



American Legion Auxiliary Legislation Chairman's Report

Carma Hanson – Legislation Chairman



Greetings and happy fall!! My name is Carma Hanson and I have been asked to serve as the Legislation Chairman for the 2025—2026 year by Department President Candace Berg. While me saying “YES” to Candace was an honor, my bigger “YES” to this role was inspired by my parents, Curtis and Judy Twete.

For as long as I can remember, our family has been involved with the American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary. From the time my siblings and I were young kids, we were taken to conventions, distributed poppies, walked in parades, knew how to properly salute a passing flag and swelled with pride each time the Pledge of Allegiance or National Anthem was heard. My parents and their role in these two organizations have been a sense of pride for me and my siblings as they have given their time, talent and treasure to the American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary for most of their adult life.

My passion for legislative efforts was also partially shaped by my father who ran for the North Dakota Senate when I was in my mid 20's. Our family became involved in his campaign and saw how attending church meals, knocking on doors and talking with people as you picked up the daily mail or groceries, could help shape what was happening in our state's capitol. I quickly became involved in a political party in my community and have worked tirelessly over the years to recruit, support and assist good candidates. In my professional role, I have also spent time in Bismarck and Washington DC, advocating for policies that support the work that I do as an injury prevention specialist.

What I have found over the years of being involved in politics and legislative advocacy is that people are sometime leery of getting involved as they are not sure what to do or say, or even more so, how to get started. They often see legislative work as “daunting” and the “role of someone else”. I would challenge those beliefs by saying that legislative advocacy is critical and everyday citizens are the driving force behind the work. It is our ideas, our desires to make our communities and lives better, that drive people to get involved in legislative work and there is a role for EVERYONE, not just those that carry the title of Senator or Representative But all of us!! My hope is that during this year, we can teach and learn from each other about the legislative process and inspire members to take action. That action doesn't need to be big and overwhelming, but something simple that when combined with the efforts of others, makes a big impression on those doing the policy making on a daily basis.

These life interactions and my desire to challenge folks to become involved in legislative advocacy, have made saying “YES” to this role an easy decision. My hope is that I will serve in a capacity that brings success to President Berg's term and pride to my parents as I commit some of my time and talent to an organization that is so beloved to them. With that said, I share with you some of my plans for the coming year and hope you will be inspired to take part in legislative activities that honor and benefit our veterans. Please watch for more activities and events to unfold throughout the year and please reach out to me at any time if you would like more information or support in your work. Together, we can all make a difference in carrying out the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary: **In the spirit of Service, Not Self, the mission of the American Legion Auxiliary is to support The American Legion and honor the sacrifice of those who serve by enhancing the lives of our veterans, military, and their families, both at home and abroad. For God and Country, we advocate for veterans, educate our citizens, mentor youth, and promote patriotism, good citizenship, peace and security.**

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Legislative Programming & Call to Action

2025-2026

Learn How To Become Involved in Legislative Advocacy:



Later this fall, I will host a virtual webinar about how to become involved in legislative advocacy. This webinar will feature tips and tricks that make the process of advocacy not so daunting. It will challenge both Units and individuals to take action and advocate for something you are passionate about. Whether that be federal bills to support our veterans, or simply a city change related to veteran's issues, I hope to leave you inspired to get involved. **Watch for more details on how to sign up for this webinar or to receive a recording of this training that could be shown at your department meetings.**

Make a Connection:



Having a connection, and ultimately the phone number of your policy makers, goes a long ways. Reaching out to your local legislators or US Congressional delegation even before you “need something”, makes the time when you have an ask go even smoother. Our local, state and federal elected officials answer to many constituents and having a personal connection or relationship with them helps to earn credibility and “their ear”. If you can get to know your elected officials and have them understand the role of the ALA, making the ask will feel more personal to them. Below are some resources to help find your local elected officials and their contact information. I would encourage you to determine who yours are and send them a letter thanking them for their service, invite them to a meeting or a local event featuring veteran programming, or set up a time you can just “take them to coffee”. Introduce yourself, share information about the ALA and share your contact information with them, offering to be a resource in the future if they have needs. Remember, our elected officials need to know “a lot of things about many topics”. They can't be experts on every topic, so offering them insight into veterans issue and our mission of the ALA will make them feel like they have a friend they can call upon as well.

Directory of ND City Officials: <https://www.ndlc.org/109/Directory-of-ND-City-Officials>

Directory of ND County Officials: <https://www.ndaco.org/cod/>

Directory of State Elected Officials/State Legislators: <https://www.nd.gov/government/state-government>

Directory of Federal Delegation: <https://www.nd.gov/government/federal-government>

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Legislative Programming & Call to Action

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Know and Understand the Legislative Issues Important to the American Legion Auxiliary:



Over the course of this year, my role will be to bring attention to issues that are of importance to the membership of the American Legion Auxiliary. These issues are ones that may be statewide or federal in nature.

Because our North Dakota Legislature only meets every other year, we will not have a legislative session during my tenure. That being said, there is still work to be done. After the first of the year, legislative districts across the state will begin holding Party meetings where those seeking office will seek the endorsement to be placed on the ballot. Being a part of recruiting, supporting and educating candidates is something that can mold their time in office. Finding candidates that support the work and mission of the ALA is important to moving our legislative agenda when the legislature convenes in January 2027.

I challenge your Departments to stay abreast of the legislative agenda being promoted by our organization and find ways that you can educate candidates and elected officials alike. Share the legislative updates that are provided to you at meetings, pay attention to the news and share information that is factual and accurate with those in a policy making position. And remember, while the legislature is not in session, your City Council or County Commissions are meeting year-round and there may be ways in which veterans issues can be a part of their work as well; don't miss an opportunity to make that occur.

Let Your Voice Be Heard:



Over the course of the year, there will be opportunities for your voice to be heard by your elected officials. Whether you speak as a Unit or an individual, don't pass up the opportunity to meet with elected officials in person, at their office, on the phone, via email, or simply on the street. Share **your work and connection with the North Dakota American Legion Auxiliary and ask for their on-going support of issues that are important to our country and state's veterans.** A few soft voices creating a choir can lead to a big impact.

In our upcoming webinar, I will share details of how members can write a letter, make a call or reach out in impactful ways to our policymakers. Stay tuned and be ready to engage. I look forward to doing this important work with and alongside you, hoping to inspire your ALA units to heed the call to action.