

Legislative Division Weekly

GRASSROOTS ACTION UPDATES

This week, we are asking Legionnaires to contact their elected representatives to support the *Contract Our Veterans Act*! The American Legion supports this crucial legislation that will help veteran-owned businesses obtain government contracts. *Go to the [Action Center](#) to quickly email a letter of support to your member of Congress.*

The American Legion family's support for Bill HR 2413, the *Dental Care for Veterans Act*, is crucial due to the significant impact it can have on improving the health and well-being of our nation's veterans. This bill aims to expand and improve dental care services for veterans who are eligible for VA health care.

Dental care is a vital aspect of overall health, yet many veterans currently do not have access to comprehensive dental services through the VA unless they are 100% disabled, have a service-connected dental condition, or meet other specific criteria. This leaves a substantial number of veterans without adequate dental care, which can affect their quality of life and overall health.

The *Dental Care for Veterans Act* seeks to address this gap by establishing a phased approach to expand dental services to all veterans enrolled in the VA health care system within five years of enactment. This expansion would prioritize veterans with service-connected disabilities and low-income veterans, gradually opening access to dental care for all enrolled veterans.

By supporting this bill, the American Legion family can advocate for better health outcomes for veterans, addressing a critical area of need that can improve veterans' quality of life and overall health. Access to proper dental care not only helps prevent serious dental issues but can also contribute to better overall health by reducing the risk of related systemic health problems. Therefore, the American Legion's support for HR 2413 is instrumental in advancing the well-being of our veterans and ensuring they receive the comprehensive care they deserve.

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 2nd Session of the 118th Congress. To review our priorities, you can check out our [Advocacy Toolkit](#).

ANOTHER SPEAKER SHOWDOWN?



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

With a House floor showdown looming next week, Speaker Mike Johnson warned that a vacancy in the chamber's top spot would be a "dangerous gambit."

"I think it's wrong for the Republican Party. I think it's wrong for the institution. I think it's wrong for the country," Johnson told guest host Alice Stewart during an interview with SiriusXM's "The Laura Coates Show," adding that there needs to be a "functioning Congress."

Johnson appears poised to defeat Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene's ouster attempt, which she has vowed to trigger a vote on next week. Two Republicans have joined her in wanting to oust Johnson: Reps. Thomas Massie (R-Ky.) and Paul Gosar (R-Ariz.). A third, Rep. Warren Davidson (R-Ohio), has indicated that he will vote against tabling the motion.

With his single-digit majority margin, that is enough for Johnson to need to rely on help from Democrats, who have indicated they will help him keep the speaker's gavel after he passed long-stalled Ukraine aid last month.

"They're doing that spontaneously on their own. I've not requested any of it, but I think their calculation is ... that we don't need another three weeks where we functionally close the government because we don't have a speaker in place," he said.

Help from Democrats could drive up the number of Republicans who at least vote with Greene to prevent her ouster resolution from being pigeonholed. Massie predicted that at least a dozen Republicans will vote against tabling the resolution — a move meant to show Johnson he won't have the votes to be speaker in January if Republicans keep the majority.

Asked at a press conference this week if forcing the vote would highlight GOP divisions and play into the hands of Democrats, Greene called the idea "bullshit."

“That little narrative that you echoed is a lie. That comes from the Republican establishment that Republican voters are ready to take a sledgehammer to and destroy. They're fed up with it,” she said. It's less than clear that Democrats will save him repeatedly if Greene or someone else tries again. The ouster threat is likely to hang over Johnson for the rest of the year, with lawmakers increasingly acknowledging that they will need to wait until January to change the one-person motion-to-vacate threshold.

HOUSE AND SENATE WORKING ON ISRAELI INVITATION

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

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) is poised to join Speaker Mike Johnson (R-La.) in inviting Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to deliver an address to Congress, despite tensions between the Israeli leader and many Democrats over the ongoing war in the Middle East. Johnson told The Hill this week that he sent Schumer a draft invitation around a month ago, but the Senate leader has been sitting on it since.

“I sent a letter draft, because it's a bicameral invitation letter, it's been sitting on Chuck Schumer's desk. As far as I know he has not cosigned it yet,” Johnson said, adding that it was sent “probably a month ago.”

But now, Schumer is ready to sign on, according to his office.

“He intends to join the invitation, the timing is being worked out,” the Senate leader's spokesperson told The Hill. The Hill was first to report on Johnson's draft invitation and Schumer's plan to sign it.

Netanyahu's visit — if it does materialize — is sure to spark outrage among liberals, who have strongly criticized the prime minister's handling of the Israel-Hamas war and the growing number of civilian deaths in the Gaza Strip.

It will also come amid a tense moment in the relationship between Schumer — the highest-ranking Jewish official in U.S. history — and Netanyahu, after the Senate leader called for new elections in Israel to replace the longtime conservative leader.

Schumer in a speech on the Senate floor said Netanyahu had “lost his way,” comments that the Israeli prime minister called “totally inappropriate.”

Johnson first floated the idea of inviting Netanyahu to the Capitol in March, after it was brought up during a closed-door House GOP conference meeting. The next day, however, he said he would “certainly” extend an invitation.

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“I would love to have him come and address a joint session of Congress,” Johnson told CNBC’s “Squawk Box” in an interview. “We’ll certainly extend that invitation.”

Schumer at the time said “I will always welcome the opportunity for the Prime Minister of Israel to speak to Congress in a bipartisan way.”

“Israel has no stronger ally than the United States and our relationship transcends any one president or any one Prime Minister,” he added in a statement.

Invitations for foreign leaders to address Congress are typically extended on behalf of Congressional leaders. There are not, however, formal procedures for inviting foreign leaders to address Congress, according to the Congressional Research Service.

Netanyahu last addressed Congress in 2015, a speech that put a spotlight on the long-running tensions between liberals Democrats and conservative Netanyahu. A number of Democrats skipped the event in protest of the Israeli leader, who utilized his time in the Capitol to criticize then-President Obama over the Iran nuclear deal.

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.

Lena Heredia-Perez, Florida

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

Lena met with Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL) in Lady Lake, FL. In Lena’s report, she shared that Senator Rubio visited American Legion Post 347 to meet with two dozen veterans to discuss the growing homeless veteran population, the VA claims processing times, dental care for veterans, and the Expanding America’s National Cemetery Act.

Thank you, Lena, for your report and the time you have dedicated to the Legion’s legislative priorities.

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 with the details.

LEGISLATIVE DIVISION UPDATES

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This week the Legislative Division staff met with staff from the offices of Senator Tuberville (Alabama), Senator Tillis (North Carolina), and Senator Brown (Ohio). We also met with staff from the House Veterans Affairs Committee and communicated with outside organizations about shared legislative priorities.

Your Legislative Division staff spent some time at the Modern Day Marine event in Washington, DC. We were able to connect with active-duty Marines about the benefits of membership in The American Legion, talk about partnerships with veteran-focused non-profits, and interact with senior military leadership including the Commandant of the Marine Corps and the Secretary of the Navy.

Leg Div staff continued to review the FY25 NDAA and VA/MilCon Bills to develop supporting positions to communicate to the House Appropriations Committee as hearings continue. Grassroots outreach took center stage as the Program manager drafted up several new campaigns for important legislation. We all worked to refine the draft products for Spring NEC meeting May in Indy, and continued producing the letters and quotes of support for legislation that the Legion and its members endorse.

GRASSROOTS INFORMATION

Interested in what the Legion is advocating for in Congress on *The Veteran's Role in Supporting the Military*? 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 or ejohnson@legion.org.

Register for Action Alerts today at <https://www.votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/Register>



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UPCOMING CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS

As of Friday, May 3rd, at Noon ET, the following hearings are scheduled:

May 7th, 10:00am – House Veteran Affairs Committee (Economic Opportunity Sub), Oversight Hearing

May 8th, 3:00pm – Senate Armed Services Committee (Personnel Sub), testimony on military and civilian personnel programs in the DoD

May 8th, 4:00pm – Senate Armed Services Committee (AirLand Sub) testimony on Air Force modernization

May 16th, 9:30am – Senate Armed Services Committee, testimony on the Department of the Navy

May 22nd, 4:45pm – Senate Armed Services Committee Strategic Forces Subcommittee, testimony on the DoD nuclear weapons program

HVAC hearings can be viewed at: [Calendar Home | House Committee on Veterans Affairs](#)

SVAC hearings can be viewed at: [Hearings - U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs](#)

HASC hearings can be viewed at: [Hearings – House Armed Services Committee](#)

SASC hearings can be viewed at: [Hearings – U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services](#)

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