

NATIONAL SECURITY COMMISSION  
2021 - 2022  
REPORT TO CONGRESS

From October 2021 through September 2022, the National Security Commission, its seven committees and council participated in myriad activities involving defense, foreign relations, homeland security and military quality of life-related matters. Focusing on The American Legion's priorities, the National Security Commission continues to improve and expand its influence across a multitude of portfolios that contribute to America maintaining a strong national security posture.

REPORT OF NATIONAL SECURITY  
COMMISSION  
TO THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

OCT. 6-7, 2021

The National Security Commission (and our seven committees) continued reviewing all active resolutions from 1941 until 2021 and are pleased to report we submitted a resolution to rescind another 37 resolutions that are either superseded, accomplished or obsolete. This totals 136 resolutions this year the NEC rescinded, allowing us to focus on current and pertinent resolutions. The follow-on goal is to accomplish what these resolutions specify – and to work on new resolutions to better align with our ever-changing national security environment.

National Security Chairman Brennan met with committee chairmen on Thursday, Sept. 16, and Thursday Sept. 30, 2021, via teleconference for the purpose of considering those matters that had previously been referred for study, and to discuss a range of other current matters.

Reviewed were four resolutions: Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention and Awareness; Support Department of Defense Directive 1344.10 and the Hatch Act of 1939; Support for First Responders and Law Enforcement Agencies; and rescinding 37 resolutions. Three of these were submitted to the Resolution Subcommittee of the NEC for consideration. One was added to Addendum A as Receive and Record. Chairman Brennan is coordinating with the specific department that wrote the resolution we listed as Receive and Record to assist in writing a resolution not already covered by current resolutions.

Over the next few months, the commission (specifically the National Security Division in the Washington, D.C., Office) will work with departments on their nominating packets for the National Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award and the National Firefighter of the Year Award; deadline is Feb. 1 (so the Law and Order Committee can review packets at the Washington Conference). The first week of January, the division will send information on the Spirit of Service Award to all branches of our armed forces (to include our newest service, the Space Force) with a deadline from the services to our commission by June 1.

POW/MIA UPDATE

Total funding of the DPAA is something we continue to be concerned about. The effects of continuing resolutions and threats of government shutdowns are crippling to DPAA efforts. Without guaranteed funding, recovery teams are threatened to end their mission and return stateside short of mission dates. Mission planning is impacted as well. The problematic mountains of Vietnam can only be excavated during the warm months, and without guaranteed funding opportunities may be missed. Since 2019, the DPAA has not been successful in its talks with North Korea and the extraction of our missing-in-action servicemembers. Up until that time they had made more recoveries than previously ever before in recent history.

Unaccounted for from past conflicts:

WWII	Korean War	Vietnam War	Cold War	Iraq & Other Conflicts
72,399	7,555	1584	126	6

This concludes the American Legion National Security Commission’s report to the National Executive Committee. We would like to thank National Commander Paul E. Dillard, our NEC Liaison Committee, and the distinguished members of the NEC for their continuing support for the commission.

ADVANCE REPORT  
OF THE  
NATIONAL SECURITY COMMISSION  
TO THE  
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

MARCH 5, 2022

Steven A. Brennan (Maryland), Chairman

The National Security Commission (including our seven committees and council) convened via Zoom on March 5, 2022, during the 62<sup>nd</sup> Annual Washington Conference. National Security Commission Chairman Steven Brennan of Maryland opened by introducing and thanking the various chairmen of the National Security committees, and division staff. Chairman Brennan discussed The American Legion's National Security-related legislative agenda for the second half of the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress. Agenda items included: military quality of life; addressing the forever wars and restoring congressional war powers; citizenship for military service; and paying the Coast Guard during government shutdowns. Chairman Brennan commended the commission’s work over the past year, which included the NEC rescinding 120 resolutions and sending a resolution on Ukraine to the NEC that was approved unanimously. Additionally, Chairman Brennan briefed

the commission on recommendations given to national leadership for improving the National Security Commission and Division.

Chairman Brennan explained that the focus of our commission meeting, as part of the Washington Conference, would be a review of The American Legion's posture and official policy on illegal immigration and to update the commission on related matters. Chairman Brennan stressed that our commission is responsible for illegal immigration, whereas the Americanism Commission is responsible for legal immigration. The program proceeded as follows:

Morning:

- Opening remarks and roll call (virtual)
- Chief Alfredo Lozano, acting deputy chief, U.S. Border Patrol Headquarters, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)
- Daniel Bible, acting deputy executive associate director, Enforcement and Removal, U.S. Immigration Customs and Enforcement (ICE)
- Jessica M. Vaughan, director of policy studies for the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS)

Afternoon:

- Chairman Brennan led a discussion on illegal immigration
- The Commission reviewed nine existing resolutions related to illegal immigration and citizenship for military service
- Business for the good of The American Legion

The chairman thanked the more than 224 Legionnaires for attending the Washington Conference and discussed upcoming commission activities that were scheduled prior to the spring NEC meetings.

### I. Chief Alfredo Lozano

The current situation at the United States' southwest border is unprecedented. Over 800,000 migrants have been encountered at the border during this fiscal year. U.S. CBP encounters around 8,000 individuals every week. Seventy-five percent of the migrants encountered are single adults, the demographic that poses the greatest threat to border patrol agents and the security of the United States. The other 25% are families or unaccompanied children, with approximately 400 unaccompanied children being encountered every day.

CBP agents oversee the apprehension of individuals who attempt to cross the border, vetting them for entry and providing food, medical attention, and also may include detention. Duties related to patrolling and securing our borders require a significant number of personnel to accomplish it in a competent manner. Still, CBP only has around 19,000 agents working along a 2,000-mile border. To complicate matters, CBP agents process the mass number of migrants while also trying to prevent the trafficking of drugs, weapons, money and people into and out of the United States. The U.S. CBP needs more personnel, facilities, technology and resources to deal with its assigned mission and associated responsibilities effectively.

## II. Daniel Bible

The Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) branch of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) works to identify, arrest, detain and remove non-citizens who threaten national security, public safety and border security. Currently, ICE has 25 domestic field offices overseeing more than 200 domestic locations employing 8,000 law enforcement and non-law enforcement personnel. ERO uses intelligence-driven leads to identify non-citizen targets, and they work with CBP and local and state law enforcement agencies to identify individuals. When working with local law enforcement, ERO will issue detainers to gain custody of non-citizens who have been arrested by local law enforcement. This is the safest and easiest way for ERO to bring individuals into their custody. Sanctuary cities do not comply with detainer requests, thereby forcing ERO to use more resources to arrest and detain non-citizens.

ERO will also arrest non-citizens, with 90% of those arrested having previous criminal convictions or pending criminal charges. ERO primarily conducts administrative arrests of non-citizens who it has probable cause to believe are removable from the United States. Once individuals have been arrested, they are then detained at ICE facilities. ERO only detains individuals for processing and removal. Because of limited resources, ERO cannot detain everyone they have arrested, so alternatives to detention are used; this includes telephonic reporting and GPS monitoring. Once non-citizens are issued a final removal order, ICE works with their home country and the State Department to organize removal proceedings. In FY 2020, 185,884 individuals were removed from the United States.

Bible explained that USCIS, ICE and CBP are working to identify and halt removal proceedings for those veterans and their family members facing removal.

## III. Jessica M. Vaughan

According to CIS, the federal government needs to do a better job of enforcing current immigration laws to prevent mass influxes of illegal immigrants. Many migrants CBP encounters at the border have criminal records or backgrounds. Still, CBP does not have enough resources to screen everyone attempting to enter the country legally at the ports of entry. There has also been an increase in minors entering into indentured labor, people who are victims of human trafficking. Even with increases in illegal immigration, there has been a decrease in deportations under the current administration, especially deporting those that overstayed their visa.

To fix the illegal immigration problem in the United States, Congress, who has the authority to create immigration laws and decide who gets to come into the country, needs to fix the asylum system, strengthen visa security and the visa vetting process, and have better management of visa programs. The federal government also needs to reform interior enforcement of illegal immigration to deport criminals; this includes penalizing sanctuary cities for not cooperating with ICE and federal law enforcement. Vaughan stated that if the federal government does decide to enact an amnesty program, they should first fix the problems with border security and immigration enforcement so that the amnesty program does not incentivize more migrants to enter the country illegally. Those amnesty programs should also only be given to specific subgroups of people, such as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals.

#### IV. Illegal Immigration and Citizenship for Military Service Resolutions Review & Discussion

The National Security Commission reviewed and unanimously agreed to continue to support the following resolutions as written: Resolution No. 19: Oppose Deportation of Non-Citizen Immigrant Veterans, Resolution No. 20: Oppose Deportation of Immediate Family Members of Non-Citizen Immigrant Veterans, Resolution No. 20: Fully Enforce Immigration Laws, Resolution No. 27: Sanctuary Cities, Resolution No. 29: Commend Border Patrol, Resolution 10: Expedited Citizenship Applications for Deported Veterans, and Resolution No. 15: Expedited Citizenship Through Military Service.

Separately, the commission voted to rescind Resolution No. 24: Illegal Immigration Policy and Resolution No. 38: Support the Pentagon Program to Recruit Temporary, Legal Immigrants in the U.S.

**Closing Remarks:** Chairman Brennan thanked the distinguished guests for their pertinent and interesting information, and reminded commission members to push this information down to their departments.

#### Emergency National Security Commission Meeting

On Feb. 25, 2022, at 2 p.m., the National Security Commission virtually convened for an emergency meeting to review, discuss and vote on Resolution No.1: Statement on Ukraine, submitted by the Department of North Carolina - Register Resolution No. 2816 (N.C.) DEC supported a peaceful resolution in Ukraine in conjunction with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Russian Federation. The commission unanimously recommended the NEC approve this resolution (with a quorum of 26 eligible voting commission members present virtually). Having the approval of the National Security Commission, it was forwarded and approved by the National Executive Committee on March 1, 2022.

#### Update on the Regional and National Law Enforcement Officer and Firefighter of the Year Awards

On March 10, 2022, at 3 p.m., the Law and Order & Homeland Security Committee virtually convened to vote on the annual Law Enforcement Officer and Firefighter of the Year Awards, where it selected the regional winners. The committee, chaired by Chairman George Wehrli (FL), selected five recipients for each category as follows:

##### Regional Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Winners for 2022:

- New England Region - Adam Anderson of New Hampshire
- Southern Region - Jesse Madsen of Florida
- Central Region - David Hines of Virginia
- Western Region - Michael Day of Oregon
- Midwest Region - Garrett Mastin of South Dakota

##### Regional Firefighter of the Year Winners for 2022:

- New England – Herb Slack of Pennsylvania

- Southern Region - Robert Jordan of Tennessee
- Central Region - Richard Duncan of Indiana
- Western Region - Bert Wellington of Oregon
- Midwest Region - Ryan Winkler of Iowa

REPORT OF NATIONAL SECURITY  
COMMISSION  
TO THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

MAY 4-5, 2022

The 62<sup>nd</sup> Annual Washington Conference was addressed in our Advanced Report (along with announcing the five Regional Law Enforcement Officers of the Year and the five Regional Firefighters of the Year). Upon completion of the Washington Conference, the National Security Commission, its seven committees and council continued to keep abreast of several matters in the national security portfolio. The National Security Commission met by conference call on Thursday, April 13 to review new resolutions, and met again by conference call on April 18 to discuss and vote on five new resolutions and rescind two obsolete resolutions.

Presiding at both meetings was Chairman Steven Brennan (MD)

Attendees include:

Vice Chairman: Kenneth Trumbull (IL)

Present committee chairmen included: Rick Oertel (VA), Thomas Schottenbauer (MN), William Flanagan (IL), George Wehrli (FL), Doug Haggan (FR), and 17 commission members.

## RESOLUTIONS

Commission Chairman Steven A. Brennan (MD) led a discussion on the following resolutions to make recommendations to the 2022 Spring National Executive Committee:

**Title:** Filling of Vacant Ambassadorships

**Origin:** National Security Commission

**National Security Commission Recommendation:** The commission moved and properly seconded to present this resolution to the 2022 Spring National Executive Committee for consideration. Motion carried.

**Title:** Revocation of U.S. Military Awards to Russian Military Personnel

**Origin:** National Security Commission

**National Security Commission Recommendation:** The commission moved and properly seconded to present this resolution to the 2022 Spring National Executive Committee for consideration. Motion carried.

**Title:** Immigration Reform  
**Origin:** National Security Commission

**National Security Commission Recommendation:** The commission moved and properly seconded to present this resolution to the 2022 Spring National Executive Committee for consideration. Motion carried.

**Title:** Support Availability of TRICARE Prime to all Eligible Veterans Residing in All United States Territories  
**Origin:** Register Resolution No. 2819 (PR) DEC

**National Security Commission Recommendation:** The commission moved and properly seconded to present this resolution to the 2022 Spring National Executive Committee for consideration. Motion carried.

**Title:** Support the Establishment of 24-Hour Child Development Centers on all Military Installations  
**Origin:** Register Resolution No. 2820 (FR) DEC

**National Security Commission Recommendation:** The commission moved and properly seconded to present this resolution to the 2022 Spring National Executive Committee for consideration. Motion carried.

Key Commission Updates:

**MILITARY QUALITY OF LIFE**

On the 21<sup>st</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> of April, The National Security Division hosted two roundtable sessions aimed at gathering updated information involving current military quality-of-life matters. Attendees for the roundtable included military spouses, veterans who retired from the military in the past 24 months, and people working in the military service organization community. Director Mario Marquez led the discussion with three questions as the focus:

1. What is the military doing well in how they maintain or improve quality of life?
2. What issues are considered major degraders to quality of life for servicemembers and their families?
3. What can The American Legion do to facilitate improved quality-of-life conditions for active-duty servicemembers and their families?

Several problem areas were identified during the roundtable and included:

- Transition assistance programs (information overload, received too close to be exiting the military)
- Lack of overseas-focused transition assistance programs (families exiting from overseas)
- Lack of adequate transition assistance programs for spouses and children

- Lack of available and/or affordable child care
- Lack of spouse employment assistance programs
- Significant issues with privatized housing continue to be a problem
- Lack of DoD contact with recently retired/departed servicemembers
- Servicemembers married to foreign spouses continue to have problems with immigration policies
- Access to VA-granted medical benefits at overseas locations continues to be difficult or unavailable
- Overseas Cost of Living Allowances are insufficient to offset expenses
- Degradation of infrastructure continues to be a safety issue and health hazard at many installations

The National Security Commission and Division will continue research to capture the impact that quality-of-life issues have on the readiness and combat effectiveness of the American military. National Security staff will continue building the military quality-of-life portfolio with the intent of testifying on appropriate matters when the opportunity arises.

## **IMMIGRATION POLICY REFORM REVIEW**

The American Legion National Security Commission continued its work on reviewing immigration policy issues. Due to their unavailability during the Washington Conference discussions on illegal immigration-related policy, a follow-on commission meeting was held on March 18, 2022, with the purpose of hosting a panel of immigration experts. The panel included:

- Alex Nowrasteh, director of economic and social policy studies, CATO Institute (His presentation was focused on immigration as it relates to NS)
- Theresa Brown, director of immigration and cross border policy, Bipartisan Policy Center

On Thursday, April 7, 2022, the National Security Commission met to review recommended resolutions, and discuss and make final edits for the new recommended Immigration Reform Policy Resolution.

On Wednesday, April 13, 2022, the National Security Commission met to discuss and vote on several resolutions: specifically, the replacement resolution titled “Immigration Reform” (replacement for Resolution No. 24, 2016, Illegal Immigration Policy) passed by the commission vote unanimously with a recommendation for approval by the NEC.

Since the Washington Conference, Chairman Brennan also engaged in several actions in support of the Immigration Policy reform to include:

- Spoke with Americanism Commission Chairman Anderson involving Americanism resolutions related to legal immigration (as they conflict or apply to the issue of illegal immigration).
- Engaged with American Legion members and officials in various southern border states concerning their experiences on the border.
- Met with various experts regarding legal specifics of sanctuary cities as they apply to the issue of illegal immigration.

- Met with a variety of Legionnaires regarding immigration reform topics and issues.
- National Security Division staff conducted follow-up discussions and fact-checking with the think tanks that briefed during the commission meetings.

## **LEGISLATIVE UPDATES**

One of the essential parts of the work of the National Security Division is the preparation and presentation of congressional testimony, bill analysis and letters of support on issues of national security and the quality of life of servicemembers. The following is a synopsis of the congressional hearings and correspondence:

- On March 29, Director Marquez testified before the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Disability & Memorials Affairs with a focus on Citizenship for Honorable Service and Increasing Accessibility, Automation and Financial Services for Veterans. Through his testimony, Marquez stressed the importance of fixing a broken citizenship and naturalization process for members of the military, veterans and their families. Additionally, he pressed for implementation of a special military family immigration committee that could advocate on behalf of veterans and their families to help reduce or prevent future deportations.

### **The National Security Commission provided two letters of support:**

1. The Hon. Jack Reed, chairman, and The Hon. Adam Smith in appreciation to the work of the Senate and House Armed Service Committee in its continued efforts to maintain a strong national defense as it begins consideration of the Fiscal Year 2023 NDAA, we take this opportunity to respectfully request the inclusion of S.1040/H.R.5562, Expedited Citizenship for Military Service, Afghan Adjustment Act, S.J. Res.10/H.R.3261, and Justice For Servicemembers Act.
2. The Hon. Darrell Issa: we are pleased to express support of H.R. 5909, which would authorize the resident to award the Medal of Honor to Capt/ E. Royce William, USN (ret.) for acts of valor during the Korean War.

<b>Completed Comprehensive Bill Analysis: October 2021 – August 2022</b>	
<b>No.</b>	<b>Title</b>
H.R. 467	Military Retiree Survivor Comfort Act
S. 4049	National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021
H.R. 567	Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership Program Act of 2021
H.R. 923	Georgia Support Act
H.R. 1182	Veteran Deportation Prevention and Reform Act
H.R. 1182	Veteran Deportation Prevention and Reform Act
H.R. 1119	Stopping Chinese Communist Involvement in the Power Grid Act
H.R. 1186	Supply Chain Security and Pharmaceutical Authentication Act of 2021
H.J. Res. 29	War Power Amendment of 2021
S. 1147	Retired Pay Restoration Act
H.R. 3261	To Repeal the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution
S.J. Res. 10	A Joint Resolution to Repeal the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq
H.R. 4382	Repatriate Our Patriots Act (ROPA)
S. 1488	Military hunger Prevention Act
H.R. 2326	Veterans Cyber Risk Awareness Act
H.R. 2339	Military Hunger Prevention Act
S.J. Res. XXX	National Security Powers Act of 2021
S. 1970	Clean Water for Military Families Act
H.R. XXX	Afghan Adjustment Act
H.R. 6876	Ukraine Democracy Defense Lend-Lease Act of 2022
H.R. 1938	National Guard Housing Equity Act
H.R. 5748	Childcare Expansion for Military Families Act of 2021
H.R. 8081	Wounded Warrior Bill of rights Act
S. 4561	Agreement to conduct a study and produce a report on barriers to home ownership for members of the Armed Forces
H.R. 475	Health Care Fairness for Military Families Act of 2021
S. 4360	Military Housing Affordability Act of 2021
S. 2922	Afghanistan War Commission Act of 2021
S. 1474	Afghan Allies Protection Act of 2019
	Save our Servicemembers Act of 2021

<b>Resolutions Approved: October 2021 – August 2022</b>	
Res. No.	Title
3	Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention and Awareness
4	Support Department of Defense Directive 1344.10 and the Hatch Act of 1939
1	Statement on Ukraine
23	Immigration Reform
27	Support Establishment of 24-Hour Child Development Centers on all Military Installations
25	Filling of Vacant U.S Ambassadorships
26	Support Availability of TRICARE Prime to all Eligible Veterans Residing in all United States Territories
23	Implementing an Appeals Process for Medical Malpractice Claims
13	Repeal the Rescission Act of 1946
51	Fully Fund the International Affairs Budget
39	Prohibit Import of Petroleum Products from Iran
65	All Americans to be Registered for Selective service
44	Oppose Government Benefits for Illegal Immigrants
52	National Guard Operating Funds Reimbursement
4	<u>Energy Independence</u>

National Security Summit: Nov. 5-6, 2021

The chairman of the National Security Commission and the seven subcommittee chairmen participated in a National Security Summit. The chairmen met with the Executive Director of Government Affairs, the Legislative Director and National Security Division staff on Nov. 5-6, 2021, to conduct an assessment of how The American Legion’s national security portfolio and programs were performing. The summit was conducted in four phases:

- Phase 1: Assessment of staff’s roles and responsibilities per the outline of authorization
- Phase 2: Discussion and assessment of the commission and committees’ roles
- Phase 3: Legislative briefing regarding national security matters in Congress and the White House
- Phase 4: Performance assessment of the commission and Committees’ performance as compared to the Outline of Authorization

Recommendations from the summit body included:

- Ensure key relations with leaders in the departments of State, Defense and Homeland Security are maintained.
- Increase partnerships with key think tanks and other organizations that contribute to The American Legion’s advocacy efforts.
- Continue to engage consultants who are current in all matters of national security.
- Increase engagement with members of the House and Senate Armed Forces committees and subcommittees.

- Continue to provide testimony on important national security matters for The American Legion.
- Bring on additional staff to support the increase in national-security advocacy efforts.
- Develop a quality-of-life assessment program in partnership with the Department of Defense that will help increase awareness and advocacy for issues that impact servicemembers and military families.

#### Veterans Naturalization Panel (Webinar): Aug. 19, 2022

On Aug. 19, 2022, National Security Director Mario Marquez participated in an online seminar titled “Veterans Naturalization Panel” to discuss the difficulties faced by active-duty servicemembers and veterans as they go through the naturalization process. Other panelists included Saif Khan, special attorney, Office of General Counsel for Veterans Affairs, and Nicqelle Fleming, Equal Justice Works Fellow at the Veterans Consortium who managed the Veterans Naturalization Assistance Program. The online seminar was attended by 110 people from various professions and resulted in positive feedback from many of the participants. The webinar was shared with members of Congress and other pertinent organizations involved with citizenship and naturalization issues.

**-End of Report-**