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**U.S. Department of Justice Military  
Outreach Program**

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United States Department of Justice  
Washington, DC**

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
**SERVICEMEMBERS &  
VETERANS INITIATIVE**



# SERVICEMEMBERS & VETERANS INITIATIVE

## OUR MISSION

The mission of the Servicemembers and Veterans Initiative is to strengthen and enhance the Department of Justice's efforts on behalf of servicemembers, veterans, and their families by coordinating and expanding our enforcement, outreach, and training.

The Initiative is connecting a comprehensive legal support and protection network focused on sharing information, identifying existing needs and trends, securing and directing the distribution of funding and other resources, and partnering with other federal agencies and state and local governments on their programs and initiatives designed to protect servicemembers' and veterans' rights.

## WHAT WE DO

### UPHOLDING THE LAW

- The Department of Justice enforces laws that protect the rights of servicemembers, veterans, and their families.
  - The Department protects a servicemember's civilian employment rights by enforcing the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).
  - The Department safeguards servicemembers' voting rights by enforcing the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA).
  - The Department promotes financial security for servicemembers, recent veterans, and military family members through actions brought under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA).
- The Department identifies current legal issues affecting servicemembers and veterans through coordination with Judge Advocate Generals' Corps, United States Attorneys' Offices, other federal agencies and bureaus, and legal assistance providers.

*To learn more, visit our website:*  
***ServiceMembers.gov***



## SEEKING STRONGER PROTECTIONS

- The Department proposed, for approval by Congress, a package of amendments designed to further strengthen legal protections for members of the military, such as:
  - requiring parties seeking default judgments against individuals to first check Department of Defense records to determine military duty status;
  - increasing penalties that employers, lenders and landlords will face for violating laws designed to protect servicemembers;
  - expanding the number and types of cases the United States may bring in defense of servicemembers attempting to return to their civilian employment upon completion of their military service;
  - expanding the available remedies for violations of the voting rights of servicemembers and their families while they are overseas;
  - affording dependent family members the same state residency rights as the servicemember; and
  - requiring states to recognize a servicemember spouse's professional licenses from other states.

## FOR THE MILITARY COMMUNITY

- The Department maintains the website **Servicemembers.gov** to provide servicemembers, veterans and their families with information on the laws that protect them and the legal resources within their communities.
- The Department provides a training curriculum for veterans treatment courts. These courts promote recovery and stability for veterans who become involved in the criminal justice system and who are also struggling with mental health issues or battling addictions.
- The Department fields calls from servicemembers, veterans and their family members and strives to provide callers with contact information for local legal resources and education on the statutes that protect their rights.

## DEPARTMENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- On September 18, 2017, CitiFinancial Credit Company, as successor to CitiFinancial Auto Corporation, agreed to pay a total of \$907,000 to individual SCRA protected servicemembers to resolve allegations that it violated the law by repossessing 164 cars owned by these servicemembers without first obtaining required court orders.
- Under a July 6, 2017 settlement agreement between the United States and COPOCO Community Credit Union, a state-chartered, federally-insured credit union in Michigan, was required to pay \$10,000 in compensation to each of three servicemembers whose motor vehicles it allegedly repossessed without a court order in violation of the SCRA, and another \$7,500 to a servicemember whose vehicle was returned after an allegedly wrongful repossession by COPOCO.
- On September 19, 2017, the Duval County, Texas, Sheriff's Department agreed to compensate a Deputy Sheriff and Army Reservist for lost wages and employee benefits, and pay him liquidated damages to resolve allegations that it violated USERRA by, among other things, terminating the Deputy Sheriff twice, once while he was on leave for military duty, and a second time for pursuing a USERRA claim after he was belatedly rehired after his period of military service.
- On June 1, 2017, the Pierce County Transportation Benefit Area Corporation of Pierce County, Washington ("Pierce Transit"), agreed to pay \$105,000 to a Washington Army National Guard Lieutenant Colonel to resolve allegations that it violated USERRA by failing to reemploy the Lieutenant Colonel after he returned from a period of military service.
- The Department facilitates and coordinates listening sessions between Department leaders and members of the military to identify the legal issues impacting today's servicemembers.

## LEGAL EDUCATION

- The Department provides training to United States Attorneys' Offices and civil litigation attorneys on USERRA and UOCAVA protections.
- The Department develops training materials for military service judge advocates and paralegals to enhance legal assistance for servicemembers and veterans.
- The Department produces toolkits for legal practitioners that address the specialized laws and resources available to stop or respond to consumer fraud targeting servicemembers and veterans.

