

LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

2023-2024



William Siperek

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JR Vice President

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As members of the VFW Auxiliary, we celebrate and appreciate the legislative victories that we, as an organization, helped bring about to better serve all veterans. Much has been accomplished, yet there is so much more to do this year. Please help the department of Maryland's team M&M to support the VFW legislative goals.

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 Auxiliary members, can influence lawmakers whose decisions affect veterans and their families every day. Join the chorus of voices that will ring out in legislators' offices this year. Study the issues laid out clearly in the VFW Priority Goals. A copy can be found in MALTA Member Resources

The first important step is communicating the goals and available resources from the national ambassadors to the Auxiliary chairman. Then the chairmen will send reports of auxiliary events that support legislative goals. Finally the participating auxiliaries will each get a certificate from National and the best report as judged by the department will be forwarded to National judging.

- President's need to
 - Forward the Legislative Chairman's contact information to my EMAIL, Provide "Name", "Phone number", "EMAIL", and "Postal Address".
 - Give the chairmen a copy of the Dept Legislative By-Monthly mailers.
 - Make sure the chairmen is reporting at the meetings and sending them to me.
 - Current Priority Goals, and how they effect veterans , service members and families.
 - Status of bills making way in state or federal legislation.
 - Auxiliary legislative events.

- Legislative Chairmen
 - Please fill out reports completely, especially the monthly totals for hours, cost, mileage and number of volunteers. The report form is the last page.
 - Read the Dept legislative Bi-Monthly Mailers for updates and bonus information for reporting.
 - Use MALTA to
 - Find legislative resources.
 - Read The National Ambassador's goals and Award programs
 - Read VFW Priority Legislative goals.
 - Log into MALTA
 - Select Member Resources
 - Select Legislative
 - Action Corps Weekly
 - Ambassador Presentation National Convention
 - Auxiliary Legislation Tools and Resources
 - Legislative Websites
 - VFW Legislative Resources
 - Contact me if you have any questions on reporting or planning events.

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 the men and women 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 our legislative goals.

What can we do

- Create good relationships with our elected officials and their staff to understand their positions for specific legislation and their reasons for taking that position.
- When communicating with elected officials and candidates for election, deliver a brief, concise message, but make your questions or statements clearly understood. Identify yourself, who you represent and why you are calling.
- Remember in all communications that you do not appear to endorse a specific candidate or one of their bills. We are supporting bills for veteran's benefit.
- Encourage members to attend town meetings held by legislators.
- Host town meeting inviting all candidates to attend and talk about veteran issues.
- When conducting auxiliary business, avoid displaying partisan politics.

Guidelines for Auxiliary involvement in the election process

- It is important to remember that in all Auxiliary political activities, we must remain neutral.
- Use legislative websites for U.S. Congress and Senate to track pieces of legislation.
- The White House and nearly every one of our elected officials have websites that provide information and options for contacting their offices.
- In addition, state legislators often introduce legislation that impacts the veterans and service members in our states. They introduce laws and resolutions that impact the veteran community. Learning about and using your state resources is important as well.

VFW Action Corps Weekly

It's free and it's full of news about what's happening on Capitol Hill, with veteran and service member issues and with our national security. Subscribe at the National website at vfwauxiliary.org by selecting "What We Do" then clicking on "Legislative." Contact your legislators: find out who's who. To identify your congressional representatives, visit the VFW website at votervoice.net/VFW/register.

Step by Step—A Bill

To follow the progress of a bill through the stages of the legislative process, visit congress.gov, where you may find a specific bill by its number or by a key word or phrase.

VFW in D.C.

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 Auxiliary members about key legislation under consideration.

By testifying at committee hearings and interacting with congressional members, the VFW 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.

To contact the D.C. office:
Website: vfw.org/advocacy
Phone: 202-543-2239
Mail: 200 Maryland Ave., N.E
Washington, DC 20002

Awards for Auxiliaries from National VFWA

Most outstanding activity and/or event educating their community on veteran Legislative issues.

- Citation to every Auxiliary that hosts an activity and/or event that educates their community on veteran Legislative issues. Entry form required and available in MALTA Member Resources. Auxiliaries must send the entry form to their Department Legislative Chairman by March 31, 2024 for judging.
- The Department Legislative Chairman must email National Headquarters by April 30, 2024 at info@vfwauxiliary.org a total combined list of every Auxiliary in their Department that completed and submitted an entry form.
- Citations will be mailed directly to participating Auxiliaries from National Headquarters.
- A Citation and \$25 to one Auxiliary in each of the four Conferences that hosts the most outstanding activity and/or event educating their community on Legislative issues.
- 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, 2024 for judging.
- Citations will be mailed directly to winning Auxiliaries from National Headquarters and money will be deposited into Auxiliary account after National Convention.

Support Today's Veterans and Military

Please contact or visit your congressional representatives and stress that these are the issues we will be fighting for in the 118th Congress. These priority goals reflect the resolutions passed and supported by the men and women of the VFW and its Auxiliary. To find your congressional representatives, visit vfw.org/ActionCorps.

Play a Role in the Process

Engage and help us ensure that these priority goals are enacted. Sign up today for the VFW Action Corps Weekly and VFW Action Alerts:

- Visit vfw.org/JoinActionCorps
- Text "VFW" to 50457*
- Scan QR Code below

*Messaging and data rates may apply. Message frequency varies. Reply HELP and STOP to unsubscribe.



View the VFW's [privacy policy](#) and [terms of use](#).

NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.



*Delivering the promise to our
veterans, service members,
and their families.*



**2023
PRIORITY
GOALS**

VFW

Washington Office
200 Maryland Ave., N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002
Tel: 202.543.2239

VFW

National Headquarters
406 W. 34th Street
Kansas City, MO 64111
Tel: 816.756.3390

www.vfw.org

Budget

To fully fund programs for veterans, service members, and their families, Congress must:

- Reform the dysfunctional federal budget process.
- Authorize VA to receive reimbursements from TRICARE and Medicare.
- Never reduce one veteran's benefits to pay for another.

Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs

To ensure veterans and their survivors have timely access to earned benefits, Congress and VA must:

- Properly implement comprehensive toxic exposure legislation.
- Review and assess military toxic exposures, and ensure health care and benefits are provided to all toxic-exposed veterans.
- Consider treatment of presumptive conditions as a claim for disability compensation.
- Properly implement the modernized appeals process.
- Reinstate pre-decisional review authority for claims representatives prior to final rating decisions.
- Require VA to accept private medical evidence in lieu of VA examinations.
- Update regulations and laws governing claims to account for digital claims processing.
- Improve the accuracy of disability compensation claims related to military sexual trauma.
- Crack down on predatory claims providers.
- Increase Dependency and Indemnity Compensation benefits for survivors.
- Increase burial allowances to account for inflation.

Education, Employment, and Transition Assistance

To ensure veterans succeed after leaving military service, Congress, VA, DOD, and DOL must:

- Require oversight of transition assistance program pathways, timely attendance, and connections to community transition resources.
- Ensure equal access to pre-discharge claims assistance across the services.
- Mandate the inclusion of accredited representatives in transition assistance briefings.
- Expand transition services for spouses.
- Ensure parity of VA and DOD education programs with other federal programs.
- Improve education benefits through increased online student housing allowances, child care stipends, parity for Guard and Reserve members, and elimination of delimiting dates.
- Enhance outreach and counseling to veterans eligible for the Veteran Readiness and Employment program.
- Expand small business and entrepreneurship resources for veterans and military spouses.
- Expand preferences and tax incentives for hiring veterans and military spouses.
- Fund and track outcomes for career-focused training programs.
- Increase funding for HUD-VASH vouchers, grant and per diem payments, and pilot programs to combat veteran homelessness.

Health Care

To ensure service members and veterans receive timely access to high-quality health care without increasing cost shares, Congress, VA, and DOD must:

- Reduce the number of service members and veterans who die by suicide to zero.
- Strengthen care and research for mental health and traumatic brain injuries.
- Research and effectively treat health conditions associated with toxic exposures.
- Expand geriatric extended care services, nursing home eligibility, and long-term care options.
- Improve VA's prescribing and deprescribing practices.
- Improve programs and services for women and minority veterans.

- Eliminate copayment requirements for preventive health care, including medications.
- Research the efficacy of medical cannabis.
- Properly implement VA and DOD health IT systems.
- Ensure Affordable Care Act parity and access for VA and TRICARE users.

Military Quality of Life

To maintain a quality, comprehensive benefits and retirement package that is the backbone for an all-volunteer force, Congress and DOD must:

- Eliminate sexual assault and harassment from the military.
- Increase military base pay comparability with private sector wages.
- Protect and improve on-base quality of life and support programs.
- Eliminate forced arbitration clauses in contracts for service members.
- Ensure that military housing is safe and free of toxic substances.
- End the military retirement pay and VA disability compensation offset.
- Ensure military family members are gainfully employed.
- Eliminate food insecurity in the military.
- Establish the Armed Forces University.
- Ensure equity of benefits for Reserve component service members.

National Security, Foreign Affairs, and POW/MIA

To fully support service members, and protect our nation's citizens and interests around the world, Congress and DOD must:

- Preserve the all-volunteer force.
- Expand partnerships with host nations and private/public organizations to achieve the fullest possible accounting of U.S. military personnel missing from all wars.
- Ensure DPAA is fully funded to perform its personnel recovery mission.



Be a Veteran's P.A.L.

Legislative

2023 - 2024 Report Form

Bill Siperek, Department Chairperson

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Auxiliary _____ District _____ Month _____ Chairman _____

Reporting Period: From _____ To _____

This month - Hours _____ Projects Cost \$ _____ Mileage _____ Volunteers # _____

Did your Auxiliary utilize any of the Legislative material/resources available in MALTA Member Resources?

Yes _____ No _____

How many Auxiliary Members subscribed to VFW *Action Corps Weekly* in this reporting period? # _____

Did your Auxiliary promote, participate and/or host an activity regarding the VFW Priority Goals?

Yes _____ No _____

Did your Auxiliary promote, participate and/or co-host with your Post an activity regarding the VFW Priority Goals?

Yes _____ No _____

Number of contacts made by your members to legislators about veterans' issues:

Personal Contacts: # _____ Emails: # _____ Social Media: # _____

Letters/Postcards: # _____ Phone Calls: # _____

Number of your members who attended events where they could interact with legislators: # _____

(For example: town halls, meet and greets, legislative conferences, etc.) Briefly explain event:

Other Legislative projects or activities (Use additional sheet if necessary):