

Legislative Program Action Plan 2018-2019

Call to Action

- Visit www.legion.org/legislative to keep current on legislative priorities. Download the Legion's legislative priority sheets and point papers.
 - The priority/drop sheets outline the Legion's priorities and you can “**drop**” these in your elected official's office.
 - The point papers provide more information on the issues and the Legion's position on them.
- Actively post the American Legion families legislative priorities on social media.
- Identify and contact your U.S. Representative and two U.S. Senators to build a relationship with these individuals and their staff members.
- Complete the **Congressional Meeting Report Form** following any meeting with your U.S. Representative, U.S. Senator or their staff members. Visit www.legion.org/legislative/aar to complete the form and give a copy to your Unit Chairman.
- Subscribe to e-newsletters of your elected officials to monitor what they consider to be vital to our veterans, military families and national security issues. Follow each elected officials' website and follow them on social media.
- Connect with other civic and community organizations to rally support for the American Legion's legislative priorities and potential American Legion Family membership opportunities.
- Attend local town hall meetings to become better informed and to network within your community.
- If possible, meet with state and national-level public officials to discuss issues facing veterans and their families. Remember, there is strength in numbers, attend as a Legion Family.
- Please contact your Department Chairman or Department President if you have a personal or professional relationship with a U.S. Representative or U.S. Senator that serves on the Veterans Affairs committee and you'd be willing to participate in the ALA Veterans Affairs Legislative Mini-Council. Each of these members should be willing to contact the officials when called to take action by the Legion on an issue.

Unit Initiatives

- Send a letter of introduction to local, state and national level officials introducing yourself as an American Legion Auxiliary representative. (template included)
- Follow us on the ALA Facebook page, search “**ALA National Legislative Group**” auxiliary members must ask to join.
- Distribute and utilize the **ALA Legislative Advocacy Guide** to your Unit members and discuss the legislative process.
- Invite a local or state official's staff member (both parties) to your unit meeting to explain the best way to contact the official.

- Include legislative issues in unit communications, (newsletters, bulletin boards, and social media.)
- Work with your Legion counterpart to plan for a Legion Family meeting with elected officials.
- Emphasize a different legislative priority each month. Draft a letter concerning that issue and have Unit members sign, to communicate the importance of the legislation related to veterans and their families. Send to your elected officials. Check **Legislative Action Alerts** for any pressing priorities.
- Invite your Department Chairman to a Unit meeting to explain how the department initiates legislative advocacy and how each unit can play a role.
- Work with you Legion Family to host a “Meet the Candidate/Official” night. Make veterans, military, health, budget and funding, women veterans, and patriotism the focus of your discussion. (See “How To” sheet for details.)
- Encourage all Unit members to sign-up for **National’s Legislative e-mail blast**. Contact your Department Chairman Shirley Fashano at legislative@alaf1.org

Legislative Petition

American Flag Protection Act – The American Legion Family strongly believes the flag is a symbol of our nation’s freedom and all that we hold in common as Americans, secured by the servicemen and women who sacrificed so much for all citizens. To support this initiative, have a petition drive within your community. The petition is in the Program Action Plan or can be downloaded from Citizens Flag Alliance.

POW/MIA Stamp Act – In order to continue to honor the sacrifices of the brave men and women of the Armed Forces who have been prisoner, missing or unaccounted for the Postmaster General shall provide for the issuance of a forever stamp. Go to www.congress.gov/bill/115thcongress/house-bill/2765 to learn more. I have included a petition form so that your American Legion Family can **TAKE ACTION**.

Legislative Action Alert

The American Legion 100th Anniversary Commemorative Coin Act – This legislation will honor the Legion for its’ 100 years of service to our nation’s heroes. The U.S. Mint will issue a variety of special limited edition commemorative coins available in 2019. The Senate passed this bill on August 3, 2017. Contact your U.S. House of Representatives to encourage them to support this legislation.

Legislative Reporting

Mid-year and year-end reports reflect your efforts and accomplishments through-out the year.

As part of your narrative report, please include answers to the following questions:

1. How did you educate members in the legislative issues promoted by The American Legion and how did your members employ those methods?
2. What legislative activities (town hall meetings, legislative receptions) did members attend in their communities and departments? What suggestions did members have to improve those activities? Please describe.
3. How did members develop relationships with their elected officials? Please describe.
4. Please describe how members were able to connect with their local and state officials and what were their successes.

Unit mid-year reports are due **December 1, 2018** to your District Chairman. Please include a list detailing your efforts. **District** mid-year reports and lists are due to the Department Chairman by **December 15, 2018**.

Year-End Reports

Unit year-end reports are due **April 1, 2019** to your District Chairman. Please include a list detailing your accomplishments and project photos. **District** year-end reports and lists are due to the Department Chairman by **April 15, 2019**.

Legislative Awards

DEPARTMENT CHAIRMAN AWARD

Flying Eagle Award

Taking time to share your story about the positive impact your Unit had on our mission is worth doing. It helps us tell the world who we are, what we do and why we matter.

Guidelines:

This Unit Chairman Award will be given at the 2019 Department Convention. **You must have all information to Department Legislative Chair 30 days prior to Convention (May 28th, 2019.)** The Unit Legislative Chair with the most Chips received will win the Flying Eagle Award. **You will not be eligible without your year-end written narrative.**

100 Chips awarded for each of the items below that you have completed:

Holding a meet and greet (copy of flyer, invitation, and a photo must be attached.)

Hold a mock debate (can be as simple as which is a better color pink or yellow)

Volunteering at the polls, (elections in November)

Speaking at a county meeting

Speaking at a city meeting

50 Chips awarded for each of the items below that you have completed:

Call to action (copy of the email reply from the Elected Official)

Attendance of county meetings

Attendance of city meetings

An innovated idea of your own to promote a Bill of the 115th Congressional meetings

Submitting ideas to Department Chair for the Department Newsletter

Involve your Unit or District Public Relation Chair at any of the above events (articles, photos, press release, etc.)

**Mail to: Shirley Fashano
521 Palmetto Drive
Melbourne FL 32935**

Email to: legislative@alaf1.org

Questions: 321-652-4434

NATIONAL

Unit Award: Unit Legislative Award

Type of Award: Citation

Presented to: One Unit in each Division (5 overall awards)

Materials and Guidelines:

- Entries must include the award cover sheet located in this program plan.
- 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 news articles.
- Units must submit their entry to the Department Chairman by May 15, 2018
- Attach a cover sheet, including the name of award and name and contact information for the Department and Unit Legislative Chairman.

Additional Resources You Can Use

1. 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, Servicemembers and their Families
2. www.legion.org/legislative (The American Legion's Legislative Center)
 - Legislative Testimony Information
 - Point Paper, Priority Sheets, Letters of Support
 - Congressional Contact Report Form

Follow us on Facebook:

- ALA National Headquarters: www.facebook.com/ALAforVeterans
- ALA Legislative Facebook group: search for "**ALA National Legislative Group**" auxiliary members must ask to join.

How to Host a “Meet the Candidate” Night

Contact information for questions: legislative@ALAforveterans.org

Step-by-Step Instructions:

A “Meet the Candidate” night is a question and answer session where all candidates for a specific election are invited to answer questions. **It is not intended to be a debate.**

Suggested Date of Event: 2-3 weeks before elections

3 Months Prior to the Event

1. In an effort to make this a Legion Family event, work with your Legion post, SAL squadron and Riders chapter (if applicable) to form a planning committee. If this isn't a family event the unit president should appoint a planning committee to work with the Legislative Chairman. Identify a place, date and time for the event. Plan advertising and public relations. Think about refreshments: will they be donated or will you buy them. Set guidelines for candidates about literature, political signs and handouts.
 - If the place is the post home, ensure you have approval for the space and it's on the calendar. Determine if your post allows political material to be displayed on post property.
2. After the candidate filling date has passed, pull a list of candidates from your states' election board or Supervisor of Elections' website. Prepare a spreadsheet of all ballot-ready candidates who will be invited. List their name, address, phone, email, party and office. Allow ample time to contact them and receive their response.
3. Mail and email invitation letters with chairman contact information and the deadline to reply. Remember, The Legion Family is nonpartisan, so you need to **invite all candidates**. Follow up periodically with candidates who have not replied. Suggest to the candidate they send another representative if there is a conflict in their scheduling.

2 Months Prior to the Event

1. The planning committee arranges for volunteers:
 - Moderator (1) – Someone impartial and ideally not part of the American Legion Family, such as a local news reporter or radio host or someone known and respected in the community. Using someone on TV or radio ensures that it will be announced on TV/radio.
 - Timekeeper (1) – To keep everyone on track. Each candidate should get an equal amount of time each round.
 - Legion Family Ambassadors (Several) – To man a table on programs, services and membership opportunities your Legion Family offers.
 - Servers (Several) – Have a team of volunteers to serve refreshments.

- Crowd Control (Several) – Volunteers to ensure that no one gets out of control. (Legion Family Sgt.-at-Arms possibly)
 - Screeners (Several) – Volunteers to collect and review questions from attendees. Selected questions will be given to the moderator for a Q&A period.
Note: Candidates can stay after to talk with attendees and address issues.
 - Public Relations Coordinator (1) – Someone who will ensure that the event is advertised in local newspapers, social media, websites and any other media outlet. (A team can be formed)
2. The planning committee sets an agenda and how the event will proceed. Depending on the number of candidates in attendance, allow time for opening and closing speeches for each (2-3minutes.) After opening speeches and introductions, the moderator will ask for questions (that have been screened.)
 - If question is to a particular candidate, allow 1-2 minutes for the answer and allow opposing candidate the same amount of time. There should be no rebuttals.
 - If it is a general question, the moderator can ask any candidate to address it, but again only 1-2 minutes per candidate.

Day of Event

1. Set up the room with the candidates in the front of the audience.
2. Prepare tent cards for all candidates with their name, party and the office their seeking. You may wish to seat alphabetically in an effort to not show favoritism.
3. Set up a table to talk about the programs, services and membership opportunities your Legion Family offers.
4. Set-up a table for voter registration. Members of our Americanism committee could man this table. Or you could invite an outside organization i.e. League of Women Voters.

After the Event

1. Follow-up with thank you notes to all candidates who participated.
2. If media did not attend, work with Public Relations chairman to send pictures to be published and post on social media.