

Legislative Program Action Plan – 2016-2017 Betty Slagle, Chairman

The Legislative Program provides information and assistance to American Legion Auxiliary members to advocate for the legislative agenda of The American Legion. Through lobbying efforts The American Legion and Auxiliary are able to influence legislation of benefit to veterans, to current military personnel, to the community and to our nation.

When measures important to The American Legion Family are before the lawmaking bodies for consideration, appeals go out for support on these measures. At such times the Unit members should contact their representatives urging them to take the desired action.

Many legislative activities can be worked with another chairman since they usually have to do with Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation – obtaining beneficial legislation for veterans; Children & Youth – benefitting children of veterans and children generally; National Security – securing national security measures or Americanism – obtaining the passage of measures promoting better citizenship or to curb the activities of radicals.

As a Unit member, you can subscribe to:

- The Legion's *Legislative Action Alerts* so that you receive notification when they call on Legion Family members to take immediate action on a bill.
- The Legion's *Legislative Update* to stay informed on veteran and military issues
- Visit the Legion's legislative website, www.legion.org/legislative to keep current on legislative priorities. From this website you can download "drop sheets" that you can drop at your legislator's office. The Point papers give additional info on the issues and the Legion's position.
- Put a list of legislative priorities in your Post Home and on social media.
- Identify your State and U.S. Legislators. Check to see if they have a website where you can sign-up for regular updates on their views and priorities and how they are voting. Subscribe to their newsletters and e-newsletters.
- Attend local town hall meetings to become better informed and to network with others.
- Meet with local, state and national officials to discuss issues facing veterans, service members and their families. Invite other Legion Family members to go with you.
- If you meet with your U.S. legislator or their staff, complete the Legion's Congressional Meeting Report Form. The form is available at www.legion.org/legislative/aar.
- Be sure you let your Unit, District and Department Chairman know all contacts. Be sure to keep copies of communications from your legislator to forward with your Mid-Year and Year-End reports.

You can also download or print the *American Legion Auxiliary Legislative Advocacy Guide*. This is designed to help members in building relationships with local and national legislators and provides a wealth of information covering many important issues including setting up visits with legislators, communicating with elected and appointed officials, sample letters written to express ideas and opinions and advocating for veterans. It also lists informative websites and phone numbers.

You may also wish to subscribe to the American Legion's publication, *The Dispatch*. If interested, subscribe online for the e-newsletter at www.legion.org/dispatch.

When word is received from The American Legion Department and National Legislative Committees, information will be forwarded to the District Chairmen. Unit Chairmen will be advised through the monthly mailings on bills of concern to the Legion Family.

Legislative Reporting

Mid-Year Reports

- Unit Mid-Year reports due to the District Legislative Chairman by December 1st, 2016.
- The District combined Mid-Year report due to the Department Chairman by December 15th, 2016.

Annual Reports

- Unit Annual reports due to the District Legislative Chairman by April 15th, 2017.
- The District combined Annual report due to the Department Chairman by May 1st, 2017.

National Awards

Unit Legislative Award – Citation (1 in each division)

- For the most outstanding overall legislative program in the division.
- Each entry must be typewritten in narrative form and must tell the story of legislative activism and how it made a difference in the lives of veterans and their families.
- Include pictures and newspaper articles.
- Units should submit the entry to their Department Chairman by May 1st, 2017.
- Attach an award cover sheet, including the name of the award, the name and contact information for the Department and Unit Legislative Chairman.

Department Awards

- **The Jean Buyer Legislative Excellence Award Revolving Plaque** to the District with the Best Legislative Program.

Additional Resources, You Can Use

- “How to Host a Meet the Candidate” Night – enclosed in this packet
- Visit www.ALAforVeterans.org on the Legislative page:
 - ALA Legislative Advocacy Guide
 - How to Fill out the Congressional Contact Form
 - How to Contact Legislators to advocate for veterans, service members and their families.
- Visit www.legion.org/legislative - The American Legion’s Legislative Center
 - Legislative Testimony Information
 - Point Papers, Priority Sheets, Letters of Support
 - Congressional Contact Report Form
- Follow us on Facebook
 - ALA National Headquarters: www.facebook.com/ALAforVeterans
 - ALA Legislative Facebook group: www.facebook.com/groups/2013alalegislativecommittee search for “ALA National Legislative Group Page”

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