



LEAGUE of UNITED LATIN AMERICAN CITIZENS

The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), the nation's oldest and largest Latino civil rights organization, has supported military veterans for nearly 100 years. We've advocated for key legislation like The PACT Act and The Brandon Act to ensure service members receive the care and benefits they deserve. LULAC is committed to advancing the wellbeing of all veterans by advocating for access to education, affordable housing, healthcare, and other essential services.

REPATRIATE OUR VETERANS

Return, Relief and Recognition



Overview

Deported veterans are not an immigration footnote; this is a veterans' issue. These servicemembers served honorably in the United States Armed Forces, and some were later deported. Deportation does not erase service or cancel earned VA disability benefits.

The question is not whether the law allows benefits; it does. The question is whether the system helps facilitate access to them. The United States made a promise to those who served. That promise requires real access to benefits and a clear pathway to the citizenship they were promised for their service

Root Causes

The crisis stems from structural failures within the military and federal systems:

1. Mission-first operational tempo prevented completion of citizenship processing
2. Lack of clear command guidance regarding military naturalization process
3. Miscommunication that citizenship would be automatic following honorable service

In many cases, service members believed their legal status was secure because of their uniform.



Current Barriers Facing Deported Veterans

The crisis stems from structural failures within the military and federal systems:

- No guaranteed pathway to citizenship after service; citizenship is not guaranteed in enlistment contracts.
- No unit tracking and/or training program to maintain unit readiness and retention programs compliant.
- limited Immigration JAG officers to assist at installations with Naturalization application.
- Promotion of benefits of Naturalization for retention and National Security reason.

The Core Question

The question is not whether deported veterans deserve benefits. The law already addresses eligibility.

The real question is whether the Department of Veterans Affairs and the federal government have built a clear, accessible, end-to-end system that allows veterans living abroad — including those who have been deported — to apply for, document, and receive the benefits they earned in uniform.

Service to the United States must guarantee protection, legal status, and access to earned benefits — wherever the veteran resides.

Eligibility must result in real delivery!

Legislative Solutions

Secure Citizenship for Those Who Served

- Require completion of naturalization during military service or prior to discharge
- Provide a clear and guided path for naturalization.

Establish a Permanent Repatriation Program

- Return deported veterans who served honorably
- Restore legal status and VA benefits for qualifying veterans
- Provide structured reintegration support to restore honor & dignity.

Call to Action

Congress should:

- Seek formal clarification from the VA regarding benefits access for deported veterans;
 - Conduct oversight of overseas medical examination access and administrative performance;
 - Establish measurable performance standards to ensure eligibility results in actual delivery;
 - Advance legislation that secures citizenship, repatriation, and healthcare access for those who served.
- Service does not expire at the border. If the law recognizes eligibility, the system must guarantee access.

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Supporting Legislation

- Healthcare Opportunities for Patriots in Exile (HOPE) Act
- Veterans Visa and Protection Act
- Veteran Service Recognition Act
- Guarantee Access to Earned VA Healthcare Worldwide
- Ensure healthcare access wherever the veteran resides
- Expand international telehealth services