



**MEMORIAL DAY MESSAGE FROM THE
SERVICEMEMBERS AND VETERANS INITIATIVE**

Each year on Memorial Day, our nation pays tribute to the men and women of the United States Armed Forces who gave their lives defending our safety and way of life. To show our appreciation we offer thoughts and prayers, participate in moments of silence, attend parades, and visit cemeteries. Many of us also commit to live our lives in a way that gives meaning to the sacrifices – great and small – made by America’s servicemembers and veterans; those who demonstrate by example what it is to be an American.

It is in this spirit of appreciation that the Servicemembers and Veterans Initiative works to ensure that servicemembers, veterans, and their families receive the full benefits and protections afforded them by those laws the Department of Justice is tasked with enforcing on their behalf. For example, the Department of Justice protects a servicemember’s civilian employment rights by enforcing the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (“USERRA”), voting rights by enforcing the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (“UOCAVA”), and financial security through the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (“SCRA”). In addition, the Department of Justice’s Consumer Protection Branch is dedicated to combating financial fraud and other scams targeting servicemembers, veterans, and their families.

The Department of Justice’s work has had tangible and positive impacts on the lives of servicemembers and their families. For example, the Department of Justice’s efforts to protect the financial and housing rights of servicemembers through SCRA litigation have resulted in over \$467 million in monetary relief going to over 119,000 servicemembers over the past decade. With respect to USERRA and military members’

civilian employment rights, the Department of Justice continues to ramp up its enforcement of USERRA against private, state, and local employers, through litigation, facilitated settlements, outreach, and advocacy. Since 2004, the Department has filed 101 USERRA lawsuits and favorably resolved 174 USERRA complaints either through consent decrees obtained in those suits or through facilitated private settlements. Under the current administration, the Department of Justice has filed five USERRA complaints on behalf of servicemembers and negotiated settlements in excess of \$365,000.

Additionally, as part of the Servicemembers and Veterans Initiative's outreach efforts, we maintain the website servicemembers.gov, a resource for members of the military community and legal practitioners to learn about the laws that the Department enforces and available local legal resources. This website features a complaint form that goes directly to Department attorneys for a prompt response. In 2017, the Servicemembers and Veterans Initiative received and responded to 471 complaints.

Finally, the Servicemembers and Veterans Initiative participates in numerous outreach and training events designed to educate servicemembers and legal practitioners about the laws that protect servicemembers, and to learn about the legal issues that are impacting servicemembers in their everyday lives. In 2017, the Initiative participated in 20 outreach events. For example, in April of 2017, Initiative staff, along with Attorney General Jeff Sessions, visited Luke Air Force Base, presenting on the SCRA and USERRA, and fielding questions and comments from military personnel stationed at the base. In November of 2017, Initiative staff, along with Attorney General Jeff Sessions, met with top ranking JAG Officers from the United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard for the Convening of the Judge Advocates General of the Armed Forces. The event was focused on a discussion of the most pressing legal issues at each branch of the military and the value of collaboration between the Department of Justice and the Armed Forces. So far this year, six events have taken place, and an additional eight have been planned through summer 2018.

On Memorial Day and every day, our nation's servicemembers make countless sacrifices, putting their lives on the line to keep us safe. By doing our jobs at the

Department of Justice well, we remove the legal impediments that would otherwise prevent servicemembers from focusing their attentions solely on the mission of protecting this great nation.