



AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY
Department of Ohio

2011-2012
LEGISLATIVE
PLAN OF ACTION

Department of Ohio Legislative Chairman

CHAIRMAN : Amanda Peel
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REPORT DUE : May 1, 2012

SEND REPORT TO : Amanda Peel
1645 Wakefield Avenue
Youngstown, Ohio 44514



Shining Stars
Vi Grzybowski
2011-2012 Department President

LEGISLATIVE

2011-2012

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 veterans and their families.

The purpose of the Legislative Program: To train our members to become grassroots advocates for our veterans and their families with local, state, and nationally elected officials. Inform our membership about ways to support the legislative agenda of The American Legion. Promote Auxiliary members enrollment in the online Legislative Action Center of The American Legion and encourage individuals to serve as representatives for the Auxiliary on legislative matters.

OBJECTIVES

1. **OBJECTIVE** – Educate Auxiliary members on effective grassroots advocacy and the legislative priorities of the American Legion.

Action Steps:

- a. Review the *American Legion Auxiliary Advocacy Guide* and provide copies to Unit Members. This publication will help guide you through the process of communicating with legislators.
- b. Promote American Legion Auxiliary member enrollment in the online Legislative Action Center of The American Legion. To view information, go to www.legion.org and click on Action Center link.
- c. To receive Legislative Action Alerts by e-mail, enroll in the Action e-list by going to the following link: <http://capwiz.com/legion/mlm/signup/>
- d. Include a regular column on American Legion Legislative Priorities in Unit newsletters.
- e. Host presentations on The American Legion legislative priorities and advocacy fundamentals by Unit and Post Legislative Chairmen at Unit meetings.
- f. Develop an email or phone system for activating American Legion Auxiliary leaders to take action in response to requests from the Legion.

2. **OBJECTIVE** – Promote support of The American Legion initiatives/agenda by Auxiliary members.

Action Steps:

- a. National Legislative Council – Per request of The American Legion, Auxiliary Departments and Units are requested to **identify an Auxiliary member(s) with a substantive professional or personal relationship with each member of their U.S. Congressional delegation (Senators and Representatives) and to request those individuals to serve as representatives for the Auxiliary on legislative matters.**
- b. **Write** – A sample letter for contacting legislators is provided the *American Legion Auxiliary Advocacy Guide*. A letter sent to the District Office will arrive much sooner than one sent to the Washington Office.

- c. **Call** – The District or Washington Office. You will usually talk to an aide and they will do their best to convey your message. Try to establish a relationship with the aide responsible for the topic you are addressing (usually the Veteran Affairs Aide).
- d. **Email** – When you write an email, it is in your own words and thoughts and not subject to interpretation.
- e. **Visit** – In person, in the Washington or District Office or attend a town hall meeting or other event hosted by your legislators.
- f. Send invitations to public officials to participate in Auxiliary programs and events or to speak at conferences and meetings.
- g. **Report** the results of your efforts to your Unit and the Department Chairman.

Ladies, we have our work cut-out for us!!

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/>, click on action e-list and fill out the form to register and receive updates. Let your members know where they can go to add their email address to this list.

Do you have a subscription to the Dispatch? This is a wonderful source of information from the American Legion for you and your Unit to help stay informed about legislative actions.

Make sure that you share your resource materials with your members. Communicate with members via your Unit newsletter or website. Utilize your local newspaper to communicate your Unit's involvement with local legislators. A simple bulletin board, located in your Post home, will help to keep all your members up-to-date with Legion and Auxiliary legislative issues.

Personal letters and emails from constituents DO have a tremendous influence on our legislator's voting decisions. Form letters and petitions rarely get their attention as quickly as a personal letter, written by our members, expressing your heartfelt concerns.

Now is the time to let our legislators see our "Shining Stars" so they know how we feel about veterans' issues. **The Legislative Program is a team effort!!!** Let's work together to create a network of continuous information between our members, our communities, and our elected officials.

AWARDS

DEPARTMENT

EMMA McBANE 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 Amanda Peel 1645 Wakefield Avenue, Youngstown, Ohio 44514 by May 1, 2012.

A certificate will be presented to all Unit Chairman and members that have written and received replies from letters or emails sent to various legislators. These replies must be attached to the

Legislative Annual Report and sent to the Department Legislative Chairman Amanda Peel, 1645 Wakefield Avenue, Youngstown, Ohio 44514 by May 1, 2012.

NATIONAL

UNIT LEGISLATIVE AWARD— A citation will be presented to the Unit Chairman in each Division that reports the Most Outstanding Overall Legislative program. Entry must be typewritten in narrative form, not to exceed 500 words. Units need to submit entries to the Department Chairman Amanda Peel 1645 Wakefield Avenue, Youngstown, Ohio 44514 May 1, 2012. You are encouraged to include pictures and newspaper articles.

AMERICAN LEGION AWARDS

A certificate of appreciation will be presented to those individuals in each Department who have made an outstanding contribution to the legislative program of the American Legion. Send nominations to Department Chairman, Amanda Peel 1645 Wakefield Ave. Youngstown, OH 44514 by May 1, 2012.

RESOURCES

- ***American Legion Auxiliary Legislative Advocacy Guide***: Contains pertinent information about advocacy, building relationships, issues, personal visits, building rapport with congressional staff, communicating with your legislator, sample letters and legislative websites. Available for download at:
<http://www.alaforveterans.org/Brochures/AdvocacyGuide-lp.pdf>
- **The American Legion Legislative Action Center** – Stay up to date on what is happening with American Legion legislative priorities. Sign up with your email at <http://capwiz.com/legion/home>.
- ***The Dispatch*** – A monthly publication of The American Legion will keep you informed on National Security/Foreign Relations, Economic, and Legislative issues, and Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation. Subscription fee is \$15.00 annually. Subscribe at www.legion.org/dispatch.
- **American Legion Legislative Page**: Includes a wealth of current information on what is happening in Congress and the news on legislative priorities: www.legion.org/legislative.
- **Ohio General Assembly** – Provides contact information for individual legislators as well as information on specific bills. <http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/>
- **Members of Congress**: www.senate.gov and www.house.gov
- **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>
- **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/>
- **White House** – www.whitehouse.gov

TELEPHONE RESOURCES:

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

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

US Capital Switchboard – (202) 224-3121

Ohio State Senators: 1-800-282-0253