

# LEGISLATIVE AMBASSADOR

## BOBBIE GOLDMAN

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Organizations like the VFW Auxiliary exist out of necessity. The military community needs services that our elected leaders do not always provide. Americans shed blood to form a democracy independent of the British monarchy, to get women the right to vote and to get the Voting Rights Act passed. We will stand on their shoulders and let our elected leaders know that taking care of veterans is our honor but it's their responsibility!

### We can do this by focusing on three things:

- Building relationships with political and civic organizations geared toward young adults.
- Ensuring that legislative activities are nonpartisan.
- Getting creative.

### Reaching Young Adult Voters

Examples of political and civic organizations at colleges or for young adult voters are the Young Republicans National Federation and Young Democrats of America, the ROTC and sororities and fraternities of nearby colleges. Reach out to their leadership team and introduce yourself. Don't just make contact, develop a partnership.

- Talk about the VFW's *Action Corps Weekly* and how to sign up, [vfw.org/advocacy/grassroots-efforts/vfw-action-corps-weekly](http://vfw.org/advocacy/grassroots-efforts/vfw-action-corps-weekly).
- Invite them to be your guests at Post and Auxiliary events.
- Ask for help using social media to contact elected leaders.
- Offer to help then with their events such as voter registration drives.
- Copy and send VFW Action Alerts to them. Do not

forward to ensure you're not unsubscribed.

- Ask about veterans of their generation and what they need.

Partnerships with these kinds of groups will make the legislative work we do more effective and will keep the VFW Auxiliary available and responsive to the youngest generation of veterans. It could also be a lot of fun.

### Legislative Guidelines

Legislative activity is not the same as political activity. We support bills, not people or political parties. No Auxiliary space, which includes websites and social media accounts, should show favoritism towards a candidate, party or issues not endorsed by the VFW.

- If you reach out to your state's Young Republicans National Federation, put equal effort into working with Young Democrats of America and vice versa.
- Any voter registration activities should be politically neutral.
- While it's true that veterans have opinions about hot button topics, our organization has no official opinion on things like environmental issues or gun rights. If you are engaged in that kind of activism, which you are free to do, you do so as a private citizen, not an Auxiliary member.
- Remind members that they are free to say whatever they want about whomever they want before and after meetings, but there is no space for partisanship when conducting official Auxiliary business.
- Invite all candidates running for a local office to your Post for a town hall or debate.
- If asked, decline to endorse any candidate.
- Ask the moderator of your Auxiliary's social media accounts to remove any posts that suggest the organization favors one party over another.

This is important because today's military is made up of liberals, conservatives, moderates, republicans and democrats. They all deserve legislation that makes their lives better.

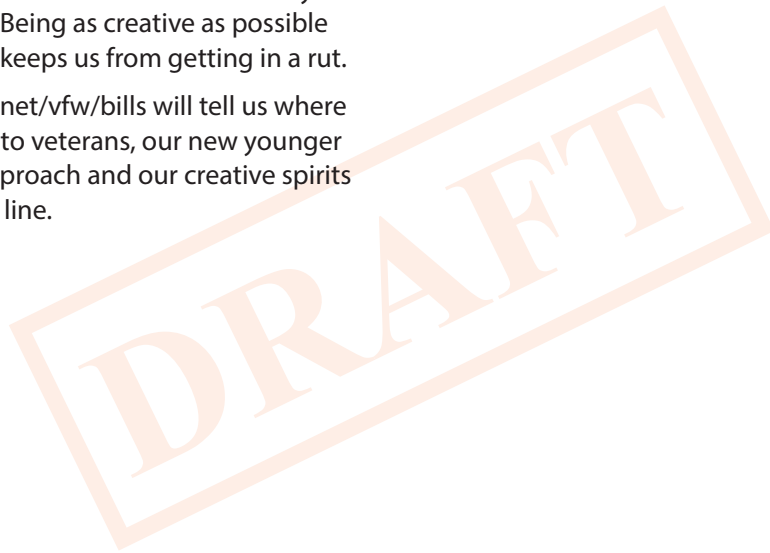
## Creative Correspondence

Being creative is not only fun, it also makes a stronger, more memorable impression. Consider these examples:

- When emailing a politician, write a little poem instead of letter, such as “America needs teachers. Soldiers need jobs. Ending the Troops to Teachers program is very odd. Return the program in 2022 or else I’m not going to vote for you.”
- Remind politicians to “stick” by veterans by mailing them a coupon for tape or glue.
- Use tissues to show how many tears are shed over the 22 veterans who kill themselves every day.
- Turn your correspondence in to a joke such as “Knock, knock. Who’s there? HR. HR who? H.R. 239. Support me.”

Politicians get hundreds of emails and letters a day. We want ours to stand out. Being as creative as possible makes us unique and it keeps us from getting in a rut.

The website [votervoice.net/vfw/bills](http://votervoice.net/vfw/bills) will tell us where to start. Our dedication to veterans, our new younger friends, our inclusive approach and our creative spirits will take us to the finish line.



# LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

## Be An Advocate • Be Informed • Be Engaged

One of the main objectives of the Legislative Program is to improve the lives of our veterans, service members and their families through advocacy. Your efforts, combined with nearly 1.5 million other VFW and Auxiliary members, can influence lawmakers whose decisions affect veterans and their families every day. Join the chorus of voices that will ring out in legislators' offices this year.

Study the issues laid out clearly in the VFW Priority Goals. A copy can be found on the National website at [vfwauxiliary.org](http://vfwauxiliary.org) by selecting "What We Do" then clicking on "Legislative."

The Priority Goals reflect the resolutions passed by the VFW to strengthen and ensure an adequate VA system for millions of current and future veterans.

They call for much-needed attention to crises such as veteran homelessness and suicide. They request fully funding research on traumatic brain injuries, reducing the claims backlog, fighting veteran unemployment and improving timely transition assistance for veterans after leaving military service. The goals are grouped under six areas of concern:

- Budget
- Health Care
- Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs
- Education, Employment and Transition Assistance
- Military Quality of Life
- National Security, Foreign Affairs and POW/MIA

These goals are released in January each year by the VFW. Be sure you check the VFW or Auxiliary websites for the current Priority Goals.

### **VFW Action Corps Weekly**

It's free and it's full of news about what's happening on Capitol Hill, with veteran and service member issues and with our national security. Subscribe at the National website at [vfwauxiliary.org](http://vfwauxiliary.org) by selecting "What We Do" then clicking on "Legislative."

Contact your legislators: find out who's who. To identify your congressional representatives, visit the VFW website at [vfw.org/advocacy/grassroots-efforts](http://vfw.org/advocacy/grassroots-efforts).

### **Step by Step—A Bill**

To follow the progress of a bill through the stages of the legislative process, visit [congress.gov](http://congress.gov), where you may find a specific bill by its number or by a key word or phrase.

### **VFW in D.C.**

One of the most crucial responsibilities of the VFW Washington, D.C. office is to actively lobby Congress and the administration on behalf of veterans. The office monitors all legislation affecting veterans and alerts VFW and Auxiliary members about key legislation under consideration.

By testifying at committee hearings and interacting with congressional members, the VFW played an instrumental role in nearly every piece of veterans' legislation passed in the 20th Century, as well as bills developed in the 21st Century.

To contact the D.C. office:  
Website: [vfw.org/advocacy](http://vfw.org/advocacy)  
Phone: 202-543-2239  
Mail: 200 Maryland Ave., N.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20002

# LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM AWARDS

## **AWARDS FOR AUXILIARIES**

1. Most outstanding consistent partnership and/or communication with young adult civic and/or political groups.
  - Citation to every Auxiliary that maintains a consistent partnership and/or communication with young adult civic and/or political groups. Criteria and entry form (required) available at [vfwauxiliary.org/resources](http://vfwauxiliary.org/resources). Auxiliaries must send the entry form to their Department Legislative Chairman by March 31, 2023.

The Department Legislative Chairman must send a copy of all submitted entry forms to National Headquarters by April 30, 2023.

Citations will be mailed directly to participating Auxiliaries from National Headquarters.

- Citation and \$25 to one Auxiliary in each of the four Conferences with the most outstanding consistent partnership and/or communication with young adult civic and/or political groups. Winners will be announced and awards presented at the 2023 National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona.

The Department Legislative Chairman must sign and send a copy of the completed Department-winning entry form to the National Legislative Ambassador Bobbie Goldman by April 30, 2023 for judging.

## **AWARDS FOR DEPARTMENTS AND DEPARTMENT CHAIRMEN**

1. Citation to each Department Legislative Chairman for participation in this Program. Citation will be presented at the 2023 Department Convention.
2. \$25 VFW Store Gift Certificate to one Department Legislative Chairman in each of the 10 Program Divisions for the most creative/unique promotion of the VFW Priority Goals. Winners will be announced and awards presented at the 2023 National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona.
3. Outstanding Performance Award in each of the 10 Program Divisions based on criteria listed on Page 5 and for the promotion of Program Goals listed at the top of Page 38. Winners will be announced and awards presented at the 2023 National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona.