

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VA's Board of Veterans' Appeals resolves record number of claims to date for FY 2018

WASHINGTON — Underscoring the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) pledge to reduce the wait time for those appealing disability benefits claims, the [Board of Veterans' Appeals](#), as of May 27, has signed more than 53,650 decisions to date in fiscal year (FY) 2018, which is approximately 86 percent more than the 28,839 decisions signed through the same period last year.

The Board is currently on track to meet and exceed its FY 2018 total goal of reviewing a historic 81,000 appeals by Sept. 30, 2018.

This pace paves the way for implementation of the [Appeals Modernization Act](#), which has a target implementation date of Feb. 14, 2019, and will offer Veterans more choice and control over their claims and appeals process.

"I'm proud of the Board for its dedication and commitment toward resolving appeals decisions for Veterans, and striving to reach a historic fiscal year goal of 81,000 appeals decisions delivered to Veterans," said VA's Acting Secretary Peter O'Rourke. "The Board's significant increase in results for Veterans and their families serves as another strong example of the department's commitment to getting it right for Veterans."

In FY 2017, Congress allocated the Board approximately \$42 million, which was used to hire additional staff, primarily more than 200 decision-writing attorneys and 24 Veterans law judges. The increase in staff, along with streamlining several processes, contributed to the result.

VA's Board of Veterans' Appeals' mission is to conduct hearings and decide appeals in a timely manner. VA's disability appeals process is a complex, multi-step adjudication process that uses "open records," which allows Veterans to submit medical and lay evidence at any point from the beginning to the end of the process, including while the claim is pending on appeal; this may, in turn, require VA to develop further evidence on the Veteran's behalf.