

# **LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM**

## **DANA RAUCH, Program Chairman**

We are, fundamentally, a nation of laws. The Legislative Program celebrates this foundational element by helping the Auxiliary to be advocates for legislation that promotes and elevates veterans' affairs. Our veterans, active service members, and their families, have sacrificed so much to protect America's legislative system – they should get the best it has to give back to them. We can help make that happen.

### **THE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM:**

As members of the VFW Auxiliary, we are instrumental in assisting the VFW 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.

It is important to not only set our goals and display a united front, but also to make sure our members understand what impact will be for the men and women, and their families, that we support. We encourage our Legislative Chairmen, and members, to be visible in our legislative communities. It is important, and a responsibility, for each of us to share and undertake. We ask all District Chairman to reach out to their Legislative Chairmen in their Auxiliaries to ensure members fully understand its importance.

- Promotes VFW Priority Goals
- Promotes Action Corps
- Encourages all citizens to exercise their right to vote and contact legislators regarding issues impacting veterans and their families.

### **PRIORITY GOALS:**

Priority Goals outline the principal legislative initiatives we promote and reflect resolutions passed by the VFW to strengthen and ensure an adequate VA system for millions of current and future veterans. They call for much-needed attention to crises and are grouped under six (6) areas of concern:

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

### **SOME DO and DON'TS:**

- **DO** create good relationships with our elected officials and their staff by emails and/or phone calls, and by visiting their websites and sending messages to them about Veteran issues.
- **DO** find out their positions for specific legislation and their reasons for taking that position.
- **DO** communicate with elected officials and candidates for election.
- **DO** communicate your message in a brief, concise and clearly understood manner.
- **DO** identify yourself, who you represent and why you are calling.
- **DO** wear clothing/pins with VFW Auxiliary emblem at public events such as town halls.
- rallies, forums and/or debates.
- **DO** encourage members to attend town hall meetings held by legislators.
- **DO** host a town hall meeting, which all candidates are invited to attend, and support comments on Veterans' issues. Develop questions for candidates, and elected officials, to ensure they provide answers to questions most important to our Veterans/members.
- **DO NOT** allow Auxiliary to appear to endorse, or support, an individual candidate in local, state, or federal elections. If asked by a candidate or elected official to either endorse them, or their legislative bill, politely explain that the Auxiliary does not permit such endorsements.
- **DO NOT** wear your VFW Auxiliary cover when actively campaigning for a candidate, such as soliciting donations or knocking on doors asking people to pledge their vote for a candidate.

### **TOOLS & RESOURCES:**

- VFW National Auxiliary (MALTA): <http://vfwauxiliary.org/>
- VFW CA Auxiliary: <http://vfwauxca.org>
- The White House: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/>
- United States House of Representatives: <http://www.house.gov/>
- United States Senate: <http://www.senate.gov/>
- National Archives – Legislative Branch: The Center for Legislative Action: <https://www.archives.gov/legislative>
- VFW Auxiliary Guide to Contacting your Legislators: <http://vfwauxiliary.org/wp-content/uploads/Legislative-Guide-to-Contacting-Your-Legislators.pdf>
- VFW Auxiliary Guide to the Legislative Process: <http://malta.vfwauxiliary.org/MemberResources/Download/718>

- **Action Corps Weekly:**

A free, short newsletter, in which VFW's Washington Office summarizes (in plain English) all legislative activity affecting veterans, active service members, and their families. This is one of the best tools we have to educate our members about veterans' concerns, and about where we want our legislators to focus *their* attention and support.

**Note:** When the Action Corps Weekly sends you an "Action Alert," it's a call to action to tell our legislators by letter / e-mail / fax / phone call of the position we want them to take on a particular bill in Congress. As our elected representatives, we can and should hold them accountable if they do not share our views. The Action Corps website has a wonderfully simple tool that has short notes already drafted to send your legislators (based on your Zip Code) about pressing issues. You can edit it as you wish, and send it electronically in seconds, or you can print out the notes for mailing to share with those who do not have Internet connectivity. In whatever way you choose, you can make your voice be heard and be counted, and thereby make a difference.

By subscribing, you will gain access to:

1. Legislative Updates: Track the latest movements on bills and policies that impact veterans, service members and their families.
2. Action Alerts: Receive timely notifications when your voice is needed most. These alerts guide you on how and when to contact your legislators to make the biggest impact.
3. In-Depth Analysis: Understand the implications of national security developments and military-related issues that could affect the veterans and communities we serve.

How to Subscribe:

4. Sign up today for the VFW Action Corps Weekly and VFW Action Alerts:
5. Visit [vfw.org/JoinActionCorps](http://vfw.org/JoinActionCorps)!
6. Text "VFW" to 50457
7. Scan QR Code.



- **Step To bill**

**by Step-A Bill**

follow the progress of a bill through the stages of the legislative process, visit [congress.gov](http://www.congress.gov), where you may find a specific bill by its number or by a key word or phrase: <http://www.congress.gov/>

- **VFW in D.C.**

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.

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.

The VFW and VFW Auxiliary advocates for veterans by testifying at hearings, interacting with Congress and fighting for justice. The VFW has played a key role in many major pieces of veterans' legislation.

To contact the D.C. office:

Website: <http://vfw.org/advocacy>

Phone: 202-543-2239

Mail: 200 Maryland Ave., N.E. Washington, D.C. 20002

### **IDEAS FOR ACTIVITIES:**

- Contact a high school, junior college, or adult education civics class and ask to give a short talk on legislative process and how it can affect our service members and their families.
- Team up with your Auxiliary's Scholarships and/or Youth Activities Program Sisters and Brothers to make it a joint event, reaching out to Scout Troops, youth sports teams and kids' church groups.
- Prominently feature copies of Priority Goals and Action Corps Weekly at the Legislative booth in your Family Freedom Festival – you can create a simple game, quiz or coloring sheet that steps through the legislative process and then offer a “Random Act of Patriotism (RAP)” card or coin, or a piece of wrapped candy, for children's entries.
- Connect with your Hospital Program volunteers to help distribute vote-by-mail applications to hospitalized veterans and/or other limited-mobility citizens.
- Pass out “I Vote In Honor of A United States Veteran” stickers.
- Host a candidate forum and invite candidates to speak and respond to questions relating to veterans' affairs – consider combining this with a Family Freedom Festival gathering.

### **LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM AWARDS:**

- **Awards for Auxiliaries:**
  1. Most outstanding activity and/or event to create thank-you notes and cards to veterans that include links to VFW Action Corps Weekly and/or the VFW Priority Goals.
    - Citation and \$25 to one VFW Auxiliary in each of the 10 Program Divisions that hosts the most outstanding activity and/or event to create thank-you notes and cards to veterans that include links to VFW Action Corps Weekly and/or the VFW Priority Goals.

Entry form is required and available in MALTA Members Resources.

VFW Auxiliaries must send the required entry form to the Department Legislative Chairman by March 31, 2026 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, 2026 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 2026 VFW National Convention.

- **Awards for Departments and Department Chairmen:**

1. \$25 VFW Store gift certificate to one Department Legislative Chairman in each of the 10 Program Divisions with the largest increase in the use of the VFW Action Alerts and new VFW Action Corps Weekly sign-ups from July 1, 2025 through April 30, 2026.

Winners will be announced and awards will be presented at the 2026 VFW National Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah.

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 program goals listed at the top of page 41, of the Nation Program.

Winners will be announced and awards will be presented at the 2026 VFW National Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah.

**Dana Rauch**  
**Department Legislative Chairman**

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