

December Legislative Program Newsletter

Madeline "Maddie" Cunningham-Colston, Chairman

Hello, Sisters and Brothers of California!

For some months, I've been showing off various features of the **"Action Corps Weekly"** and the **"VFW Priority Goals"** because they are core elements of the Legislative Program. The **Checkpoint** Newsletter is another key resource.



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 - Ceremonies in Illinois and Kansas honor two Medal of Honor recipients from WWI.
- \$7 Million Raffle Ends 8
 - The Military VFW Queen of Hearts raffle jackpot ended two years before a winner was drawn in September.



VFW Provides Disaster Relief in North Carolina, California

From supporting wildfire-ravaged California to relief efforts in the Carolinas during Hurricane Florence, all levels of VFW offer support across the country this year.

"The best thing about being a VFW member is having a voice and being able to make change."

— Angela Hudson Davis
Persian Gulf War Vet
Post 10321



DO I QUALIFY FOR UNMET NEEDS?

To be eligible to receive financial assistance through VFW's Unmet Needs program, a recipient must:

- ✓ Be on active duty, whose financial hardship is a result of deployment, military pay error or medical discharge.
- ✓ Have been discharged on or after Sept. 11, 2001, whose financial hardship is a direct result of military-service connected injuries and/or illnesses that are causing an employment hardship.
- ✓ Have been discharged prior to Sept. 11, 2001, who is on a fixed income (VA compensation, SSI, SSDI) and/or whose financial hardship is an emergency situation.

The financial hardship can't be caused by:

- Civil, legal or domestic issues; misconduct; or any issues that result from spousal separation or divorce.
- Financial mismanagement by self or others, or due to bankruptcy.

Eligible expenses

- Household (mortgage, rent, repairs, insurance).
- Vehicle (payments, insurance, repairs).
- Utilities.
- Food and clothing.
- Children's clothing, diapers, formula, school or childcare expenses.
- Medical bills, prescriptions, eyeglasses.

Ineligible expenses

- Credit cards, military charge cards or retail store cards.
- Cable, internet or secondary phones.
- Cosmetic or investigational medical procedures/expenses.
- Taxes.
- Furniture, electronic equipment or vehicle rentals.
- Any other expenses not determined to be a basic life need.

Unmet Needs has Disbursed \$10 Million

VFW's Unmet Needs program helps America's military families who have experienced unexpected financial difficulties. The program, supported by Burger King franchises, provides financial aid to assist those with basic life needs in the form of a grant — not a loan. Since 2004, Unmet Needs has given \$10 million to more than 8,800 military and veteran families. In the current fiscal year alone, the program has assisted nearly 4,000 service members and veterans. Learn more about the Unmet Needs program at: <https://www.vfw.org/assistance/financial-grants>.

VFW National Legislative Conference a 'Transformational' Experience

Nine student veterans came together on Capitol Hill in March as part of VFW's National Legislative Conference, joining forces for one common goal — to meet with legislators and advocate for veterans' causes.

The following students are the latest VFW Student Veterans of America (SVVA) fellows to take on that task: Jennifer Hosley, Bradley Ward, Gabriel Sureshelli, Edward Tjaden, Brian Walker, Ryan Rehberg, Joseph Sacco, Hannah Joyce and Francheska Salazar.

Ward, who served from January–September 2014 with the 302nd MP Co. from Grand Prairie and the 18th Airborne Corps in the Army Reserve, said the work in D.C. was a "transformational experience."

"The opportunity to connect and openly discuss policy and veteran-related issues with Congressional leaders and department directors was an incredible experience that is certain to prepare me for future work in the field," Ward said.

without losing why we sat down in the first place."

"Everyone has their perspective, but having the ability to listen, collaborate and act with intention toward a solid solution takes flexibility by everyone involved," Joyce said.

The fellows also witnessed VFW National Commander-in-Chief Keith Harman testify on VFW's behalf to Congress.

"I sat right in the front row watching Commander-in-Chief Harman testify on significant issues that negatively affect my community — how Congress needs to push legislation that resolves these issues quickly and efficiently to aid these marginalized veterans," said Sureshelli, who served in the Navy aboard the USS



Ed Tjaden, a member of VFW Post 1507 in St. Peters, Mo., meets with Sen. Claire McCaskill (D-Mo.) in March during VFW's National Legislative Conference. Tjaden was one of nine VFW Student Veterans of America Fellows who attended the conference. PHOTO COURTESY OF VFW

- Legislative Program Goals:**
- VFW Priority Goals
 - VFW Action Corps Weekly
 - Local Legislative Involvement
 - Student Education and Engagement

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The VFW publishes it bimonthly for a total of six issues per year. You can view the issues online for free -- <https://www.vfw.org/media-and-events/checkpoint>.

Various feature articles in each edition showcase Post activities from all over the country. They also provide a more in-depth look at the benefits of membership. Frequently, articles are published describing the VFW's fundamental initiatives, including elements of the Legislative Program. This is one more means available to us to help educate our members about the essential purpose of the Legislative Program and how we can advocate veterans' issues with our elected officials.

So, take a few minutes to check out the **Checkpoint** Newsletter. In one of your Auxiliary meetings, do a brief 'show-and-tell' about one of the articles that features legislative interactions so that more of our members know about this informative Newsletter and all that it has to offer. Finally, send me a report noting that you did this so I can give you credit on the Blackout Sheet!

Cordially,

Maddie

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*Legislative
Program Goals:*

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