



# **Dinner Honoring NATIONAL PRESIDENT TRISH WARD**

**April 8, 2025**

**5 to 6pm Happy Hour/6 to 9pm Dinner  
Chicken Strips or Chicken Fried Steak**

**RVSP: 928-634-3004 (\$15.00 @ door)**

**American Legion Post 25 - 480 S. Calvary Way  
Cottonwood AZ 85326**

**Dress Code: Smart Casual, Branded Shirts/Blouses**

Dept Finance approved pricing



**From:** Carley Schutz <cschutz@legion-aux.org>

**Sent:** Friday, February 14, 2025 1:45 PM

**To:** 2025 Department Presidents <2025departmentpresidents@legion-aux.org>; ALA Dept Secy/EDs <DeptSecretariesEDs@legion-aux.org>

**Subject:** UPDATE: AEF Disaster Grant Deadline Change

**Importance:** High

Good afternoon,

ALA National Headquarters is implementing a three-month deadline instead of six months for Auxiliary Emergency Fund disaster applications effective **March 1, 2025**. This approach balances the need for urgency with accessibility, ensuring more efficient resource allocation and quicker recovery for ALA members.

Any ALA member who applies for assistance for a disaster that occurs after March 1, 2025, will be subject to this change. If ALA members apply for assistance for a disaster that occurred prior to March 1 (ex. Hurricane Helene, Hurricane Milton, CA wildfires) they will still be granted the existing six-month deadline.

A three-month deadline for disaster applications promotes timely aid distribution and efficient resource management. While shorter deadlines may pose challenges for certain populations, these can be addressed through targeted outreach, flexibility for exceptional cases, and enhanced support systems. By making this change, the ALA can better serve affected communities and expedite the transition from immediate response to long-term recovery.

Please reach out if you have any questions or would like further clarification. Have a wonderful weekend!

Carley Schutz, CFRE | Development Director | American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters | 3450 Founders Road | Indianapolis, IN 46268 | Office: (317) 569-4537 | Fax: (317) 569-4502 | [www.ALAFoundation.org](http://www.ALAFoundation.org) | [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org) | [cschutz@legion-aux.org](mailto:cschutz@legion-aux.org) | *A Community of Volunteers Serving Veterans, Military, and their Families*



**Chaplain Report February 2025**  
**February is National Security and Americanism and Auxiliary Emergency Fund**

**The Four Chaplains**



**George L. Fox Alexander D. Goode Clark Poling John P. Washington**

On February 3, 1943, four Army Chaplains – Father John P. Washington, Rabbi Alexander D. Goode, and the Revs. George L. Fox and Clark V. Poling – gave up their life jackets on a sinking Army transport in the North Atlantic so that other might live.

In the early morning hours of February 3, 1943, the U.S.A.T. Dorchester was crowded to capacity, carrying 902 servicemen, merchant seamen, and civilian workers. Once a luxury coastal liner, the 5,649-ton vessel had been converted into an Army transport ship. The Dorchester, one of three ships in the SG-19 convoy, was moving steadily across the icy waters from Newfoundland toward an American base in Greenland. SG-19 was escorted by Coast Guard Cutters Tampa, Escanaba, and Comanche.

Of the 902 soldiers, Navy armed guard, ship's crew, and civilian passengers on board of the Dorchester, only 230 survived. They have told us of the chaplain's efforts to restore claim in a hopeless and chaotic situation, and how they were last seen at the ship's stern, arms linked in prayer.

The Four Chaplain's promoted interfaith cooperation and selfless service in individual. They encouraged selfless service in the tradition and to teach and promote interfaith understanding and cooperation among all peoples. "Unity without Uniformity".

It is customary to hold a ceremony in February. The Ceremony for Four Chaplains is in the Chaplains prayer book, here is the Link: <https://www.legion-aux.org/Member/Guides/Prayer-Book>

If you know of someone who could benefit from a card or phone call, please let me know:  
Stephanie McMullen Chaplain, [stephaniemcmullenala62az@gmail.com](mailto:stephaniemcmullenala62az@gmail.com), (623) 910-4716



A posthumous Special Medal for Heroism, The Four Chaplains' Medal, was authorized by Congress and awarded by the President on January 18, 1961.  
It was never given before and will never be given again.



## Education February 2025



As we all know, college is very expensive, and all of our high school students should be taking advantage of any and all scholarships available to them. Units and departments are responsible for promoting American Legion Auxiliary scholarships and making sure the schools have them in ample time for students to apply. The American Legion Auxiliary offers four scholarship opportunities to students:

1. **Children of Warriors National Presidents Scholarship:** Scholarship is awarded to children of veterans who served in the armed forces during eligibility dates for The American Legion. Three \$5,000 scholarships will be awarded in each division. Fifteen outstanding students will be awarded a total of \$75,000 to further their education. The applicant must complete 50 hours of community service during their high school years to be eligible for one of these scholarships. **Applicants must submit this scholarship online this year by March 1, 2025. It will be forwarded to the Department Education Chair by the National Organization.**
2. **The Non-Traditional Student Scholarship:** One scholarship in the amount of \$2,000 will be awarded in each American Legion Auxiliary division. Applicant must be a member of The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary or Sons of The American Legion and shall have paid dues for the two preceding years and for the calendar year in which the application is made. **Applicants must submit this scholarship online this year by March 1, 2025. It will be forwarded to the Department Education Chair by the National Organization.**
3. **Spirit of Youth Scholarship:** One Junior member in each division will receive a scholarship valued at \$5,000. The applicant must have held membership in the American Legion Auxiliary for the immediate past three years, hold a current membership card and continue her membership in the American Legion Auxiliary during the four-year scholarship period. **Applicants must submit this scholarship online this year by March 1, 2025. It will be forwarded to the Department Education Chair by the National Organization.**
4. **Junior Member Loyalty Scholarship:** American Legion Auxiliary Junior members are the future of our organization. To reward those who retain their membership into adulthood, the American Legion Auxiliary offers the Junior Member Loyalty Scholarship to current college students. Ten scholarships, in the amount of \$2,500 each, will be awarded to a current college student for 2020. Two scholarships will be awarded in each division of the American Legion Auxiliary. The scholarship is a grant; not a loan. **Applicants must submit this scholarship online this year by March 1, 2025. It will be forwarded to the Department Education Chair by the National Organization.**

Please promote these American Legion Auxiliary scholarships to enable our children of veterans to apply and receive funds the American Legion Auxiliary has so graciously provided. Applications are available online at [www.ALAforVeterans.org/Scholarships](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org/Scholarships). Links to the scholarship applications can also be found on the Department website.

In the Spirit of Service, not for self,  
For Veterans, God and Country,

*Julie Vietri*

Education Chairman  
Department of Arizona

[jvietri@msn.com](mailto:jvietri@msn.com)

480-495-1558

## **Finance**

**February 2025**

**And again Part 3 of Policies and Procedures section on Finance:**

### **Bonding**

**All Department Officers or Employees handling the American Legion Auxiliary monies shall be properly bonded with a good and solvent bonding and surety company. (National 2005). The Districts will be bonded by a separate policy (held by the Department) at the Districts' expense. (2013)**

### **Online Dues Payments**

**Department will be issuing checks to all Units for their credits earned from online dues payments by members. In February 2024 the checks were for credits recorded by Department and unused prior to February 1, 2024. Starting in March 2024 checks will be processed once a month for the previous month's transactions. Checks will NOT be processed in June, July, and August of any year, with September checks bringing all Units current once again. Checks will be processed via Wells Fargo and sent to the Unit mailing address on file at Department, so it is essential that each Unit's mailing address be kept current. The check will be good for 90 days. If the Unit does not cash the check within 90 days, the bank will notify Department and the Unit will forfeit the money to Department. If Department makes an error processing the first check, they will generate a second check to the Unit, but only if the Unit notifies Department of the problem within the 90 day period.**

**Bank Accounts: Key Executives and Signers/Payers The Department of Arizona will have 3 Key Executives on the Department main checking account, those people being the Department Secretary/Treasurer, the Department Finance Chairman, and a Past Department President who will be appointed by the Finance Committee with approval from the Executive Committee. There will be 4 signers/payers on the Department main checking account, those people being the Department Secretary/Treasurer; Department Finance Chairman; the Past Department President who has been appointed as a Key Executive; and the current Department President. There will be at least 3 Key Executives and at least 3 signers/payers on all other Department banking accounts. The office will keep on file detailed records of each bank account with the names of the current Key Executives, signers/payers and any other pertinent information required to administer those accounts.**

### **Disbursal of Funds from Department Banking Accounts**

**This policy is designed to insure that any disbursement of funds from a Department bank account will be known to at least two different qualified persons. Any debit card or electronic payment issued from the Department office accounts by a Signer/Payer will be documented in writing with Transaction IDs recorded and receipts or invoices attached. The Department Finance Chairman will review and validate all debit and electronic payments from the office accounts. If the Finance Chairman is the Signer/Payer then another Key Executive must validate the transaction. Any handwritten paper checks being issued from the Department office accounts must be signed by two separate Signers/Payers, and supporting documentation, receipts and invoices must be provided for review and audit.**

**This in essence is the Finance section under Policies and Procedures, but there is a lot more. Please contact this Chairman, or you are invited to completely research Policies and Procedures under Finance. This section is enlightening, and this Chairman will gladly clarify your questions.**

**Yolanda Bonilla, Chairman, 602-989-3321, [yodobo@msn.com](mailto:yodobo@msn.com)**

**Penny Maklary, Member, 520-364-5038, [ahhpenny@aol.com](mailto:ahhpenny@aol.com)**

**Barbara White, 602-908-2980, [barbara.white99gmail.com](mailto:barbara.white99gmail.com)**

**Members by Virtue of Office: Stacey Mayberry, President, NEC, Rose Ficklin, Sec/Tres. (no vote)**

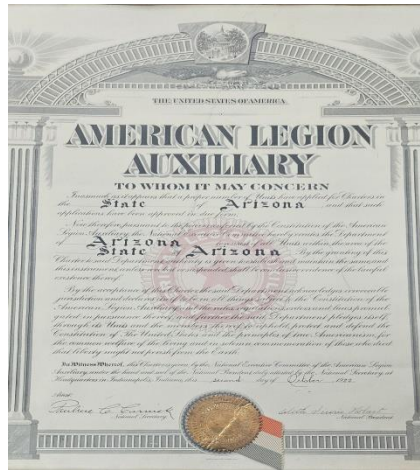
**February 2025**

**UNITS OWING MANDATES:**

**1,5,19, 37, 69,84,87,88,114,125,129,133,136,140**

Units are reminded that per Page 12, ALA Policies and Procedures Manual, updated June 2024: **“Units not having their current District, Department and National Mandates paid thirty days prior to Department Convention shall not be entitled to vote.”**

## Department of Arizona Historian Report February 2025



### Department of Arizona Auxiliary Charter – October 2, 1922 Signed by National President - Mrs. Lowell F. Hobart – Department of Ohio Department of Arizona President S.H. Bowyer

I have put the Department of Arizona Charter on our February Bulletin as a project for our National President Trish Ward. **I need a copy of all unit Charter and the name of the National President who signed the Charter. Please email me a copy along with the National President who signed it.**

As a member do you know what your Unit Charter is? Have you seen your unit Charter? Do you know where your unit Charter is?

All ALA units are attached to a Legion post, taking its name, location, and number (e.g., John P. Hand American Legion Auxiliary Unit 250), but units are not obligated to meet at the Legion post. If the Post is no longer active, a unit may continue to function as what's called a widow unit. Sons of The American Legion groups within Legion posts at the community level are referred to as squadrons.

The first step in the organization of an American Legion Auxiliary Unit is to create interest among those in the community who are eligible for Auxiliary membership and to secure authorization for the creation of an Auxiliary Unit from the Post. Charter application forms, individual membership applications, suggested Constitution & Bylaws and any other needed supplies or information may be obtained from department headquarters. Department officers are always ready to assist in installations and in providing expertise when needed.

**I want YOU in the Department History**  
**Be sure to post on Ring Your Bell and send me your meeting minutes!**

Lynda Griffin  
AZ Department Historian  
[Lynda4ala@gmail.com](mailto:Lynda4ala@gmail.com)



## **Leadership/Arizona Mission Training**

**February 2025**

I hope that all of you had a wonderful and meaningful time during the Holidays while serving our veterans and spending time with family and friends. Especially those who shared the two and held various activities in which we included those who may not have families.

The Department of Arizona has reassigned responsibility for choosing the Arizona Unit Member of the Year and presenting the individual and Unit awards involved to the Department Leadership/Mission Training Chairman and Committee. This was done officially at the Executive meeting during Fall Conference 2023. This form along with the Leadership report form is on the department website [aladepaz.org](http://aladepaz.org). Go to Member Resources Tab #5. We advise you to check into this site regularly to see any updates or changes. You will find a wealth of information. The Unit Member of the Year Award recognizes those serving at the unit level who exemplify the values and ideals of the Auxiliary and whose accomplishments significantly impact the program work in their units. This award form will also be on our website. Go to the Awards tab and be sure to look at the criteria for Unit member of the Year. This criteria is very specific and must be followed as there are many entries for this award. More to come on additional awards in this program.

It is not too late to schedule a Mission Training. Please contact me if you would like to plan a Training. The date must be scheduled with me along with instructors. The rule of 10 applies. \$10 per member, 10 members (minimum) signed up with this information sent to Department 10 days prior to training. Please follow directions carefully. Thank you!!

Karen Smith, Chairman

[ksmith111@cox.net](mailto:ksmith111@cox.net)

(520) 249-1119

**SCHEDULED**  
**ARIZONA MISSION TRAINING**  
**EVENTS**

**3-8-25 Unit 25 Cottonwood Dede Dexter**  
**546-370-0080 debdexter2010@yahoo.com**

**3-22-25 Unit 16 Bisbee Ria DuBois**  
**860-508-7330 texasct2@gmail.com**

**3-29-25 Unit 62 Peoria Kathy Amery**  
**623-640-0134 Luv2p8@gmail.com**

*Information added as available*

# Legislative Bulletin

Feb 2024

Happy New Year, first let me apologize for not doing a January bulletin. With the transition of a new president things were, well in transition but things are now going like gang busters.

Legislative had our quarterly meeting on 1/28 and a lot of things are now happening.

First, I have been asked to share this



This is important so that Arizona dual members can help us with our numbers. (Remember we are competing in competition) Yes, I want Arizona to be number 1.

We have a new Secretary to the Veterans Affairs Secretary. Rep. Doug Collins. Rep Collins, who has served as an Air Force Reserve chaplain since 2002, understands the challenges that our Veterans have. Congratulations to Rep Collins!

We have a new agenda for the new 119<sup>th</sup> Congress. It is posted in a separate link on the site. Check it out.

Another item discussed in our meeting was that our Senators and Congressmen like to get letters. We are encouraging you to write a letter. A sample letter on our site. I cannot lie, but I like just clicking a button on the computer and supporting the various bills. But since I am supposed to lead by example, I will be mailing a letter. 😞

I want to remind everyone that we are non-partisan. But it does not mean we put our heads in the sand and do not pay attention to what is going on. There are lawmakers on both sides of the aisles that oppose anything to do with Veterans, pay attention! I found it very interesting those that opposed representative, Collins.

I know this has been long but want to leave you with two things. First contact Congress to request support for the ***Major Richard Star Act!*** This act aims to allow combat-injured veterans to receive both their earned retirement pay and disability compensation without offset. *The American Legion supports this legislation, and we appreciate all the emails you have sent so far. Go to the [Action Center](#) to quickly email a letter of support to your members of Congress.* -So quick, easy and painless.

Lastly, I am so honored and excited to be attending **February 21-26, 2025**, The American Legion's 65th Annual Washington Conference at the Washington Hilton Hotel. This conference provides an opportunity for Legionnaires and Auxiliary to meet with their respective lawmakers and hear from members of Congress and VA leadership. The National Commander will also address attendees on legislative priorities during the National Commander's Rally. I am nervous and excited but not looking forward to the colder temperature. I want to say I will represent us well and hope to have a lot to share with you upon return.

Until then please reach out regarding these very important bills coming before congress in this session.

Register for Action Alerts today at

<https://www.votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/Register>

You can find relevant legislation and the Legion's stance on them in the [legislation section of VoterVoice!](#)

For God and Country,

Kathy Amery , Legislative Chair 2024-2025

[alalegislativaz@gmail.com](mailto:alalegislativaz@gmail.com) 623-640-0134



# The American Legion's 2025 Legislative Priorities

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For the 119th Congress,  
1st Session

**FOR GOD AND COUNTRY  
WE ASSOCIATE OURSELVES TOGETHER  
FOR THE FOLLOWING PURPOSES:**

- To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America;
- To maintain law and order;
- To foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism;
- To preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in all wars;
- To inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation;
- To combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses;
- To make right the master of might;
- To promote peace and goodwill on earth;
- To safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy;
- To consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness

**VETERANS – DEFENSE – AMERICANISM – YOUTH**

# The American Legion Legislative Priorities

The American Legion, largest organization of U.S. military veterans, operates out of more than 12,000 local posts worldwide. Combined with the Sons of The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary, the American Legion Family consists of more than 3 million dedicated volunteers and advocates for those who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces.

Since its inception in 1919, The American Legion has achieved multiple legislative accomplishments, working closely with Congress, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Pentagon and other arms of government at the federal, state and local levels.

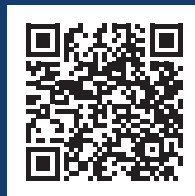
Grassroots American Legion advocacy has strengthened the United States through such achievements as the GI Bill, accountability to military veterans exposed to toxic contamination, diagnostic recognition of post-traumatic stress disorder, the U.S. Flag Code and more.

This publication provides a synopsis of priorities the organization has identified for the 119th Congress. It is divided into four parts:

- **Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation**
- **National Security**
- **Veterans Employment & Education**
- **Americanism**

In addition to priorities expressed here, The American Legion stands ready to respond to new and evolving issues, as well as others that comply with resolutions passed by the all-volunteer veteran membership.

## Grassroots Action Center



The American Legion's Grassroots Action Center provides updates and alerts on legislation of interest to the organization. Scan this QR code or visit [legion.org/legislative](https://legion.org/legislative) to visit the center, learn about bills and contact congressional delegations.



## Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

The American Legion's Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission oversees a portfolio of vital interests that include high-quality healthcare for those who have served, fair and timely disability benefits and compassion for family members and caregivers who face challenges of supporting veteran loved ones in need.

Atop The American Legion's Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation priorities for the 119th Congress are:

### The war within

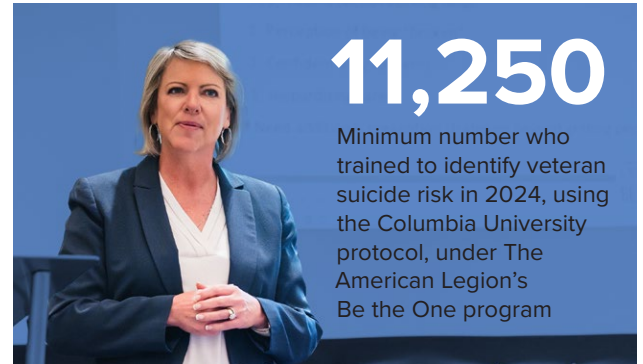
The suicide rate among veterans is nearly double that of their civilian counterparts.

Essential to reducing the rate are:

- Destigmatizing the pursuit of mental health assistance by veterans
- Increasing access to mental healthcare and paving the way for alternative therapies

The American Legion urges Congress to amply fund VA's suicide-prevention outreach budget, mental health treatment services and peer-support programs. Moreover, Congress must take steps to ensure VA's timeliness, efficacy and standardization of data regarding veteran suicide. This is critical to understand the scope of the issue and ensuring resources are allocated where they will be most effective.

To further address this top national priority of The American Legion, the organization has established the Be the One mission. Thousands of American Legion members have been trained to identify risk and "be the one" to help just one veteran, or more, who may be wrestling with thoughts of suicide.



### VA benefits protection, enhancement

Total Disability Based on Individual Unemployability (TDIU) is vital for certain veterans with service-connected disabilities that prevent them from obtaining full-time employment. The Congressional Budget Office has proposed to phase out this benefit within the next five years for veterans 67 or older. TDIU should be based solely on a veteran's ability to secure gainful employment and should not be based on age or any other factors. Losing TDIU benefits could cause severe financial burdens to veterans who have become dependent on them as a source of income.

The amount of Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) for eligible surviving spouses is substantially lower than benefits received by survivors of federal civil service retirees or employees. DIC benefits need to be increased to an amount comparable to civil service benefits. DIC recipients also face unfair risks of losing their benefits if they remarry before the age of 55. Congress must end this disparity to ensure the families of those who paid the ultimate sacrifice for our nation receive adequate financial support.

Predatory claims companies continue to target veterans, collecting billions of dollars annually from exorbitant fees charged for questionable services. VA currently lacks the enforcement tools necessary to take

meaningful action against these companies. Congress must enact legislation with stiff penalties for predatory claims companies and other bad actors who continue to exploit veterans.

# 1.2 million

Approximate number of veterans who were represented free of charge by The American Legion in 2024 with their VA claims.



## Community care balance

Access to community care is essential for veterans, particularly those living in rural areas. An estimated 5 million veterans reside in rural communities, and approximately 58% of VA-enrolled veterans live in these areas, underscoring the need for accessible healthcare options. The American Legion firmly believes that VA should remain the cornerstone of veteran care.

The 2024 VA budget shortfall highlights a significant concern: over \$150 billion has been spent on community care providers since 2015. While The American Legion supports access to community care, issues with current wait-time and drive-distance rules often result in veterans waiting longer or traveling farther for care than they would otherwise receive within the VA system. This challenge is especially pronounced in rural areas, as observed during American Legion System Worth Saving site visits. The American Legion urges Congress to hold the Office of Community Care accountable for the continuity of veteran care, improve communication between VA and community providers and strengthen transportation services to community care appointments for rural health veterans.



## Electronic Health Record Modernization

The Electronic Health Record Modernization project, which would provide a seamless electronic health record from the beginning of military service throughout a veteran's life, remains a work in progress for VA. While new rollouts of the system have been delayed until fiscal 2025, The American Legion urges Congress to continue providing oversight for the project to ensure a smooth resumption. This includes continuing to improve infrastructure and staff training. The American Legion also urges Congress to work to expand telehealth access by increasing public-private partnerships with healthcare providers, offering grants to increase rural broadband access and improving infrastructure of VA facilities to support modernization efforts. National standards of care should also be established for consistency in veteran healthcare, ensuring a seamless experience.

# 826

Major performance incidents reported with the electronic health record system rolled out between October 2020 and March 2024, according to the VA Inspector General's Office

## Quality of Compensation & Pension examinations

American Legion service officers across the country are concerned with the poor quality of VA-contracted Compensation & Pension (C&P) exams. These exams conducted by inadequately trained providers have led to significant delays in the claims process and unfair denials of veterans' disability benefits. Incentives and penalties currently written into contracts with VA vendors do not appear to be effective.

Congress must ensure that VA holds its vendors to higher C&P examination standards. The quality review process for VA-contracted medical examiners must be made transparent, and Congress must ensure more effective incentives, stricter oversight mechanisms, mandatory quality reviews and severe penalties for non-compliance.



## Claims and appeals

VA often delays the processing of benefits claims simply because veterans filed their claims on incorrect forms (i.e., not the most current versions). Instead of delaying the claims process and depriving veterans of potential disability benefits, VA should move forward and ask for any additional information with notification letters.

One important issue that needs to be addressed in the appeals process is an “evidence gap.” Any evidence submitted from the date of a claim’s denial to the date when a Notice of Disagreement is filed cannot be considered by decision-review officers or veterans law judges. This gap needs to be eliminated so that evidence submitted any time before an appeal decision can be considered.

VA needs to adopt more veteran-friendly policies to ensure there are no wrong doors when claimants file for benefits they have earned. Total Disability Based on Individual Unemployability benefits must be protected, VA should accept any standard form regardless of currency, and Congress must act decisively to hold predatory claims companies accountable for their unconscionable actions against veterans.



## Alternative therapies

Traumatic brain injury is associated with increased risk of mental health issues, including substance-use disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety and depression. Alternatives to opioids and easier access to complementary and alternative therapies must be improved to assist veterans.



## Toxic exposure

The Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act (PACT Act) has successfully helped more than 1 million veterans receive care and disability benefits after exposure to toxic contamination while in service. Congress must continue to closely monitor and require VA to provide data to ensure full implementation of this historic legislation.

## Support for survivors

Survivors, spouses and children of military personnel who die on active duty or due to a service-connected illness or injury continue to face challenges. Two priorities of The American Legion are:

- To allow the spouses of the fallen to keep their benefits when they remarry; and
- To raise military survivor benefits to align with those offered by other federal programs, addressing disparities, and ensuring equitable support.

## CAVC judgeship expansion

The Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (CAVC) has exclusive jurisdiction to conduct judicial reviews of decisions made by the Board of Veterans’ Appeals. Currently, the CAVC has seven permanent judges and two temporary judges whose appointments expire at the end of 2025. Congress should pass legislation to make the two temporary judgeships permanent to prevent case backlog.

## Federal employees as veteran advocates

Many members of The American Legion and other service organizations are federal employees who are prohibited by law from volunteering as accredited representatives for veterans. Congress should eliminate this restriction and allow federal employees to serve in a pro-bono capacity as veterans service officers while in full compliance with ethical standards.



## National Security

As veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces, members of The American Legion are keenly aware of the opportunities and challenges faced by those who serve in the active-duty, National Guard and Reserve branches. The Legion works with the Pentagon and installation commands to understand the needs of our nation's defenders. Moreover, The American Legion listens closely to the men and women in uniform to help craft policy and advocacy for them to achieve success.

Among the top legislative priorities of The American Legion National Security Commission for the 119th Congress are:



## Military quality of life

The American Legion believes that Congress and the DoD must continue to improve quality-of-life conditions for servicemembers and military families. Inflationary pressures resulting from the pandemic, supply-chain disruptions, rising energy costs, monetary policies and

government spending, and support for multiple wars overseas have led to significant increases in the cost of living for Americans. Funding for military pay, benefits and quality-of-life programs must continue to be adjusted accordingly. Moreover, barriers to quality-of-life services offered to servicemembers and their families have negatively impacted retention and recruitment numbers in the U.S. Armed Forces. DoD must continue to make difficult decisions, balancing spending for modernization of the military while funding long-neglected quality-of-life requirements.

# \$400

Approximate difference between Base Housing Allowance stipends for Shaw Air Force Base personnel and area monthly off-base housing costs

## Border security

Transnational Criminal Organizations operate across borders to illegally facilitate capital gains or influence. These crimes include drug smuggling, arms dealing, human trafficking, money laundering and cybercrime. In 2022, the State Department identified 11,676 trafficking victims in the Americas and Caribbean. More than 107,543 Americans died from drug overdoses in 2023, even though U.S. Border Patrol agents seized more than 27,000 pounds of fentanyl. Moreover, nearly one-third of Border Patrol agents are veterans. Unfortunately, U.S. Border Patrol retention and recruiting rates are dropping, and suicide rates among Border Patrol agents have risen rapidly. The politicizing of the border is preventing congressional collaboration, a problem that needs to be resolved. The American Legion implores lawmakers to work together on behalf of Americans and Border Patrol agents to improve national security.

# 850,000

Approximate number of immigrants living in the United States on expired visas



## Lethality of the U.S. Armed Forces

Continued modernization of the U.S. Armed Forces is essential for maintaining military superiority and ensuring national security in an increasingly complex and dynamic global environment. As adversaries adopt new technologies and strategies, the United States must stay ahead by embracing cutting-edge solutions and modernizing its defense capabilities. This includes investing in next-generation weaponry, cybersecurity measures and artificial intelligence; all are critical to maintaining strategic advantage. America no longer has the world's largest navy, and China's shipbuilding capacity is 232 times greater than that of the United States. The modernization process also involves updating military infrastructure, improving logistics and enhancing the training and operational readiness of personnel to address evolving threats. Congress must increase funding defense-related research initiatives to accelerate fielding capabilities in all domains of conflict while prioritizing joint warfighting capabilities.

## Funding the State Department and foreign operations

Former Secretary of Defense James Mattis said, "To those who would threaten America's experiment in democracy, they must know: If you challenge us, it will be your longest and your worst day. Work with our diplomats; you don't want to fight the Department of Defense." America's diplomats are the first line of de-escalation. Without them, U.S. servicemembers are put into unnecessary conflicts. The House of Representatives Fiscal Year 2025 State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs bill proposed an 11% cut to overall funding levels, which were already

cut 6% last year. As the nation faces mounting tensions around the globe, Congress must reverse this trend. China has also surpassed the United States with 173 embassies worldwide. While DoD prepares for potential conflict with China, America needs a robust and well-funded foreign service to counter authoritarian influence.

## Protect Coast Guard pay and entitlements

U.S. Coast Guard personnel carry out missions vital to America's national security. Still, the Coast Guard is the only branch of service forced to work without pay during government shutdowns. The repeated threat of shutdowns brings unnecessary hardship on these servicemembers and their families and significant degradation in readiness. During the 2019 government shutdown, The American Legion stepped up and issued more than \$1 million in expedited Temporary Financial Assistance grants to Coast Guard personnel and their families. The American Legion urges Congress to introduce legislation that guarantees Coast Guard personnel are paid without delay like their military counterparts at the Department of Defense in the event of a government shutdown.



## Full accountability of POW/MIAs

Today, more than 81,000 U.S. servicemembers are recorded as "Missing in Action" since the end of World War II. Now, more than 80 years later, surviving family members are still left waiting to learn the fates of their loved ones. It is imperative that the U.S. military keeps its commitment to its ethos of "no one left behind" and provide the fullest possible accounting of those who paid the ultimate sacrifice on the battlefield.



## Veterans Employment & Education

The American Legion's Veterans & Employment Commission oversees efforts to ensure that those who have served the United States in uniform are provided the best possible opportunities to succeed after discharge. Resolution-driven policies and initiatives under the commission revolve around career opportunities for veterans and their spouses; education and training; home ownership; and veteran homelessness prevention.

Among the top priorities under The American Legion's Veterans Employment & Education umbrella for the 119th Congress are:

### End veteran homelessness

Prevention of veteran homelessness requires greater attention to underlying causes for veterans and their families. Factors such as substance abuse, mental health, unemployment and legal challenges contribute to the complexity of the issue. The Department of Housing and Urban Development's Point-In-Time count estimates that 35,574 veterans are currently homeless, making up 5% of the total adult homeless population in the United States, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia. Despite veteran homelessness decreasing by 49% since 2009, more work must be done. To effectively address veteran homelessness, policies must include comprehensive support for at-risk and homeless veterans, including counseling, assistance in

accessing care and benefits, financial and career resources, and business development opportunities.

### Modernize the Transition Assistance Program

The American Legion supports modernizing the DoD Transition Assistance Program by developing a mobile application that utilizes artificial intelligence to tailor resources and information to the individual. This app would provide servicemembers with on-demand access to critical transition resources, offering a tailored toolkit that allows users to individualize their career and transition plans, providing easy access to resources anytime and anywhere. Through AI, the app could offer personalized guidance, helping users make informed decisions and navigate the challenges of civilian life. The application would also provide offline functionality, ensuring that military personnel deployed in low-connectivity areas can access vital information. The American Legion emphasizes that the app must be developed thoughtfully, with input from interagency partners, the private sector and veterans service organizations, to ensure effectiveness and operability.



### Veterans in federal contracting

Veteran-owned small businesses (VOSBs) can play a major role in supporting the Defense Industrial Base (DIB), due to their agility, innovation, specialized capabilities and competitive pricing. Despite this, many federal agencies fail to meet their procurement goals for Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSBs). An analysis

by The American Legion revealed that only four of the 24 largest federal agencies met their SDVOSB prime and subcontracting goals in 2024. The American Legion encourages expanding opportunities in federal contracting for SDVOSBs. Specifically, The American Legion encourages the Department of Defense to adopt the Vets First Program to ensure continued SDVOSB participation in federal contracting opportunities. Strengthening the Vets First program, enforcing procurement goals, enhancing subcontracting access, and fostering innovation will better integrate SDVOSBs into the defense supply chain. Prioritizing SDVOSBs is essential for the long-term resilience and competitiveness of the DIB.



## VA Home Loan transferability

Approximately 60% of millennials cite saving for a down payment as the primary barrier to homeownership. Introducing transferability into the VA Home Loan Guaranty Program could address this issue for veterans and military families by enabling access to the no-down-payment feature, thereby expanding homeownership opportunities. Improving the VA Home Loan benefit to



include transferability would promote financial stability and support the well-being of veterans and their families. The Department of Veterans Affairs can, and should, ensure that veterans and their dependents have equal access to economic advancement and homeownership opportunities. Granting family members access to the VA Home Loan benefit would demonstrate gratitude for military sacrifices and commitment.



## National Guard and Reserve GI Bill parity

National Guard and Reserve servicemembers play a critical role in national defense, responding to public health crises and global threats alike, and supporting law enforcement. However, they often face unique challenges, including prolonged absences from their families and civilian jobs, often incurring significant financial loss. Despite their contributions, many are denied a fundamental benefit: the GI Bill. Under current law, National Guard and Reserve members only accrue GI Bill entitlements when activated under federal orders. Those activated under state orders do not qualify, creating a significant disparity. The distinction between federal and state orders in determining GI Bill eligibility is unjust. The American Legion believes that “every day in uniform counts” and that National Guard and Reserve members, who serve alongside their active-duty counterparts at home and around the world, should receive the same benefits. Congress should extend GI Bill eligibility to all National Guard and Reserve servicemembers, regardless of activation status.



## Americanism

The American Legion's Americanism Commission oversees programs and services that elevate pride, education and awareness of the United States and its identity. Included are Boys State/Boys Nation, which mentor young people to learn and serve in the American democracy; Oratorical Contests that offer scholarships at the local, state and national levels for students who learn to speak fluently on the U.S. Constitution; and, emphatically, respect for the U.S. flag under which U.S. military men and women have served and sacrificed since the founding of the nation.

Top priorities for the 119th Congress, in support of The American Legion's Americanism pillar value include:

### Protection of the U.S. flag

Since a 1989 5-4 Supreme Court decision defined deliberate acts of U.S. flag desecration as free speech protected under the First Amendment, The American Legion has led efforts to return to the states their ability to legally prohibit such acts. The American Legion has come within one Senate vote in previous efforts to obtain the needed supermajority for a constitutional amendment that would restore the ability for states to enact and enforce laws that prohibit deliberate acts of desecration against the flag. The American Legion renews its vow to continue fighting to give Congress "power to prohibit physical desecration of the flag of the United States."



### Modernize U.S. Flag Code

The American Legion led national conferences in 1923 and 1924 that established the first rules of U.S. flag respect for the nation. Those guidelines laid the groundwork for what would be passed as U.S. Flag Code in 1942. Modern practices at massive public events, such as professional sports contests, frequently run counter to the code, and The American Legion calls for an amendment to modernize the guidelines that would make exceptions for common patriotic expressions of that magnitude that may include, for instance, displaying the flag in a horizontal position.



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# The American Legion's Grassroots Advocacy

## 148,517

Actions taken through The American Legion's online  
Grassroots Action Center on legislative topics in 2024

## 786,654

American Legion Grassroots  
Action Center  
participants as of  
Jan. 1, 2025



## 585

Members of The  
American Legion  
National Legislative  
Council, who work  
with lawmakers in  
their home districts



## 24,936

Messages sent through The American Legion's  
Grassroots Action Center online platform to Congress,  
seeking passage of the Sen. Elizabeth Dole 21st  
Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement  
Act, which was signed into law Jan. 2, 2025



 AMERICAN  
LEGION

P.O. Box 1055  
Indianapolis, IN 46206  
(317) 630-1200

[legion.org](http://legion.org)



Connect with The American Legion



*A Community of Volunteers Serving Veterans, Military, and their Families*

**Unit/Department Name**  
**Street Address**  
**City, State, Zip Code**  
**Phone Number**  
**Email Address**

October 20, 2024

**Representative Name**  
**Representative Address**  
**Representative City, State, Zip Code**

Dear (\*See proper salutation below),

The American Legion Auxiliary is one component of the nation's most prominent supporters of veterans, military, and their families — The American Legion Family. The American Legion Auxiliary **Unit/Department Name** members stand in support of The American Legion's Legislative Agenda, advocating for laws that enhance the quality of life for our veterans, military, and their families. Our **unit/department** aims to maintain a valued relationship with you during your term in office.

The American Legion has endorsed the **name of the resolution/bill**; therefore, the Auxiliary advocates for your support in honor of those who have fought and continue to fight for our nation's democracy.

In the spirit of *Service Not Self*,

### **American Legion Auxiliary Members Signatures**

*A Community of Volunteers Serving Veterans, Military, and their Families.*

#### **\*5 FAH-1 H-516 SALUTATION**

*(CT:CH-41; 07-28-2015)*

a. When preparing a Congressional letter for the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, the drafter must use one of the following salutations:

- (1) Dear Senator \_\_\_\_\_: (To a U.S. Senator (male or female));
- (2) Dear Mr. or Ms. \_\_\_\_\_: (To a Member of the House of Representatives);
- (3) Dear Mr. or Madam Chairman: (To a male or female Member as chairperson of a committee or subcommittee);
- (4) Dear Mr. or Madam Speaker: (To the Speaker of the House of Representatives); or
- (5) Dear Mr. or Madam President: (To the Vice President of the United States in his/her capacity as the President of the Senate).

## MEMBERSHIP FEBRUARY 28, 2025

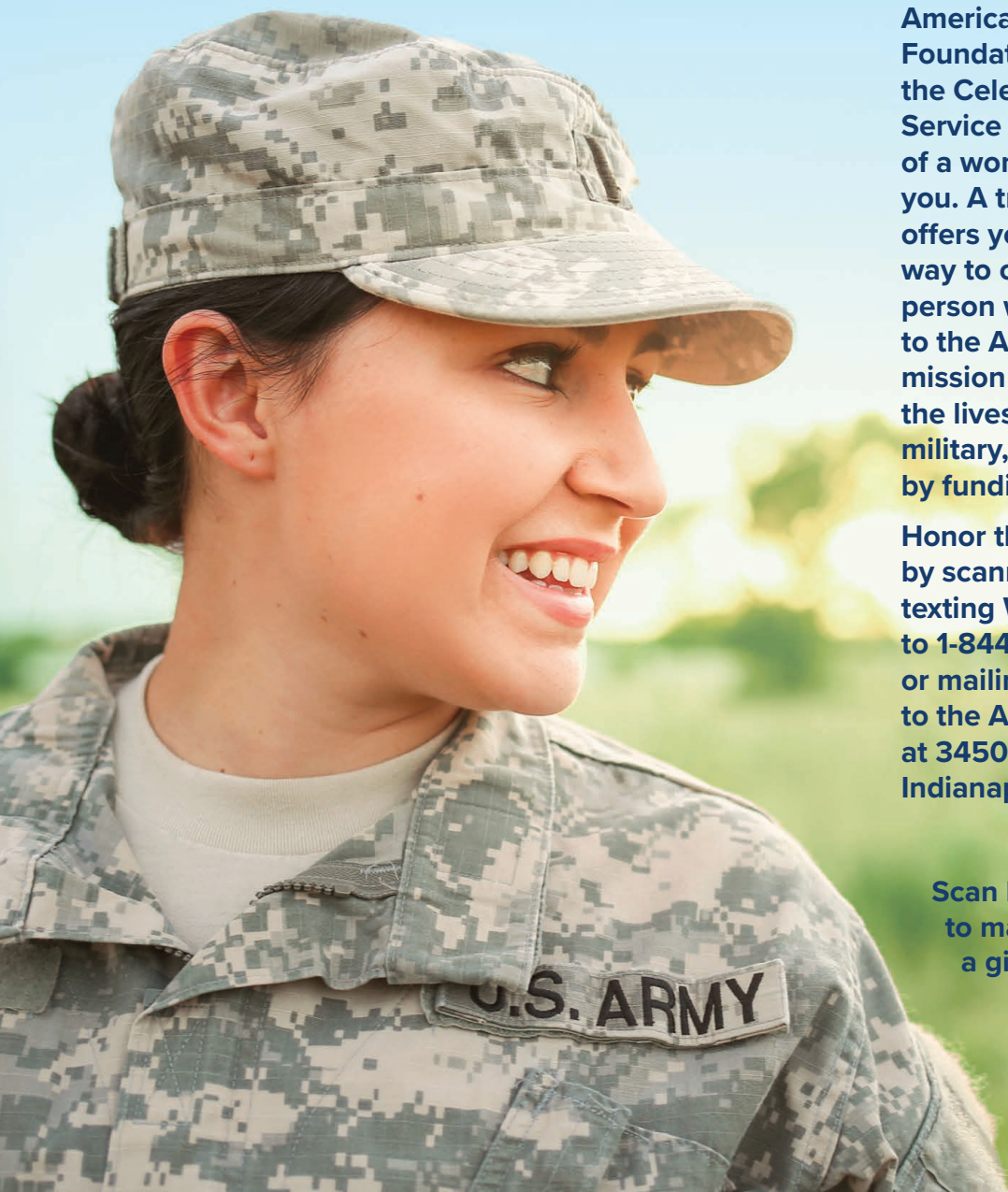
		UNIT	CITY	OBJECTIVE	JUNIOR	SENIOR	TOTAL	PERCENT
		0100	Phoenix	193	5	149	154	79.79%
		<b>Total</b>		<b>193</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>79.79%</b>
	<b>Total</b>			<b>193</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>79.79%</b>
01		0019	Yuma	216	7	155	162	75.00%
		0046	Bouse	58	2	36	38	65.52%
		0056	Yuma	80	1	68	69	86.25%
		<b>Total</b>		<b>354</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>75.99%</b>
	<b>Total</b>			<b>354</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>75.99%</b>
02		0007	Tucson	45	0	33	33	73.33%
		0036	Tucson	279	4	208	212	75.99%
		0059	Tucson	145	3	111	114	78.62%
		0066	Green Valley	900	0	802	802	89.11%
		0068	Tucson	61	1	50	51	83.61%
		0073	Tucson	35	1	20	21	60.00%
		0109	Vail	390	10	357	367	94.10%
		0125	Tucson	16	1	14	15	93.75%
		0131	Green Valley	580	0	553	553	95.34%
		0132	Oro Valley	85	1	76	77	90.59%
		<b>Total</b>		<b>2536</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>2224</b>	<b>2245</b>	<b>88.53%</b>
	<b>Total</b>			<b>2536</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>2224</b>	<b>2245</b>	<b>88.53%</b>
03		0011	Douglas	145	2	107	109	75.17%
		0016	Bisbee	64	0	43	43	67.19%
		0024	Tombstone	415	10	401	411	99.04%
		0045	Benson	50	0	34	34	68.00%
		0052	Sierra Vista	210	3	166	169	80.48%
		0141	Pearce	22	0	20	20	90.91%
		<b>Total</b>		<b>906</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>771</b>	<b>786</b>	<b>86.75%</b>
	<b>Total</b>			<b>906</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>771</b>	<b>786</b>	<b>86.75%</b>
04		0008	Casa Grande	35	0	20	20	57.14%
		0009	Florence	125	1	122	123	98.40%
		0051	Coolidge	70	8	59	67	95.71%
		0054	Coolidge	93	1	74	75	80.65%
		0097	San Tan Valley	40	1	32	33	82.50%
		0129	Queen Creek	21	1	14	15	71.43%
		0133	Maricopa	35	1	22	23	65.71%
		<b>Total</b>		<b>419</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>84.96%</b>
	<b>Total</b>			<b>419</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>84.96%</b>

05	0004	Globe	40	2	31	33	82.50%
	0028	Clifton	85	1	60	61	71.76%
	0032	Safford	155	0	112	112	72.26%
	0095	Solomon	82	5	73	78	95.12%
	<b>Total</b>		<b>362</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>78.45%</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>362</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>78.45%</b>	
06	0030	Springerville	90	0	77	77	85.56%
	0037	Holbrook	25	0	28	28	112.00%
	0069	Payson	130	0	49	49	37.69%
	0086	Overgaard	415	2	383	385	92.77%
	<b>Total</b>		<b>660</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>81.67%</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>660</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>539</b>	<b>81.67%</b>	
07	0003	Flagstaff	73	3	41	44	60.27%
	0013	Williams	50	2	46	48	96.00%
	0014	Kingman	145	3	119	122	84.14%
	0022	Golden Valley	150	4	119	123	82.00%
	0042	Grand Canyon	38	6	27	33	86.84%
	0057	Ash Fork	80	2	57	59	73.75%
	0081	Lake Havasu City	670	7	672	679	101.34%
	0087	Bullhead City	132	2	120	122	92.42%
	0088	Dolan Springs	10	0	26	26	260.00%
	0103	Meadview	43	0	47	47	109.30%
	0123	Seligman	40	0	25	25	62.50%
	0136	Yucca	15	0	10	10	66.67%
	<b>Total</b>		<b>1446</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>1309</b>	<b>1338</b>	<b>92.53%</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>1446</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>1309</b>	<b>1338</b>	<b>92.53%</b>	
08	0006	Prescott	263	7	259	266	101.14%
	0025	Cottonwood	306	9	260	269	87.91%
	0040	Chino Valley	95	0	86	86	90.53%
	0078	Humboldt	160	2	128	130	81.25%
	0079	Yarnell	183	0	149	149	81.42%
	0090	Black Canyon City	75	1	56	57	76.00%
	0093	Camp Verde	112	0	104	104	92.86%
	0108	Prescott Valley	38	3	25	28	73.68%
	0135	Cornville	47	8	33	41	87.23%
	0140	Prescott Valley	23	4	12	16	69.57%
<b>Total</b>		<b>1302</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>1112</b>	<b>1146</b>	<b>88.02%</b>	
<b>Total</b>		<b>1302</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>1112</b>	<b>1146</b>	<b>88.02%</b>	

11	0001	Phoenix	127	0	26	26	20.47%	
	0005	Phoenix	65	3	45	48	73.85%	
	0012	Wickenburg	220	4	171	175	79.55%	
	0029	Glendale	250	5	180	185	74.00%	
	0053	Buckeye	30	0	31	31	103.33%	
	0061	Avondale	215	3	210	213	99.07%	
	0062	Peoria	1000	31	948	979	97.90%	
	0105	Phoenix	215	7	231	238	110.70%	
	0115	Glendale	35	3	21	24	68.57%	
	0145	Peoria	14	0	16	16	114.29%	
		<b>Total</b>			<b>2171</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>1879</b>	<b>1935</b>
	<b>Total</b>			<b>2171</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>1879</b>	<b>1935</b>	<b>89.13%</b>
12	0002	Tempe	111	2	94	96	86.49%	
	0026	Mesa	235	2	207	209	88.94%	
	0027	Apache Junction	1920	4	1814	1818	94.69%	
	0034	Cave Creek	320	1	233	234	73.13%	
	0035	Chandler	316	7	254	261	82.59%	
	0039	Gilbert	520	11	510	521	100.19%	
	0041	Phoenix	350	11	275	286	81.71%	
	0044	Scottsdale	340	0	278	278	81.76%	
	0058	Fountain Hills	405	8	376	384	94.81%	
	0064	Phoenix	25	0	16	16	64.00%	
	0065	Phoenix	350	12	249	261	74.57%	
	0084	Sacaton	50	9	47	56	112.00%	
	0091	Chandler	275	18	245	263	95.64%	
	0107	Phoenix	210	2	182	184	87.62%	
	0114	Scottsdale	25	0	3	3	12.00%	
	0117	Phoenix	265	3	213	216	81.51%	
	0124	Guadalupe	30	4	15	19	63.33%	
	0138	Mesa	54	0	83	83	153.70%	
	<b>Total</b>			<b>5801</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>5094</b>	<b>5188</b>	<b>89.43%</b>
	<b>Total</b>			<b>5801</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>5094</b>	<b>5188</b>	<b>89.43%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>Total</b>			<b>16150</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>13953</b>	<b>14240</b>	<b>88.17%</b>

 AMERICAN  
**LEGION**  
AUXILIARY  
FOUNDATION

# *Celebrating Women of Service*



International Women's Day is March 8. Support the American Legion Auxiliary Foundation by donating to the Celebrating Women of Service campaign in honor of a woman who inspires you. A tribute donation offers you a thoughtful way to celebrate a special person while contributing to the ALA Foundation's mission to positively impact the lives of veterans, military, and their families by funding ALA programs.

Honor their service today by scanning the QR code, texting **WOMAN** to 1-844-940-3450, or mailing a check to the ALA Foundation at 3450 Founders Road, Indianapolis, IN 46268.

Scan here  
to make  
a gift:



## Phoenix State Home Birthday list March – May 2025

Questions? Contact Candy Neagle at [candy.neagle@gmail.com](mailto:candy.neagle@gmail.com); 623-826-9580 (call or text)

### March

Kenneth T	3/6
Miguel Y	3/8
James H	3/9
John M	3/9
Gregory G	3/13
Leslie B	3/17

### April

Richard B	4/1
George G	4/7
Doyles G	4/12
Jonathan S	4/16
Rex G	4/20
James W	4/21

### May

William E	5/1
John M	5/2
Edward N	5/4
Steve D	5/6
Cecil B	5/31