



AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY
Department of Ohio

2009-2010
LEGISLATIVE
PLAN OF ACTION

Department of Ohio Legislative Chairman

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SEND REPORT TO : Karen Peel
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Communication Is Key
Martha Lee Thatcher
2009-2010 Department President

LEGISLATIVE PLAN OF ACTION

2009-2010

Congratulations on being selected to chair the Legislative Program for your Unit! It will be an informative year as we keep our members up-to-date about important legislation that involves our veteran and their families.

The purpose of the Legislative Program:

To train and inform our members to become grassroot advocates for veterans and their families with local, state, and nationally elected officials, supporting the Legislative agenda of the American Legion.

LEGISLATIVE OBJECTIVES

1. **OBJECTIVE** – To increase the influence of the American Legion Auxiliary on legislative offices on Capitol Hill and give members talking points and specific reasons to contact their legislators at least twice a year.

Action Steps:

- a. The American Legion Auxiliary is a nonpartisan group.
 - b. Write letters, send emails, faxes and make phone calls to share your point of view with elected officials on legislative issues.
 - c. Build working relationships with reliable and dedicated staff people in those offices.
 - d. Provide frequent communication to elected officials for the purpose of legislative updates and status of specific legislation.
 - e. Ask legislators how they will vote on specific issues and ask them for their response in writing.
 - f. Use technology to get the information out to the members.
 - g. Provide each Senate and House VA Committee members' office with a subscription of *HomeFront*.
 - h. Thank legislators immediately after votes are taken.
 - i. Sign up for the ALA Spirit of America eNewsletter.
2. **OBJECTIVE** – To raise awareness of grassroots involvement by quarterly visits to local congressional offices when advocating for veterans issues/concerns.
- ### **Action Steps:**
- a. Form good relationships with local legislators by inviting them to address the American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary or SAL.
 - b. Most Congressional offices include: Chief of Staff, Director of the District or State Office, Appointment Secretary, Legislative Assistants, Committee/Subcommittee Staff, and Case/Project Workers.
 - c. Contact your elected officials frequently and let them know your feelings/concerns on specific issues.
 - d. Ask for email addresses to stay in touch with the latest and greatest information.

- e. Partner with other organizations that share similar interests and work together on issues related to veterans and/or military families.
- f. In conjunction with the Americanism Committee, inform your members to **“GET OUT AND VOTE”**.
- g. Provide transportation and babysitting services to get members and public to the polls.
- h. Contact military family members to get absentee ballots early enough to be counted.

We have a lot of work to do!

Are you signed up to receive The American Legion Action Center alerts? If not – it is easy to sign-up. Insert your email address at <http://capwiz.com/legion/home/>. Does your Unit have a newsletter? Let you members know where they can go to add their email address to the list.

“Communication Is Key” Department President Martha Lee’s theme sums up the Legislative program. Without communication this program cannot survive. We hold the key in our hands. Unlock the floodgates and show our elected officials that we do care about our veterans, our military and their families. It is important that we keep an open line of communication with all our elected officials. Write letters, send e-mails, faxes and make phone calls to share your point of view. **Personal letters from constituents have tremendous influence!** Form letters and petitions rarely get the attention a personal letter receives.

Be sure to share your resource materials with your members. Does your Unit have a newsletter or a website? If so – utilize them. A simple bulletin board strategically placed in your Post home will help to keep all your members up-to-date.

Other Legislative ideas:

- Subscribe to the Dispatch.
- Hold or attend Town Meetings, Legislative Rallies and Meet The Candidates Night.
- Host a “Get Out The Vote” campaign and “Share A Ride” to the polls.

The time is now to action! We must all work together to create a network of continuous information to our members and our elected officials.

HAVE AN EXCITING AND INFORMATIVE LEGISLATIVE YEAR!

LEGISLATIVE AWARDS

DEPARTMENT

EMMA MC BANE PLAQUE – Presented to the Unit with the best all-around Legislative program based on the annual report form. The Legislative Annual Report is a required report for the coveted “Certificate of Merit” and must be submitted to the Department Legislative Chairman – Karen Peel, 2216 25th Street SW, Akron, OH 44314-2202 by May 1, 2010.

A **CERTIFICATE** will be presented to all Unit Chairman and members who have written and received replies from letters sent to various legislators. These replies must be attached to the Legislative Annual Report and sent to the Department Legislative Chairman – Karen Peel, 2216 25th Street SW, Akron, OH 44314-2202 by May 1, 2010.

NATIONAL

UNIT LEGISLATIVE AWARD – A plaque will be presented to the Unit Chairman in each Division reporting the **MOST OUTSTANDING OVERALL LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM**. Entry must be typewritten in narrative form not to exceed 1,000 words. Do not include pictures, clippings, scrapbooks, folders, etc. Entries must be submitted to the Department Legislative Chairman – Karen Peel, 2216 25th Street SW, Akron, OH 44314-2202 by May 1, 2010. The Department Chairman judges the narratives and will forward winning narrative to the Central Division Chairman.

INDIVIDUAL RECOGNITION CERTIFICATES – A recognition certificate will be presented to individual Unit members that forward the National Legislative Chairman copies of responses received from congressional leaders as a result of their advocacy efforts; letters, emails, visits, etc. Packets of correspondence must be post-marked by June 1, 2010 to be considered. Send packets to National Legislative Chairman – Vickie Koutz, 1410 Wilson Street, Boonville, IN 47601.

LEGISLATIVE RESOURCES

ALA LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY GUIDE – Available for free download at www.legion-aux.org.

THE DISPATCH – Periodical publication of The American Legion. Subscription fee is \$15.00 annually.

THE AMERICAN LEGION LEGISLATIVE ACTION CENTER – Sign up with your email at <http://capwiz.com/legion/home>.

CONGRESSIONAL YELLOW PAGES – A comprehensive guide to all Federal agencies and government offices. www.leadershipdirectories.com (212) 627-4140

MEDIA CONTACTS:

ABC News – <http://abcnews.go.com>

CBS News – www.cbsnews.com

CNN – www.cnn.com

C-Span – www.c-span.org

NBC News – www.msnbc.com

The Hill – www.hillnews.com

CONGRESS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS (Publication) – A comprehensive guide with profiles of all members of congress including key websites and contact information, standing committees, and state congressional maps. Capital Advantage – www.capitaladvantage.com (877) 827-3321

IMPORTANT WEBSITES:

Congressional Record – www.gpoaccess.gov/record/index.htm/

Department of Defense – www.defenselink.mil/

Department of Veterans Affairs – www.va.gov

Federal Election Commission – www.fec.gov

House Committee on Veterans Affairs – <http://veterans.house.gov>

House of Representatives – www.house.gov

Library of Congress – www.loc.gov

Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs – <http://veterans.senate.gov>

State Department – www.state.gov

Supreme Court – www.supremecourtus.gov

THOMAS Legislative Information – <http://thomas.loc.gov/>

US Census Bureau – www.census.gov

US Senate – www.senate.gov

White House – www.whitehouse.gov

TELEPHONE RESOURCES:

Democratic National Committee – (202) 863-8000 www.democrates.org

Republican National Committee – (202) 479-7000 www.rnc.org

US Capital Switchboard – (202) 224-3121