



NVLSP

NATIONAL VETERANS LEGAL SERVICES PROGRAM

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Justice for Warriors Newsletter



May 2025

Greetings,

During National Military Appreciation Month, we are honored and grateful to share our recent efforts advancing our mission to ensure that the government delivers to our nation's veterans, active duty personnel, and their families the benefits to which they have earned because of disabilities resulting from their military service to our country.

As a veteran and proud member of a military family, I feel extremely fortunate to lead NVLSP and help those veterans and their families who have been wrongfully denied their benefits.

Paul Wright
Executive Director

Honoring Those Who Served



Against an overcast sky at the Korean War Veterans Memorial and the distinguished Field of Service, family, friends, and staff of NVLSP and White & Case gathered to honor our veterans and wash the Korean War Veterans Memorial on May 17, 2025, Armed Forces Day.

Pictured from left to right:
White & Case Associate
Director of Engagement &
Development Nichole Bartlett,
White & Case Associate Philip

Russell, Abigail Mills, NVLSP Appellate Attorney Emily Mills, NVLSP Senior Appellate Attorney Emily Woodward Deutsch, Jim Bartoszczyk, NVLSP Director of CAVC Litigation Stacy Tromble, NVLSP Development Research Assistant Kimberley Davis, Jennifer Roos, NVLSP Communications Assistant Elizabeth Schneider, Katherine Deutsch and NVLSP Director of HR & Operations Rafael Resto-Olivo. Front row: Rosemary Deutsch, NVLSP Director of Communications Patty Briotta, White & Case Associate Otto Nuñez-Montelongo, NVLSP Executive Director Paul Wright, NVLSP Appellate Attorney Alec Ghezzi and Mary Ellen Ruff.

NVLSP's Veterans Benefits Training for Advocates

NVLSP's Veterans Benefits Training for Advocates- *Get Trained by the People Who Wrote the Book*

Guest Speaker



Michael P. Allen

**Chief Judge
U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims**

On June 25, 2025, the National Veterans Legal Services Program (NVLSP), author of the nation's first treatise on veterans law, the [Veterans Benefits Manual](#) (VBM), and leader in training veterans advocates for more than 40 years will host a live and virtual training event in Washington, D.C. At the training, NVLSP's Veterans Benefits Training for Advocates -*Get Trained by the People Who Wrote the Book*- authors and

editors of the VBM will share their insights on the evolving veterans law landscape and the VA benefits process. Michael P. Allen, Chief Judge U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims will be guest speaker at the event.

This training will qualify for 6.0 hours of CLE credit by the Virginia State Bar. Attendees will also receive bonuses for half or full day attendance. [Register](#) by June 3, 2025.

Presenters



Barton F. Stichman
Special Counsel and Co-Founder



Richard V. Spataro
Director of Training and Publications



Renée A. Burbank
Director of Litigation



Alexis M. Ivory
Senior Staff Attorney



Elizabeth Tarlovski
Staff Attorney

NVLSP Presenters left to right: Bart Stichman, Special Counsel and Co-Founder, Richard Spataro, Director of Training and Publications, Renee Burbank, Director of Litigation, Alexis Ivory, Senior Staff Attorney and Elizabeth Tarlovski, Staff Attorney.

Litigation Update



Supreme Court Hears Landmark Case on Retroactive Pay for Combat-Disabled Veterans Pro Bono Counsel Sidley Austin LLP

On April 28, 2025, the Supreme Court heard oral arguments in [Soto v. United States](#), a case about whether combat-disabled veterans can receive full retroactive backpay despite a six-year limitation of backpay under the Barring Act. The case was filed by the National Veterans Legal Services Program and pro bono counsel Sidley Austin LLP on behalf of Mr. Soto and a class of over 9,000 combat-disabled veterans who were denied full retroactive compensation. If you missed the oral arguments, you can catch them at [C-SPAN](#).

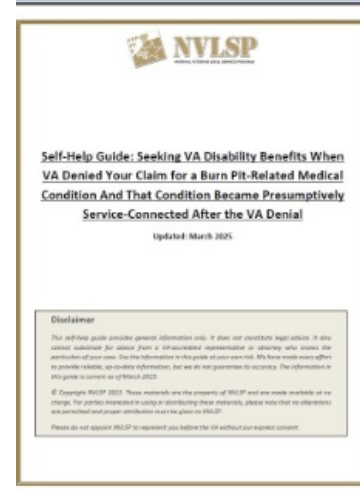
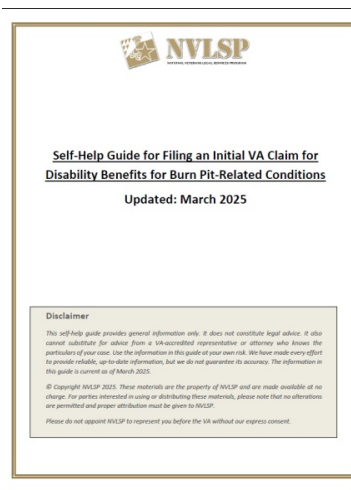
Left to right: NVLSP Board Member & Sidley Austin LLP Pro Bono Counsel Emily Wexler, NVLSP Director of

Litigation Renee Burbank, and Sidley Austin Appellate Litigator Tacy Flint gathered outside The Supreme Court after oral arguments on April 28 in landmark case Soto v. United States.

[NVLSP](#) Issues Updated FAQs for Burn Pits Claims

[NVLSP's Burn Pits Claims Assistance Program \(BPCAP\)](#) updated its two Frequently Asked Questions guides in March

for those filing [initial VA claims](#) or for those [for how to file a claim that has been previously denied](#).



Staff Spotlight



Alec Ghezzi joined NVLSP's Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (CAVC) team in 2024, bringing with him a wealth of experience in veterans advocacy. Alec's journey to NVLSP began at the University of Detroit Mercy School of Law's Veterans Clinic, where he first encountered the Veterans Benefits Manual – the same essential resource NVLSP attorneys rely on today. His passion for veterans law was sparked by hands-on experience assisting low-income Vietnam and World War II veterans, giving him an early understanding of the profound impact legal representation can have on the lives of those who served.

For Alec, joining NVLSP was a natural step. "I've always viewed NVLSP as the pinnacle of nonprofit advocacy for veterans," he explains. "Throughout my career, I've seen firsthand how critical NVLSP's work is in closing the gap between veterans and the benefits they deserve. I wanted to be part of an organization that not only stands up for individual veterans but also pushes for systemic change in veterans law."

As a CAVC staff attorney, Alec's work focuses on reviewing VA claims files, developing compelling legal arguments, and representing veterans in federal court. He values the opportunity to present rigorous, legally sound cases that hold the VA accountable. Unlike his previous roles, Alec now has the support of NVLSP's exceptional administrative team, allowing him to focus more fully on his legal work and his clients.

Since joining NVLSP, Alec has handled dozens of cases that have allowed him to preserve veterans' rights and increase the chances that their VA benefits will be granted. He has already secured significant wins for his clients, including recent settlements that restored crucial benefits. He also actively screens Board of Veterans' Appeals decisions, helping NVLSP identify errors that may be appealed to the Veterans Court.

Alec takes pride in contributing to an organization that has long been at the forefront of veterans advocacy. "I'm proud to be part of a team that is constantly pushing the law forward and ensuring veterans have the support they need to secure the benefits they've earned," he says.

Outside of work, Alec enjoys spending time with his family, including his young son, who keeps him busy and inspired. He's also a history buff, particularly when it comes to U.S. military conflicts – a fitting interest for someone dedicated to serving those who served.

NVLSP In The News

Several news outlets covered NVLSP's case at the Supreme Court *Soto v. United States*

- [Military.com](#) Supreme Court Justices Question Potential Financial Impact of Ruling on Combat Disability Pay Case
 - [Bloomberg Law](#): Sidley Partner to Make Supreme Court Debut in Veterans Dispute
 - [Stars and Stripes](#): Supreme Court to hear combat-injured Marine veteran's case challenging compensation limits
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NVLSP On The Move



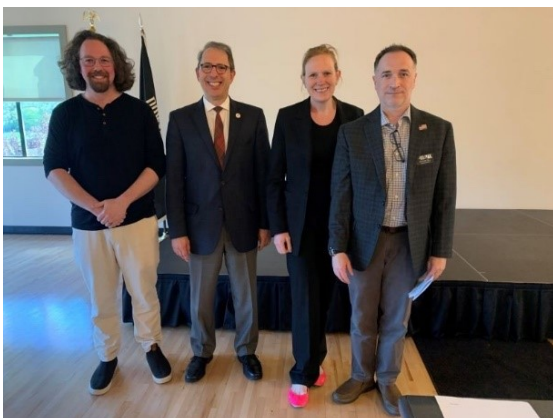
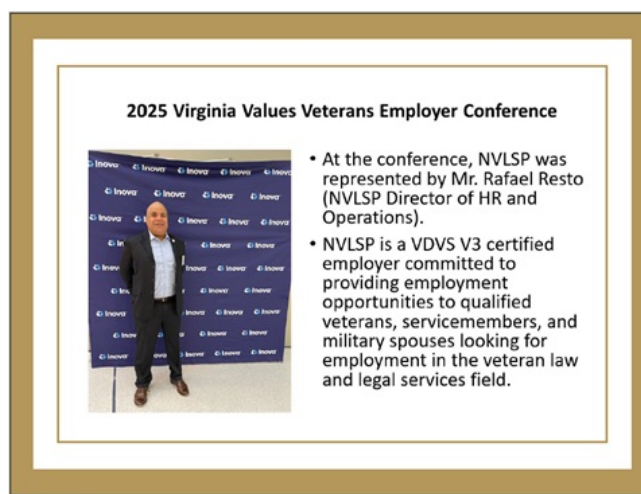
Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs Memorial Day Salute

On May 22, the National Veterans Legal Services Program participated in Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs (KDVA) Memorial Day salute to our fallen heroes.

NVLSP Executive Director Paul Wright joined Lt. Governor Jacqueline Coleman at the Capitol Rotunda.

2025 Virginia Values Veterans Employer Conference

On May 6, NVLSP Director of Human Resources and Operations, Rafael Resto-Olivo, was proud to participate and represent NVLSP at the 2025 Virginia Values Veterans Employer Conference.



NVLSP Spring Training

In April, NVLSP Special Counsel Louis George, Staff Attorney Alexis Ivory met with Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA).

Pictured from left to right: Terrell (Tucker) Flood, WDVA Claims Quality Assurance Manager; NVLSP Special Counsel Lou George; NVLSP Senior Staff Attorney Alexis Ivory, and Steven J. Gill, WDVA Veterans

WAYS YOU CAN HELP

We hope this newsletter inspires you to become more active with NVLSP. If you want to help NVLSP do more for our veterans, here are a few suggestions.

1. You can follow us on [X](#), connect with us on [LinkedIn](#), and like us on [Facebook](#).
2. Help us promote our free [App](#) for veterans.
3. Tell a friend about [NVLSP](#).



We look forward to connecting with you again soon!

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