

Military OneSource Video — Why Estate Planning Matters for Military Families

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2F7ivWNmTr4&t=2s>

Video transcript

Traci Voelke:

I met my husband, Paul, in high school. We were high school sweethearts. I was a military spouse for 14 years before he was killed in Afghanistan. After his death, I decided to dedicate my career to helping soldiers and families.

David Isom:

Over my 39 years of military service, I've seen the importance of good estate planning over and over again.

Karen Vaughn:

Having an estate plan is an absolute gift to your family because they do not have to spend the time that they're grieving wondering. That's the best thing you could ever do for them is remove all the questions.

Isom:

You can't go back in time once tragedy strikes, so you need to get a plan in place now.

Voelke:

Estate planning is essential because families are already dealing with so many different emotional needs during a death. Having this completed will help them with the ease of all of the administrative tasks they have to complete.

Vaughn:

The worst thing that can happen is something happens to you and then suddenly everybody else is left with compounded grief and compounded struggles because you didn't take care of things that you could have easily taken care of by simply planning your estate well.

Isom:

I would tell families that you need to ensure that you have an estate plan and that you've got all the important documents that you need in your life all in one place so that in the event of a tragedy, a family, a spouse, others can ensure that they've got what they need.

Voelke:

After my husband's death, it was comforting to know that he had had his will prepared in a way that helped my family know what his wishes were.

Isom:

Some service members would tell you they're too young, or they're not wealthy enough, or they don't have enough things to worry about estate planning. And the truth is everyone needs a plan.

Vaughn:

An estate plan matters no matter how young you are because you have things. You have checking accounts, you have savings accounts, you have plans that you need to make sure you share with somebody.

Isom:

The right time to start thinking about estate planning is really yesterday.

Voelke:

My advice for military families is to complete an estate planning worksheet or workbook and take it to your local legal assistance office so that they can help assist you draft your wills and powers of attorney.

Vaughn:

If you're overwhelmed by the idea of estate planning, don't be. Just take the first step. Go to Military OneSource and look up the Estate Planning Workbook. It will lead you through every single thing you need to know to do this well and to leave your family well taken care of.