

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

Madeline “Maddie” Cunningham-Colston
2026 – 2027 Department Chairman

This is an election year: the Legislative Program may just be the easiest Program to support in the entire Auxiliary. We are, fundamentally, a nation of laws. The Legislative Program celebrates this foundational element by helping the Auxiliary to be advocates for legislation that promotes and elevates veterans’ affairs. All 435 seats in the House of Representatives are up for election this year. Of the 100 U.S. Senate seats, 33 are up for grabs and governors will be chosen in 36 states. Thousands of state-level senators and representatives will be voted in, or out, of office, as well.

The candidates are listening: you can make your voice heard and tell our legislators that you care about veterans’ issues and you expect them to do the same.

After all, our veterans, active service members, and their families have sacrificed much to protect America – they should get the best it has to give back to them. We can help make that happen.

Kim McWilliams, the Legislative Program National Ambassador, says the focus of the Legislative Program this year is on being the voice of our veterans: become involved both individually AND collectively with your Auxiliary members and your community.

This year, the Department will host a training program on the legislative process, citizen advocacy and how to communicate with your elected officials, using the Auxiliary’s “Guide to the Legislative Process” and the “Guide on Contacting Your Legislators” as well as other materials from the national website to help members learn more about how to communicate with our elected officials. We also plan to take part in the “VFW Legislative Day” activities at the state capitol in Sacramento.

We have some excellent tools at hand to help us articulate our message: the **VFW Priority Goals** and the **VFW Action Corps Weekly**. Each year, the VFW publishes the **VFW Priority Goals**. Every candidate for the House and Senate should be given a copy of this one-page document. This simple document lays out the principal issues, concerns and initiatives the VFW wants our legislators and the Veterans Administration to address, based on resolutions passed by the VFW. The 2026 **VFW Priority Goals** is the first of three key elements of the Legislative Program this year. These **Goals** are grouped into six areas of concern:

- ✓ Budget
- ✓ Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs
- ✓ Education, Employment and Transition Assistance
- ✓ National Security, Foreign Affairs and POW/MIA
- ✓ Health Care
- ✓ Military Readiness

The **VFW Action Corps Weekly** is a free, short newsletter, in which the VFW's Washington Office summarizes (in plain English) all legislative activity affecting veterans, active service members and their families. This is one of the best tools we have to educate our members about veterans' concerns, and about where we want our legislators to focus *their* attention and support.

- Note: When the **Action Corps Weekly** sends you an "Action Alert," it's a call to action to tell our legislators by letter / e-mail / fax / phone call of the position we want them to take on a particular bill in Congress. As our elected representatives, we can and should hold them accountable if they do not share our views. The **Action Corps** website has a wonderfully simple tool that has short notes *already drafted* to send your legislators (based on your Zip Code) about pressing issues. You can edit it as you wish, and send it electronically in seconds, or you can print out the notes for mailing to share with those who do not have Internet connectivity. In whatever way you choose, you can make your voice be heard and be counted, and thereby have an influence.

The VFW and the Student Veterans of America (SVA) annually host the VFW-SVA Legislative Fellowship, in which student veterans are afforded the opportunity to make their voices heard on with their Congress members and take part in educating the leadership from the committees responsible for veterans' issues.

RESOURCES and WEBSITES:

VFW Priority Goals:	VFW Priority Goals
VFW Action Corps Weekly:	VFW Action Corps Weekly Sign-Up Sheet
"Guide to the Legislative Process"	VFW Auxiliary Guide to the Legislative Process
"Guide to Contacting Your Legislators"	VFW Auxiliary Guide to Contacting Your Legislators
"VFW Auxiliary Involvement in Elections & Political Activities"	VFW Auxiliary Involvement in Elections & Political Activities

[U. S. House of Representatives](#)

[U. S. Senate](#)

[The White House](#)

[Congress.gov | Library of Congress](#)

[National Archives – Legislative Branch: The Center for Legislative Archives](#)

Awards for Auxiliaries:

1. Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the 10 Program Divisions with the largest increase in new VFW Action Corps Weekly sign-ups from the community and new VFW Auxiliary members.
 - a. Entry form is required and available in MALTA Member Resources
 - b. VFW Auxiliary must send the required entry form to the Department Legislative Chairman by March 31, 2027 for judging.
 - c. The Department Legislative Chairman must sign and send a copy of the completed Department-winning entry form to the National Legislative Ambassador by April 30, 2027 for judging
 - d. Citations will be mailed directly to winning VFW Auxiliaries from National Headquarters and money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

2. A “Legacy Award” will be issued to one member or Auxiliary for the Outstanding Promotion of the Program.

Awards for Departments and Department Chairmen:

1. Citation and \$25 to one Department Legislative Chairman in each of the 10 Program Divisions with the best promotion for educating members on how to talk to legislative representatives.

Winners will be announced, and citations presented at the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention. Money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary Department account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention for disbursement to the winning VFW Auxiliary Department Chairman.

2. The Outstanding Performance Award and Second-Place Outstanding Performance Award will be awarded in each of the 10 Program Divisions based on the criteria listed on page 5 and for the promotion of the Ambassador’s Program goals.

Winners will be announced, and citations presented at the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention. Money will be deposited into the VFW Auxiliary Department account after the 2027 VFW Auxiliary National Convention.

Please don’t hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or comments – I am happy to help!

Cordially,

Maddie

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