

# LEGISLATIVE GUIDE

2018-2019

## COMMITTEE CONTACT INFORMATION

### CHAIRMAN:

GEORGIA DOWNS  
5102 E. LOOP RD, P.O. BOX 52  
HESPERIA, MI 49421  
231-720-0645  
231-519-4741  
[downsgeorgiac@gmail.com](mailto:downsgeorgiac@gmail.com)

### COMMITTEE MEMBER:

TAYLOR TOWNES  
P.O.BOX 584  
CEDAR SPRINGS, MI 49319  
616-253-3031  
[taylortownes@gmail.com](mailto:taylortownes@gmail.com)

### **OBJECTIVE: WHAT CAN WE DO?**

1. Encourage our members to attend meetings and debates in their areas and learn what their elected officials on the local, state and national levels stand for on Veteran's issues. Remember to go and vote when elections are held.
2. Distribute the American Legion Advocacy Guide within Units in order to provide members with information needed to contact leaders and give them guidelines in dealing with their officials.
3. Ask members to email, call and or write letters to their elected officials on the local, state and national levels concerning the current affairs affecting our Veterans and their families. **(SEND COPIES OF LETTERS AND RESPONSES TO YOUR DISTRICT CHAIRMAN)**
4. Ask members to write letters to the editors of the newspapers in their areas explaining the views of Veterans and their family's needs. **(SEND COPIES OF LETTERS TO DISTRICT CHAIRMAN)**
5. Encourage members to utilize The American Legion Legislative Action system In order to keep via THE DISPATCH and The American Legion website at [www.legion.org/legislative](http://www.legion.org/legislative) to find the latest information.
6. Encourage members to grow their membership in order to increase the base of support needed to continually inform the local, state and national leadership of The American Legion support of Veteran's programs.

7. Inform our Junior members of the Congress for Kids, an interactive website for Grades 4-12 to learn about our Federal Government and how it affects them. The website is available at [www.congressforkids.net/index.htm](http://www.congressforkids.net/index.htm).
8. Complete the Legion's Congressional Meeting Report Form following all meetings with US Representatives, US Senators and/or their staff members. **(SEND A COPY TO DISTRICT CHAIRMAN)**
9. Subscribe to e-newsletters of elected officials to monitor what they consider to be their priorities on Veterans and National Security issues. (See each elected official's Website for details on how to sign-up)
10. Subscribe to the Legion's Weekly Legislative Update to stay informed about current legislative activities on Capitol Hill. Visit [www.legion.org/enewsletters](http://www.legion.org/enewsletters) to subscribe.

### **What is this program, and why do we have it?**

The Legislative Program provides information and assistance to American Legion Auxiliary members to advocate for the legislative agenda of the American Legion. The Legislative Program and the 2014-2019 ALA Centennial Strategic Plan: While advocating for the legislative agenda of The American Legion, Auxiliary members raise awareness for our mission and increase brand loyalty (Goal 5).

### **Legislative Awards, Deadlines and Submission Requirements:**

Taking the time to share a favorite story about the positive impact you or someone you know has had on our mission is worth doing! It helps us tell the world who we are, what we do and why we matter. Just three simple steps to add your part to our national success story:

- 1) Please follow instructions as you fill out the National Report and Awards Cover Sheet found in the awards section of the Programs Action Plan.
- 2) Provide details/examples about the activity as outlined in the award's materials and guidelines section.
- 3) Submit as indicated in the Annual Supplement to the Programs Action Plan.

National Report and Awards Cover Sheet, deadlines and Legislative committee contact information may be found on the Legislative committee page on the National website, [www.ALForVeterans.org](http://www.ALForVeterans.org).

## **Legislative Reporting:**

### Mid-Year Reports

Mid-Year reports reflect the program work of units in the department, and are intended as an opportunity for mid-year correction. Each Unit is to report to their District Chairmen by **December 1, 2018** and District Chairmen are to report to the Department Chairman **by December 15, 2018**. All in narrative form.

### Year-End Reports

Annual reports reflect the program work of units in the Department, and may result in a national award for participants if award requirements are met.

## **AWARDS**

### **NATIONAL AWARDS**

**All entries must include cover sheet found in this guide and your narrative must include questions 1 thru 6 that you answered from the Unit Annual report form.**

**Unit Legislative Award** – A citation presented to the Unit Chairman in each division reporting the most outstanding overall legislative program. Entry must have cover sheet, be typewritten in narrative form, not exceed 500 words, and must tell the story of legislative activism and how it made a difference in the lives of Veterans and their families. Pictures and newspaper articles can be included. All entries must be sent to **Department Chairman, Georgia Downs by April 15, 2019.**

### **DEPARTMENT AWARDS**

#### **THE ALICE THOMAS CITATION**

One winner to the District with the most Legislative Bulletin subscriptions ordered.

#### **THE ROMAINE ROETHEL CITATION**

A citation presented to a Legislative Chairman for the best narrative year-round report in 1,000 words or less. This award was named for Past Department President Romaine Roethel from Unit #190 in Detroit, who served as Department President in 1969-1070. Romaine went on to become National President, serving in 1981-1982.

#### **UNIT LEGISLATIVE AWARD**

A citation presented to the Unit Chairman reporting the most outstanding overall legislative program. Entry must be typewritten in narrative form, not to exceed 500 words. Pictures and newspaper article may be included. **All entries must be sent to Department Chairman by April 15, 2019.**

## LEGISLATIVE RESOURCES

1. **AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY ADVOCACY GUIDE:** an informative tool discussing advocacy, relationship building and communication with your legislators; a list of key legislative websites and sample letters are also-included. Available for free download at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).
2. **ALA e-NEWS:** The American Legion Auxiliary's monthly newsletter. Sign up with your e-mail address on the Auxiliary's website to receive legislative updates.
3. **THE DISPATCH:** A monthly publication of the American Legion describing current legislative issues and other news pertinent to the American Legion Family. To subscribe, at a cost of \$15.00 a year, call the American Legion at 317-630-1298 or on line at [www.legion.org/dispatch](http://www.legion.org/dispatch).
4. **CONGRESS FOR KIDS:** Interactive, fun-filled experiences designed to help grades 4- 12 learn about the foundation of our federal government and how it actions affect them. [www.congressforkids.net/index.htm](http://www.congressforkids.net/index.htm).
5. **MEMBERS OF CONGRESS:** Can be found at [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov) and [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov) .
6. **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:** Can be found at [www.legion.org/legislative/resources](http://www.legion.org/legislative/resources) and [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).

## **2017-2022 American Legion Auxiliary Programs Action Plan Legislative**

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

### **Committee Contact Information**

[legislative@ALAforVeterans.org](mailto:legislative@ALAforVeterans.org)

### **What Can You Do?**

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

#### **Ideas:**

##### **Member**

- Subscribe to the Legion's Legislative Action Alerts to receive notification when they call on all Legion Family members to take immediate action on a topic. Visit [www.capwiz.com/legion/mlm/signup](http://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 help build legislative awareness in your community. The guide can also be downloaded from [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).
- Visit the Legion's legislative website, [www.legion.org/legislative](http://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.
  - o The priority/drop sheets outline the Legion's priorities and you can "drop" these in your elected official's office.
  - o The point papers provide more information on the issue and the Legion's position.
- Actively post The American Legion's legislative priorities on social media.
- Identify your U.S. representative and two U.S. senators and 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 how to sign-up and social media links).
- Connect with other civic organizations to communicate The American Legion's legislative priorities for potential support and 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, service members and their families. If possible, attend meetings with other Legion Family members.

o 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](http://www.legion.org/legislative/aar) to complete the form.
- Let your department Legislative chairman or department president 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.

### **Unit**

- Hold a unit meeting to go over the steps outlined by the ALA Legislative Advocacy Guide and discuss the 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, 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.
- Invite your department chairman 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).

### **Department**

- Order the ALA Legislative Advocacy Guide and distribute to each unit. Provide information on how members can order their own copies of the guide through their department. The guide can also be downloaded from the Legislative page on [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).
- Encourage members to subscribe to the Legion's Legislative Action Alerts to receive notification when they call on all Legion Family members to take immediate action on a topic. Visit

[www.capwiz.com/legion/mlm/signup](http://www.capwiz.com/legion/mlm/signup) to subscribe. • Encourage members to subscribe to the Legion's Legislative Update to remain informed about current legislation activities on Capitol Hill. Visit [www.legion.org/enewsletters](http://www.legion.org/enewsletters) to subscribe.

- Encourage all Legion Family members to complete the Legion's Congressional Meeting Report Form following all meetings with U.S. representatives, senators and/or their legislative staff members. Visit [www.legion.org/legislative/aar](http://www.legion.org/legislative/aar) to complete the form. 2017-2022 Programs Action Plan: Page 68 Legislative 3

- Visit the Legion's legislative website, [www.legion.org/legislative](http://www.legion.org/legislative), to keep your units and members current on our legislative priorities. The site also contains the Legion's legislative priority sheets and point papers.

- o The priority/drop sheets outline the Legion's priorities and you can "drop" these in your elected official's office. Printed color copies can be requested by email by contacting Legion Headquarters. Be sure to include the quantity you are requesting and your contact information.

- o Point papers provide more information and the Legion's position.

- Work with your Legion department Legislative chairman and request that the Auxiliary be included in Legion meetings with national and state officials, and be invited to legislative briefings and other functions. Encourage members to attend.

- Hold a department legislative workshop and invite members to participate in activities to articulate the purpose of the Legislative program.

- o Legion Legislative staff is authorized to travel to Auxiliary department functions by submitting a request to the national adjutant.

- Write articles on the Legion's current legislative activities and publish them in ALA newsletters, newspapers and on websites. Article content can be drawn from the Legislative Update, articles in the Legion's Dispatch or other Legion media.

- The work of the Legislative committee amplifies the work of other committees. Collaborate with your department's Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, National Security, Education and Americanism chairmen, depending on the legislative issue, to mobilize members and help distribute the "Calls to Action" throughout their spheres of influence.

- In joint effort with the Legion, advocate at the state level to identify and initiate specific steps that need to be taken to provide transitioning service members and military spouses with the credentials they need as they transition into civilian life, reducing barriers to licensing based on military experience or frequent moves.

- In collaboration with your Legion department, coordinate days for the Legion Family to storm your state capital.



## **Legislative Reporting\***

### Mid-Year Reports

Mid-Year reports reflect the program work of units in the department, and are intended as an opportunity for mid-year correction. Each department Legislative chairman is required to submit a narrative report to the division Legislative chairman, plus copy the national Legislative chairman.

### Year-End Reports

Annual reports reflect the program work of units in the department, and may result in a national award for participants if award requirements are met. Each department Legislative chairman is required to submit a narrative report to the division Legislative chairman, plus copy the national Legislative chairman. Members and units should follow their department's protocol and deadlines.

### **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) 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.

### **Legislative Awards**

Taking the time to share a favorite story about the positive impact you or someone you know has had on our mission is worth doing! It helps us tell the world who we are, what we do, and why we matter. Just three simple steps to add your part to our national success story:

- 1) Please follow instructions as you fill out the National Report and Awards Cover Sheet found in the awards section of the Programs Action Plan.
- 2) Provide details/examples about the activity as outlined in the award's materials and guidelines section.
- 3) Submit as indicated in the Annual Supplement to the Programs Action Plan.

National Report and Awards Cover Sheet, deadlines, and Legislative committee contact information may be found on the Legislative committee page on the national website, [www.ALforVeterans.org](http://www.ALforVeterans.org).

#### **A. Unit Award: Most Outstanding Unit Legislative Program**

- Award: Citation Plaque • Presented to: One unit in each division (5)

- Materials and Guidelines: o Entries must be typewritten in narrative form. o Include pictures and newspaper articles.

**B. Department Award: Best Department Legislative Program**

- Award: Citation
- Presented to: One department in each division (5)
- Materials and Guidelines:
  - o Entries must be typewritten in narrative form.
  - o Include pictures and newspaper articles.

**How To Sheets**

. Host A “Meet the Candidate” Night

**Additional Resources You Can Use**

1. [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org) on the Legislative program page:
  - ALA Legislative Advocacy Guide
  - How to Fill Out the Congressional Contact Form 2017-2022 Programs Action Plan: Page 70 Legislative 5
  - How to Contact Legislators to Advocate for Veterans, Service members and their Families
2. [www.legion.org/legislative](http://www.legion.org/legislative) (The American Legion’s Legislative Center):
  - Legislative Testimony Information
  - Point Papers, Priority Sheets, Letters of Support
  - Congressional Contact Report Form
3. Facebook:
  - ALA National Headquarters: [www.facebook.com/ALAforVeterans](https://www.facebook.com/ALAforVeterans)
  - The national Legislative Committee Facebook group, search “ALA National Legislative Group Page”
4. Your national Legislative committee members (see Legislative program page on the national website or Annual Supplement for contact information) 2017-2022 Programs Action Plan: Page 71



**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: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Award:                     Department                     Unit                     Member

Name of the award you are applying for: \_\_\_\_\_

**For a unit award or to 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 Annual Supplement to the Programs Action Plan to determine where to send this form.*



**American Legion Auxiliary  
National Report and Award Cover Sheet**

**PLEASE BE AWARE THE AWARDS AND REPORTING PROCESSES HAVE  
CHANGED. 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 in the Annual Supplement to the Programs Action Plan.
- 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 in its entirety. For your convenience, a fillable version of this form is available online at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).

For the award for which you wish to be considered, please refer to the 2017-2022 Programs Action Plan at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://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.