

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY DEPARTMENT OF TEXAS
PROGRAM ACTION PLAN 2022-2023

LEGISLATIVE

Committee members and contact details:



2nd Division, Marty Peters, Chairman 1005 N Main St Cleburne TX 76033

marty54@sbcglobal.net

Cell: 817-475-2885

4th Division: Mary Creighton, 4th Division 717 E. Murco Dr., Mineral Wells, TX 76067

Mcreigh220@yahoo.com

Cell: 940-452-0516

KEY PROGRAM STATEMENTS **What are the goals of this program?**

The Legislative program provides information and assistance to ALA members to **ADVOCATE** for the legislative agenda of The American Legion.

What can ALA members do?

1. Encourage and empower members to be more knowledgeable to take action on The American Legion's legislative priorities.

IDEAS:

MEMBERS CAN...

- Subscribe to the Legion's ***Legislative Action Alerts*** to receive notifications when they call upon all Legion Family Members to take immediate action on a topic.
www.capwiz.com/legion/mlm/signup to subscribe. Report to your unit chairman when you have done so.
- Subscribe to the Legion's ***Legislative Update*** to stay informed on veteran and military legislative issues. Report to your unit chairman when you have subscribed.
- Order a copy of the ***ALA Legislative Advocacy Guide*** through your unit or your department headquarters and follow the suggestions it contains to build legislative awareness in your community. The guide can also be downloaded from www.ALAforVeterans.org
- Visit the Legion's legislative website, www.legion.org/legislative , to keep current on legislative priorities. The site also contains the Legion's legislative priority sheets and point papers available for download.
 - The priority/drop sheets outline the Legion's priorities and you can "drop" these in your elected official's office.
 - The point papers provide more information on the issues and the Legion's position.
- Actively post The American Legion's legislative priorities on social media
- Identify your U.S. representative and your two U.S. senators. Work to build a relationship and rapport with these individuals and/or members of their staff.
- Subscribe to e-newsletters of your elected officials to monitor what they consider to be their priorities and to make sure that veteran/military and national security issues are among them.
- Follow them on social media as well. (See each elected official's website for details on how to sign-up and to find their social media links)


How many veterans are currently serving in Congress?

Currently, there are **76** Members in the U.S. House of Representatives who are veterans.

- Connect with other civic organizations to communicate The American Legion’s legislative priorities for potential support and (as always) membership opportunities.
- Attend local informational town hall meetings to become better informed and to network with other community and civic organizations.
- Attend department and/or legislative meetings and activities.
- Meet with state and national level public officials to discuss issues facing veterans, servicemembers and their families. If possible attend meetings with other Legion Family members.
- Remember, we’re putting a face on legislative topics. We can share the human reality on how issues affect veterans and their families.
- Complete the Legion’s Congressional Meeting Report Form following any meeting with your U.S. representative, U.S. senator and/or their legislative staff members. Visit www.legion.org/legislative/aar to complete the form.
- Let this committee know if you have a personal or professional relationship with a U.S. representative and/or U.S. senator who serves on the Veterans Affairs committees or a member of his/her legislative staff and that you’d be willing to participate in the ALA Veterans Affairs Legislative Mini-Council. Each of these members should be willing to contact the representative, senator or staff member when called to action by the Legion on an issue.

UNITS CAN...

- During a meeting, go over the steps outlined by the ALA Legislative Advocacy Guide and discuss legislative priorities.
- Invite a staff member of your U.S. representative and/or senator to a unit meeting so he/she can explain the best way to contact the official.
- Include legislative priorities in unit communications (social media and newsletters)
- Work with your Legion counterpart to make arrangements for Legion Family members to meet with respective Congressional delegation while on recess and in home districts.
- Choose a different legislative priority each month and allow time at each unit meeting for members to draft letters and communicate the importance of legislation related to veterans and their families. Watch for **Legislative Action Alerts** for any pressing priority.
- Take a laptop to your meeting and show the members how easy it is to “click” and write to your congressmen through the Action Alerts – or use your phones together.
- Invite a member of the Department Legislative Committee to a unit meeting to explain how the Department initiates legislative advocacy and how each unit can play a role.
- Work with your Legion Family to host a “Meet the Candidate” night. Make veterans/military issues the primary topic for discussion. (See the ‘How-To’ sheet for details)

How many presidents served in the military? 

Serving in the military isn't a prerequisite for becoming president. Nonetheless, out of the 45 presidents of the United States, **29** had some military experience in their background, according to the US Department of Veterans Affairs.

REPORTING

Year-End Reports

Annual reports should reflect the program work of the units and may result in a national award for participants if requirements are met. Each unit is asked to submit a narrative report to the Department Legislative Chairman following the protocol and deadlines. It is due to the chairman no later than May 1, 2023.

AWARDS TO STRIVE TOWARDS

Thank you in advance for choosing to take the time to share a story about the positive impact you or someone in your unit has had on our mission through working the Legislative program. Your story may inspire another member into service and it helps tell the world who we are, what we do and why we matter.

As part of your narrative report, please include answers to the following questions:

- How did you educate members in the legislative issues promoted by The American Legion and how did your members employ those methods?
- What legislative activities (town hall meetings, legislative receptions, etc) did members attend in their communities and departments? What suggestions did members have to improve those activities? Please describe.
- How did members develop relationships with their elected officials? Please describe.
- Please describe how members were able to connect with their local and state officials and what were their successes.

Some members think Legislative is “boring”. I disagree. Legislative is so very exciting because this is where the American Legion Auxiliary can truly have an impact and make a difference in the lives and in the futures of our military and for our veterans as laws are passed or changed that provide benefits and improve care for our veterans, our military and their families along with all the other programs of the American Legion Auxiliary.

Historically it can be proven that letter writing campaigns by the ALA have truly persuaded our government leaders to tackle issues and change laws that affected change – and each member of the American Legion Auxiliary can take pride in that history and can make that same impact on the future by working this Legislative program.

TEXAS MEMBER AWARD YOU CAN QUALIFY FOR:

Deadline: May 1

Submit a narrative to submit an inspiring member that has embraced the concepts of the Legislative program and has put forth the effort to:

- learn and implement the ideas in the *Legislative Advocacy Guide*

- has subscribed to the herein suggested websites, alerts and updates
- has worked with The American Legion on Legislative efforts at local or state levels
- Has created or been instrumental in receiving proclamations from local governments

A special **"BEST TEXAS MEMBER-LEGISLATOR"** AWARD will be presented at Department Convention

UNIT AWARD: Most Outstanding Unit Legislative Program (one per division)

Deadline: May 1 Must be sent by 5pm CST on deadline. **Photos** of "Legislation in Action" are encouraged and should be emailed separately as jpg or pdf

The best narrative will be forwarded to National for consideration of a National Award.

NATIONAL PRESIDENTS AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE As a member & unit you can submit for this award directly to National. See www.alaforveterans.org for details.

"HOW-TO" SHEETS

HOW TO HOST A "MEET THE CANDIDATE" NIGHT

PROCLAMATIONS & LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE

www.ALAforVeterans.org on the Legislative program page:

- a. ALA Legislative Advocacy Guide
- b. How to Fill Out the Congressional Contact Form
- c. How to Contact Legislators to Advocate for Veterans, Servicemembers & their families

www.Legion.org/legislative [The American Legion's Legislative Center]:

- a. Legislative Testimony Information
- b. Point Papers, Priority Sheets, Letters of Support
- c. Congressional Contact Report Form

Facebook:

- a. ALA National Headquarters: www.facebook.com/ALAforVeterans
- b. The national Legislative Committee Facebook group: ALA National Legislative Group

Department Legislative Committee Members:

Marty Peters marty54@sbcglobal.net **817-475-2885**

Mary Creighton mcreigh220@yahoo.com **940-452-0516**

Only 17 members in the U.S. Senate have served in the United States Military.

“HOW-TO” SHEET

LOCAL LEGISLATIVE OPPORTUNITIES

LOCAL LEGISLATIVE OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN YOUR UNITS AND YOUR COMMUNITIES

CONSTITUTION DAY	SEPTEMBER 17	
ELECTION DAY, 2022	NOVEMBER 8, 2022	FEDERAL, STATE & COUNTY
FILE BILLS FOR TX 88 TH LEGISLATURE	NOV 14, 2022	
BILL OF RIGHTS DAY	DECEMBER 15, 2022	
TEXAS LEGISLATIVE CALENDAR	JAN 10,23 – MAY 29, 2023	
PRESIDENTS DAY	FEB 20, 2023	
LAW DAY	MAY 1, 2023	

Many local civic organizations are looking for speakers to present ceremonies at their meetings.

Contact your Lions Club, Kiwanis Club, Rotary Club and others and offer to present the POW/MIA table ceremony; the Military Child Table; the 9/11 Table Ceremony (available from Marty Peters); a Flag Day presentation and more. Work with your other unit chairmen and your Public Relations chairman along with the Post and the Squadron to tie in your legislative efforts with everything that you do – each of these has existing legislative efforts currently underway.

HOW-TO SHEET

PROCLAMATIONS

A great way to get to know your local elected officials is to regularly attend the Commissioners' Court for your county and the City Council Meetings for your city.

They are usually more than happy to issue proclamations for veteran related or Americanism proclamations. You prepare them (in word) and email them to the city secretary or the county judge office and then show up to receive them. They have deadlines that you must meet. This gives the American Legion Auxiliary exposure for the many programs and is often a live feed and archived to be seen by the public. Free, easy and you just use the same proclamations year after year. I know from personal experience they get to know you and expect you and appreciate you for making them look good as they proclaim the important event.

You can find sample proclamations online and modify them for your local event or ceremony or recognition. Many are on the American Legion Auxiliary website and this chairman is happy to share the many she has produced and used.

DAYS TO REQUEST PROCLAMATIONS FROM YOUR CITY-COUNTY &/OR STATE

AUGUST	6 TH	1 ST ATOMIC BOMB DROPPED ON HIROSHIMA
	7 TH	PURPLE HEART RECOGNITION DAY
	9 TH	2 ND ATOMIC BOMB DROPPED ON NAGASAKI

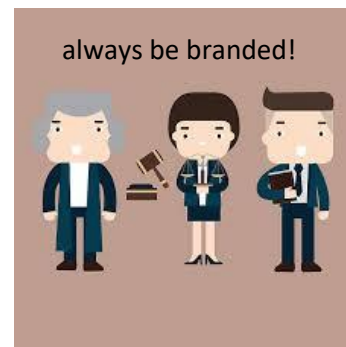
PROCLAMATION POSSIBLE DATES (CONTINUED)

SEPTEMBER	2 ND	VJ (VICTORY OVER JAPAN) DAY – OFFICIAL END OF WORLD WAR II
	11 TH	PATRIOT DAY
	17 TH	CONSTITUTION DAY
	3 RD Friday	POW/MIA DAY
OCTOBER	26 TH	NATIONAL DAY OF THE DEPLOYED
NOVEMBER	11 TH	VETERANS DAY
	WEEK BEFORE THANKSGIVING AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK	
DECEMBER	7 TH	PEARL HARBOR DAY
	15 TH	BILL OF RIGHTS DAY
JANUARY	3 RD Monday	MARTIN LUTHER KING JR DAY
	28 TH	BATTLE OF THE BULGE ENDS
FEBRUARY	3 RD	FOUR CHAPLAINS DAY
	16 TH	IWO JIMA BATTLE BEGINS
	23 RD	FLAG RAISED ON IWO JIMA

SEE MORE ON NEXT PAGE...



MARCH	13 TH	K9 VETERANS DAY	
	15 TH – 17 TH	THE AMERICAN LEGION BIRTHDAY	
	25 TH	NATIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR DAY	
	29 TH	VIETNAM VETERAN DAY	
APRIL	5 TH	GOLD STAR WIVES DAY	
MAY	8 TH	VE DAY (VICTORY IN EUROPE)	
	20 TH	ARMED FORCES DAY	
	FRIDAY BEFORE MEMORIAL DAY	NATIONAL POPPY DAY	
	LAST MONDAY IN MAY	MEMORIAL DAY	
JUNE	6 TH	D-DAY	
	14 TH	FLAG DAY	
	19 TH	JUNETEENTH DAY	
	22 ND	PLEDGE DAY	
	27 TH	NATIONAL PTSD AWARENESS DAY	
JULY	4 TH	INDEPENDENCE DAY	
	27 TH	KOREAN ARMISTICE DAY	



Mark these on your calendar and get them out to your local government offices 3 – 4 weeks in advance!

IMPACT FORMS:

GET ‘EM DONE!

MEMBERS TO YOUR UNIT!

UNIT TO YOUR DISTRICT!

GET ‘EM DONE!!!

How to Host a Meet the Candidates Night

3 Months Prior to the Event

1. In an effort to make this a Legion Family event, work with your Legionpost, SAL squadron and Riders chapter (if applicable) to form a planning committee. If this isn't a Legion Family event, the unit Legislative chairman and unit president should appoint a planning committee. Identify a place, date and time for the event. Map out a plan to get the word out to the general community. Think about if you'll serve refreshments; will they be donated or do you need to buy them? Set guidelines for candidates before the event about literature, political signs and handouts.
 - If the place is the post home, ensure you have approval for the space and it's on the calendar. Determine if your post allows political material (like signs) to be displayed on post property
2. After the candidate filling deadline has passed, pull a list of candidates from your state's election board or Supervisor of Elections' website. Prepare a spreadsheet of all ballot-ready candidates (local, state and/or federal) who will be invited. List their name, address, phone, email, party and office. Allow ample time to contact them and receive their response.
3. Mail and email invitation letters with Legion Family Point of Contact name and the deadline date to reply. Remember: The Legion Family is nonpartisan, so you need to invite **ALL** candidates. Follow up periodically with candidates who have not replied. Suggest to the candidate they send another representative if there is a conflict in their scheduling.

2 Months Prior

1. The planning committee arranges for volunteers for the following roles:
 - Moderator (1) – Someone impartial and ideally not a part of the Legion Family, such as local news reporter or radio host or someone known and respected by the community. Using someone on TV or radio also ensures that it will be announced on TV/radio.
 - Timekeeper (1) – To keep everyone on track. Each candidate should get an equal amount of time each round.
 - Legion Family Ambassadors (Several) – To man a table on programs and services your Legion Family offers. They should also have membership applications on hand.
 - Servers (Several) – Have a small team of volunteers serve refreshments.
 - Crowd Control (Several) – Volunteers to ensure that no attendee gets out of control. (Legion Family Sergeants at Arms might be great for this role).
 - Screeners (Several) – Volunteers to collect and review questions from attendees. Selected questions will be given to the moderator for a Q&A period. **Note: Candidates can stay after to talk with people and address their issues.*
 - Public Relations Coordinator (1) – Someone who will ensure that event is advertised in local newspapers, social media, websites and any other media outlet. They might invite a radio station or local TV station to stream the event live. (They might form a team to help promote the event on social media, create a hashtag, etc.).
2. The planning committee sets an agenda and how the event will proceed. Depending on the number of candidates in attendance, allow time for opening and closing speeches for each (this could be 2 to 3 minutes). After opening speeches and introductions, the moderator will ask for questions (that have been screened).
 - If question is to a particular candidate, allow 1-2 minutes for the answer and allow opposing candidate the same amount of time. There should be no rebuttals!
 - If it is a general question, the moderator can ask any candidate to address it, but again only 1-2 minutes per candidate.

Day of Event

1. Set up the room with the candidates in front of the audience.
2. Prepare tent cards for all candidates with their name, party and the office they're seeking. You may wish to seat candidates alphabetically in an effort to not show favoritism.
3. Set up a table to talk about the programs and services your Legion Family offers. They should also have membership applications on hand and other Legion Family branded information.
4. Set up a table for voter registration¹. Members of your Americanism committee might be good to man this table, or you can invite an outside organization, like the League of Women Voters to help with the voter registration.

After the Event

1. Follow up with thank you notes to all the candidates who participated.
2. If media did not attend, work with your Public Relations chairman to send pictures to be published and posted on social media.

Here are the national awards for this committee:

Unit Award: Most Outstanding Unit Legislative Program (per division)

- All unit entries must be submitted by the department chairman via electronic form by 5 p.m. EST on June 1.

Note: You will receive a confirmation when your award is submitted. Unit members should follow instructions from their department.

National Awards Form Link: <https://www.legion-aux.org/National-Awards-Form>

Department Award: Best Department Legislative Program (per division)

- All department entries must be submitted by the department chairman via electronic form by 5 p.m. EST on June 1.

Note: You will receive a confirmation when your award is submitted.

National Awards Form Link: <https://www.legion-aux.org/National-Awards-Form>

Please note – when applicable, unit and department deadlines differ.

Questions? Contact legislative@ALAforVeterans.org

Fine Print:

Award submissions become property of the American Legion Auxillary National Headquarters. Through submission of reports and award entries, the submitter grants nonexclusive reproduction and publication rights to the materials submitted and agrees to have their names and submission published for ALA use or commercial use without additional compensation or permission.

Please fill out the information as completely and accurately as possible. Award certificates will be completed using the information given on this sheet, so please be sure to complete the electronic form in its entirety.

Please refer to the webpage for the specific criteria such as photographs, narrative length, submission deadline, and point of contact. All awards will be mailed to the department office after ALA National Convention. Department presidents may wish to recognize award recipients by presenting them with the award at a department function.

American Legion Auxiliary National Report and Award Cover Sheet

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION CLOSELY TO ENSURE THAT YOU HAVE SUPPLIED ALL NEEDED INFORMATION.

Member: The National Report and Award Cover Sheet should be attached if you are reporting. Submission may make you or your unit/department eligible for a national award.

Department Chairman and Unit Chairman: This cover sheet should be attached to each narrative submitted as a year-end report or if you are applying for a department or unit national award.

- Send all award entries/year-end narrative reports to the appropriate program's division chairman unless otherwise noted on the committee's web site under "Program's Awards" at www.ALAforVeterans.org.
- All year-end narratives will be judged as award entries.
- Award winners are announced in the respective committee "pre-con" meeting prior to the start of ALA National Convention. All awards will be mailed to the winners' department headquarters at the close of ALA National Convention.

To all submitting this form:

Submissions become property of the American Legion Auxiliary National Headquarters. Through submission of reports and award entries, the submitter grants nonexclusive reproduction and publication rights to the materials submitted and agrees to have their names and submission published for ALA use or commercial use without additional compensation or permission.

Please fill out the information as completely and accurately as possible. Award certificates will be completed using the information given on this sheet, so please be sure to complete the form legibly in its entirety. For your convenience, a fillable version of this form is available online at www.ALAforVeterans.org.

For the award for which you wish to be considered, please refer to the specific program's web page in the member portal at www.ALAforVeterans.org for the specific criteria such as photographs, narrative length, submission deadline, and point of contact. Please include all required documentation along with your submission of the National Report and Award Cover Sheet. All awards will be mailed to the department office after ALA National Convention. Department presidents may wish to recognize award recipients by presenting them with the award at a department function.



American Legion Auxiliary National Report and Award Cover Sheet

Please note, your report will also be viewed as an award entry.

Complete the following if you are applying for a member award. Be sure to give the complete name of the member. The award certificate will be prepared using the information you include below.

Unit #: _____ Full official unit name: _____

Name of state where you are a member: _____

Member Name: _____ ALA member ID#: _____

Nominating Member (if different from above): _____

Nominator's Phone number: (____) _____

Nominator's Email address: _____

National committee sponsoring award: _____

CHOOSE ONE>>>>>

ENTER ONE>>>>>

Then only fill out
the appropriate
section.

MUST BE
ATTACHED TO ANY
& ALL NATIONAL
SUBMISSIONS TO
BE CONSIDERED
FOR AN AWARD.

Type of Award: ☐ Department ☐ Unit ☐ Member

Name of the award you are applying for: _____

For a unit award or submit a year-end unit narrative report, please complete this section. Be sure to give the complete name of your unit. The award certificate will be prepared using the information you include below.

Unit #: _____ Full official unit name: _____

Name of department: _____

Unit president/chairman (circle one) name: _____

Above listed person's ALA member ID#: _____ Phone number: (____) _____

Email address: _____

For a department award or to submit a year-end department narrative report, please complete this section:

Name of department: _____

Name of department chairman: _____

Chairman's phone number: (____) _____ ALA member ID#: _____

Chairman's email address: _____

Please see your committee's page on www.ALAforVeterans.org to determine where to send this form.