



March 27, 2026

WEEKLY GRASSROOTS NEWSLETTER

This week's newsletter features a mix of topics, from Legionnaires advocating Capitol Hill to national conversations impacting military families and global events affecting our service members. No matter the focus, each effort reflects our shared commitment to serving our communities and upholding the core mission of The American Legion.

STAY INFORMED: LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES NOW AVAILABLE

Want to see the issues Legionnaires are discussing with lawmakers? The 119th Congress, 2nd Session Legislative Priorities materials are available now. View and download them on the Legion website [here](#).

CALL TO ACTION



This week legion family, we are calling on you because, you know, the United States Coast Guard is an integral component of our nation's national security and homeland defense. At a time when the United States faces one of its highest levels of risk in decades due to ongoing global events, it is completely unacceptable for Coast Guard members and their families to face the possibility of missing a paycheck.

We call on the 2.5 million members of The American Legion Family to immediately contact their Members of Congress and demand action. The men and women of our Coast Guard MUST BE PAID NOW.

Now more than ever, Congress needs to feel the power of The American Legion Family's 2.5 million voices. Please send a message TODAY to your two U.S. Senators and House Congressional Representative urging them to pay our Coast Guard.

The American Legion appreciates your advocacy efforts. Visit the [Action Center](#) to quickly email a letter of support to your members of Congress. Remember to report any recent meetings or calls to help showcase the impact of Legion advocacy [here](#).

SHARE YOUR CAPITOL HILL VISIT WITH US

Last week's newsletter focused on the Washington Conference, and this week we've already received some amazing reports from Capitol Hill visits. We'd love to hear about yours as well, so share your Capitol Hill visit with us.

Please email sbrooks@legion.org with the following information:

- The members of your delegation who participated in the visit (please include any current post, district, or department offices they hold).
- The members of Congress or congressional staff your delegation met with.
- Photos from your visit on Capitol Hill.

ARIZONA LEGION FAMILY SHARES LEGION'S LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES DURING CAPITOL HILL VISITS

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



LEGION FAMILY DELEGATION MEETS WITH VARIOUS LAWMAKERS DURING WASHINGTON CONFERENCE.

During The American Legion's Washington Conference earlier this month, members of the Department of Arizona American Legion Family discussed veterans' issues on Capitol Hill with various lawmakers and their staff.

During their visit, the delegation was able to talk directly with or staff from Sens. Ruben Gallego and Mark Kelly, as well as U.S. Reps. Abraham Hamadeh, Greg Stanton, David Schweikert, Juan Ciscomani, Paul Gosar, Andy Biggs, Eli Crane and Adelita Grijaliva.

Members of the Arizona delegation included:

- Department Commander Gary Vaughan
- National Vice Commander Ben Headen
- National Executive Committeeman Andres Jaime
- Alternate National Executive Committeeman Ken Queen
- Past Department Commander and current National Legislative Commission member Steve Aguirre
- Sons of The American Legion member Matt Griffin
- American Legion Auxiliary members Lynda Griffin and Misty Lacy,
- Department Vice Commander Department Legislative Chairman José

Maldonado,

- National Commander Legislative Appointment Jaclyn Kulfan
- Department Membership Chairman Bobbie Kimelton
- Department National Security Chairman Gerard Brinkman
- District 2 Commander Al Young
- Department of Arizona Legislative Commission member Bradley Shafer
- Past National Legislative Commission Chairman Mathew Shuman
- Department Adjutant Matthew Kritzer

“During our time on Capitol Hill, we focused our advocacy on several key 2026 American Legion legislative priorities,” Aguirre said, noting those priorities included:

- Championing women veterans’ health by supporting the Servicemembers and Veterans Empowerment and Support (SAVES) Act.
- Expanding mental health resources through the Building Resources and Access for Veterans’ Mental Health Engagement (BRAVE) Act.
- Balancing community care with veterans’ needs, including the Veterans ACCESS Act.
- Protecting Veteran Access to Telemedicine Services Act

“We also prioritized Guard and Reserve GI Bill parity via related bills and supported full concurrent receipt for combat-injured, medically retired veterans under the Major Richard Star Act to authorize full concurrent receipt for medically retired, combat-injured veterans and eliminate statutory offsets,” Aguirre said. “While there are additional priorities for 2026, given our limited time with elected representatives, we focused on those that would have the greatest impact on Arizona Legionnaires.”

During their trip to the nation’s capital, members of the Arizona delegation also visited several veterans memorials and were at Arlington National Cemetery for a Sons of The American legion wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

VA FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY, VETERANS DATA PRIVACY AMONG ISSUES ADDRESSED DURING LEGION TESTIMONY

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

AMERICAN LEGION LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR COLE LYLE DELIVERS REMARKS TO HVAC'S SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS.

During a March 25 House Committee on Veterans' Affairs subcommittee hearing, American Legion Legislative Division Director Cole Lyle expressed Legion support – with some suggested amendments – to pending legislation that addresses better fiscal management by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, veterans data privacy and providing a clearer route for recovering bonuses from former VA employees for exhibited misconduct or poor performances.

Lyle addressed the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations and immediately pointed out a similarity in the pieces of legislation being considered. “Across the bills under consideration, one common theme emerges: VA must become a better steward of the resources and trust veterans have placed in it,” he said. “We see this clearly in the management of software assets. VA spent roughly \$21 billion on software licenses and systems between FY 2022 and 2024. Yet a recent GAO report found the department still cannot accurately track how many licenses it uses.

“According to GAO’s written testimony, without implementing comprehensive guidance from managing the impacts of restrictive software license practices, VA is not well-positioned to identify and analyze the impact or mitigate the risks they present. The result is wasted taxpayer dollars and inefficient operations.”

A potential solution is H.R. 6654, the Veterans Affairs Management and Oversight of Software Assets Act that Lyle said takes a “practical step” toward addressing the problem through requiring a comprehensive inventory, centralized oversight and annual reporting.

“With modest amendments, we believe this bill will deliver meaningful, long-term savings that can be redirected back to veteran care,” he said.

Another piece of legislation under consideration is H.R. 7683, the VA Fiscal

Management Modernization Act. The legislation would clarify and expand the authority of VA's Assistant Secretary for Management to modernize the department's financial oversight processes.

"Strong financial management is foundational to everything the VA does. For too long, material weaknesses in VA's financial reporting have frustrated Congress and undermine confidence in the department's budget requests," Lyle said. "The VA Fiscal Management Modernization Act would give the chief financial officer the clear statutory authority and structure needed to fix these long-standing problems. We support the bill but recommend clear lines of reporting be included."

Lyle also spoke about The VA Bonus and Relocation Recovery Act, which would clarify that VA's existing recoupment authorities extend to former employees, closing a loophole that allows improper payments to go unrecovered solely because an employee has left the agency.

"Under 38 (U.S. Code) 721, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs can order a current VA employee to repay all or part of a bonus or award if misconduct or poor performance is later discovered. However, this authority does not clearly extend to former employees who have already left the department, either voluntarily or through termination," Lyle said. "There is similar limited authority under 38 (U.S.C.) 723 for recouping relocation expenses, but again, it primarily applies if the person is still employed. In practice, once an employee separates from VA, the department's ability to recover improperly paid bonuses, awards or relocation incentives becomes very difficult or impossible.

"The VA Bonus and Relocation Recovery Act is designed to close this loophole. If passed, it would explicitly authorize the secretary to recoup bonuses, awards and relocation from former employees when the secretary determines the payment should not have been made. We support the bill, also with amendments to strengthen due process and clarify the judicial reviews of major adverse actions under Title 38 ... and shorten the statute of limitations, as we believe six years is too onerous on the former employee."

During a Q&A session, subcommittee Ranking Member Delia Ramirez thanked Lyle for referencing H.R. 7280, the Veteran DATA Act, earlier in his testimony. The legislation would amend an existing law to prohibit the Secretary of Veterans Affairs from entering into any contract that allows a contractor to sell or otherwise disclose for payment veteran data to another company; would explicitly forbid contractors and their subcontractors from monetizing, selling or misusing this data; would mandate VA issue guidance to its employees and contractors on how to identify such misuse; and would require the VA Secretary to report to Congress on the implemented contract clauses

secretary to report to Congress on the implemented contract clauses, guidance and any other compliance actions taken.

She then asked what Lyle had heard from Legionnaires about their concerns about data privacy within VA – especially as VA works more with external parties as it continues to modernize.

“I think veterans across the country are rightfully concerned about how their data is used,” Lyle said. “There have been instances of identity theft (and) fraud in the veteran community as a result of data leaks in the public sector and the private sector when it relates to veteran health care data. I think one of the main concerns as technology so rapidly advances is that government protections are not keeping pace with that technological advancement.

“The VA has said that a lot of these protections are currently in place in contracts. I have not seen the specifics of those contracts, so I think (the Veteran DATA Act) is an important step to ensure that protections are in fact in place.”

In addressing the Veteran DATA Act earlier in the hearing, Lyle said a need exists for such measures. “In the era of sophisticated scams and rapidly advancing technology – including AI, that can sometimes reidentify and automate records – veterans are rightly concerned about who has access to their information and how it is used,” he said. “The Veteran DATA Act would seek to close gaps by prohibiting contractors from selling or monetizing veterans’ data, providing training to assist employees to identify this sensitive information.

“While we support the overall goal of the bill, we recommend targeted amendments to avoid unnecessary renegotiation of contracts that may already contain adequate protections.”

Read Lyle’s written testimony [here](#). A video of the hearing also is available [here](#).

MILITARY FAMILIES: DOD WANTS YOUR INPUT ON QUALITY OF LIFE IMPROVEMENTS

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

Military families and others have the opportunity over the next month to provide input for defense officials on quality of life issues at the state level for service members and their families.

Defense officials are specifically interested in issues where state governments are the primary agents for positive change, according to the request for information posted in the Federal Register on Tuesday by the Defense Department's office of the deputy assistant secretary of defense for military community and family policy.

They're asking for input on what should be considered for 2028.

Submissions are due by **April 23**. Information on how to submit the input can be found in the [Federal Register notice](#). The notice includes information that should be included, such as a title for the issue; the description of the issue with a problem statement about who is affected and whether the issue could be solved by change in state procedures, state regulations or state laws; a description of a potential solution; a description of the current status of the issue; and contact information for any needed follow up.

“The proposed solution should positively impact the quality of life of service members and their families, positively contribute to readiness, or both,” according to the Federal Register request for information.

Each year, officials in DOD's State Liaison Office choose policy priorities for states to consider that cause barriers because of the mobility and uncertainty of military life. They'll consider the public's input in crafting their priorities.

Over the years, DOD's State Liaison office officials have worked to inform state legislators and others about steps they could consider to help ease burdens related to a number of issues, such as easing the transitions of military children into new school schools and military spouse employment, including the [transfer of professional licenses](#) when spouses move to a new permanent duty station.

For 2026, the DOD State Liaison's Office priorities for states to consider are:

- Exempting DOD-certified in-home childcare providers from state

licensure requirements.

- Speeding up the adoption and implementation of professional licensure compacts to ensure seamless portability, reduce financial strain and support long-term military family stability.
- Including military clauses in state family leave laws to help spouses address urgent family needs without risking income or job insecurity — when the service member is activated or in training, for example.
- Providing solutions for military homeschoolers, such as expanding access to school extracurricular activities and sports.
- Improving local implementation of policies that support military-connected children and help families by clarifying requirements and streamlining access to information on state and local education websites.
- Providing state support for military families with special needs, ensuring timely establishment of services when families relocate and reducing procedural burdens.
- Providing open enrollment so that students can remain in their current school in spite of moving from temporary to permanent housing.
- Adopting policies that facilitate concurrent juvenile jurisdiction between the military and civilian authorities.
- Enhancing state laws to further protect victims of interpersonal violence by increasing access to civilian protective orders for victims and mandating required sharing of information between military and civilian law enforcement authorities.
- Establishing statewide military-focused councils that consider military family readiness and dedicate at least one seat to members of the military community.

DHS REOPENING DEAL ON SHAKY GROUND AMID BIPARTISAN BACKLASH

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

A deal to reopen the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is taking fire from both sides of the aisle after appearing to gain momentum just a day earlier.

While Senate Republicans and the White House signaled earlier in the week that President Trump would back the emerging proposal to end the 40-day DHS shutdown, the president told reporters Tuesday he would take a “hard look” at the deal, suggesting he wasn’t sold.

The plan would have Congress fund almost all of the department, with some additional funding for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) set aside and advanced under a separate reconciliation bill that could pass without Democratic support.

But Senate Democrats rejected that proposal, saying it still didn’t make the substantive changes to immigration enforcement they have insisted on for weeks.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) told reporters Democrats would submit a counteroffer to the GOP, but they are still insisting on reforms to “rein in” ICE, keeping to their key demand that Republicans have repeatedly refused.

“Every one of my colleagues, every one, A) believes we should be unified, and, B) we need reforms of ICE — every single one,” Schumer said following a meeting with his fellow Democratic senators.

Democrats aren’t the only ones who pose an obstacle to the deal coming together. The Hill’s Alexander Bolton reports the proposal is also facing attacks from conservative Republicans, quickly reversing any momentum the idea might have had.

House Republicans are similarly pushing back, The Hill’s Mike Lillis, Emily Brooks and Sudiksha Kochi report.

“I can tell you, the House has funded DHS twice. We’re prepared to do it again. Completely fund the entire department. That is the responsible way to do this thing. So, we’ve been very resistant to any idea to break it

apart,” Speaker Mike Johnson (R-La.) told reporters.

Another key element of the plan is to include parts of the SAVE America Act, a key legislative priority for the president, in the reconciliation bill. But members of the conservative House Freedom Caucus expressed doubt that parts of the voting requirements bill can be included given rules surrounding the reconciliation process.

With such intense opposition coming from all sides, efforts to end the shutdown and restore funding and paychecks for TSA workers may be going back to square one just as newly minted Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin starts his first full day on the job.

This could prolong a shutdown already set to break the record for length in U.S. history this weekend. Lawmakers only have a few days to try to prevent the situation from carrying on for at least two more weeks.

Both chambers of Congress remain in session through Friday but are scheduled to go on a two-week recess for Easter starting next week. If no deal is reached by the end of the week, that would likely ensure the DHS shutdown continues through mid-April.

That will add to pressures at airports that have increasingly been hounded by issues as the shutdown has carried on.

ICE officers have now been deployed to help beleaguered Transportation Security Administration (TSA) employees who are dealing with more and more staffing issues as additional agents call out. White House border czar Tom Homan said Monday that ICE officers are stationed at 14 of the country’s busiest airports and he expects the number to grow.

The percentage of TSA employees marked absent nationwide surpassed 10 percent for another day Monday. Airports in cities such as Houston, Atlanta and New Orleans saw the highest call-out percentages, approaching or surpassing 40 percent, while others in New York City, Baltimore and Pittsburgh surpassed 25 percent, according to data from DHS.

The deployment of ICE officers has added another angle of frustration for Democrats in the ongoing standoff over DHS funding and the role of immigration enforcement agents as they have slammed the administration’s move.

Wait times at airports are varying widely, with officials warning travelers in some cities to expect hours-long waits.

COAST GUARD OPERATES WITH UNPAID BILLS AND 'GRIM UNCERTAINTY' IN ONGOING GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

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

40-DAY SHUTDOWN OF DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY HAS LED TO MISSED PAYCHECKS FOR CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES, THREATENS POTENTIAL MISSED PAY FOR SERVICEMEMBERS.

The 40-day shutdown of the Department of Homeland Security has led to several missed paychecks for the Coast Guard's civilian employees and a "grim uncertainty" of potential missed pay for its military members.

It has prevented the service from paying more than 5,000 utility accounts, putting the Coast Guard's critical infrastructure in "imminent danger" of widespread utility shutoffs and refusals of fuel deliveries. And it has stalled the processing of more than 16,000 merchant marine credentials, with the backlog growing by 300 per day.

Those are just some of the effects the funding lapse has had on the Coast Guard, which operates under the department in peacetime, the service's vice commandant, Adm. Thomas Allan, told lawmakers on Wednesday.

"These realities erode the sacred trust our men and women have in the nation they serve," Allan said in testimony to the House Committee on Homeland Security. "Every day the shutdown drags on moves us closer to a tipping point."

It takes the Coast Guard two and a half days to recover from each day it is in a shutdown, he said, meaning if the shutdown were to end Wednesday, the service would not catch up with bills and other affected activities until July 3.

Negotiations to end the shutdown, which began on Feb. 14, took on more urgency this week as lawmakers pushed to resolve the impasse before leaving for a two-week recess on Friday. But a bipartisan deal has yet to emerge.

Senate Republicans sent a proposal to Democrats on Tuesday to fund the entirety of the department except for parts of Immigration and Customs Enforcement involved in the Trump administration's deportation crackdown. Democrats, who have unsuccessfully offered bills to separate funding for the department from ICE and Customs and Border Protection, sent a counteroffer with ICE reforms on Wednesday morning, according to Sen. Minority Leader Chuck Schumer of New York

In the meantime, the Coast Guard has continued “to serve, because that is what our people have sworn to do,” Allan told lawmakers as he outlined the impact of the shutdown alongside officials from other department agencies.

“But a crew should never question whether the nation they protect will stand behind them and their families,” he added. “Stable funding for DHS is not simply a budgetary matter, it’s a matter of trust, readiness and national security.”

The shutdown has created an “unacceptable financial strain” on the Coast Guard’s civilian workforce, Allan said, and though service members have continued to get paid, the service is constantly unsure if it can make the next payroll for them.

Such uncertainty has affected mission readiness and likely caused people to question whether they want to be part of a military service that frequently gets impacted by government shutdowns, he told lawmakers.

“For the Coast Guard, this marks the third shutdown of this fiscal year,” Allan wrote in testimony submitted to the committee. “In total, for 85 of the last 176 days — for nearly half the year — our service has been without the funding necessary to operate and pay our people.”

The latest shutdown has left crews deployed on national security missions unable to get reimbursed for thousands of dollars of official expenses on their government travel cards — a personal debt that is an “unacceptable burden,” he wrote.

It has also crippled the Coast Guard’s ability to pay its many contractors and vendors, including companies that perform ship maintenance and are increasingly voicing their unwillingness to work without pay. The damage could be long-lasting, he said.

“What we worry about is that it’s not only a near-term impact, but as we bid for these contracts with these companies in the future, they’re not going to come to the Coast Guard, they’ll go to the Navy, they’ll go to the Marines,” Allan said.

The service has so far incurred more than \$200 million in unpaid bills to industry partners, he said. Among them are missed payments for cloud and satellite communications services that threaten to sever vital command-and-control links, according to Allan.

It has also ceased activities that do not protect human life or property from

imminent danger, including routine patrols and fisheries enforcement. Many preparations for this summer's World Cup and America's 250th birthday celebrations have also been paused, he said.

DID YOU KNOW...

Republicans and Democrats continue to blame each other for the shutdown, which was triggered when a deal to provide full-year funding for the department unraveled following the killing of an American citizen by federal immigration agents in Minnesota.

President Donald Trump said Tuesday he would take a "good, hard look" at the Republican-proposed deal to end the partial government shutdown but added that "any deal they make, I'm pretty much not happy with it."

LEGION FAMILY SET TO HONOR VIETNAM WAR VETERANS DAY

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



MARCH 29 IS SET ASIDE TO HONOR THOSE WHO SERVED AND THOSE LOST DURING THE VIETNAM WAR.

March 29 is set aside as National Vietnam War Veterans Day and provides an opportunity to pay special tribute to the 9 million Americans who served during the Vietnam War era, to the 58,000 names memorialized on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., and to those who never received the recognition they deserved when they returned to America from war.

The date references the day in 1973 when U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam was disestablished and the last U.S. combat troops departed Vietnam. Also on that day, Operation Homecoming was completed, when the last of 591 U.S. prisoners were released and returned to the United States.

Across the country, American Legion posts will either host or take part in Vietnam War Veterans Day events, inviting veterans of the war to their facilities to honor, thank and welcome them home.

If your post or American Legion Family members are commemorating Vietnam War Veterans Day, please share your stories and photos at www.legiontown.org.

The following are a few events scheduled across the nation.

California

In Redondo Beach, South Bay Post 184 is conducting its first Vietnam War Veterans Day BBQ on March 29. The full Legion Family will provide a meal that will include hamburgers, hot dogs and hot links; the public is invited and is encouraged to bring side dishes and other foods to add to the event.

The day also will include live music, as well as Redondo Union High School ROTC presenting the colors.

Florida

In Sebastian, American Legion Post 189 will host a community pancake breakfast on March 29 to honor Vietnam War Veterans Day. Sons of The American Legion Squadron 189 is providing the breakfast to any Vietnam veterans who attend and is asking them to sign a welcome home banner.

Georgia

In Brunswick, American Legion Posts 9 and 507 are teaming with Hospice of Golden Isles to host a Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Celebration on April 2. In addition to serving finger foods, the event will include a POW/MIA Remembrance Ceremony and a screening of a Vietnam veteran documentary.

Illinois

In Edwardsville, American Legion Post 199 is honoring Vietnam veterans with a free breakfast on March 28. A similar breakfast last year had more than 100 attendees.

“We want all veterans to be recognized for their service and the sacrifices they did for this country,” said Past Post 199 Commander Ron Swaim.

The post is requesting guests register ahead of time, and the first 20 Vietnam veterans who register will receive a Quilt of Valor if they have not already received one.

Along with breakfast, retired Maj. Gen. Bill Enyart will be the guest speaker. Enyart served in both the U.S. Air Force and the Army National Guard and also represented Illinois' 12th Congressional District from 2013 to 2015, serving on the House Armed Services Committee and the House Agriculture Committee. He is now a contributor for networks that include NewsNation and CNN.

Maine

In Camden, American Legion Post 30 is honoring Vietnam veterans with a luncheon on March 29. Vietnam veterans eat free and can bring one guest

"Post 30 encourages all (Vietnam) veterans to attend whether they served in country or in support roles to connect with their brothers and sisters," Maine American Legion District 6 Commander Jeff Sukeforth said via a news release. "This event is a chance for those who served to come together and perhaps receive some of the comradery they may have been missing for many years."

Minnesota

In St. Peter, American Legion Auxiliary Unit 37 will provide a meal at the post following a Vietnam veterans program at the St. Peter Community Center.

Missouri

In Hannibal, American Legion Post 55 will host its third annual dinner honoring Vietnam veterans on March 28. The event will include a special pinning ceremony for Vietnam veterans.

New York

In Norwich, Post 189's American Legion Family and Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2789 will honor Vietnam veterans by hosting morning coffee and pastries, and a soup and sandwich lunch at Post 189.

The day also will include a screening of "Truths and Myths of the Vietnam War", a documentary film produced by a group of Atlanta veterans that also was shown at the 2025 American Legion National Convention. Veterans who attend will be encouraged to share their experiences and thoughts with each other and community members who would like to learn first-hand about the Vietnam War.

Members of both Post 189 and VFW Post 2789 also will be available to answer questions and provide information about services available to area veterans.

North Carolina

In Fuquay Varina, American Legion Post 116 is hosting a Vietnam veterans remembrance ceremony on March 29. The ceremony is open to members of The American Legion Family and the public.

North Dakota

In Gackle, Mayer-Morlock Post 250, Melvin E. Bender Post 265, Clifford Ost Post 260 and Robert Kurtz Post 57 hosted Vietnam Veterans Day and 107th American Legion birthday celebrations on March 21 at Post 250. North Dakota American Legion Auxiliary Department President Candace Berg was the guest speaker.

SPRING.

Unit 250 provided sandwiches, coffee and cake.

Ohio

In Salineville, American Legion Post 442 is hosting a free dinner for area Vietnam veterans and their spouses on March 28. Unit 442 will prepare the dinner, which will include chicken, mashed potatoes, a vegetable, dessert and a drink.

Pennsylvania

In Plum Borough, American Legion Post 980 is having a pancake and egg breakfast for Vietnam War veterans on March 28. At the breakfast, veterans from other eras and peacetime will serve the Vietnam veterans at their tables. Music from the Vietnam War era will be played, and Vietnam War veterans will be presented challenge coins and flag pins.

LEGION PROVIDES NEARLY \$9 MILLION IN COLLEGE AID TO 4,500 STUDENTS

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

FROM THE POST TO NATIONAL LEVEL, THE AMERICAN LEGION SUPPORT YOUTH NATIONWIDE THROUGH SCHOLARSHIPS.

About 4,500 students across the country received access to higher education in 2025 thanks to the efforts of The American Legion. In all, students received nearly \$9 million in college aid from American Legion national and local post programs.

At the national level, The American Legion Legacy Scholarship led this effort with a record \$1.7 million in financial aid awarded to 559 children of fallen or disabled post-9/11 veterans. Following this was the Samsung American Legion Scholarship that awarded \$251,250 in scholarships to 101 high school students who attended either Legion Boys State or Auxiliary Girls State; then the National Oratorical Contest, awarding \$197,500 among 51 high school students who spoke on the U.S. Constitution.

At the post level, according to the 2025 American Legion Consolidated Post Report (CPR), posts awarded over \$6.6 million in scholarships to 3,746 students. Approximately 70% of American Legion posts submitted CPRs.

American Legion youth scholarships available at the national level:

American Legion Legacy Scholarship. A needs-based scholarship for children of a parent who lost their lives while honorably serving on active military duty on or after Sept. 11, 2001, or children of a post-9/11 veteran with a combined Department of Veterans Affairs disability rating of 50% or greater. Children of the fallen receive up to \$20,000 scholarship; children of the disabled receive up to \$5,000.

Samsung American Legion Scholarship. Available for high school juniors who participate in the current session of American Legion Boys State or Auxiliary Girls State and are a direct descendant (or legally adopted child) of a U.S. military veteran who served honorably and eligible for American Legion membership. Scholarships of up to \$10,000 are awarded.

National Oratorical Contest. High school students enter this competition at the post level where they develop an understanding of the U.S. Constitution by

preparing an oration on an aspect of it. A finalist from each participating department advances to the national contest in Hillsdale, Mich., where they compete for up to \$203,500 in scholarships.

Junior Shooting Sports Program. The top 30 competitors from the air rifle postal competition advance to the national tournament in Hillsdale, Mich., where first and second-place finishers receive scholarships.

Legion Baseball. About 3,000 teams participate in this program for a chance to be one of eight teams advancing to the American Legion World Series in Shelby, N.C. Scholarships are awarded to the American Legion Baseball All-Academic Team.

Boys Nation. Rising high school juniors become part of the operation of local, county and state government during Boys State with two delegates from each department program attending Boys Nation in Washington, D.C., for a week to receive an education on the structure and function of federal government. Scholarships are awarded to Boys Nation elected leaders.

Scouting. An Eagle Scout of the Year is named and is awarded \$10,000, while three runners-up each receive \$2,500.

LAST CHANCE TO ENTER MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS CONTEST

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

APRIL 15 IS THE DEADLINE FOR THE CONTEST THAT ALLOWS AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY MEMBERS TO SHOWCASE THEIR WORK PROMOTING THE ORGANIZATIONS.

The annual American Legion Media & Communications Contest is open for 2026 to recognize the great work American Legion Family members do at the post, district and department levels to positively promote and educate about the organizations. Members of the Legion, Sons, Auxiliary and Riders are encouraged to enter the contest to showcase their work in various media channels.

There are six categories for submissions: websites, publications, visual media, social media, editorial/news writing, and public relations/community outreach. Entries are broken into four divisions to select – departments/districts, posts over 750 members, posts 250-749 members, and posts up to 249 members.

Three things to know about the contest:

1. All entries must have been published during the 2025 calendar year.
2. You may enter submissions in one or multiple categories.
3. Each submission costs \$5.

Enter the contest by visiting [**legion.org/media-communications-contest**](https://legion.org/media-communications-contest).
Deadline for submissions is April 15.

Winners in each category receive a plaque and are considered for the Innovation Award and Chairman's Award (a "Best in Show" honor), which include a plaque and a \$50 Emblem Sales credit.

Media & Communications Contest Q&A

Q: Who judges the entries and selects the Innovation Award and Chairman's Award winners?

A: Media & Communications National Headquarters staff, along with American Legion Media & Communications Commission members, will select the winners in each category. The list of winners will then go before the entire

Media & Communications Commission for approval during Spring Meetings in May.

Q: How will I know that my submissions were received for judging?

A: Upon payment for all submissions, a confirmation email will be sent.

Q: How will contest entrants be notified of the winners?

A: An individual email will be sent to all winners notifying them of their award. Additionally, an email will be sent to everyone who entered the contest notifying them of the 2026 Media & Communications Contest winners.

If you have questions, please email dispatch@legion.org.

Legionnaire of the Week

To recognize the weekly accomplishments of our Legionnaires, we 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.

John Hendrick, Department of Arkansas

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

During the Washington Conference, John met with Senator Boozman and his senior staff. They discussed the Major Richard Star Act, veteran suicide prevention efforts, improvements to the Veterans Crisis Line, and the impacts of the government shutdown, including Department of Homeland Security personnel, such as Coast Guard members, who are in threat of working without pay.

Thank you, John, 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.

NEED TO FIND YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS?

<https://www.votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/Address>

THIS WEEKS TOP GRASSROOTS DEPARTMENTS:

Kansas	281
Wisconsin	250
Tennessee	224
New York	120
Florida	106

Register more participants in your Department and help amplify the voice of veterans on Capitol Hill. Maybe your state just might earn a spot-on next week's Letter Board! Register with the link below:

<https://www.votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/Register>

GRASSROOTS INFORMATION

Interested in what the Legion is advocating for in Congress? Check out our [information papers](#) and [Legislative priorities](#). This is a great starting point for a conversation with your elected officials!

10 Tips for a Successful Meeting on Capitol Hill and the *Legislative Meeting Worksheet* are now available for viewing and download on The Legion's website. You can find them and other legislative resources on the [Legislative Advocacy Resources & Toolkit page](#).

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

jfunari@legion.org.

You can find relevant legislation and the Legion's stance on them in the [key legislation section of VoterVoice](#).

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



UPCOMING CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS

Congress is in recess from March 30 through April 10, and no hearings are scheduled during this time. Regular committee activity is expected to resume once Congress returns April 13.

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](#)



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