

**REPORT OF THE
AMERICANISM COMMISSION
TO THE
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
RICHARD W. ANDERSON (CT), CHAIRMAN
May 1, 2021**

The Americanism Commission met in a virtual meeting on Saturday, May 1, 2021 at 11:00 a.m. (EDT). Following the formal opening, the roll was called; 30 members of the Americanism Commission were in attendance and a quorum declared. Following Chairman Anderson's opening remarks, welcome and greetings were delivered by National Commander of The American Legion James W. "Bill" Oxford (NC); Past National Commander John "Jake" Comer (MA); and National Executive Committeeman Dennis Boland (FL), chairman of the Americanism Commission Liaison Committee. Procedural matters for participating in the meeting were reviewed, and Chairman Anderson then called upon individual committee and subcommittee chairmen to deliver their reports.

COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & YOUTH

The members of the Committee on Children & Youth (C&Y) Committee met in a virtual meeting on Saturday, April 10, 2021. The meeting was chaired by Herbert Petit, Jr. (LA). Roll call was taken and a quorum declared.

Chairman Petit reviewed that during the meeting of the Committee on Children & Youth (C&Y) last fall, the committee identified that it has been some time since the governing resolution for the Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) program has been thoroughly reviewed; the governing resolution is Resolution No. 8 of the October 2017 National Executive Committee (NEC) titled "Restructure of the Temporary Financial Assistance Statement of Policy" and has the full TFA policy document incorporated into it. The committee discussed that a thorough review will allow the committee opportunity to seek greater clarity and scope in areas lacking clear intent, update any language within the document that is not gender neutral, and help department chairmen and their local investigators with more refined guidance for assessing a potential TFA case. To begin the process some committee members undertook preliminary review as an ad hoc working group on March 6, 2021. That working group developed a proposed working draft of updated TFA policies and procedures that the Committee on C&Y reviewed during this spring meeting. The committee is pleased with progress of the review and once the committee is fully satisfied with its systematic review and draft development, it will then be presented to the Americanism Commission for consideration and further vetting.

The committee next received an update on the status of TFA grants for 2021. During this current calendar year through April 1st, over \$5,946* in TFA grants have been provided to qualified veterans with minor children in the home to help with the basic needs of their child(ren). The calendar year (CY) 2020 ended with the TFA program providing over \$54,913* in assistance to 43 veteran families, thereby keeping 95 children in a stable and safe environment. The number of requests for TFA slowed during CY 2020 and has continued to be slow during CY 2021. It is felt this is due the federal government providing multiple stimulus packages to Americans to help combat unemployment and stimulate the economy in response to impact of the global coronavirus pandemic. The stimulus packages in general provided \$600 per person in January and then another \$1,400 per person in March. The most recent stimulus package extended additional unemployment benefits until September 6, 2021. (*subject to final audit)

For the good of the Legion, the Committee on C&Y discussed the 2nd annual "100 Miles for Hope" campaign that is underway; viewed the new Legion video titled "Youth Programs and Responsible Citizenship"; reviewed Resolution No. 5 as amended by the National Executive Committee, October 14-15, 2020 titled "Vision, Mission Values and Motto of The American Legion"; and discussed "April is Children and Youth Month."

The Americanism Commission received and filed the written report of the Committee on Children & Youth.

AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL

Gary Stone (MO), Chairman of the American Legion Baseball (ALB) Committee reported that the ALB Committee met in a virtual meeting on Thursday, April 15, 2020, with a quorum present. The committee received an update regarding the 2021 online registration and national tournament status from Baseball Operations Program Manager Steve Cloud. As of the date of the committee's meeting, a total of 1,511 teams (962 senior teams and 549 junior teams) from 47 departments registered online for the 2021 season. Cloud further reported that he and Chairman Stone will be attending planning meetings in Shelby, North Carolina with the ALWS Shelby Executive Committee on April 21 - 23 to discuss preparations and schedules for the 2021 American Legion World Series.

The Baseball Committee reviewed a new resolution titled *“Raising Awareness of the Presumptive Service-Connected Condition Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), Also Known as “Lou Gehrig’s Disease”* and recommends its approval to the Americanism Commission. This resolution was suggested by Past National Commander David Rehbein (IA) and calls for following suit with Major League Baseball’s new annual tradition of bringing a greater awareness to the condition of Lou Gehrig’s disease - also known as “ALS”. Just as Major League Baseball teams will begin doing annually on June 2nd this summer, this resolution strongly encourages every American Legion Baseball team to observe a moment of silence before their game each year on June 2nd in memory of Lou Gehrig, who died on the same date in 1941 at age 37, and also in memory of all veterans who suffer or have died from Lou Gehrig’s disease, which is a presumptive service-connected disease. Military veterans, regardless of their branch of service, or the era in which they served, or during a time of peace or war, are at a greater risk of dying from Lou Gehrig’s disease than non-veterans. And for reasons yet unknown, veterans are in fact twice as likely to be diagnosed with Lou Gehrig’s disease than the general population. The resolution further calls for National Headquarters to promote this observation each year in appropriate media channels; and American Legion Baseball teams and posts are encouraged to also promote this annual observance within their own local communities. This resolution has the concurrence of the VA&R Commission.

The ALB Committee next put forth an “American Legion Baseball Contingency Plan” for consideration. As the coronavirus global pandemic stretched into 2021, the importance for the ALB program to be prepared with a contingency plan in the event any ALB national tournaments were to encounter conditions in hosting departments that might require cancellation, the development of a contingency plan was deemed prudent. At the time of this report, conditions are looking favorable for having all of the ALB national tournaments this summer, so a contingency plan will likely not need to be implemented this year, but the ALB Committee feels it is still a good plan to keep in reserve should it be needed in the future.

The ALB Committee discussed the new Major League Baseball (MLB) extra inning rule whereby each extra inning starts with a runner on second. The committee recommends that the ALB program not adopt this MLB rule. The MLB plays 9-inning games, and they adopted this rule as a pace of play rule. The ALB Committee feels pace of play is not an issue for the Legion since ALB games are 7-innings.

As a result of an audit review of all the national scholarship programs, the baseball scholarships are being assessed for the 2022 season. The ALB Committee also took opportunity to review the new Legion video titled “Youth Programs and Responsible Citizenship;” discussed the 2nd annual “100 Miles of Hope” campaign that is underway; and also reviewed Resolution No. 5 as amended by the National Executive Committee, October 14-15, 2020, titled “Vision, Mission Values and Motto of The American Legion.”

The Americanism Commission received and filed the written report of the ALB Committee, with the exception of: 1) the resolution titled *Raising Awareness of the Presumptive Service-Connected Condition Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), Also Known as “Lou Gehrig’s Disease”*; 2) Exhibit A titled “American Legion Baseball Contingency Plan”; 3) Exhibit B titled “American Legion Baseball 2021 National Tournament Rules and Policies”; and 4) ratification of the ALB Committee’s recommendation not adopt the new MLB extra inning rule – each of these were voted upon separately. The Americanism Commission voted to accept each of the recommendations put forth by the ALB Committee to: 1) approve the resolution; 2)

approve Exhibit A; 3) approve Exhibit B; and 4) ratify the recommendation to reject adopting the MLB's new extra inning rule.

YOUTH CADET LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE

Larry Price (SD), chairman of the Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Committee (YCLEC), reported that on April 14th, 2021, the YCLEC met via a virtual meeting platform. Chairman Price asked Americanism's new Youth Programs Manager, Todd Foster, to introduce himself to the committee and Foster gave a brief history of his experience and skills. The YCLEC went on to view the new Legion video titled "Youth Programs and Responsible Citizenship"; discussed Resolution No. 5 as amended by the National Executive Committee, October 14-15, 2020, titled "Vision, Mission Values and Motto of The American Legion"; and discussed the 2nd annual "100 Miles for Hope" wellness campaign currently underway as a fundraiser for the Veterans & Childrens Foundation.

Chairman Price led a discussion by asking each committee member to share the status of the YCLE program in their respective home departments for this year. Chairmen Price next sought to learn if there had been any response to the letter over his signature sent out in January 2021 to departments who have a YCLE program asking them to reach out to neighboring states to offer support and generate interest. Jim Willis (OR) stated that he will be visiting with the Department of Washington, as they have indicated interest in starting a YCLE Academy and that the Department of California is considering having two YCLE Academies due to the size of its state, in the summer of 2022. Chairman Price spoke with the Departments of Iowa and Texas and they are each interested in starting a department YCLE program in the future. Americanism Commission Chairman, who was attending the YCLEC as a guest, offered a room at convention if the YCLE committee wished to invite prospective departments to facilitate a discussion.

The Americanism Commission received and filed the written report of the Committee on Children & Youth.

CITIZENSHIP & NATURALIZATION SUBCOMMITTEE

Chairman Randy Edwards reported that the Citizenship & Naturalization Subcommittee (CNSC) convened on April 16, 2020. Roll was taken with a quorum present.

The CNSC discussed the Citizenship Outreach Guide of The American Legion that was provided in advance of the meeting to review for potential updates. Last updated in 2015, the CNSC determined that the content is still relevant but moved that staff review the many web links within the document to ensure they are still working and valid.

The CNSC next moved that Americanism Division staff work with the Media & Communications Division of the National Headquarters to create a media campaign generating support for citizenship and naturalization events, as well as highlight this publication, in conjunction with Independence Day. This will link immigrants to becoming new citizens with that of America having become a new nation on July 4th.

Chairman Edwards discussed National Commander Oxford having testified before the new U.S. Congress in March 2021, wherein the commander called upon the 117th Congress to again take up a position in support of finding a path of "Citizenship for Honorable Service."

For the good of the Legion, the CNSC discussed the 2nd annual "100 Miles for Hope" campaign and reviewed Resolution No. 5 as amended by the National Executive Committee, October 14-15, 2020, titled "Vision, Mission Values and Motto of The American Legion."

The Americanism Commission received and filed the written report of the Citizenship & Naturalization Subcommittee.

YOUTH ACTIVITIES SUBCOMMITTEE

Chairman Loren "Bud" Sperry reported that the Youth Activities Subcommittee (YASC) met in a virtual meeting on Wednesday, April 21, 2021. The roll was called, and a quorum declared.

For the first order of business the YASC reviewed the following two resolutions to make recommendations to the Americanism Commission:

- Register Resolution No. 2779 (AR) 2020 DEC *Remove Assigned Topics From Oratorical Contest*
- Resolution No. 49 (OR) 2019 National Convention *Changes to The American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year*

Register Resolution No. 2779 (AR) titled *Remove Assigned Topics From Oratorical Contest* calls for removing the requirement for the 3-to-5 minute assigned topic speech and retaining the 8- to 10-minute prepared speech. Department oratorical chairmen discussed this resolution at the 2020 national Combined Americanism Conference, with all 29 of the department oratorical chairmen in attendance unanimously recommending rejection of this resolution. The department chairmen discussed that the purpose of the 3- to 5-minute assigned topic speech is to test the speaker's knowledge of the constitutional amendment that's been assigned, the extent of his or her research, and the ability to discuss the topic as it relates to the basic principles of government under the Constitution. It is felt that to eliminate the assigned topic speech would be to eliminate an important aspect for giving judges insight into each contestant's level of knowledge, ability to research, and skill to discuss. The YASC also discussed this resolution and are in agreement with the department chairmen's recommendation to reject this resolution.

Resolution No. 49 (OR) titled *Changes to The American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year* calls for changing the current name of "The American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year Award" to "The American Legion Top Scouting Award of the Year Scholarship" so as to extend eligibility for receiving the award not only to Eagle Scouts, but also to youth in the Venturing and Sea Scout programs of the Boy Scouts of America organization. It also seeks to include eligibility of females. Legion department Scouting chairmen discussed Resolution No. 49 during the 2019 national Combined Americanism Conference and it was unanimously recommended by all 14 departments represented to reject this resolution as there is no good methodology for objectively comparing the pinnacle achievements of each of the three Boy Scouts of America youth programs (Eagle Scout Award in Scouting, the Summit Award in Venturing, and the Quartermaster Award in Sea Scouting) because each are very separate and distinct. It is extremely difficult to make like-comparisons among the pinnacle awards of three very different Boy Scouts of America programs in order to combine them into a single award that will adequately recognize the nuances of each. The resolution additionally seeks that Legion Scouting awards "be extended to the female gender," however, there is nothing in the current eligibility of any pinnacle awards of the Boy Scouts of America organization limiting awards to any one gender, therefore a Legion Scouting award would not exclude female recipients. The YASC also discussed this resolution and are in agreement with Scouting department chairmen to reject this resolution.

The YASC next discussed youth program updates:

- Junior Shooting Sports: The 30th American Legion Junior Shooting Three Position Air Rifle National Championship will be held July 21 – 24, 2021, at the temporary USA Shooting range facility located in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The sixth annual Junior Shooting Sports Chairmen's Conference will be held virtually September 18 – 19, 2021.
- Oratorical: The 83rd National Oratorical Finals Contest of The American Legion were cancelled this year due effects of the ongoing COVID-19 global pandemic in Indianapolis, however, a \$5,000 scholarship was awarded to each youth certified as a 2021 department oratorical winner. The scholarship was generously sponsored by the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation and The American Legion. The 52nd annual meeting of department Oratorical chairpersons will be held September 25 – 26, 2021, at the Sheraton Hotel in Indianapolis, Indiana. The 2022 National Oratorical Finals Contest will be held April 22nd – 24th at the Wyndham Indianapolis West Hotel. The certification of 2022 department oratorical winners are due to National Headquarters no later than March 14, 2022. Assigned topics for the 2022 National Oratorical Contest are as follows:
 - **Amendment III** – Quartering of soldiers
 - **Amendment VIII** – Excessive bail
 - **Amendment XIV Section 3** – Insurrection amendment

- **Amendment XXV Section 4** – President is unable to discharge the powers and duties of the Presidential office.
- **Scouting:** Scouting patches currently available for purchase through Emblem Sales reflects “Boy Scouts”. Because the Boy Scouts of American organization changed the name of its “Boy Scouts” youth program to “Scouts BSA”, it was recommended that consideration be given to seek having the patches changed to instead simply reflect “Scouting.” A motion was made and approved to seek approval from the Americanism Commission for staff to pursue this change. This year Eagle Scout of the Year nominations were received from 26 Legion departments. Members of the Youth Activities Subcommittee reviewed and scored those nomination applications, results were compiled, and the four top scoring Eagle Scouts were ranked from 1st to 4th, with the Eagle Scout of the Year as the first ranked and the subsequent three as runners-up. As you saw from the Youth Activities Subcommittee report the following Scouts have been put forth for the Americanism Commission to ratify:
 - John McPhie of California as the 2021 American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year
 - Cale Abbott of Oklahoma as 1st runner-up
 - Thomas Kopasko of Pennsylvania as 2nd runner-up
 - Spencer Burke of Texas as 3rd runner-up

The YASC tasked staff with making changes to the ESOY application which the YASC discussed and asked staff to present a draft to the subcommittee for discussion via email this summer. The Scouting Department Chairmen’s Conference will be held September 25th and 26th at the Sheraton City Centre Hotel. Additional information will be posted.

- **Boys State/Nation:** In 2020 all 50 Boys State programs across the United States were heavily impacted by the coronavirus global pandemic, with the vast majority having been canceled in the interest of health and safety of everyone involved. American Legion Texas Boys State did demonstrate success in swiftly pivoting to a virtual program in 2020. For 2021 there are currently a total of 44 departments will be having a Boys State program this year (31 in-person 13 virtual). Six departments cancelled their Boys State program for this year. Marymount University in Arlington, Virginia has confirmed it can accommodate the Boys Nation program this year.
- **Risk Mitigation Measures:** All national youth programs of The American Legion will be observing CDC guidelines, in addition to any applicable state and local mandates.

The YASC took opportunity to discuss the 2nd annual “100 Miles for Hope” campaign that is underway; reviewed the new Legion video titled “Youth Programs and Responsible Citizenship”; and also reviewed Resolution No. 5 as amended by the National Executive Committee, October 14-15, 2020, titled “Vision, Mission Values and Motto of The American Legion.”

The Americanism Commission received and filed the written report of the YASC, with the exception of: 1) the two resolutions discussed; and 2) changing the scout patch available through Emblem Sales – each of these were voted upon separately. The Americanism Commission voted to accept each of the recommendations put forth by the YASC to: 1) reject Register Resolution No. 2779 (AR) titled *Remove Assigned Topics From Oratorical Contest*; 2) reject Resolution No. 49 (OR) titled “*Changes to The American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year*”; and 3) approve seeking to have patches sold through Emblem Sales changed to read “Scouting.”

COMMITTEE ON YOUTH EDUCATION

Michael Westergren (AR), chairman of the Committee on Youth Education (COYE), reported that the committee met virtually on April 28, 2021. The COYE recommended the following 32 applicants as recipients of a 2021 American Legion Legacy Scholarship, totaling \$357,228.84. These applicants demonstrated both eligibility and financial need. The breakdown of 2021 applications and scholarships awards follows:

- A total of 1,075 applications were opened and started

- Of those there were 541 having submitted a complete application
- Of those there were 127 having demonstrated verifiable eligibility and financial need
- Of those a total of 32 were awarded an American Legion Legacy scholarship as detailed below
(5 children of the fallen / 27 children of disabled veterans)
- 95 applications with verifiable eligibility and financial need totaling \$706,158 remained unfulfilled due to The American Legion meeting its financial award cap for the year

Children of a fallen servicemember – 2021 Legacy Scholarship awards

Endira Caldwell (IA)	\$ 20,000.00
Ahlania Davis (NV)	\$ 20,000.00
Nicole Desiree Fontenot (MA)	\$ 19,232.81
Dennis Abiola Jallah III (NC)	\$ 15,653.81
Chelsea Briggs (HI)	\$ 15,064.39

Children of a disabled veteran – 2021 Legacy Scholarship awards

Makayla Sharonne Hamlin (WA)	\$ 10,000.00
Dominique Marie Smith (OH)	\$ 10,000.00
Jared Neil Layton (PA)	\$ 10,000.00
Destiny Quinn (FL)	\$ 10,000.00
McKayla Ann Kraft (NC)	\$ 10,000.00
Katline Barrows (WA)	\$ 10,000.00
Trinity A Rivas (TX)	\$ 10,000.00
Joseph Anderson (OK)	\$ 10,000.00
Emily Anne Lewis (NY)	\$ 10,000.00
Sydney Alissa Long (NE)	\$ 10,000.00
Jerusha Patera Simmons (KS)	\$ 10,000.00
Nathan Russell Smith (AZ)	\$ 10,000.00
Axel Adrian Oquendo (GA)	\$ 10,000.00
Emma Rose Furlan (CT)	\$ 10,000.00
Xzavier Latchison (TX)	\$ 10,000.00
Dequiala D Kelly (GA)	\$ 10,000.00
Noelani Milena Allison (WA)	\$ 10,000.00
Paige Kathleen Roff (IA)	\$ 10,000.00
Hannah Elizabeth Brooks (GA)	\$ 10,000.00
Madeline Alexis Starling (PA)	\$ 10,000.00
Erin Moroney (DC)	\$ 10,000.00
Jesse Michael Pettigrew (OH)	\$ 10,000.00
Andino James-Vincenzo LaVersa (TX)	\$ 10,000.00
Sabrina Rose Starling (PA)	\$ 10,000.00
Isabel Bathke (SD)	\$ 10,000.00
Emily T Jansen (MN)	\$ 10,000.00
Mark W Kolb (MD)	\$ 7,277.83
	\$357,228.84

In accordance with Resolution No. 6 approved by the National Executive Committee in October 2011, the COYE selected S. Adam Seagrave, Ph.D. as recipient of the 2021 American Legion National Education Award. S. Adam Seagrave is associate director of the School of Civic and Economic Thought and Leadership at Arizona University. He is the author of “The Accessible Federalist”, the editor of “Liberty and Equality: The American Conversation”, and his article "Whatever Happened to Civics?" was featured in the March 2021 issue of The American Legion Magazine. In “Whatever Happened to Civics?”, S. Adam Seagrave writes that

serious deficiencies in U.S. civics and history education are depriving generations of Americans of the knowledge needed to maintain our republic. "The events of recent months underscore the urgency of strengthening our civic fabric," he writes. "There is a general acknowledgment of the fact that a constitutional democracy such as ours cannot survive on STEM alone." The recipient of the American Legion National Education Award is invited to the national convention city each year to receive their award personally from the chairman of the Americanism Commission, and Dr. Seagrave will be invited to Phoenix this summer.

The COYE also discussed updates to The American Legion Education Guide, and draft SOP's for the Legacy and Samsung Scholarships; discussed the 2nd annual "100 Miles for Hope" campaign; and reviewed Resolution No. 5 of the National Executive Committee, October 14-15, 2020, titled "Vision, Mission Values and Motto of The American Legion."

The Americanism Commission received and filed the written report of the COYE, with the exception of ratification of Exhibit A titled "2021 American Legion Legacy Scholarship Award Recipients", which was voted upon separately. The Americanism Commission voted to ratify Exhibit A titled "2021 American Legion Legacy Scholarship Award Recipients."

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to come before the Americanism Commission.

NEW BUSINESS

The commission previewed a new video produced by the Media and Communications Division of National Headquarters titled "American Legion Youth Programs and Responsible Citizenship." The American Legion created this video to illustrate the one common denominator that all of our youth programs have – instilling responsible citizenship. The video also highlights why those who served in the U.S. military and who continue their service through membership in The American Legion have such a vested stake in our youth programs – programs that develop tomorrow's leaders. This 7-minute video will be shown during all national youth programs, with posts and departments encouraged to do the same.

The Commission next reviewed Resolution No. 5 as amended by the National Executive Committee titled "Vision, Mission, Values and Motto of The American Legion," discussing that its purpose is to provide The American Legion clear guidance about who we are and what we wish to stand for. The vision and mission statements, along with the value principles and motto, helps define the purpose of our organization; provides guidance for aligning our organization's resources toward a successful future; provides clear and effective decision-making guidance; helps formulate strategic planning; and publicly communicates our message. This resolution should serve as a guide when assessing if a topic, position, or initiative is aligned with the Legion's organizational purpose.

Commission members were encouraged to participate in 2nd annual American Legion "100 Miles for Hope" virtual 100-mile walk, run, ride challenge that promotes promote wellness by encouraging people to get active and to invigorate donations for the American Legion Veterans and Children Foundation.

RESOLUTIONS SUMMARY

At the virtual meeting of the Americanism Commission on May 1, 2021, a total of seven resolutions were considered. The Americanism Commission agreed upon recommending the following action for consideration by the National Executive Committee:

Approve

- ***Raising Awareness of the Presumptive Service-Connected Condition Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), Also Known as "Lou Gehrig's Disease"***
- ***Authority to Temporarily Amend, Delay or Suspend Rules or Policies of National Youth Programs***
- ***Applicability of Resolution No. 28 Titled "Citizenship, Residency, Or Visitor Status For Youth Participation In American Legion Youth Programs at the National Level"***

Reject

- Resolution Register No. 2779 (AR) 2020 Department Executive Committee *Remove Assigned Topics from Oratorical Contest*
- Resolution No. 49 (OR) 2019 National Convention *Changes to The American Legion Eagle Scout of The Year*

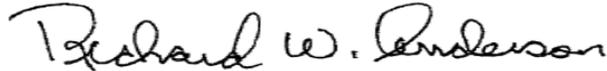
Handle Administratively

- Resolution Register No. 2799 (MN) 2020 Department Executive Committee *Seek Clarification From the National Council of the Boy Scouts of America Concerning Their Letter to Scout Leaders Concerning Racism Dated July 15, 2020*

Hold for Further Study

- Resolution Register No. 2803 (AL) 2021 Department Executive Committee *Department of Alabama Offers To Host The American Legion Junior Shooting Sports National Championship*

Respectfully submitted,



RICHARD W. ANDERSON, Chairman
Americanism Commission