

American Legion Legislative Program

Narrative

2014-2015

Screen 1:

American Legion family works together to support all veterans and military families.

The American Legion Auxiliary supports the initiatives outlined by the American Legion.

Screen 2:

Committee Members: ~~Kathie Coughlin~~ Dawn Burgess
and Pat Clark

~~Kathie's focus will be on Florida legislation, while I will focus on National legislation.~~

Screen 3:

National Presidents Theme: Celebrating Faith, Family and Freedom

Our most basic instinct is not for survival but for family. Most of us would give our own life for the survival of a family member, yet we lead our daily life too often as if we take our family for granted
Paul Pearshall quotes

I chose this quote because to me it represents all that we fight for and all that freedom really means to us. There are many definitions of family, traditional, nuclear, extended and so on. The Legion organization identifies itself as a family. We work together for the purpose and the good of all. Let's remember that goal this year and work as a family in support of one-another.

Erna's theme for the Department is "Lighting the way for Veterans" With all of the news coverage regarding the lack of care for our Veterans I am sure many of them feel left in the dark. For those who have served in combat the dark is a scary place to be. Let's get our Veterans back into the light. We need to let them know they have not been forgotten. They need us, all of us, to advocate for their needs. Let's not let them down!

Screen 4:

The national chairmen have reformatted the plan of action for this year. I love. It is much easier to read and understand. The first question on the plan of action is "**What is the program, and why do we have it?**" Great question and good place to start!

The Legislative Program provides information and assistance to American Legion Auxiliary members to advocate for the legislative agenda of The American Legion.

Screen 5

The next question is: **What can you do?**

Again great question and right to the point. What can I do to help the legislative initiative?

1. Encourage members to be more knowledgeable about The American Legion's legislative priorities.

Well how can I do that?

- a. Download the *American Legion Auxiliary Legislative Advocacy Guide* and distribute them to Unit members (ALAforVeterans.org)
- b. Sign up to receive emails using <http://capwiz.com/legion/mlm/signup/>
- c. Watch for Legislative News and updates in the Communique published monthly.
- d. Visit the Legion's website, www.legion.org/legislative, to keep current on legislative priorities.

Find out who the Legislative chairman is for the Legion at the post and district level and talk with them. Ask them to pass along important information so you can pass the information on to your members.

2. Encourage and empower American Legion Auxiliary members to take action on the legislative priorities of The American Legion.

- a. Invite congressmen and local officials to Auxiliary events; invite them to speak at a meeting. Let them know the accomplishments of the American Legion Auxiliary as the largest women's patriotic service organization in the world. Please remember we are a non-partisan organization, do not limit yourselves to one political group. If you plan to invite individuals running for office (no matter what level) to speak at a meeting, you must extend the invitation to all individuals running for that office.
- b. VOTE for candidates who support initiatives and programs for Veteran's and military personnel.
- c. In your Unit or District newsletter, include an update of The American Legion initiatives. At Unit meetings, report to members on The American Legion legislative issues.
- d. Advocate for Veteran's and military families by writing to your State and Federal Senators and Representatives. Attend local government meetings. Let your community know how important our Veterans and active duty military are by advocating for services that can improve their lives.

Screen 6

Now that you have done all the work, you ask, "How can I win an award"?

There are 2 Department Awards

1. A plaque will be presented to the Unit Chairman reporting the **Most Outstanding Overall Legislative program** (through a narrative report). Entry must be typewritten in narrative form, not to exceed 500 words. All entries must be sent to the Department Chairman to be received 30 days prior to Department Convention. You are encouraged to include pictures and newspaper articles.

Fly leaf cover: Name of the Award, Unit Name, number and location, name of the Unit Legislative Chairman, and name of the Unit President.

2. A plaque will be presented to the Unit submitting the most Legislative activity on the year-end report form.

See Plan of Action for Details

There are 2 Unit Awards at the National Level

Unit Award: Unit Legislative Award

Type of Award: Citation

Presented to: One unit chairman in each division (5 overall awards)

Materials and Guidelines:

- Entries must include the award cover sheet located in this Plan.
- For the most outstanding overall legislative program in the division.
- Each entry must be typewritten in narrative form, not to exceed 500 words, 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 newspapers articles.
- All entries must sent to the national division legislative chairman postmarked by June 1, 2015 or by email sent by 5pm EST on June 1, 2015, and copy the national legislative chairman. The addresses can be found on the front page of this legislative plan.

Unit Award: Million Membership Award

Type of Award: Citation Plaque

Presented to: One unit chairman in each division (5 overall awards)

Materials and Guidelines:

- Entries must include the award cover sheet located in this Plan.
- For the best demonstration on how working the mission of the legislative committee engaged, retained and attracted members to grow membership in the unit.
- Each entry must be typewritten in narrative form, not to exceed 500 words, 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 newspapers articles.
- All entries are due to the National Vice Chairman Grafton Day postmarked by June 1, 2015 or by email sent by 5pm EST on June 1, 2015, and copy the national legislative chairman. The address can be found on the front page of this legislative plan.

ALL INFORMATION IS INCLUDED IN THE PLAN OF ACTION. DISTRICT CHAIRMEN PLEASE MAKE SURE YOUR UNIT CHAIRMAN RECEIVES THE INFORMATION.

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There are numerous resources listed in the Plan of Action. In addition, information will be included monthly in the Communiqué.

Who knows what HB7015 is? House Bill for the Florida GI Bill.

SB7020? Senate Bill which is the companion bill for Florida GI Bill

Ask for a volunteer from the audience. Role play taking to a Congressman.

My state Representative is Mike La Rosa, State Senator Denise Grimsley

State Congressman is Tom Rooney

US Senator Bill Nelson and Marco Rubio

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Reports

Midterm Unit Legislative Report: Send your Unit's midterm activities to your **District Chairman** by December 1st, 2014 (see Midterm Unit Report attached).

Midterm District Legislative Report: District Chairman; send your Midterm District report (consolidated from Unit reports) to the Department Legislative Chairman by Dec. 15th, 2014 (see Midterm District Report attached).

Year-end Unit Legislative Report: Send your Year-end Unit Legislative Report to your **District Chairman** by April 1, 2015

Year-end District Legislative Report: Send your District Year-end Report (consolidated from the Unit Year-end reports) to the Department Legislative Chairman by April 15th, 2015

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I need the names of each District Legislative Chairman so I can get information out to you. Please sign my notebook at the Legislative Display Board indicating you are the legislative chairman. Include your name, phone number and email address. IF you do not use the computer please include your mailing address.

I like to do most of my communication via email. My email is legislative@al afl.org

Anyone else interested in receiving email updates regarding legislative issues please email me and request to be added to my email list. My contact information is included in the Unit Guide and the plan of action.

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ANY QUESTIONS????

"The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional to how they perceive the Veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by their nation."

President George Washington

Please let us be a shining example of appreciation and advocacy for our veterans and military families.

In the Spirit of Service not Self for Veterans, God, and Country