



AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY • DEPARTMENT OF NORTH DAKOTA
Marcy Schmidt, Legislation Chairman

August 27, 2020

Dear North Dakota Unit Presidents, and Auxiliary Members,

In addition to veteran and military issues on the National level, let us not forget that our state legislators also work for us. Find out who your state senator or state representative is and contact him or her. Ask your state legislators to support funding for the *North Dakota Veterans Home* located in Lisbon, North Dakota.

If you need phone numbers or email addresses for your state legislators, you might try your local Chamber of Commerce; they have a wealth of information to share. Ask for their list of civic and social organizations as well. Check with your American Legion Legislative committee to see if the Legion has legislative priorities for your city or county. Examples might include earmarking money for veteran-specific mental health initiatives, such as training first responders on how to identify and best respond to those with PTSD, establishing a Veterans Treatment Court, and providing an incentive to military families moving into your area. Units and posts working together let your lawmakers know you care about how your community is affected by these issues. Ask what your legislator can do to help and then work together to find solutions.

How do you get your legislative information out to your members? Using email and social media is a great tool but what about those members who do not subscribe to the new technology? Contact those 'not so tech savvy' members by phone and suggest letter writing as a way for them to participate. Letter writers have a strong voice in our legislation. Letter writing may be considered a lost art by some, but it is still effective. You will find sample letters to legislators in the *ALA Advocacy Guide* with helpful suggestions and how to successfully reach your legislators. Every member has a voice and the right to exercise your voice in support of The American Legion's legislative agenda.

Most importantly, when you communicate with your elected officials, document what you have done and remember to include that information in your year-end reports. I would love to hear from you about your success with the legislative program.

North Dakota Congressional Delegation:

<p>Honorable Kelly Armstrong North Dakota Representative 1004 Longworth HOB Washington DC 20515</p> <p>Phone: (202) 225-2611</p>	<p>Honorable John Hoeven North Dakota Senator 338 Russell Senate Office Bldg. Washington, DC 20510</p> <p>Phone: (202) 224-2551</p>	<p>Honorable Kevin Kramer North Dakota Senator 400 Russell Senate Office Bldg. Washington, DC 20501</p> <p>Phone: (202) 224-2043</p>
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Marcy Schmidt, Department Legislative Chairman

Attachment: Legislative Advocacy Guide, 'How to Contact Legislators to Advocate for Veterans....' Flyer



Call to Action: This letter from Barb Vetter, Northwest Division Legislative Chairman is being shared with you as part of the Department's Legislation Program.

Let Your Voices Be Heard

As members of the ALA, we support the legislative priorities of The American Legion. One way to become an active advocate to Congress, is to sign up for the Legislative Alerts at <http://capwiz.com/legion/mlm/> or <https://www.votervoicenet.com/AmericanLegion/home>. You will be notified of important pending legislation coming up for vote and have an opportunity to express your opinion to your legislators.

The American Legion National Legislative Division (NLD) uses this form of communication as its advocacy platform for connecting American Legion members with members of Congress. There are now 23,706 members and supporters signed up to receive action alerts. One of the latest actions by the American Legion to take place through this communication is The American Legion Commander's Call to Action to open the VA to ALL WWII Veterans.

Thousands of WWII veterans that have previously received care and services from the VA are no longer able to receive those same services because of means-testing implemented in 1996. Now more than ever it is critical to exempt World War II veterans in this time of need. Our Greatest Generation is also the most at-risk generation in this global pandemic, and we owe a duty to those who have borne the battle to provide them with the healthcare benefits they have earned and deserve.

The campaign was sent out via the Commander's Message to all Legionnaires. American Legion National Commander Oxford stated "*.... I am calling on you today to help recognize these heroes with actions far more meaningful than words. We can never truly thank the Greatest Generation enough for what they did in the Pacific and European theaters. But one way we can express our gratitude to those still living is to right this wrong on their behalf. **Join me in contacting** your congressional representatives today to tell them to open VA to all World War II veterans.*"

The campaign asked for members to use the link provided above to send an email to their senators asking them to support Senate Bill 3812, which will remove means testing criteria for veterans of World War II to receive VA care and benefits. As of July 10th, 1,656 advocates have acted sending 3,320 emails to their senators. This is just one way we can continue to work the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary during the pandemic.

On another note, the Pentagon has approved award of the Armed Forces Service Medal and the Humanitarian Service Medal to recognize service members for participating in COVID-19 operations or activities anywhere in the world. The period of award for both medals is from January 31, 2020 to a point in time to be determined.

As always, remember to take advantage of the free resources available at www.legion.org/legislative and join us on our ALA Legislative Facebook page for daily posts, videos, and our Monthly Monday Legislative Messages with special guest speakers.

For God and Country, Barb Vetter, Northwestern Division Legislative Chairperson
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