

LEGISLATIVE AMBASSADOR



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Your role as Most Valuable Player (MVP) for veterans, families and legislators is invaluable while ***Serving America's Heroes.***

As Auxiliary members, we have the capability of making a difference with the VFW's Legislative Priority Goals. As family members, we need to be the voice of our veterans.

We currently have nearly 480,000 members. Let's elevate our town hall meetings. As the voice of our veterans, we need to demonstrate to our legislators the significance of supporting those who have served our country. The priorities of the VFW are crucial for ensuring that our veterans receive the care and recognition they were promised.

Auxiliary Legislative Day

Organize an Auxiliary Legislative Day within your Department to provide Auxiliary members with the ability to discuss how VFW priorities impact not only veterans, but also their families. This event will foster understanding of and the implications of these priorities, ensuring the voices of both veterans and their loved ones are heard and considered.

A terrific way to do this is by arranging a meeting with your legislative representatives at the state capital or even within the Auxiliary Department. Get creative to ensure that your members can easily access their legislators, especially for those who might find it challenging to travel long distances to the capital. This can be accomplished by working closely with your Department Chairman.

It's crucial for lawmakers to hear the stories of the veterans' families as this will help them grasp the significance of our priorities. Standing alongside the VFW and on our own day, speaking to legislators, we can influence how they perceive the needs of our veterans, emphasizing that they deserve improved care and benefits after they serve our country.

For your Auxiliary to host a Legislative Day will take a lot of planning and cooperation. Check with your state's legislation for all the important dates and schedule ample time for your group to make your plan of action.

How to Speak to a Legislator

Understanding how to communicate with your representative about VFW priorities is crucial. Know your VFW priorities, not just the name of the bill. Show your legislators you are invested in your veterans' needs. Share with your Chairman the importance of each bill. It is important to train them on how to effectively communicate with representatives. This support can empower individuals to express their needs and concerns clearly.

When we support the VFW, whether at the state level or in Washington, D.C., it's important to remember that they are the ones taking the lead. That we are then in a supportive role. The turnout at these events is also significant, as it reflects our commitment and solidarity. When speaking, always remember to:

- Be clear.
- Be precise.
- Be courteous.
- Know the talking points.
- Tell your story.
- Make the "ask" - formally request the legislator's support.
- Take notes on their responses.
- Thank them.

Veteran Advocacy Resources

It is important to provide Auxiliaries, Chairman and families with resources to be successful when speaking on veterans' issues. You can conduct a legislative training session during a Department or District meeting or opt for a virtual meeting on a service like Zoom or Teams. Empower them with the skills to be great advocates while engaging with our lawmakers.

Remember to use all your resources including:

- VFW Priority Goals
- Member Resources in MALTA
- House.gov
- Congress.gov
- Local state government websites
- VFW Action Corps Weekly

VFW Action Corps Weekly is an excellent resource for keeping everyone updated on legislative matters. You can easily register community members at your events by using the QR code provided. Whenever you welcome a new member, make sure to sign them up right away.

See the Legislative awards on page 35 for more information.

#Auxlegislative





LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

Be An Advocate • Be Informed • Be Engaged

One of the main objectives of the Legislative Program is to improve the lives of our veterans, service members and their families through advocacy. Your efforts, combined with nearly 1.5 million other VFW and VFW Auxiliary members, can influence lawmakers whose decisions affect veterans and their families every day.

Study the issues laid out clearly in the VFW Priority Goals. The VFW focuses on these to strengthen and ensure an adequate VA system for millions of current and future veterans.

The goals are grouped under six areas of concern:

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

The legislative goals are released in January of each year by the VFW on the VFW National website:

<https://www.vfw.org/advocacy/national-legislative-service>

VFW Action Corps Weekly

To access VFW Action Corps Weekly current and archived editions go to the VFW National website at:

<https://www.vfw.org/advocacy/grassroots-efforts/vfw-action-corps-weekly>

You can subscribe to VFW Action Corps Weekly here:

<http://votervoice.net/VFW/register>

To identify your congressional representatives, visit the VFW website at:

<https://votervoice.net/VFW/Address>

Step by Step—A Bill

To follow the progress of a specific bill through the stages of the legislative process by its number or by a key word or phrase go to:

<https://www.congress.gov/>

VFW in D.C.

The VFW and VFW Auxiliary advocate for veterans by testifying at hearings, interacting with Congress, and fighting for justice. By testifying at committee hearings and interacting with congressional members, the VFW has played an instrumental role in nearly every piece of veterans' legislation passed in the 20th Century as well as bills developed in the 21st Century.

One of the most crucial responsibilities of the VFW Washington, D.C. office is to actively lobby Congress and the administration on behalf of veterans. The office monitors all legislation affecting veterans and alerts VFW and VFW Auxiliary members about key legislation under consideration.

The VFW's Washington, D.C. office operates under the National Legislative Service, and you can find information about their advocacy and legislative efforts on the main VFW website, specifically under the Advocacy section at vfw.org/advocacy.

To contact the D.C. office:

Phone: 202-543-2239

Mail: 200 Maryland Ave., N.E.

Washington, D.C. 20002

VFW-SVA Legislative Fellowship

To continue empowering tomorrow's leaders, the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and Student Veterans of America (SVA) hosts the VFW-SVA Legislative Fellowship, providing exemplary student veterans the opportunity to make their voices heard on Capitol Hill and in their community. This program has been held annually since 2014.

During the VFW event, they will engage with Congress members, educating them on the challenges faced by today's veterans. Fellows can also join VFW advocates from their respective states and form teams to directly meet with the leadership from the committees responsible for veterans' issues, including the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees.

For rules and eligibility, visit the VFW website at: <https://www.vfw.org/assistance/student-veterans/support/student-fellowship>

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM AWARDS

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.

Entry form is required and available in MALTA Member Resources.

VFW Auxiliaries must send the required entry form to the Department Legislative Chairman by March 31, 2027 for judging.

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.

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.

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 will be 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 awards will be 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.