

AUGUST LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM PROMOTION

**MADDIE CUNNINGHAM-COLSTON
2026-2027 DEPARTMENT CHAIRMAN**

Do Your Elected Officials Know Your Name? If not, we're going to change that with a "Auxiliary Legislative Day" with your legislators.

Dear California Auxiliary,

As a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary, you have some instant credibility with legislators when talking about veterans' welfare. You are in a great position to share your stories with your respective local or national lawmakers to help them understand our needs so they can better craft and shape legislation that benefits veterans and their families. If your legislators don't know who you are yet, we're going to help you change that by organizing a "VFW Auxiliary Legislative Day" in your respective legislative districts so you can easily lend your voice to identify our issues and concerns.

This year is an election year. Never forget that your elected officials are your employees – you pay their wages with your tax dollars. The expectation is that they will represent their constituents in the State Assembly, State Senate or Congressional House of Representatives. They cannot represent you properly if they don't know who you are or what you need them to do on behalf of our veterans and families.

The emphasis on the "Auxiliary Legislative Day" is that it is organized and sponsored by the Auxiliary. The Post members and folks from the community are welcome, but the coordinating should be done by Auxiliary members. For many of you, it would make perfect sense to team up with other Auxiliaries in your District or region to invite your elected officials to a central location in your region, and invite the community in, too.

I asked the Congressional Representative for my own Post about HOW she wanted to hear from our members. Congresswoman Maxine Waters, D-43, told me that she wants members to tell her:

- their stories,
- identify any problem(s) and
- tell her what is *missing* in the current situation.

In some cases, the incumbent elected officials are not running for another term. In these situations, the Auxiliaries could join up to host a "Meet The Candidates" forum and

provide the opportunity to speak with them, share your stories and ask what they plan to do for veterans. Within your Districts, reach out to the other Auxiliaries to see what makes sense for your specific area, state or Congressional district, and candidates.

Please start thinking about this now. I will have more to share in a few weeks. In the meantime, I want to remind everyone that when you welcome a new member, the first thing you should show them is the QR code for signing up to receive the *Action Corps Weekly* (ACW) so that they can begin to be involved right away in the Auxiliary's cause.

Just aim your phone's camera at the QR code and when it reads "www.votervoice.net" below the image, tap that link. You'll be taken directly to the sign-up box to enter your name, address and email so that you can receive the *Action Corps Weekly* and the "Action Alerts" our VFW leaders in Washington occasionally send when they need the members to act.



When you receive your ACW email, be sure to open it. If there are "Action Alerts" from our leaders in the VFW, you can select a pre-written response that will be sent to your elected officials, based on your zip code. If you have not seen one in a while, you should visit the VFW.ORG site and select "Advocacy" to make sure you have not missed any.

As always, remember to report any new ACW sign-ups and any other interactions you have with elected officials at any level. Please don't hesitate to call or drop me a note if you have any questions.

Cordially,

Madeline "Maddie" Cunningham-Colston
26-27 Department Legislative Program Chairman
310 / 387-7906
maddiec2@att.net