

## Legislative Division Weekly

### GRASSROOTS ACTION UPDATES

This week, we are asking Legionnaires to contact their elected representatives to [pass H.R. 1413 Expanding America's National Cemeteries Act of 2023](#) to safeguard the crucial benefit of full military honors at burial for more veterans. This Act will enable VA-run national cemeteries to conduct full military ceremonies for our fallen heroes and expand a key resource. *Go to the [Action Center](#) to quickly email a letter of support to your member of Congress.*

Have you had a recent meeting or phone call with your member of Congress? Report your contact today! Click [here](#) to register your Congressional contact and demonstrate the power of The American Legion advocacy in action.

The American Legion's legislative agenda for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Session of the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress. To review our priorities, you can check out our [Advocacy Toolkit](#).

### NEW CHAIR NAMED FOR HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS



Congressman Tom Cole (R-OK-4<sup>th</sup>) has been selected to chair the House Appropriations Committee after Congresswoman Kay Granger (R-TX-12<sup>th</sup>) recently stepped down. Rep. Cole has served on the House Appropriations Committee for many years and is seen as a respected conservative voice in Washington. Serving as chairman of the Appropriations Committee is an important and powerful committee assignment, and is a vital role in the battle for limited federal funding each year.

Cole received unanimous support this week from the House GOP Steering Committee for the assignment. His first task is to assign the subcommittee chairs, and then get to work on the FY25 funding bills. He has already highlighted Defense, MilCon-VA, and Homeland Security bills as the Committee priorities.

### HOUSE GOP LEADERS WORK ON GOVERNMENT SURVEILLANCE PROGRAM

*This article's original publication can be found [here](#).*

Speaker Mike Johnson and GOP Whip Tom Emmer tried to meet into the night with many of the 19 Republicans who tanked a key procedural vote on the reauthorization of a controversial surveillance program.

The defeat on the floor Wednesday was the fourth failed procedural vote in the last six months since Johnson took the speakership. The issue at hand: A measure to reauthorize and change Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, allowing the intelligence community to gather and sort the communications of foreign targets without a warrant.

Johnson could bring the surveillance bill's rule back up for a vote Thursday, but the outcome of those evening meetings with FISA critics are not yet clear. The collapse of the FISA measure followed former President Donald Trump's social media push for lawmakers to kill the bill. That adds to the growing list of congressional priorities that Trump has scuttled in recent months, from the bipartisan border agreement in the Senate to Ukraine aid and now FISA. Johnson's trip to Mar-a-Lago on Friday will follow a bruising week in the House.

### LEGIONNAIRE OF THE WEEK

To recognize the weekly accomplishments of our Legionnaires, we will spotlight an individual every week. These individuals demonstrate exceptional grassroots activism by meeting with/contacting their Congressional Representative/Senator to advocate for veterans. Efforts like these truly make a difference and give veterans a voice in Congress.

#### Todd McKinley, Tennessee

Mr. McKinley, for your steadfast advocacy of Legion priorities, we are honored to name you Legionnaire of the Week!

Mr. McKinley met with Congresswoman Diana Harshbarger (R-TN-01) in Kingsport, TN. In Mr. McKinley's report, he shared that he discussed VA funding and the presumptive conditions not spelled out in the PACT Act. These are key Legion priorities!

Thank you, Mr. McKinley, for your report and the time you have dedicated to the Legion's legislative priorities.

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If you have made a Grassroots effort and would like to be considered for next week's "Legionnaire of the Week," please fill out the Congressional Contact Report Form [here](#). You can also email us at [grassroots@legion.org](mailto:grassroots@legion.org) with the details.

### LEGISLATIVE DIVISION UPDATES

Legislative Division staff in DC attended the Sea-Air-Space 2024 convention put on by the Navy League. Legion staff were able to listen to talks by members of the House Armed Services Committee, hear the Secretary of the Navy speak to the future of Naval warfare and the status of the industrial base, and interact with leaders from the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard, as well as peers at non-profits and for-profit organizations that interact in the veteran and defense space.

Legislative Division staff also met with a delegation from the Ukraine to speak about how to set up a veterans memorials and benefits for their own war dead and survivors. Several staff members sat in on the HVAC DAMA hearing, and the SVAC hearing on women veterans. Our Legislative Director also attended a joint Blue Star Families/With Honor reception at the Willard Hotel on Wednesday.

Your DC team attended meetings on Capitol Hill to discuss the Richard Star Act with Rep. Harshbarger's staff and met with staff from several Senate offices on S.3636 (Hire Veterans Act).

### GRASSROOTS INFORMATION

Interested in what the Legion is advocating for in Congress on *Suicide Prevention & Peer Support*? Check out our information paper in the [Legislative Toolkit](#). This is a great starting point for a conversation with your elected officials!

As part of our ongoing Grassroots efforts, LegDiv staff is available to provide **Grassroots Training** tailored to the hosting Department's needs. If you are interested in hosting a Grassroots training event, please contact [grassroots@legion.org](mailto:grassroots@legion.org) or [ejohnson@legion.org](mailto:ejohnson@legion.org). Congratulations to the Department of California for scheduling Grassroots Training during their Legion College session in April!



## UPCOMING CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS

As Thursday, April 11<sup>th</sup>, at Noon ET, the following hearings are scheduled:

Senate Armed Services – Full Committee: Air Force FY25 Budget Request  
April 16, 9:30 a.m., 216 Hart Bldg.

House Veterans' Affairs - Subcommittee on Health: Pending Legislation  
April 16, 3 p.m., 360 Cannon Bldg.

House Veterans' Affairs - Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity: Pending Legislation  
April 16, 1 p.m., 360 Cannon Bldg.

House Veterans' Affairs - Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations: Pending Legislation  
April 17, 9:30 a.m., 360 Cannon Bldg.

House Veterans' Affairs - Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity: Pending Legislation  
April 17, 1:00 p.m., 360 Cannon Bldg.

Senate Armed Services – Subcommittee on Personnel: DoD Pharmacy Program  
April 17<sup>th</sup>, 3:00 p.m., G50 Dirksen Bldg.

Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee: Pending Legislation  
April 17<sup>th</sup>, 3:30 p.m., 418 Russell Bldg.

Senate Armed Services – Subcommittee on Air Land: Army Modernization and FY25 Budget Request  
April 17<sup>th</sup>, 4:00 p.m., 232 Russell Bldg.

House Veterans' Affairs — Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity: Field Hearing on Transitioning Service Members  
April 19, 11 a.m., Western Technical College, 400 7th St., North Lacrosse, Wis.

Previous HVAC hearings can be viewed at: [Calendar Home | House Committee on Veterans Affairs](#)  
Previous SVAC hearings can be viewed at: [Hearings - U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs](#)

[View The American Legion Legislative Handbook Here](#)