

President's Message

I have a plea to make for everyone to see and putting it in the Legislative Update might not get the attention or convey the urgency of the matter. Everyone probably knows that the veteran population in Illinois is high. Would you believe over 75,000 veterans and currently serving? MOAA National does a great job of making headway with our national legislators, but we're the ones who are called to work at the state level—all 5,000 plus MOAA members in Illinois. There are bills currently being considered by the Illinois legislature that could affect more than just the local area being targeted. One such is HB3590 which will defund the Cook County Veterans Assistance Commission, and could be the catalyst for other counties in Illinois to take similar action. The Cook County Board is urging passage and it may go to the floor for a vote soon. We need to take action now and call our state representatives and tell

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Treasurer's Report	
Checking Account Balance ...	\$855
Savings Account Balance	\$3,841
Certificates of Deposit	\$15,185
Total	\$19,881



Visit us on Facebook! (click logo on left)

Visit our website: www.moaa-swil.org

Send your comments to moaa.swil@gmail.com

2021 USO and Fisher House Donations Drive

PLEASURE AND GRATITUDE

It's a pleasure to announce that the chapter's 2021 campaign is officially closed, and you excelled! Records were broken. The chapter per se donated a combined total of \$9,370. That number split \$4,655 for the USO of Missouri and \$4,715 for St. Louis Fisher House. These numbers are new records for the chapter. Congratulations!

St. Michael's church added \$3,050 to the above combined total. That makes the grand combined total \$12,420! The new split becomes \$6,105 to the USO and \$6,315 to Fisher House. Of course, all of these numbers are records for a campaign. Again, congratulations to all who made this success happen!

Also, it is noteworthy that in this pandemic year, O'Fallon High School JROTC collected a delivery van full of Wish List items to be divided about equally between the USO and the

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From Right to Left: George Herrera (Asst. Fisher House Manager), Nick Wartonick, Ann Morey, Justine Young (Fisher House Employee)

Featured in this Issue

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This Month's Program

Due to the current Illinois restrictions on gatherings, we will not hold a May 2021 Business Meeting.

WE DON'T KNOW WHEN IN-PERSON RESTRICTIONS WILL BE LIFTED IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

WE WILL KEEP YOU INFORMED ABOUT FUTURE PROGRAMS IN THE NEWSLETTER.

As you know, we didn't have our annual Scholarship Charity Auction in December. We asked you to donate the money you would've bid on the gifts--thank you to those of you who did.

It's not too late to donate if you haven't already.

Send donations by check to: SW IL MOAA, PO Box 735, O'Fallon IL 62269

Upcoming Programs (all are tentative due to pandemic restrictions)

Date	Venue	Topic
12 Jun 2021	O'Fallon Park on Hwy 50	Picnic (bring your own food, drinks, chairs, games)
11 Sep 2021	Tavern on Main	Tentative
9 Oct 2021	Cardinal Creek Golf Course	Tentative
13 Nov 2021	Cardinal Creek Golf Course	Tentative
11 Dec 2021	Cardinal Creek Golf Course	Annual Dinner and Scholarship Auction

If you normally receive the newsletter via email, but received it in the mail, then we don't have your correct email address. Send your name and correct email address to moaa.swil@gmail.com.

Reminder: Please review your chapter membership status and send in your local chapter dues, \$8 per year. Send to: Southwest Illinois MOAA, PO Box 735 O'Fallon, IL, 62269.

USO/Fisher House Donations (continued)

Fisher House. Although the quantity of items collected this year was reduced, it's the spirit and effort that counts. Our chapter sends them our thanks and appreciation.

So, it is with great gratitude that we (Ann and Nick) want you to know that we appreciate the order of magnitude with which you responded in tough times, both in increased contributions and increased participation. We offer you from the two of us and on behalf of our active military and all veterans and the families of both who benefit from the services of the USO and Fisher House a GREAT BIG THANK YOU!

Co-chairs, Ann Morey, 618-628-0268 (H), 618-409-9966 (M)

Nick Wartonick, 618-628-0858 (H), 618-406-6907 (M),
wartonick-59@charter.net

USO/Fisher House Delivery



Cary Warner (left), USO Operations Manager, and Nick Wartonick after the pickup.

President's Message (continued)

them to vote against passage of this bill. Last year, the Illinois Department of Veteran Affairs submitted 10 bills to the legislature and none of them were passed. IDVA has reintroduced all 10 for this session of the general assembly. The Legislative chairs for the largest veteran groups have supported these bills with witness slips, but that is not enough. To be successful, bills need co-sponsors. The only way this happens is if veterans contact their state representatives and let them know our position. Thank you for your service and action to help the veteran community all over Illinois and the nation. God bless you, our community, the men and women who volunteer to be part of the greatest armed force in the world, those who have served, our elected leaders, and this great nation! Never stop serving!

Just a few items this month. First, Take Action, then Advocacy in Action. Finally, some State issues.

Take Action!

These important issues require your immediate attention. Contact your elected officials today.

(Note: for more details about issues you can carry to our legislators, see the Take Action article in Council and Chapter News, or go to <https://takeaction.moaa.org/moaa/?0>)

Watch for the opportunity to send a message to Congress in the coming months on the bills listed here.

- [Urge Your Elected Officials to Support Comprehensive Toxic Exposure Reform Legislation](#)

The Toxic Exposure in the American Military (TEAM) Act, introduced by Senators Thom Tillis (R-NC) and Maggie Hassan (D-NH) and Representative Mike Bost (R-IL) would create comprehensive toxic exposure reform to expand health care, improve the presumptive process, and ensure veteran input in the process about the critical conditions affecting the health and well-being of servicemembers, veterans, families, survivors, and caregivers as a result of exposures while in service.

Continued next page



Legislative News (continued)

- [Urge Your Senators to Support Legislation to Repeal the TRICARE Select Enrollment Fee](#)

Act now to urge your senators to support the TRICARE Select Restoration Act, which is an important first step to repeal the enrollment fee for grandfathered retirees.

- [Urge your Legislators to Support Concurrent Receipt](#)

Contact your representative and senators and urge them to support The Major Richard Star Act, which would provide concurrent receipt for servicemembers unable to complete 20 years of service due to combat-related injuries. Help ensure these men and women get their full service-earned retirement, as well as their disability compensation from the VA.

- [Support Health Care for Children of Disabled Veterans or Veterans Who Have Died Due to a Service-Connected Disability](#)

Did you know many adult children of veterans who are disabled or who died from a service-connected disability lose access to their parent's health care well before the age of 26?

- [Urge Senators to Support Legislation Extending TRICARE Coverage--Certain 'Gray Area' Retirees](#)

The TRICARE Fairness for National Guard and Reserve Retirees Act (S. 829), introduced by Senators Rob Portman (R-OH) and Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) and the House companion bill (H.R. 1997), introduced by Representatives Bill Johnson (R-OH) and Dean Phillips (D-MN) would ensure these "gray area" retirees who qualify for retirement pay before age 60 are eligible for the TRICARE retiree benefit.

- [Ask Congress to Preserve Arlington National Cemetery and Eligibility for 20-Year Retirees](#)

Help MOAA stay in the middle of this important conversation – Contact your representative and urge them to designate in the FY 2022 NDAA the next national cemetery as ANC reaches capacity.

Advocacy in Action

Traditionally an in-person event that brings hundreds to the Hill, this will be MOAA's second year going virtual. In 2020, the advocacy mission continued despite the pandemic, with 19,000 letters of support reaching every congressional office and hundreds of members conducting meetings with their legislators and staffers via online platforms.

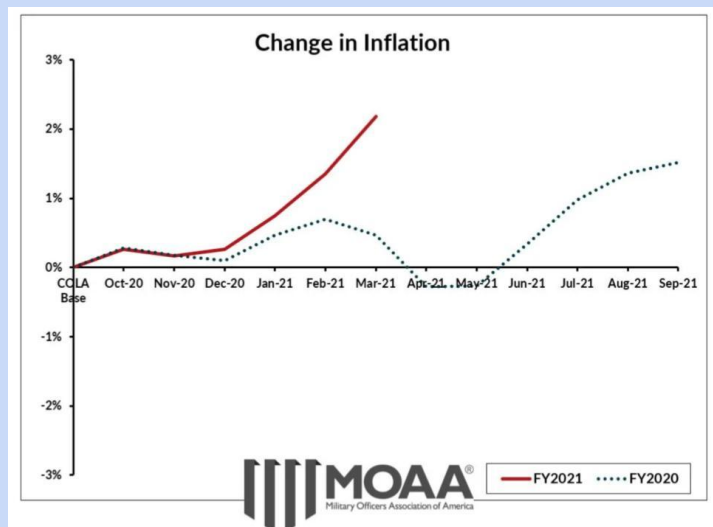
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COLA Watch

moaa.org/content/take-action/cola-watch

The March 2021 CPI is 258.935, 2.2 percent above the FY 2021 COLA baseline.

The Consumer Price Index for April is scheduled to be released May 12. The CPI baseline for FY 2021 is 253.412.



Legislative News (continued)

Check this [link](https://www.moaa.org/content/take-action/advocacy-in-action/) (https://www.moaa.org/content/take-action/advocacy-in-action/) in the coming weeks for details on this year's three advocacy topics: Comprehensive toxic exposure reform, TRICARE Young Adult health care coverage parity, and a basic needs allowance for military families facing food insecurity. You can read more about each issue at this [link](#). Also, use this [link](#) to find the one-page letters on the topics.

If you receive Military Officer magazine, you will find copies of these letters in your April edition. The letters are located between pages 14-15 and 62-63 in the magazine, and extra copies are included for members with spouses on file.

State Legislative Issues

There are a number of important bills in the Illinois legislature that affect veterans and deserve attention and consideration toward action, probably the most important being HB2378 and SB2559 dealing with Homestead Exemption for Surviving Spouses. Below is a summary of those. Thanks to COL (ret) Mike Peck, USA, IL Council of Chapters, for pulling these together.

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New Push Aims to Ease Burden on Spouses Transferring Professional Licenses

By: Karen Jowers, [Military Times](#) | 31 Mar 2021 ([Link](#) to article)

In a step toward easing the burden on military spouses who transfer their professional license (<https://www.militarytimes.com/pay-benefits/2020/02/24/heres-what-dod-wants-states-to-do-to-help-military-spouses-with-their-occupational-licenses/>) after a PCS move, defense officials have approved grants to help develop that licensure portability in five occupations.

Those professions are teaching, social work, cosmetology, massage therapy, and dentistry/dental hygiene. Others will follow. All told, Defense Department officials calculate there are about 132,140 active duty spouses in numerous professions that require licensing.

Read more at this [link](https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2021-news-articles/new-push-aims-to-ease-burden-on-spouses-transferring-professional-licenses/). (https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2021-news-articles/new-push-aims-to-ease-burden-on-spouses-transferring-professional-licenses/.)

Chapter Officers	
President	Col (ret) Bob Norman
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Membership	Maj (ret) Sabrina Luttrell-Andrews
Programs	Yasemin Koss
ROTC Liaison	CDR (ret) Tim Grout
Spouses Liaison	Narni Cahill

Call for Articles! If you want to submit an article for the Eyes to the Skies, just send the draft article to me at moaa.swil@gmail.com. Please keep these things in mind:

- Submit your article by the 10th of the month prior
- The article must be in MS Word or text format

We reserve the right to edit the article so it fits in the newsletter and meets our (and MOAA's) editorial policy.

Editorial Policy

The Southwest Illinois Chapter Newsletter is published monthly by the Southwest Illinois Chapter which is an affiliate of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA). MOAA and its affiliated chapters and councils are nonpartisan.



This GI Bill Rule Change Could Cost Veterans Thousands of Dollars a Semester

By: Steve Beyon, Military Times | 31 Mar 2021 ([Link](#))

The Department of Veterans Affairs is set to remove a relatively obscure GI Bill rule (<https://www.military.com/education/gi-bill>), which could cost beneficiaries thousands of dollars. But Congress is poised to act if the agency doesn't reverse course before a critical deadline this summer.

The so-called "rounding out" rule will be phased out Aug. 1, according to the VA. Currently, a GI Bill student can round out a college schedule with non-required classes to bring their course load to a full-term schedule once per program. This allows students to continue to receive full-time benefits, such as a larger housing allowance.

When asked about the move during a congressional hearing, VA Secretary Denis McDonough said he had never heard about rounding out or the Trump administration's decision to scrub it. He added that he would follow up with lawmakers.

It is unclear how many students have used the rounding out rule, but it is difficult to perfectly map out four years of schooling. Dropping just one class from a schedule could be detrimental to a GI Bill student's income, costing them thousands of dollars in a single semester.

Right now, a full-time GI Bill student eligible for full post-9/11 benefits will earn \$7,452 in housing allowance per semester at the school. Getting rid of a single course would reduce that to \$5,962. In Manhattan, students bring in \$14,553 per semester.

Read more at this [link](#). (<https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2021-news-articles/this-gi-bill-rule-change-could-cost-veterans-thousands-of-dollars-a-semester/>)

Legislative News (continued)

HB 583 – Income Tax-Veterans Caregiver. Amends the Illinois Income Tax Act. Creates an income tax credit for taxpayers who are caregivers of a veteran with a disability. Provides that the credit shall be in an amount equal to 5% of the costs incurred in caring for the veteran, not to exceed \$1,000 in credits in any taxable year. Effective immediately.

- Introduced February 8, 2021
- Original Sponsor(s): Rep. Katie Stuart; Chief Co-sponsor: Joyce Mason; Co-sponsors: 6
- Last Action: March 2, 2021 - Assigned to Revenue & Finance Committee
- Link: <https://ilga.gov/house/committees/members.asp?committeeID=2710>

HB35-Veterans Bill of Rights. Creates the Veterans Bill of Rights Act. Requires the Department of Veterans' Affairs to make specified efforts to: (1) increase loans to small business concerns owned and controlled by veterans or service-disabled veterans; (2) increase veterans' access to health care coverage and services; (3) take specified steps toward preventing veteran suicide; and (4) develop and implement a strategy to end veteran homelessness within 3 years. Directs the Department of Financial and Professional Regulation to review all State licenses for which military service members may have relevant training or experience, produce a report recommending steps that can be taken to increase recognition of military training and experience toward licensing, and take those steps within one year of issuing the report. Contains provisions regarding veterans at public institutions of higher education receiving college credit, registering for courses, and being called to active duty. Requires the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to annually review apprentice, training, and other vocational programs focused on providing

Legislative News (continued)

job training and placement to returning military service members and veterans. Contains other provisions.

- Introduced January 14, 2021
- Original Sponsor(s): Rep. Joyce Mason; Co-sponsors: 2
- Last Action: February 23, 2021 - Assigned to Veterans' Affairs Committee (VAC)
- Link: <https://ilga.gov/house/committees/members.asp?committeeID=2677>

HB 163 – School Code-Military Dependent Tuition. Amends the School Code. Provides that if, at the time of enrollment, a dependent of United States military personnel is housed in temporary housing located outside of a school district, but will be living within the district within 6 months (instead of within 60 days), the dependent must be allowed to enroll and must not be charged tuition. Provides that United States military personnel shall provide proof within 6 months (instead of within 60 days) after the time of enrollment that the dependent will be living within the district. Effective immediately.

- Introduced January 22, 2021
- Original Sponsor(s): Rep. Jeff Keicher; Co-sponsors: 6
- Last Action: February 23, 2021 - Assigned to Elementary & Secondary Education: School Curriculum & Policies Committee
- Link: <https://ilga.gov/house/committees/members.asp?committeeID=2665>

HB 390 - Veteran Service Dogs. Appropriates \$200,000 from the General Revenue Fund to the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to be used for a \$100,000 grant to the Willing Partners Canine Education, Inc. and a \$100,000 grant to K9s for Veterans, NFP, for costs associated with service dog training for veterans. Effective July 1, 2021.

- Introduced January 29, 2021
- Original Sponsor(s): Rep. Martin J. Moylan; Co-sponsors: 3
- Last Action: March 2, 2021 - Assigned to Appropriations-General Services Committee
- Link: <https://ilga.gov/house/committees/members.asp?committeeID=2659>

HB2378 - Surviving Spouse Amendment to Homestead Exemption (companion bill to SB 2559). Amends the Property Tax Code. Provides that, for the 2015 taxable year and thereafter, the exemption for veterans with disabilities also carries over to the surviving spouse of a veteran who was killed in the line of duty in the current taxable year or any preceding taxable year. Provides that, for the 2021 taxable year and thereafter, the exemption for veterans with disabilities also carries over to (i) the surviving spouse of a veteran who did not obtain the exemption before death, but who would have qualified for the exemption in the current taxable year if he or she had survived and (ii) the surviving spouse of a veteran whose death was determined to be service-connected and who is certified by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs as being a current recipient of Dependency and Indemnity Compensation. Provides that, in the case of a surviving spouse who is certified by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs as being a current recipient of Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, the property is exempt. Provides that the exemption carries over to the benefit of the veteran's adult or minor child if the child receives social security disability benefits or social security supplemental income because of a permanent disability and the veteran is deceased and the veteran's surviving spouse is deceased, remarries, or disclaims the exemption under this Section. Effective immediately.

- Introduced January 29, 2021
- Original Sponsor(s): Rep. Joyce Mason; Co-sponsors: 0
- Last Action: March 9, 2021 - Assigned to Revenue & Finance Committee
- Link: <https://ilga.gov/house/committees/members.asp?committeeID=2710>

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Legislative News (continued)

HB3279 - Nursing Scholarship for IDVA. Amends the Department of Veterans' Affairs Act. Provides that the Department of Veterans' Affairs shall establish a program to enable veterans who are certified nursing assistants to meet the requirements for practical nurse licensure under the Nurse Practice Act.

- Introduced January 19, 2021
- Original Sponsor(s): Rep. Terra Costa Howard; Co-sponsors: 0
- Last Action: February 19, 2021 - Referred to Rules Committee
- Link: <https://ilga.gov/house/committees/members.asp?committeeID=2675>

SB 91 - Admission to Veterans Home for Guard and Reserve Retirees. Amends the Department of Veterans' Affairs Act. Provides that a veteran is entitled to admission to an Illinois Veterans Home if he or she has served in the National Guard or Reserve Forces of the United States and completed 20 years of satisfactory service, is otherwise eligible to receive reserve or active-duty retirement benefits, and has been an Illinois resident for at least one year before applying for admission for purposes of eligibility for domiciliary care or nursing home care (currently, only domiciliary care). Effective immediately.

- Introduced January 19, 2021
- Original Sponsor(s): Sen. Jil Tracy; Co-sponsors: 0
- Last Action: February 3, 2021 - Referred to Assignments
- Link: <https://ilga.gov/senate/committees/members.asp?committeeID=2700>

SB 2559 - Surviving Spouse Amendment to Homestead (companion Bill HB2378). Amends the Property Tax Code. Provides that, for the 2015 taxable year and thereafter, the exemption for veterans with disabilities also carries over to the surviving spouse of a veteran who was killed in the line of duty in the current taxable year or any preceding taxable year. Provides that, for the 2021 taxable year and thereafter, the exemption for veterans with disabilities also carries over to (i) the surviving spouse of a veteran who did not obtain the exemption before death, but who would have qualified for the exemption in the current taxable year if he or she had survived and (ii) the surviving spouse of a veteran whose death was determined to be service-connected and who is certified by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs as being a current recipient of Dependency and Indemnity Compensation. Provides that, in the case of a surviving spouse who is certified by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs as being a current recipient of Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, the property is exempt. Effective immediately.

- Introduced February 26, 2021
- Original Sponsor(s): Sen. Melinda Bush; Co-sponsors: 0
- Last Action: February 26, 2021 - Referred to Assignments
- Link: <https://ilga.gov/senate/committees/members.asp?committeeID=2700>

SB59 - Wave Certification Fees for Active-Duty Military. Amends the Department of Professional Regulation Law of the Civil Administrative Code of Illinois. Provides that the Department shall waive all application fees and examination fees for active military personnel and their spouses. Provides that nothing in the provisions waives the requirement that the person or spouse meet all other licensing requirements, including other fees required during the licensing process.

- Introduced January 29, 2021
- Original Sponsor(s): Sen. Thomas Cullerton; Co-sponsors: 19
- Last Action: March 9, 2021 - Placed on Calendar Order of 2nd Reading March 10, 2021
- Link: <https://ilga.gov/senate/committees/members.asp?committeeID=2680>

Continued next page

Legislative News (continued)

SB569 – Recruiter Access/ASVAB Test. Amends the School Code. Beginning with the 2022-2023 school year, requires a school district to provide to students enrolled in grades 10 through 12 the opportunity to take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery test and consult with a military recruiter during regular school hours and in a location situated on school grounds.

- Introduced February 23, 2021
- Original Sponsor(s): Sen. Ram Villivalam; Co-sponsors: 0
- Last Action: March 3, 2021 - Assigned to Education
- Link: <https://ilga.gov/senate/committees/members.asp?committeeID=2680>

COUNCIL AND CHAPTER NEWS

News from National MOAA

For more information about the articles in this month's newsletter and how you can get more involved in other issues, visit the MOAA [Take Action Center](#) or [News](#) webpages.

SW IL VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE

The [VSO](#) provides free assistance to veterans, their dependents, and survivors in navigating complex services and benefits. The nearest VSO is in Belleville, and can be contacted at 618-233-8445/5140.

Visit the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs by following this [link](#).

For information on services available to the aging population, please visit the [Illinois Department on Aging](#).

Use the links below to read some timely veteran-related articles.

- [Send a Vet a Message](#) -- Send a message of support to Illinois Veterans' Homes residents or staff.
- [Illinois Veterans Newsletters](#) -- Award-winning email newsletter created by IDVA, delivers important news and information to the Illinois veteran community. (March 2020 edition at this [link](#).)
- [Operation Rising Spirit](#) -- Challenges service organizations, volunteers, and patriots of Illinois to raise the spirits of military veterans and the heroic staff who care for them at state veterans' homes.
- [Veterans Drivers License](#) -- Veteran's designation helps ensure military veterans receive the services and benefits for which they are entitled.

MOAA SW IL Chapter ROTC/JROTC Awards

By Tim Grout, CDR, USN, Ret

Each year the Southwest Illinois Chapter of MOAA recognizes an outstanding cadet or midshipman in their Junior year of a ROTC/JROTC program who has demonstrated exceptional potential for military leadership. The 2021 awardees are:

- Army ROTC, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville - Caine A. Ashlock
- Army JROTC, Cahokia High School - Micah Neal
- AFJROTC
 - Alton High School- Spencer Steele
 - Mascoutah High School - Caitlynn Perez
 - O'Fallon Township High School - William Garcia-Boyd

Congratulations to the awardees on a job well done!

YOUR MONEY

Required Minimum Distributions (RMD) in 2021

By: Shane Ostrom

Many of us have been dealing with RMD for several years, others may be wondering what this is all about. This affects everyone who has reached 70½ years of age, or 72 years of age. Right there, many may be turned off to reading further because you're not there yet. Well, it comes quicker than one may think, and it is better to prepare for that eventuality as opposed to being surprised by this mandatory event. Preparing will definitely help you resolve any questions or issues regarding what you need to do and how it will affect your tax position. The following information is taken from an article by Lt. Col. Shane Ostrom, USAF (Ret), CFP®, Program Director, Financial & Benefits Education/Counseling at MOAA.

Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) pertain to retirement accounts, except for the Roth IRAs. The RMD is an obligation that starts at specific ages to withdraw a minimum amount from the accounts so you must pay taxes. You can always withdraw more if you wish. RMDs count as ordinary taxable income in the year withdrawn.

The RMD is explained in IRS Publication 590B. The tax code requires us to withdraw money each year in the form of a RMD, and the calculation for the amount required is in the 590B publication. You can learn more about this on the IRS website.

If you turned age 70½ in 2019 or earlier, you are currently taking your RMDs. People who turned 70½ in 2020 or later start RMDs at age 72. Your first RMD must be withdrawn by April 1 of the year following the year you turn age 70½ or 72. Subsequent RMDs must be withdrawn by Dec. 31 of each year.

In 2020, the COVID-19 virus and the resulting economic and stock market plunges were the catalyst behind a law to waive RMDs for 2020. RMDs return in 2021. Because RMDs were not required in 2020, this may cause some planning confusion for some people new to RMDs.

As a result of COVID-19 virus relief legislation in 2020, many of you either did not take your RMD in 2020, or you took the RMD and put it back when you realized you didn't have to take it.

Besides having to take your RMDs this year if you are of age, you might want to prepare by figuring the amount.

Last calendar year, the stock markets were up about 16%. From the bottom of the stock market dive in March 2020 to the end of the year, stock markets were up almost 60%. Depending on how you manage your portfolios, your account values at the end of 2020 could be sizable.

This matters because the RMD amount for 2021 is a proportion of your portfolio value as of Dec. 31, 2020.

If your 2021 RMD amount and the resulting tax bill causes you a bit of distress, consider this: You can donate some or all your RMD to a charity to reduce your tax bite. This is known as a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD). QCDs are covered in IRS Pub 590B also. The QCD-eligible age is 70½ or older.

A QCD can count as your RMD for the year. Because you are using your RMD to make a charitable donation, the RMD is not taxable. The fact that the RMD is not taxed on a QCD withdrawal is the tax benefit — you don't get an additional charitable tax deduction after a QCD.

QCD rules are a bit complicated, so make sure you understand the details behind a proper transfer. Ask your tax specialist if a QCD will work for you. If this sounds like a good idea, consider MOAA's charities for your QCD.

If you have multiple retirement accounts, be careful about how to take RMDs, as special rules apply to multiple accounts.

Account owners who fail to withdraw a RMD, or fail to withdraw the full amount of the RMD, or fail to withdraw the RMD by the deadline, owe a 50% tax on the amount not withdrawn.

Because RMD amounts count as income in the tax year, careful planning helps as income levels can impact income tax rates, Medicare Part B premiums, and the Unearned Income Medicare Contribution Surtax, which is a 3.8% Medicare tax that applies to investment income plus regular income above \$200,000 for individuals and \$250,000 for joint filers.

Besides IRS Pub 590B, you can find more details about RMDs on this IRS site to include the special rules that apply to the COVID-19 relief changes.

Surviving Spouse Corner: Focusing on Finances After Loss

By: Pat Green | 26 Mar 2021 ([Link](#))

The loss of a spouse has quite an impact. At first, you are busy dealing with grief and helping your family recover from the loss. Eventually, though, you must focus your energy on finances. You have lost your financial partner.

Your goal should be to live comfortably with as little financial stress as possible. Losing a spouse often means a reduction in family income. This requires some changes and hard decisions as you consider:

Where should I live? Many factors are involved in this decision. Work, commute time, children, their friends, activities, and school proximity, health, safety, and other family responsibilities are all important.

What can I afford? This is probably the most important consideration. If you and your spouse were conservative in spending, your living expenses and debt might be manageable. Do a budget analysis based on your current income and spending. Be aware of adjustments. Income might be down, but taxes might be up if your new IRS tax status is “single” (higher rates). Include new insurance costs for yourself to protect any dependents. Don’t forget to add in the expense of services your spouse provided, such as lawn mowing, painting, or handy jobs. Do the calculations. If you can stay put for a while, great!

How can I make changes to my current home? It’s home, and you love it. You can freshen things up with some inexpensive changes like rearranging furniture, adding some fresh paint, buying a new bed or bedspread, and relocating photos and wall art.

What if a change of address is necessary? Downsizing or moving might be the best option for your new financial circumstances or emotional state. Make a pro/con list of emotional factors and expenses. Be thoughtful about real estate commissions, state income tax, moving, and redecorating expenses as well as all those emotional pluses and minuses. Investigate whether spousal disability exemptions and entitlements are available at a new home or new location. Changing states can generate issues. Do your homework. Be diligent!

This is a lot to do and a lot to consider, but help and resources are available. There are excellent calculators and programs online to assist with mortgages, investments, budget analysis, and insurance decisions, including on MOAA.org. Find them at [this link](#).

(<https://www.moaa.org/content/benefits-and-discounts/finance/finance/>)

Southwest Illinois Chapter
Military Officers Association of America
P.O. Box 735
O'Fallon IL 62269

Meeting Announcement

This Month's Meeting has been cancelled due to the current pandemic restrictions and an abundance of caution.