

American Legion Auxiliary

Legislative Newsletter

October 2024

ALA Legislative Program- "What" & "Why"

Margaret Mead once stated "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

The American Legion Auxiliary is that group of citizens whose involvement in the Legislative program which provides information and assistance to American Legion Auxiliary members to advocate for the Legion's legislative agenda. Awareness of The American Legion's priorities and call-to-action alerts prepares the Auxiliary to communicate with representatives on impending legislature. Using knowledge to persuade elected officials to achieve The American Legion's priorities is often the process of changing or reforming attitudes toward the needed legislature.

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ALA Legislative

Share Your Story

Be sure to "JOIN" us on Facebook. Help spread the word about your service @ ALA Legislative. This is a closed group, so you must request permission to join. You then must answer all questions to be approved:

Year-End Reports- Narrative report to Division Legislative Chairman by May 15, 2025, plus copy to National Legislative Chairman.

Did you know that National has a blog? The blog features excellent info and photos that can be easily shared. No log-in required!
<https://www.legion-aux.org/blog>

Please send information on your Department's Legislative Program events. Throughout the year, please send photos and short blurbs about your members in Legislative action to your Division Chairmen and post on the National Legislative Facebook page.

Websites with Legislative Planning Information:

- 1. The American Legion Auxiliary Legislative Website-**
<https://member.legion-aux.org/member/committees/legislative>
- 2. The American Legion Legislative Action Center-**
<https://www.votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/home>
- 3. Legislative Advocacy Guide-**
https://member.legion-aux.org/cmsdesk/ALA/media/PDF/Guides/Legislative_Advocacy_Guide.pdf
- 4. The American Legion Dispatch-**
<https://www.legion.org/dispatch>
- 5. How to Host a Meet the Candidates Night-**
<https://member.legion-aux.org/Member/Committees/Legislative/How-to-Host-a-Meet-the-Candidate-Night>

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The purpose of the Legislative program is to provide information and assistance to American Legion Auxiliary members to advocate for the legislative agenda of The American Legion.

Standing Rule #5, National Committees -Mission Outreach

ALAforVeterans.org-
Legislative Program

Legislative Committee Contact Information (continued)

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Host a Meet the Candidates Night

If you want to empower the Legion Family to be more knowledgeable to support the American Legion's legislative priorities, you can "Host a Meet the Candidates Night." It is simply a question-and-answer session, not a debate, with all candidates for an election. A few simple steps: Form a Legion Family Committee, map out a Plan of Action, set guidelines for candidates, contact all candidates (remember the Legion family is nonpartisan), invite them to your special night, find your volunteers, moderator, timekeepers, Legion Family Ambassadors, servers, Crowd Control and Screeners. Set up your agenda; on your night, set up your room to include a voter registration table and Legion Family membership, programs, and information. With some upfront planning, your Candidates Night will be a great success. Your Meet the Candidates Night will support the Legion's "Get Out the Vote," which began in 1920 with the American Legion requesting all Legionnaires to exercise their right to vote and encourage others to vote. Let us, The American Legion Family, renew our commitment to continue to be politically active individuals – be Informed and participate in our government, which leads to our mission of supporting our veterans.

If you want more details, you can find a step-by-step guide to Hosting a Candidates Night on the American Legion Auxiliary National website at www.alaforveterans.org/Legislative/Committee.

"Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can."

Arthur Ashe

Joan Cannon, Western Division Legislative Chair

<https://member.legion-aux.org/Member/Committees/Legislative/How-to-Host-a-Meet-the-Candidate-Night>

The Auxiliary has many tools that aid members in learning about our programs.

*ALA Academy

www.alaforveterans.org/ALA-Academy/

MISSION TRAINING

Northwestern: 11/16/24
Denver, CO

Southern: 11/16/24
Nashville, TN

Central: 1/25/25
Des Moines, IA

Eastern: 2/1/2025
Boston, MA

Western: 2/1/2025
Las Vegas, NV

Further information found at
<https://member.legion-aux.org/meetings/mission-training/>

Legislative Important Dates

Legislative 2nd Quarterly Meeting
January 28, 2025 @ 8:00 PM ET

Legislative 3rd Quarterly Meeting
April 1, 2025 @ 8:00 PM ET

Washington Conference
March 2-5, 2025

Department Chairman Year-End Report due to National Chairman & National Division Chairmen by May 15

Unit Award: Most Outstanding Unit Legislative Program (per department) - submitted electronically by 5 p.m. ET on June 1.

Department Award: Best Department Legislative Program (per department) — submitted by 5 p.m. ET on June 1.

Legislative Newsletter

National Legislative 1st Quarterly Zoom Meeting

The Legislative National Committee met with the Department Chairs and guests, which included our National Vice President, Ray Ward, on September 24, 2024. The Legislative National Committee met with the Department Chairs and guests, which included our National Vice President, Ray Ward, on September 24, 2024. The main topics for this meeting included Auxiliary supporting the Legion's Legislative Agenda and Get Out the Vote as early voting has already begun. Divisional breakout sessions focused on the following:

- How can we encourage and train members to use the Grassroots Action Center to engage more with their legislative representatives?
- Discuss how the ALA Legislative Department Chairs are working with TAL Legislative Department Chair to share the legislative agenda for their state.
- Joining ALA Legislative Facebook Page
- Submit pictures and events to the division chairman and national chairman as they happen instead of at year-end reporting, which will allow for a jump on year-end reporting.

National Legislative Chair Sallie Rossman spoke on the American Legion Auxiliary supporting The American Legion's Legislative Agenda. The National Chair stated that the American Legion Auxiliary is a group of citizens whose involvement in the Legislative program provides information and assistance to American Legion Auxiliary members to advocate for the Legion's legislative agenda. Awareness of The American Legion's priorities and call-to-action alerts prepares the Auxiliary to communicate with representatives on the impending legislature. Using knowledge to persuade elected officials to achieve The American Legion's priorities is often the process of changing or reforming attitudes toward the needed legislature.

The Call to Action is for the Auxiliary to advocate for The American Legion Legislative Agenda at all levels of our government. It includes being knowledgeable of TAL legislative priorities, responding to the Legislative Action Alerts, contacting representatives at all levels of the government, and hosting Meet the Candidates Nights. Members have the tools available on The American Legion Legislative, and the American Legion Auxiliary website will allow members to achieve the mission of our Legislative program, which is to "provide information and assistance to members to advocate for The American Legion agenda."

National Legislative Vice Chair Amy Luft provided information on the "Get Out the Vote" giving information on TAL initiative to increase voter turnout in elections. The "Get Out the Vote" program includes ideas on how to work the program effectively. Members can conduct voter registration and nonpartisan "Get Out the Vote" campaigns, host or participate in a nonpartisan candidate forum, promote the importance of voting at your local schools, and provide transportation to voting polls for members/community and/or help with childcare. What members cannot do includes endorse or oppose a candidate for public office, make contributions (money, time, or facilities) to a candidate, volunteers working on an American Legion family-sponsored registration and voting drive should not wear campaign buttons or make their personal views about candidates known in any way, and not invite candidates to speak at or during an official meeting of The American Legion Family. As stated by TAL, "Get Out the Vote activities in an American Legion post must be nonpartisan, which simply means the American Legion Family cannot show or state a preference for or against any particular candidate or a particular political party."

Western Division- Joan Cannon, National Division Chair

They discussed how to provide Legislative Program information to district chairs in a format shareable with unit members. One suggestion was making a flow chart to show the steps to get to the grassroots action center. Most importantly, department legislative chairs must pass the information on to their unit counterparts. Discussing the importance of contacting the TAL Legislative Department Chair and introducing this will enable our department legislative chairs to create a relationship with their TAL counterpart. Joining ALA Legislative Facebook Page – All western division department chairs joined the national legislative Facebook page, and district chairs and all members will be encouraged to participate by providing information on joining. Requested departments send pictures and event information as it happens or monthly. Doing so will support their department's end-of-year reporting and Western Division and National Chairmen's year-end reporting.

Central Division- Cynthia Boehnlein, National Division Chair

The Central Division is off to a great start. The division chair shared two tips with the chairs to help make their programs successful. One is, if they always have a 118th Congress trifold with them, there is a QR code printed on it that will take a member or advocate directly to the Grassroots Action Center to sign up and begin sending messages. The second is to ensure the member checks the box to sign up for text alerts for special alerts from the Legion. In doing this, the member can send the messages directly from their text messages and not have to search their email accounts for Action Alerts. We found it advisable to review our profiles to ensure we have all checked the box, as this is a newer feature of the Grassroots Center. **Illinois**—Reports posting action alerts and Legion priorities on the department's Facebook page and sending out flyers with the Legion agenda. **Indiana**—Department Chair shared the TAL Legislative Guide with members. The department chair is scheduling a Zoom meeting with the District Chairman, and they will try Quarterly meetings. **Iowa** – Members discussed the Legion's legislative agenda at their annual leadership meeting in August. **Kansas**—Some members march on Capitol Hill with their jobs and can connect with their legislators. **Michigan**—Chair met with the Legion counterpart and discussed the upcoming election and candidates' meet-and-greets in the state. **Missouri**—Encouraging signing up for alerts in the "Legionette," discussed in a virtual meeting, and providing the link to the TAL legislative website. Rallies will be held in January and April before the sessions shut down. **Ohio** – Using the PowerPoint provided by the national chair at the Department School of Instructions. The department chair also met with Ohio State Senator Jerry Cirino from District 18 to discuss veterans' issues at the Statehouse on the radio show "They Sacrificed for Us." The State of Ohio has also held its first Veteran Suicide Awareness Day statewide on September 22. **West Virginia**—Holding a training session where she challenged each member to send ten messages before the morning coffee. Their high schools organized a conference call with their two senators to voice their opinions. **Wisconsin**—The Department's PEP was rewritten to mirror the National PEP. Weekly notifications from Grassroots were forwarded to members, and step-by-step instructions on how to sign into the Grassroots Action Center were shared with members. She reports that several articles have been written for the Department paper.

National Legislative 1st Quarterly Zoom Meeting (Continued)

Southern Division- Pearl Sanders-Mills, Division Chair

The Southern Division discussed Getting Out the Vote. Ideas included conducting a voter registration drive in your community and providing transportation to the polls on voting day. We discussed the Grassroots Action Center and ensured all members could locate their representatives' contact information. We will encourage members to join the national Facebook page. Some states will work with voter registration. We talked about working with the Legislative Legion Chair.

Northwestern Division- DeLora Kautzmann, Division Chair

Information on voting and legislation supported by the Legion was disseminated to members of their departments. South Dakota has participated in joint legislative activities with the Legion. There was discussion on getting young voters by posting Get Out the Vote, voting location, and absentee voting information posters at universities and colleges.

Eastern Division- Lisa Boyer, Division Chair

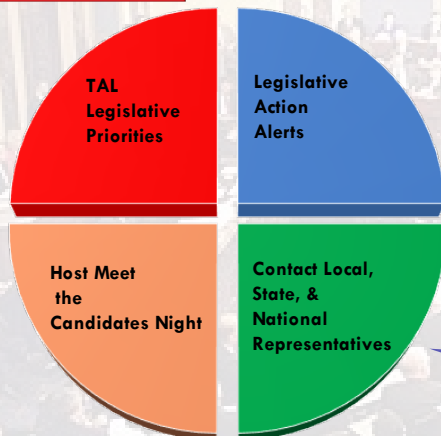
Connecticut--Starting a Campaign: Put some *PEP in your Step*: P - Phone Calls, E - Emails, P - Personal Contact. **Maryland**- held their chairman's meeting, noting that half of the units have Legislative Chairs and making sure that each one is on the Action Committee, knows how to get the Grassroots Newsletter, and has signed up to send emails. **Massachusetts**-Department Chair Ann Gobi, the past state legislator, suggested holding a Zoom meeting inviting the Congress people and US Senators with the folks in the department so people can meet face to face in a relaxed atmosphere after the election. **New Jersey**-The goal this year is to make everything easy: attention grabber flyers and quick information- and this seems to be getting a good response. Request a blurb for the "Get Out the Vote" to be consistent when posting.

The quarterly Legislative Program zooms are on January 28, 2025, and April 1, 2025, at 8:00 PM Eastern.

Legislative Committee



Advocacy in Action



Legislative Program



<https://member.legion-aux.org/member/committees/legislative>

