



VetsLegal.org



**VETERANS**  
**LEGAL INSTITUTE**

— 2022 —

# **IMPACT** **ANNUAL** **REPORT**

# TESTIMONIALS

*"The VLI team was so good to me. It feels like they truly care about their clients. Not only did they help me reach a resolution to my case but they were available to answer all my questions honestly. If it wasn't for them, I would still be lost."*

**– Chris G., Marine Corps Veteran**

*"Once again, you are a blessing to me and I am so grateful to have had your help. I owe you big time. My family is also very grateful."*

**– Brittany M., Air Force Veteran**  
**Successful discharge upgrade recipient**

*"Thank you for what you did for me. I will never stop thanking you. I wish I would have known about you and your staff a long time ago. 60+ years went by not knowing where to go or what to do. Thank you."*

**– Juan R., Navy Veteran**  
**Successful discharge upgrade recipient**

*"Thank you and your staff at VLI for everything. My case was deemed unwinnable from so many Veteran lawyers for so many years. You guys are amazing. Thank you so much for all your hard work."*

**– Brian O., Army Veteran, Successfully rated 100% disabled and awarded \$64,000 in back pay**

*"Thank you so very much for your thoughtful and validating words of support! I'm so thankful we were matched together and thankful for your time, eagerness to teach, and knowledge of how to promote positive change of broken systems. You've taught me patience, given me immeasurable advice coupled with guidance of 'The system' and overall, you've reinforced a sense of self determination and worth in me."*

**– Jennifer B., Army Veteran and MST Survivor**

*"I am lost for words for how much I appreciate what the both of you have done on my behalf. The care and compassion you both showed me was unreal and for that I am super thankful. You both are amazing."*

**– Daniel P., Navy Veteran, to his VLI attorney and pro bono attorney from Sheppard Mullin**

*"You and the Veterans Legal Institute have been invaluable to me and I am very grateful for all the help I have received. You all have changed my life for the better. I now have a secure future and it feels great to not have to worry anymore."*

**– Joseph E., Army Veteran**

# WHO WE ARE

VLI provides pro bono legal assistance to homeless, at risk, disabled and low income current and former service members to eradicate barriers to housing, healthcare, education, and employment and foster self-sufficiency.

## **Board Members:**

Michael Kibbe, Esq. *\*USMC Veteran*  
Sheila-Marie Finkelstein, Esq.  
Marco Arcadia *\*USMC Veteran*  
Andrea Bird-Steiner, Esq. *\*USMC Veteran*  
Pete Seitz *\*USMC & Army Veteran*  
Jack Williams, Esq. *\*USMC Veteran*  
Kathy Dawson *\*Military family member*  
Sajindra Gunawardane, Esq.  
Nathan Cazier, Esq. *\*Army Veteran*  
Cindy Goss *\*Military family member*  
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Bruce Braviroff *\*Air Force Veteran*  
Eric Reynolds, SPHR, PHR *\*Navy Veteran*  
Jeff Roberts, Esq.  
Jackie Smart, CPA/CFF, CFE, CVA  
Justin Goldberg, Esq.  
Ron Brand, Esq.  
Wendy Hooper-Ross *\*Military Widow*

## **Executive Management:**

Antoinette Naddour, Esq., LLM - Executive Director and Co-Founder  
Katie Binkley, Esq.- Deputy Executive Director  
Michelle Robinson, Esq. - Managing Attorney

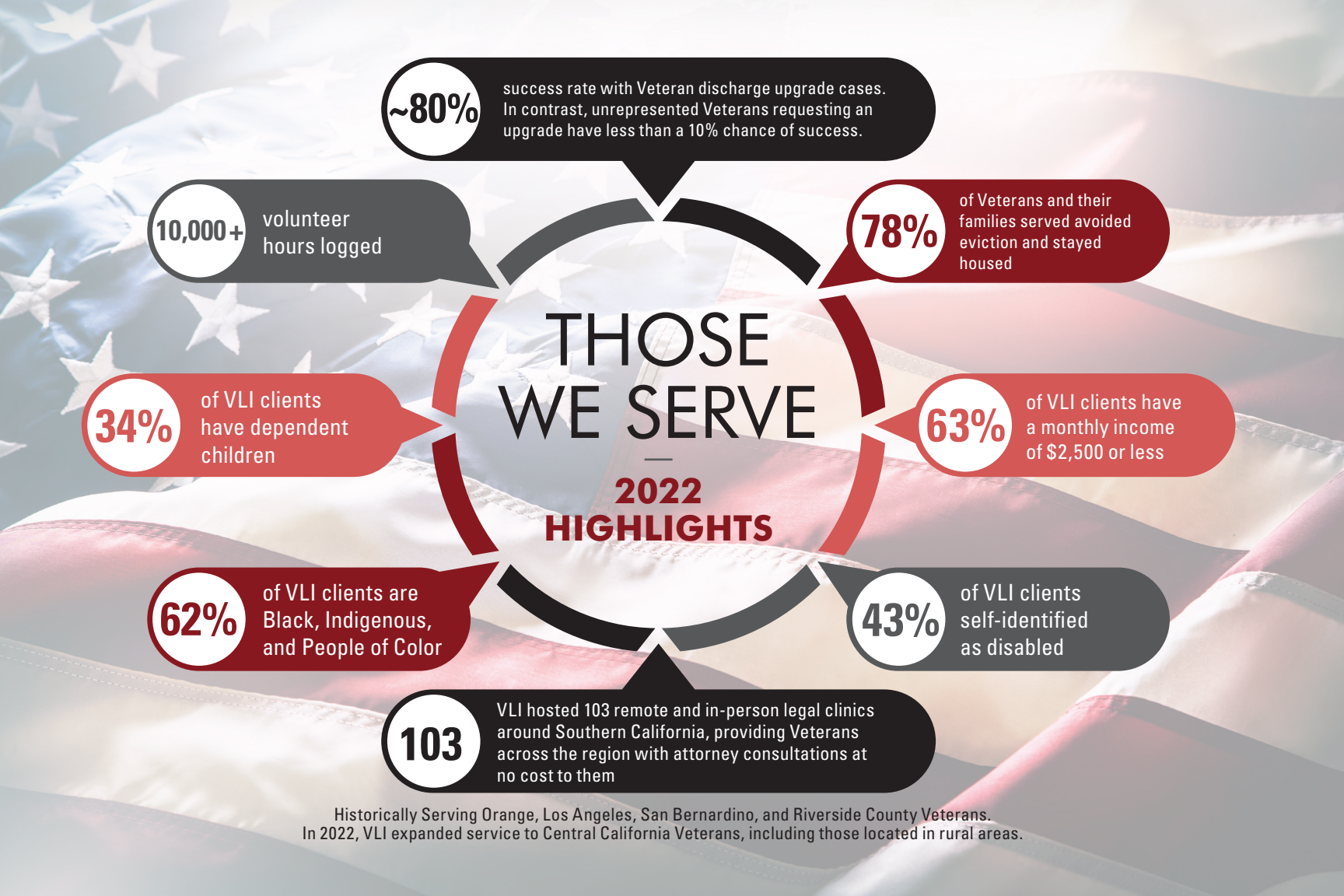
## **Board of Advisers:**

Richard Oberreiter *\*Navy Veteran and Officer in the California State Guard*  
Rosanna E. Fristed, Esq.  
Matt Rabin, Esq. *\*Officer in the California State Guard*  
Sunny Jha, MD, MS, FASA  
Congressman Lou Correa  
Bobby McDonald *\*Navy Veteran*  
Sean S. Twomey, Esq.  
Lacey Price Craig  
Nick Beske  
MG (CA) Jay M. Coggan, ret. *\*Navy Veteran*  
Lea Petersen  
Lanän M. Clark *\*Navy Veteran*

## **VLI's Core Values**

• Outreach • Compassion • Quality • Leadership • Empowerment





# THOSE WE SERVE

## 2022 HIGHLIGHTS

**~80%**

success rate with Veteran discharge upgrade cases. In contrast, unrepresented Veterans requesting an upgrade have less than a 10% chance of success.

**10,000+**

volunteer  
hours logged

**78%**

of Veterans and their  
families served avoided  
eviction and stayed  
housed

**34%**

of VLI clients  
have dependent  
children

**63%**

of VLI clients have  
a monthly income  
of \$2,500 or less

**62%**

of VLI clients are  
Black, Indigenous,  
and People of Color

**43%**

of VLI clients  
self-identified  
as disabled

**103**

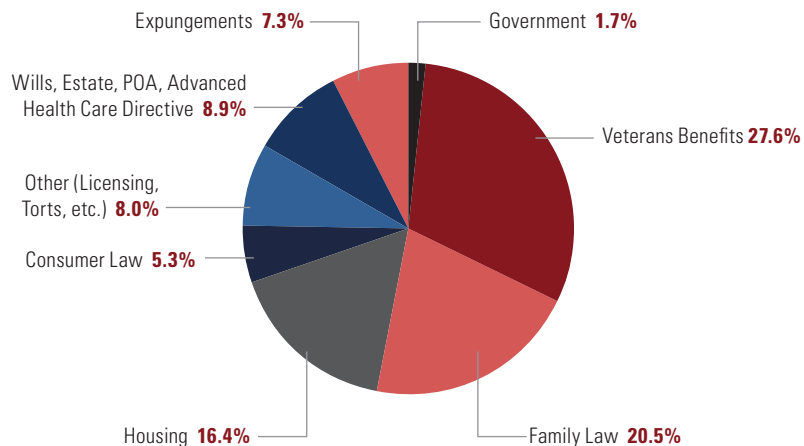
VLI hosted 103 remote and in-person legal clinics around Southern California, providing Veterans across the region with attorney consultations at no cost to them

Historically Serving Orange, Los Angeles, San Bernardino, and Riverside County Veterans.  
In 2022, VLI expanded service to Central California Veterans, including those located in rural areas.

## 2022

In 2022, VLI secured over \$2.31M in lump sum recovery benefits for disabled Veterans. VLI obtained over \$237,000 in monthly compensation for disabled Veterans battling PTSD and other service-related conditions. Most importantly, VLI is a pro bono law firm. This means that no Veteran ever needs to worry about receiving a bill for VLI's life-changing services.

### Total Impact of Matters by Practice Area in 2022



### Total # of Matters by Practice Area in 2022

Veterans Benefits and Discharge Upgrades	447
Family Law	332
Housing	266
Consumer Law	86
Other (Licensing, Torts, etc.)	130
Wills, Estate, POA, Advanced Health Care Directive	141
Expungements	119
Individual Rights (including Immigration, Civil Rights)	23
Nonprofit and Small Business Assistance	18
Employment Law	27
Government Benefits, other than Veteran	28





## **Access to Justice for Disabled Veterans Statewide**

Veterans Legal Institute is committed not only to its clients, but to the overall California Veteran community. In 2022, VLI joined forces with policymakers in Sacramento to expand access to justice for disabled California Veterans. Before SB 498 was passed, many Veterans were disqualified from legal aid because their disability compensation made them “over-income.” Disabled Veterans were in a Catch-22: too “rich” to qualify for legal aid, but too poor to afford a private attorney due to their service-related disability. VLI partnered with Senator Tom Umberg to push for this critically needed legislation, which allowed disabled Veterans to access justice while not being penalized for their disability. As a result, disabled Veterans throughout California can now qualify for the legal services they desperately need – and deserve.

## **Holistic Support for Disabled Veterans in the Family Court System**

Family court can be stressful and heartbreaking on anyone. A Veteran living with PTSD, or a traumatic brain injury, might be exceptionally affected by the intense mental, emotional, and financial strain of a divorce, child custody dispute, or other family court proceeding. VLI joined Senator Susan Eggman in advocating for SB 1182 to connect Veterans in family court with local resources including mental health, housing, legal services, and other resources. This legislation ensures all affected Veterans are equipped to face these challenging times in a healthy and constructive manner.



# SPONSOR A HERO

## \$5,000

Supports onsite and online, free legal clinics at a local VA Hospital. This clinic serves close to 60 low-income and homeless Veterans who have medical issues monthly.

## \$2,500

Supports a Veterans Legal Institute advocate to give onsite legal services at the Vet Center and other veteran serving hot spots, where combat Veterans can gather and receive free mental health services each month.

## \$1,000

Supports sustaining the healthcare and standard of living of Veterans through appeals led by an attorney. These appeals secure benefits claims for illnesses and injuries including, but not limited to, post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, and other visible and invisible wounds of war.

## \$500

Supports one Legal Hero to collaborate with other nonprofits to keep one Veteran family safe and sound.



**ONGOING  
SUPPORTERS**

Wright  
Ford  
Young & Co.



JUDICATE  
WEST



CALOVET



UnionBank

Orange County  
Community  
Foundation



BANK OF THE WEST  
BNP PARIBAS



Volunteers  
of America



SoCalGas



PointClick.io



BOB WOODRUFF  
FOUNDATION



Orange County Bar Association  
Charitable Fund

## WAYS TO SERVE AT VETERANS LEGAL INSTITUTE

- Take a case pro bono
- Volunteer in-house
- Apply to join the VLI Board
- Join the VLI's Annual Fundraising Event Committee

\*All donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law

## WAYS TO CONTRIBUTE

- Become a monthly supporter and stand with our Veterans of today and tomorrow by registering at [VetsLegal.org](https://VetsLegal.org) or text VLI to 44-321
- Recommend VLI receive a donation through your Donor Advised Fund (DAF)
- Consider VLI in your estate legacy planning

Donate via Venmo



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Platinum  
Transparency  
2023

**Candid.**