

NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION
Randall A. Fisher (Kentucky), Chairman
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The purpose of the National Legislative Commission is to promote the legislative mandates of The American Legion before Congress. These mandates are dictated by resolutions adopted at either a national convention or by the National Executive Committee.

The American Legion's legislative portfolio covers a broad spectrum of issues, such as the global war on terrorism; juvenile delinquency; veterans employment, training and education; military preparedness; immigration; flag protection; and veterans health care. The American Legion's mandates are promoted by oral and written testimony at congressional hearings.

During our commission meetings we hear briefings from federal executives, military leaders, elected officials and some of the best minds available on the topics of legislation, budget, and overall issues of national interest for which our organization advocates. We have heard briefings on a wide variety of topics such as the VA budget; a history and background for veterans benefits in this country; and training for veterans seeking public office.

To date, during the First Session of the 116th Congress, The American Legion has issued 18 letters of support that specifically address our national legislative resolutions. We have testified six times before committees or subcommittees of Congress. Our national commander personally testified before a joint session of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs committees, presenting The American Legion's legislative program on February 27.

One of the commission's most important tools is the National Legislative Council. Composed of 585 volunteer Legionnaires, this body directs grassroots campaigns and lobbying of Congress through countless hours of telephone calls, e-mails and face-to-face meetings. In addition, the American Legion Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion are critical components in our grassroots lobbying efforts.

Since the last national convention, a number of public laws were enacted which address areas of concern to The American Legion. They include:

- **Public Law (PL) 116-11**, a bill to authorize the honorary appointment of Robert J. Dole to the grade of colonel in the regular Army;
- **PL 116-12**, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify the grade and pay of podiatrists of the Department of Veterans Affairs;

On May 14, the House of Representatives passed **H.R. 299**, under suspension of the rules 410-0 the “Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019.” The American Legion-supported bill, which must still be approved by the Senate before going to the president, would restore VA benefits to thousands of Vietnam veterans, expand inclusive dates to those who served along the Korean DMZ, and benefit children born with spina bifida due to a parent’s exposure to Agent Orange-related herbicides in Thailand.

The American Legion’s legislative attention during the remainder of 2019 will be devoted to: passage of the LEGION Act, Pay the Coast Guard Act, FY 2020 appropriations for VA medical care accounts, homeland security and national defense; continued support for legislation to eliminate the disabled veterans’ tax; and passage of a constitutional amendment to protect the American flag from physical desecration. If you would like further information about the Legislative Commission or its work, please contact the Legislative Division at 202-861-2700, extension 5752 or go to www.legion.org/legislative.