

Legislative Promotion #2 | October 2023  
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I am so delighted to see Legislative Chairs starting our year off with so much energy. As our National President Carla Martinez's theme for 2023-2024 is:

***BANDING TOGETHER FOR OUR VETERNS***

I am finding so many of the Department Legislative Chairmen are following her theme. It's fair to say that due to the Legislative activities of numerous Department Chairmen in sharing information with their Auxiliary members in reports, we have participated in success of passage of legislation beneficial to all veterans and their families.

Department Legislative Chairs you are the guides to your Auxiliaries on legislative issues. We all believe in the mission of our Auxiliary, which is to serve and improve the lives of veterans, service members and their families, and our communities.

I have received reports from numerous Chairs about your reaching out to your legislators concerning veterans' issues, holding town hall meetings to inform members of the Priority Goals, and signing up for Action Corps, etc. I have enjoyed reading your reports and appreciate your promoting this Program.

A great deal of thanks for your advocacy and actions taken to help our veterans and their families.

**Suicide Prevention**

Many of you helped the Suicide Prevention Hotline Designation Act of 2020 become a reality. Signed into law in October 2020, 988 became a national resource/crisis hotline for anyone considering harming themselves or for the families of veterans in crisis, to get help before the threat ends in a very bad situation. By dialing 988, and pressing 1, a veteran in crisis can receive help, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It is good to remember and to share; someone is always listening.

**Legislation to watch**

There are several bills in the House and Senate that is imperative that we educate and have our members become active in achieving our elected representatives' support. All are listed on the vfw.org website in Legislative Priority Goals and in the subparagraphs of pending and current legislation.

While there are too many to list here, many are certainly necessary for our watchful eyes.



- ✓ Major Richard Star Act 2023 – Still a top priority issue.  
A proposed legislation that would allow combat-wounded veterans who are medically retired before serving 20 years to concurrently receive military retirement and disability pay, without offsets.
- ✓ Camp Lejeune Justice Act of 2022 – It is important that our veterans and their families know that if they are awarded compensation by the courts, their VA disability compensation is not affected. So, if they are in the Camp Lejeune category, they should apply for the benefit.

- ✓ Women Veterans Issues – It is imperative that we are alert for any legislation affecting the health care or any other benefits afforded women for their military service. Legislative Chairs, I encourage you to make sure our members are educated and up to date on all legislative issues regarding our veteran men and women and how to take necessary action to ensure Legislator support.

## **Legislative Program**

### **Promotes the VFW Priority Goals**

It is important to not only set our goals and display a united front but also to make sure our members understand what the impact will be for our veterans, and their families, that we support. Collaborate to increase your own knowledge and understanding. Being visible in our legislative communities, both state and federal, is important and is a responsibility each of us should share and undertake. It should be a part of the mission of our Legislative Chairmen to ensure our members fully understand.

### **Make it personal**

One of the most personal things we can do is vote. No one can do it for us. It is something that only we can do for ourselves. It is imperative that we as Auxiliary members are registered to vote and that we encourage all who are eligible to register. Next step is to understand pending legislation and cast our votes.

VFW Auxiliary members are instrumental in aiding the VFW to pass or block legislation that impacts veterans and their families. Each year, members contact legislators to share our views regarding such legislation with them and invite them to share their positions on veterans' issues; we hold legislators accountable for honoring America's promises to our nation's veterans. Chairs, I believe our members are up to the task.