



Stacey Abrams knows we must support, invest in and keep our promises to Georgia's active duty service members, military families, civilian employees and our veterans. Georgia is home to some 700,000 veterans and over 120,000 active-duty members, reserve members, and civilian employees of the military.ⁱ Our military bases are the economic engines of communities across the state, generating almost \$20 billion in economic impact.ⁱⁱ

As governor, Abrams will build on her work as the House Democratic Leader, where she led the Democratic Caucus to introduce the "A Promise Kept"ⁱⁱⁱ Initiative in support of veterans and military families. Under her leadership, several bipartisan measures were enacted into law aimed at removing barriers identified by the U.S. Department of Defense: expand access to Medicaid for military families, allow veterans and military spouses to receive temporary occupational licenses, protect the employment of national guardsmen, and permit military spouses who are teachers to apply for temporary occupational licenses. As House Democratic Leader, she co-sponsored the following bills:

- Protecting Guardsmen's Employment Act^{iv}
- Bridging the Military Health Care Gap Act^v
- Military Spouses and Veterans Licensure Act^{vi}
- Educating Children of Military Families Act^{vii}
- Protecting Military Children Act^{viii}
- Military Consumer Protection Act^{ix}

Stacey Abrams for Governor: Military and Veterans Platform

Stacey Abrams' Military and Veterans Platform has six pillars: Establish Protections for Georgia Veteran and Military Families, Improve Transitions from Service to School and Career, Protect Our Military Bases, Respect and Support the Diversity of Our Troops, Support Veterans in Rural Communities, and End Veteran Homelessness.

- 1. Establish Protections for Georgia Veteran and Military Families.** Abrams will establish protections and priorities for Georgia veterans and military families. We will listen to veterans and service members and propose comprehensive legislation to address the key issues that impact veterans and military families like predatory lending, poverty, poor health, financial education, and economic mobility.
- 2. Improve Transitions from Service to School and Career.** Many service members finish their service and need added resources to transition to civilian life; the "A Promise Kept" initiative was an important first step, but Abrams believes we must do more to support these transitions.



- **Veteran Hiring.** As governor, Abrams will support incentives for veteran hiring, as found in the “Georgia Veterans Work Opportunity Tax Credit” (HB 220; Rep. Karen Bennett). We will remove additional occupational barriers through legislation such as the “Increasing Interstate Access to Veteran Employment” Resolution (HR 169; Rep. Sandra Scott).
 - **Provide Support for Higher Education and Postsecondary Pathways.** Nationally, veterans and service members are more likely to be “non-traditional” college students who work their way through school while as they support and care for their families. Moreover, they are more likely to be first-generation college students, with almost two out of three being the first in their family to attend college.^x As governor, Abrams will provide supports for veterans, service members, and their families in our technical college system and university system. These include support staff at every college and university, campus climate surveys of veterans to identify their unmet needs, more credit transfer opportunities, and strong financial supports. It is essential that our higher education system values military training and experience and actively reaches out to service members and veterans to let them know about our top-rated, veteran-friendly campuses.
 - **Expand Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment.** Abrams will expand Medicaid to increase access to mental health and substance abuse treatment widely and will reach out to veterans who are eligible for but not using existing Veteran’s Affairs programs.
- 3. Protect Our Military Bases.** Our military installations are crucial economic engines in communities throughout Georgia. Georgia fared well under the first four rounds of Base Realignment and Closures (BRAC). However, in 2005 — the first BRAC under Republican leadership in Georgia — we gained soldiers but lost about one-third of our bases.^{xi} As governor, Abrams will protect our military installations via investments in technology, infrastructure, economic security, and educational opportunity that support the quality of life of military families. These investments are critical to achieving outcomes that the Department of Defense will assess when determining future base closures. Abrams will protect our military bases:
- **Institute a Military Council.** Abrams will institute a professionally staffed and funded Military Council, which can anticipate opportunities, prepare for the next round of BRAC, and undertake high-quality strategic planning studies on a regular basis.
 - **Examine encroachment.** We will examine issues of encroachment and compatible use to ensure continued mission viability. We will coordinate with military and community leaders, as well as elected officials at every level of government, to strengthen our installations.
 - **Invest in Infrastructure.** We will invest in the necessary infrastructure such as water, broadband, rail, ports, and transportation.



- **Support Advanced Energy.** Abrams is the only candidate to offer an [Advanced Energy Jobs Plan](#), which will support the military's efforts to expand their renewable energy portfolio.
 - **Promote K-12 Investments.** K-12 investments are pro-military initiatives. The Georgia House Study Committee on Military Affairs heard this message loud and clear — a lack of quality public education is the biggest threat to the security of our bases.^{xii} Military families and our bases will not remain in Georgia if we do not provide a high-quality education. Abrams co-sponsored the Educating Children of Military Families Act in 2017, leveraging data points to remove barriers and promote a greater success for the children of military families. She is the strongest supporter of Georgia public schools of any candidate in the race, and the only candidate on either side of the aisle who has consistently refused to undermine our public schools. As governor, Abrams will continue to fully fund our K-12 system, make major new investments in early care and learning, and expand wraparound services for our children. Abrams has released plans to make STEAM afterschool programming available in every county — in accordance with Pentagon requests for more science-ready recruits.
 - **Support Higher Education.** Abrams will strengthen our higher education system to ensure access, affordability, and relevancy of programs to meet the needs of our military bases.
4. **Respect and Support the Diversity of Our Troops.** Stacey Abrams knows our diversity is our strength in Georgia. Veterans and service members are a valuable part of that diversity.
- **Support the Women Veterans Office.** Abrams voted YES in 2016 to create women veterans' license plates (HB 736) and YES in 2017 to create the Women Veterans Office in the Georgia Dept. of Veterans Services (SB 108). We will ensure this new office has the resources needed to serve women veterans.
 - **Create the Office of Military Inclusion.** In addition to women veterans, other states have recognized the challenges facing veterans of color and LGBTQ veterans. Abrams will create the Office of Military Inclusion to coordinate specialized outreach efforts and address the health, housing, education, employment, and legal challenges of these communities.
5. **Support Veterans in Rural Communities.** Georgia veterans are more likely than nonveterans to live in rural Georgia.^{xiii} About 190,000 veterans call rural Georgia home and face many of the challenges of their rural nonveteran neighbors—lack of Internet access, long travel times to health providers, and more limited employment opportunities.^{xiv} Abrams' plans in economic development, infrastructure, health, and education address these challenges rural Georgians face.



- **Economic Development and Jobs.** As governor, Abrams will incentivize multi-jurisdictional solutions, just as we did in transportation funding. As co-founder of NOWaccount, she understands how Georgia can effectively deploy capital to under-served businesses who need small capital investment to sustain or expand. An Abrams administration will target industries we know will be job generators for rural Georgia, including agriculture and energy. Her Advanced Energy Jobs Plan sees a future for energy infrastructure in all 159 counties, which will generate 25,000 to 45,000 good jobs.
- **Infrastructure.** Abrams will invest in broadband for affordable, high speed internet access. Such access is important for military bases, rural businesses, and students. She will invest in transit for greater connectivity across the state.
- **Health.** Broadband expansion will allow greater access to tele-medicine, including tele-behavioral health. Military families deserve access to mental health services no matter their zip code. As governor, Abrams will expand Medicaid, which will save rural hospitals, produce 50,000 jobs, and strengthen our healthcare infrastructure.
- **Education.** Abrams will invest in people through education and training when she continues fully funding K-12 education, makes technical college tuition free, and increases college affordability. Her Bold Action for a Brighter Future Plan clearly states her plan to increase early care and learning opportunities in the child care deserts of rural Georgia, so each child can have a bold start and each parent have greater employment opportunities.

6. End Veteran Homelessness. Virginia, Connecticut, and Delaware, as well as Atlanta and DeKalb County have announced an end to veteran homelessness as of February 2018.^{xv} During her first term as governor, Stacey Abrams will end veteran homelessness in the state of Georgia. Georgia will examine what has worked in-state and nationwide to end homelessness for the veterans and will model a statewide funding program based on Atlanta's Homeless Opportunities Bond.^{xvi}

ⁱ <https://www2.census.gov/library/visualizations/2015/comm/vets/ga-vets.pdf>

ⁱⁱ http://www.house.ga.gov/Documents/CommitteeDocuments/2016/MilitaryAffairs/HR1135_FinalReport.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.gahousedems.com/issues>

^{iv} <http://www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/en-US/display/20152016/HB/831>

^v <http://www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/en-US/display/20152016/HB/852>

^{vi} <http://www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/en-US/display/20152016/HB/821>

^{vii} <http://www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/en-US/display/20152016/HB/814>

^{viii} <http://www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/en-US/display/20152016/HB/825>

^{ix} <http://www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/en-US/display/20152016/HB/812>

^x <http://www.ncsl.org/research/education/veterans-and-college.aspx>

^{xi} http://www.house.ga.gov/Documents/CommitteeDocuments/2016/MilitaryAffairs/HR1135_FinalReport.pdf



^{xii} https://cviog.uga.edu/_resources/documents/training-and-education/biennial-presentations/biennial-monday-belton.pdf

^{xiii} <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2017/acs/acs-36.pdf>

^{xiv} <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2017/acs/acs-36.pdf>

^{xv} <https://www.usich.gov/goals/veterans>

^{xvi} <https://www.ajc.com/news/local/city-atlanta-announces-end-veteran-homelessness/9WlyRGijAz2nLNTuNM6TEJ/>