

Educate Ourselves and Others on Legislative issues 2024-2025 National Legislative Ambassador DeeDee Guyette

Greetings Auxiliary Advocates!

We are about to embark on one of the most important presidential election years in the history of the Legislative Program! 2024 is unfolding into a fiery race for the White House, setting new precedents for all party presidential candidates – not to mention all the state and congressional races going on. Incumbents and candidates alike are out there looking for exposure and we must seize this opportunity to advocate for our veterans and let our voices be heard!

We have roughly three months left before the November election to learn where veterans' issues stand in the minds of those running for office. And if they aren't where they should be, then we need to work hard to educate them on the importance of protecting and securing the rights our veterans so greatly deserve. So how do we do this, you ask? The answer is simple: first, educate ourselves; next, educate others; then, get involved in the voting process.

- **Educate Ourselves** – Download the VFW Legislative Priority Goals brochure from the VFW or VFW Auxiliary website and learn what they are all about. You don't need to memorize the whole thing but keep it handy and be prepared to reference it and/or pass it out when communicating to others. Talk to your own VFW Post members and learn how the Priority Goals will impact and better their lives. Being able to share this first-hand information with elected officials and candidates will be impactful. Keep current on pending legislation. Right now, the Elizabeth Dole Home Care Act is at the top of the list, addressing home care and caregiver programs provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).
- **Educate Others** – Put your knowledge to work and reach out to the candidates any way you can. Call their offices, write them letters, visit their websites, and attend town hall meetings and campaign stops. How about holding a legislative luncheon at your Post and inviting the candidates? And don't forget to get the word out to your local community. How about writing an article for the local newspaper? Emphasize the Priority Goals and relate what you learned from your Post members. Just simple conversation is an opportunity to educate others about legislative efforts. Talk about pending legislation and encourage them to sign up for the VFW Action Corps Weekly - because remember, it is NOT just for VFW and Auxiliary members. Be creative and advocate every chance you get.
- **Get Involved in the Voting Process** – Now it's time to exercise our right to vote and to help our veterans do the same. Voter registration is the first step. Then there are also early voting and absentee ballot voting opportunities. But be sure to check ahead of time because every state has different deadlines and requirements for all these. So, how about collaborating with your VFW Post and holding a voter information clinic to assist veterans with their voting needs? For those who will be voting in person, how about organizing a transportation pool on election day? We must assist our veterans with their right to vote all we can, whether through our Post, or individually.

Remember that our legislative efforts are the roots of Brenda's tree, with a strong foothold this election year. Together our voices will be heard loud and clear this November!

From Our Roots to Our Branches, Extending Service to Our Veterans!