-income veterans from obtaining the medical debt relief they are entitled to, and the Administration is taking important steps to reduce these barriers for veterans who owe federally-held medical debts. These administrative roadblocks are especially burdensome to low-income veterans, many of whom are trying to manage medical conditions that are consequences of their military service. Without the ability to discharge the debts, they become subject to the federal government's extraordinary collection powers," **said Kyra Taylor, staff attorney at the National Consumer Law Center.** "America's heroes should not have to weather wage garnishment, tax offset, and administrative offset for overdue fees charged for critical medical and mental health care at VA facilities."

"Non-white veterans are more likely to use the VA for healthcare needs, and making it easier for them to get medical debt relief will especially help protect the financial well-being of veterans of color," **said Berneta Haynes, staff attorney at the National Consumer Law Center.** "Veterans and military families should not need to worry that seeking medical care or receiving an overpayment of benefits could endanger their ability to pay the rent, feed their families, or obtain an auto loan."