
PROCEEDINGS

of the

National Executive Committee

of

**THE AMERICAN LEGION
Pre-Convention Meeting and
Post-Convention Meeting**

**Salt Palace Convention Center
Salt Lake City, Utah**

August 28 & 31, 2006

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PROCEEDINGS
of the
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
THE AMERICAN LEGION
PRE-CONVENTION MEETING

Monday, August 28, 2006

...At 9:00 a.m., August 28, 2006, the Pre-Convention Meeting of the National Executive Committee of The American Legion was called to order by National Commander Thomas L. Bock, and the following proceedings were had:

...National Adjutant Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan, acted as Secretary.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Sergeant-At-Arms, please secure the doors. Join me in paying respects to our flag of our nation with a hand salute! Ready, Two!

...The National Executive Committee stood and saluted the Colors.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Chaplain Wright, would you please give the invocation?

Invocation
Rev. Steven E. Wright, Utah
National Chaplain

Our heavenly Father, we bow our heads with humility and thank You for the blessings of this day. We give Thee thanks for the blessing of living here in this great land and having the opportunity to support and defend its Constitution.

We pray for those men and women who serve us in our armed forces, that they may be blessed with safety and peace. We are saddened of the news of hearing that others have given their lives so that freedom's great purposes may be forwarded. We pray for their families as they are deeply saddened at this time. Wilt Thou strengthen and bless them.

Wilt Thou bless us that we may be stilled in our resolve to continue with the programs and purposes for which we come together as a body. We pray for those who have been ravaged through last year with storms and floods.

We thank You as we are meeting together as an executive body. We pray that as we come together, with our individual desires and our individual personalities, that we may be able to express ourselves and leave each meeting as one with unity and purpose in keeping Thy guidance and blessing of this great country. We humbly pray in Thy name. Amen.

Pledge of Allegiance
and Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion

...The National Executive Committee recited the Pledge of Allegiance and the Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion.

NATL COMDR BOCK: We'll proceed with the roll call, Mr. Adjutant.

Roll Call

National Officers

National Commander

Thomas L. Bock, Colorado

National Adjutant

Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan

National Chaplain

Steven E. Wright, Utah

National Vice Commanders

Willard F. Coffey, Michigan
 James H. Hall, New Jersey
 Taurino J. Trevino, New Mexico
 Sebastian T. Roll, North Dakota
 Michael E. Harris, Virginia

Past National Commanders

William E. Galbraith, Nebraska	Robert S. Turner, Georgia
John H. Geiger, Illinois	William M. Detweiler, Louisiana
Joe Lee Matthews, Texas	Daniel A. Ludwig, Minnesota
William J. Rogers, Maine—Excused	Joseph J. Frank, Missouri
John M. ‘Jack’ Carey, Michigan—Excused	Anthony G. Jordan, Maine
Michael J. Kogutek, New York	Butch L. Miller, Virginia
Keith A. Kreul, Wisconsin	Hon. Alan G. Lance, Sr., Virginia
Clarence M. Bacon, Maryland	Ray G. Smith, North Carolina
Judge James P. Dean, Mississippi—Excused	Richard J. Santos, Maryland
John P. ‘Jake’ Comer, Massachusetts	Ronald F. Conley, Pennsylvania
Hon. H. F. Gierke, North Dakota	John A. Brieden, III, Texas
Miles S. Epling, West Virginia	Thomas P. Cadmus, Michigan

National Executive Committeemen

Department	Committeemen	Alternate
Alabama	Floyd W. Turner	
Alaska	Jimmie L. Foster	
Arizona	Julius Maklary	
Arkansas	Bobby L. Wamble	
California	Floyd Martin	
Colorado	Joseph E. Ross	
Connecticut	Richard W. Anderson	
Delaware	Thomas L. Burns	
D.C.	Ernest R. Sohns	
Florida	Robert J. Proctor	
France	William E. Marshall	
Georgia	Ray Hendrix	
Hawaii	Andrew W. Johnson	
Idaho	Richard Hanni	
Illinois	Rodger A. Bennett	
Indiana	Thomas Henderson	
Iowa	Michael E. Wanser	
Kansas	David O. Warnken	
Kentucky	Randall Coffman	

Louisiana	Charles D. Aucoin	
Maine	Robert A. Owen	
Maryland	Alfred M. Schmidt	
Massachusetts	Lawrence A. Connors	
Mexico	John E. Hayes	
Michigan	Keith G. Dittenber	
Minnesota	Virgil V. Persing	
Mississippi	Charles E. Langley	
Missouri	David N. Voyles	
Montana	Arthur C. Ellison	
Nebraska	Michael J. Landkamer	
Nevada	Ron Gutzman	
New Hampshire	Benjamin F. Talford	
New Jersey	William A. Rakestraw, Jr.	
New Mexico	Bruce Jorgensen	
New York	Richard C. O'Keefe	
North Carolina	Jerry L. Hedrick	
North Dakota	Curtis O. Twete	
Ohio	Carl W. Swisher	
Oklahoma		
Oregon	Charles E. Schmidt	
Pennsylvania	Alfred Pirolli	
Philippines	Ernesto P. Golez	
Puerto Rico	Carlos Orria-Medina	
Rhode Island	Eugene Pytka	
South Carolina	R. M. Singletary, Jr.—Excused	Billy W. Bell
South Dakota	Paul A. Evenson	
Tennessee	Joseph W. Young—Excused	Perry D. Roberts
Texas	Ronald G. Cherry	
Utah	William E. Christoffersen	
Vermont	Rodney A. Sherman	
Virginia	Rob R. Gordon, Jr.—Excused	George C. Lussier, Jr.
Washington	William F. Schrier—Excused	James F. Angell
West Virginia	William W. Kile	
Wisconsin	Arthur D. Herbison	
Wyoming	Irvin A. 'Tiny' Quick	

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Thank you Mr. Commander, that completes the roll call.

NATL COMDR BOCK: I declare a quorum present.

Minutes of the Previous National Executive Committee Meeting

NATL COMDR BOCK: Call for the reading of the minutes of the previous meeting.

RES SUBCOM VICE CHRNM FOSTER: Mr. Commander.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Jimmie Foster.

RES SUBCOM VICE CHRNM FOSTER: These minutes have been printed in digest form and distributed to the NEC. I move they be approved without being read.

...Second.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Moved and second to approve the minutes without being read. Any discussion? Hearing none, those in favor give their consent by saying 'aye.' Opposed same sign. We're going to move a little faster this morning. Opening Remarks.

Opening Remarks
Thomas L. Bock, Colorado
National Commander

My note down asks, "Doug, where is the National Commander's Aide?" He's right here. Ladies and gentlemen, will you give him appreciation for what he's done. (Applause.)

Doug Wooddell has been by my side all the year. If he hadn't been pulling on my rope, I'd have been tripping on it. He did one heck of a job and I'm really proud that he's performed so outstandingly as our National Commander's Aide.

What an incredible year! We couldn't have asked for any more on our plate, nor could we have done any better. Everything from Resolution 169, supporting the Global War on Terrorism, to standing up with the Public Expression of Religion Act and standing for true, real, American values.

Membership. Wow! Somebody said we stumbled a little bit on membership and I said no, we're just slow out of the gate. We finished really strong. With DMS Plus this year, we have 26 Departments that have more membership in 2006 than they had in 2005. (Applause.) When we put all of our numbers together, we are this close, within 3,000 members of equaling the total of the 2005 membership. That is turning the boat around. You don't turn it on a dime. An organization of nearly three million members, you don't just turn it on a dime. So, we're looking forward into 2007 for nearly 70,000 members ahead of where we were this time last year in 2006.

So it's happening because we're standing up, we're leading the way for America, we're making a difference and we're moving forward. I'm so excited, all the way through this year with our announcement of the rollout of the Heroes to Hometown program. Wow! The American Legion is there supporting our veterans, taking care of our children, our wonderful Americanism program, and standing for a strong national defense and supporting our troops.

I couldn't have been more proud of the Legion this year. It's been an incredible honor. I thank you, for your wonderful service.

Now, let's move on. We have some reports to get into. Report of the Subcommittee on Resolutions. Mr. Hedrick, North Carolina.

Report: Subcommittee on Resolutions
Jerry L. Hedrick, North Carolina, Chairman

First off, Mr. Commander, we have no resolutions to come before this NEC this morning. At this time, I'd ask that you prepare the NEC for Memorial Resolutions.

Memorial Resolutions

...At this time, the National Commander rapped the gavel and the National Executive Committee uncovered and stood in silence for the reading of the following Memorial Resolutions.

Resolution
Henry J. Field, South Carolina

Whereas, It has pleased almighty God, the Great Commander, to summon to His immortal legions our beloved comrade, Henry J. Field—Department Commander—1969 to 1970; and

Whereas, We humbly bow to the will of Divine Providence, while ever cherishing in our hearts the memory of his distinguished service to our country and his outstanding contributions to American Legion comradeship; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the National Executive Committee of The American Legion, in regular meeting assembled on this 28th Day of August in the year of our Lord 2006, does mourn the passing of our distinguished Legionnaire, Henry J. Field, that we commend to all men and

to God his spirit; and, be it further

Resolved, That in token of our common grief, a copy of this resolution be presented to his family.

Similar resolutions will be presented to the families of: Lee S. Hodge, Arkansas; Dorothy Crimes Long, Colorado; Alexander Deo Anderson, District of Columbia; Nolie C. Deas, Sr., Florida; Ray Mattox, Florida; Arthur R. Wheeler, Florida; William W. Daves, Hawaii; William H. Hicks, Indiana; Edward E. Newman, Kansas; Kenneth E. Slarb, Maryland; Norman J. Doray, Massachusetts; Seth A. Slocum, Missouri; Harry G. Scoufos, Jr., Oklahoma; William A. Weatherly, South Carolina; Howard G. Holt, Tennessee; Elwin T. Holland, Vermont; and William J. Haese, Wisconsin.

There Is No Death

There is no death! The dust we tread
Shall change, beneath the summer showers,
To golden grain, or mellow fruit,
Or rainbow-tinted flowers.

And ever near us though unseen,
The dear immortal spirits tread,
For all the boundless universe
Is life—"there are no dead."

John Luckey McCreery

NATL COMDR BOCK: Thank you, Mr. Hendrick. I just had to walk four miles to go visit the Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms in a meeting. It's some place in this building. I swear it's four miles from this point. (Laughter.)

Update on the Citizens Flag Alliance. Mr. Wheeler, President of the Citizens Flag Alliance.

**Oral Report: Citizens Flag Alliance, Inc.
Daniel S. Wheeler, Virginia, President**

On June 26, the United States Senate considered SJ Res. 12, and defeated the Flag Amendment by a vote of 66-34, which was one vote shy of the 67 needed to pass it to send it to the States for ratification.

Attached to the Citizens Flag Alliance Report is a summary of the activities and logistics undertaken by the Citizens Flag Alliance and, of course, The American Legion meetings in the four months prior to the vote in the Senate.

There were many obstacles to overcome, first of which was actually to get a vote in the Senate. We concentrated on 10 states and about a dozen and a half senators. We did surveys in all of those states; we had press conferences in all of those states. A team was assembled in every one of those states that drew on the populace to work with the offices of the senators in question. I've never seen so much activity. I've never seen so much coverage on the Flag Amendment as what we had in the months of 2006 up to the vote on June 26.

I truly believe that there was little else that could have been done that wasn't done. I certainly commend all the people who were involved in this final push we called "Countdown to Victory," because we truly believed that we would have a victory at that time.

There are many who deserve recognition for their tireless efforts and this is certainly the National Commander, who visited numerous Senate offices; talked to numerous staffers; conducted numerous media interviews; talked about it every place that he went; and was a most

effective spokesman.

Bob Spanogle was certainly in the lead among those who deserve recognition. He made several trips to Washington himself to consult and visit with numerous senators and worked tirelessly behind the scenes coming up with ideas to further the efforts. We couldn't have gotten as far as we did without his efforts.

And of course Gen. Pat Brady is certainly a most eloquent spokesperson on this issue. He believes in the rightness of the issue from the bottom of his heart, even postponed having his hip replaced for four months even though he was in pain, just so he could give 100 percent to the effort.

I'd be remiss if I didn't also mention two of your staffers who worked on this day and night, Marty Justis, the Americanism Director and Steve Robertson, our Legislative Director, for untold hours of work which will never be recounted, but we couldn't have gotten anywhere without them. Certainly I must also mention all the members of the NEC, most of whom worked their hearts out on this issue. We appreciate all that you did in your home states, and the organizing in those target states. They knew that we were there. The newspapers knew that we were there, the media knew that we were there and certainly targeted senators knew that we were there.

About 40 members of what we call the A-Team, were people that were very active in the 10 target states and will be recognized by the National Commander and Pat Brady on Tuesday afternoon during the special report on the CFA. Every one of them will be given an award for their efforts and it's certainly well deserved.

Americanism has passed a resolution recommending that The American Legion continue its efforts to pass a Flag Amendment. The 147 organizations of the CFA are certainly ready and rolling to continue this effort. The staff is bloody but unbowed and we're ready to serve in whatever capacity that you desire that we do.

The 110th Congress will present many difficult challenges, some of which we have not faced in the last 17 years, but every one is a challenge that's to be overcome. We're ready and willing to go forth. We believe as you do that there is no good time to quit doing the right thing. And protecting the Flag of the United States is certainly the right thing.

I thank you for everything that you've done to help move this forward. I thank you for letting me participate in it. And I hope that the next time that we report on this, we'll be reporting a plan to take the ratification to the states. (Applause.)

Report: Citizens Flag Alliance , Inc.
August 28, 2006
Daniel S. Wheeler, Virginia, President

On June 26, 2006, by a vote of 66-34, the flag amendment, SJR-12, was defeated by a margin of one vote.

Attached to this report is a summary of the efforts comprising "Countdown to Victory," that was put into place to give our best shot at getting the 67th vote. This marks the third time that the Senate has defeated the flag amendment, yet 66 votes is the closest we have ever come to victory.

The Convention Committee on Americanism will consider a resolution authorizing the Legion to continue its efforts to pass a flag amendment. If the resolution is passed, the CFA stands ready to push forward into the 110th Congress.

Also attached to this report is an early prognostication on the possible outcome of the November Senate election. Based on this early report, there is a possibility of going into the 110th Congress with 67 pledged votes in the Senate. That, of course, gives us renewed hope and determination.

The CFA currently has \$217,138 cash on hand, and the National Commander has authority to authorize the expenditure of an additional \$250,000.

We want to thank The American Legion for its leadership and financial support of this endeavor.

**Citizens Flag Alliance
August 2006
Recent history**

Lost in the 109th Congress

Passed House in summer of 2005; 286 - 130; sixth time since 1995

- Lost in the Senate June 2006; 66-34; third time since 1995
- Start over again in the 110th
- Cunningham's problems; in the 110th will need new Republican champion; maybe Dem, too [Jack Murtha???

“Countdown to Victory” -2006 Senate Campaign

Advertising Campaign

- Advertising [primarily in June 2006] to urge people's contact with key Senators
 - o Military Times
 - o National Journal [Wash. DC]
 - o Newspapers in ten key states—ads in 29 different editions
 - o 30- and 60-second radio spots in key states; voice of Heather French, et al

Polling to determine support for the amendment among the people

- Conducted in April 2006
 - o Key States: Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Kentucky, New York, North Dakota, Rhode Island, Utah, West Virginia, Washington

Press Conferences

- Structured “A” team - CFA leaders in the ten key states who coordinated communication and activities over a four-month span
- Conducted press conferences in ten key states in May and June, most at State Capitols
 - o Hartford, CT; Dover, DE; Springfield, IL; Frankfort, KY; Albany, NY; Bismarck, ND; Providence, RI; Salt Lake City, UT; Charleston, WV; Olympia, WA
- Editorial Boards in several of the capital cities
- Radio interviews and talk shows, television, in conjunction with press conferences throughout the key states

Walk the Hill Activities

- Brought 40+ key-state volunteers to Washington, DC, June 13-15 to visit every Senate office and urge support for SJR 12; group included the Board of Directors of the Citizens Flag Alliance
- Participated in Capitol Hill Press Conference at the invitation of Sen. Bill Frist
- Secured former baseball great Rick Monday and former Miss America Heather French Henry to participate in the press conference and act as spokesmen for the issue

Communications Coordination

- Regular conference calls with “A” team leaders and others associated with the campaign
- Established a secure web site for transmission of sensitive information among the “A” teams

Field Activities

- Editorials issued weekly through a two-month period; results effective; great interest among the media
- Developed and distributed written materials for use by CFA organizations, with particular attention to the 15,000 posts of The American Legion, all of which received “A Call to Action” brochure with a laundry list of objectives for urging support of SJR12

- Encouraged handwritten notes by CFA activists to all US Senators
- Encouraged office visits to Senators, with focus on in-state offices
- Distributed the CFA newsletter "Old Glory News" to CFA Organizations, concentrating on the 15,000 posts of The Legion; edition carried info on Senator's positions on the amendment; Senate contact information; overview of the issue; and objectives to be accomplished in garnering support for the amendment
- Requested letters from CFA CEOs to all US Senators; request by phone, fax and email to all 147 organizations
- Issued emails to 8 million addressees, urging contact with US Senators

Direct contact with Capitol Hill by TAL/CFA HQ

- Approached Sens. Allen, Graham, Thune, et al, to urge other Rs to support.
- TAL National Commander met with President Bush on the matter; requested statement of support from the President
- Met with Sens. Hatch, Feinstein and Reid
- Arranged meetings for CFA constitutional consultants [Profs. Parker and Presser] with Sens. Obama and Chafee, et al.

Memorial Resolutions booklet

- Prepared, printed and distributed booklet of all 50 state Memorial Resolutions, which call on Congress to propose the amendment and send it to the states for ratification
- Booklet distributed to media at press conferences
- Booklet distributed to all US Senators by CFA representatives during Walk the Hill events

Media efforts in addition to press conferences

- Press releases on polling results statewide
- Press releases to announce latest cosponsors, Landriou and Rockefeller
- Weekly issue of editorials since May, 2006
- Media advisory to talk shows -radio and tv
- Talk shows: MSNBC by Gen. Brady [Scarborough]
- TV talk CNN -Heather French on flag amendment
- Continue to address adverse editorial opinion nationwide

Expenditures

- The American Legion has expended in excess of \$500,000 during the 4-month campaign in an effort to hold the sixty-six supporters we have and to gain the one needed to pass SJR 12 off of Capitol Hill and send it to the states for ratification.

ARIZONA: Senator Kyle is a flag supporter. Primary 9-12-06. This race is still not very close. **No likely impact to flag vote**, as this race is still reasonably safe.

CALIFORNIA: Senator Feinstein is a flag support. Challenger is Dick Mountjoy (R) and his position is unknown at this time. Appears not to be a serious challenger. **Should not impact on the flag vote.**

CONNECTICUT: Ned Lamont defeated Senator Lieberman in the Democratic Primary. Lamont's position on the flag is confusing, and he has even disavowed having even met with the Adjutant of Connecticut. Alan Schlesinger is the Republican running against Lamont. Lieberman plans to run an Independent. **No impact on flag vote.**

DELAWARE: Senator Carper is not a flag supporter and does not appear to have serious opposition. Primary is 9-12-06. **Should not impact on the flag vote.**

FLORIDA: Senator Nelson is a flag supporter. Primary is 9-5-06. Nelson is well positioned to win reelection. **No impact on the flag vote.**

HAWAII: Senator Akaka is not a supporter. Primary is 9-23-06. **No impact on the flag vote.**

INDIANA: Senator Lugar is a supporter and does not appear to face any serious opposition. **Should not have an impact on the current flag vote.**

MAINE: Senator Snowe is a supporter and does not appear to face any serious opposition. **Should not have an impact on the flag vote.**

MARYLAND: Open seat formerly held by a flag opponent. Primary is 9-12-06. Democratic primary between Cardin and Mfume is leaning towards Cardin, with both in opposition to the flag. The big question is whether a Cardin win would alienate the African American Democratic base in Maryland, and whether a defection to Steele is likely. Since Steele is a supporter, this marks a potential pickup opportunity for the flag vote.

MASSACHUSETTS: Senator Kennedy opposes the flag amendment and does not face significant challenge. Primary is 9-19-06. **Should have no impact on the flag vote.**

MICHIGAN: Senator Stabenow is a supporter and does not appear to have a tough re-election campaign; however, has taken some heat over her support. She will be challenged by Mike Bouchard who is also a supporter. **Should have no impact on the flag vote.**

MINNESOTA: **Open seat** formerly held by a flag supporter. Primary is 9-12-06. The race between Representative Mark Kennedy (a flag supporter) and Amy Klobuchar is heating up. Kennedy hit Klobuchar after the flag vote for failing to state a position, and she answered with silence. This race is one of the closest in the country, and I am working with Jeff Olson on trying to get Klobuchar on record. **Potential flag vote loss.**

MISSISSIPPI: Senator Lott is a supporter and does not appear to have a serious challenger at hand. **Should not have an impact on the flag vote.**

MISSOURI: Senator Jim Talent (a supporter) and Claire McCaskill's race in Missouri is tight. Very tight. McCaskill recently took the flag amendment off the debate schedule by coming out in support of it. This race is a toss up, but will have **no impact on the flag vote.**

MONTANA: Senator Burns is a flag supporter. Thanks in no small part to alleged ties to disgraced lobbyist Jack Abramoff, Burns is in a tight race. It appears that his opponent, Jon Tester, is in opposition to the Amendment, something that Burns will hit him with over and over and over. This race has the **potential to be a flag vote loss**, however, I think this issue could be a defining one in this close campaign.

NEBRASKA: Senator Nelson is a flag supporter. Another race that could be safe, but listed here because Ricketts is a supporter and a personal effort by Sen Hagel to get an all-GOP delegation. Everyone supports the Flag Amendment, so **no change to the flag vote.**

NEVADA: Senator Ensign is a flag supporter. He appears to be in a safe race. Primary is 8-15-06. **No change in the flag vote.**

NEW JERSEY: Senator Menendez is a flag supporter and Tom Kean, Jr. is also a flag supporter. Another very tight race, which could go either way, **both candidates support the Amendment.**

NEW MEXICO: Senator Bingaman is an opponent. Appears to have a safe race. Allen McCulloch position is currently unknown. **No likely change in the flag vote.**

NEW YORK: Senator Clinton is an opponent. Appears to have a safe race. Primary is 9-12-06. **Should not impact on the flag vote.**

NORTH DAKOTA: Senator Conrad is an opponent. Appears to have a safe race. Dwight Gorthberg supports the flag amendment. **Should not impact on the flag vote.**

OHIO: Senator DeWine and Rep Sherrod Brown **both support the flag amendment.**

PENNSYLVANIA: Senator Santorum (a flag supporter) is unlikely to be reelected, and the position of his opponent and likely successor, Bob Casey is somewhat odd: "Bob Casey believes Congress can and should shape statutory legislation to protect the flag that can be held constitutional. As a last resort, he would support the flag amendment." According to his Campaign Manager. This language is, at the least, troubling, however PNC Conley assures us that Casey will support. **Should not have an impact on the flag vote.**

RHODE ISLAND: Senator Chafee is not a flag supporter. Primary is 9-12-06. This one could be entertaining for flag supporters. First, Chafee must fend off from the right, in a

spirited challenge from Steve Laffey who supports the Amendment. IF, and that's a big IF, Chafee gets passed that hurdle, he must face Sheldon Whitehouse in the general election. Whitehouse is unknown at this point, and I think the best tactic is to wait and see how Laffey does before we push him. If Laffey does damage to Chafee on this issue, we can talk to Whitehouse about how well this issue plays in Rhode Island. With Chafee being a "No" vote, Rhode Island has the **potential to be a vote pickup**.

TENNESSEE: This is an **open seat** formerly held by a supporter. In a race that will not impact the flag vote, the RNC is worried. It is not the strength of the Democrat, flag supporter and Representative Harold Ford Jr, but the late GOP primary and the hostility between the candidates that is already heating up. Bob Croker also supports the flag amendment. The polls are all over the place, **but should not have an impact on the flag vote**.

TEXAS: Senator Hutchison is a flag supporter and does not face any serious threat for reelection. Barbara Ann Radnofsky's position is unknown. **Should not have an impact on the flag vote**.

UTAH: Senator Hatch is a supporter and chief sponsor of the legislation. Faces an extremely hostile media force in opposition to his amendment. Peter Ashdown opposes the flag amendment. **Should not have an impact on the flag vote**.

VIRGINIA: Senator Allen is a flag supporter. The flag war between Allen and Webb has already begun. Allen challenged Webb on his flag position, Webb sent out a scathing press release accusing Allen of attacking his patriotism. It is uncertain if this approach will work. Allen's campaign manager is Dick Wadhams, who previously ran the Thune campaign, and is world renowned for fighting in the dirty campaigns, so this will be interesting. Most observers expect Allen to win going away, and view this as a warm-up for Allen's 2008 White House bid. **Should not have an impact on the flag vote**.

VERMONT: This is an open seat formerly held by an opponent of the flag amendment. Primary is 9-12-06. Representative Sanders is pretty much walking away with this, which will not affect the flag vote. **Should not have an impact on the flag vote**.

WASHINGTON: Senator Cantwell is a flag opponent. Primary is 9-19-06. In what could be a big issue, the flag is playing virtually no part, largely because McGavick has sworn himself to a "civil" campaign, and refuses to say anything bad about Cantwell. A McGavick win would result in a net of one plus vote. **Potential pick up on the flag vote**.

WEST VIRGINIA: Senator Byrd is not a flag supporter. Appears to have a comfortable lead over John Raese. **Should not have an impact on the flag vote**.

WISCONSIN: Senator Kohl is not a flag supporter and does not face tough re-election. Primary is 9-12-06. **Should not have an impact on the flag vote**.

WYOMING: Senator Thomas is a flag support and does not appear to have a tough re-election race. **Should not have an impact on the flag vote**.

Pick Up Opportunities: Maryland, Rhode Island, Washington

Potential Losses: Minnesota, Montana

RES SUBCOM VICE CHRMN FOSTER: Move the report be received and filed.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Motion to receive and file. Is there a second?

I heard a second. All those in favor give their consent by saying 'aye.' Opposed same sign. Motion carried.

Dan, thank you for your service and the entire A-Team, and the whole CFA. This was not a defeat. We've been working 17 years on this thing. Amending the United States Constitution should be a very difficult task. But there are two significant accomplishments you need to be aware of and to share with your membership.

Number one, we achieved the objective of getting every United States Senator on record prior to this election coming up in November. That's significant. We were unable to do that last time around. That's very important and we need to remind our members of that.

The second thing is, never before in the history of America has a grassroots effort been

within one vote in the United States Senate for amending the Constitution. It's historic. We need to remind ourselves it's not an easy job, but we're moving towards the final objective of passage of this amendment. We can do it. We need to keep our chins high and be proud of what The American Legion and the Citizens Flag Alliance has accomplished.

Moving onto more reports of the commissions. Finance Commission, Kenneth D. Danilson of Iowa.

**Oral Report: National Finance Commission
Kenneth D. Danilson, Iowa, Chairman**

The National Finance Commission convened at 8:30 a.m., Saturday, August 26, 2006, in the Canyon I Room, Salt Lake City.

All members were present except James Coleman, South Carolina. I'm not going to read the report fully you have that. I will go through it just a little bit here.

The National Executive Committee at its meeting October 5-6, 2005, approved the 2006 Budget based on revenues of \$63,615,913, and expenditures of \$64,048,973, resulting in a 2006 operational deficit of \$443,060. The budget is based on a 2006 membership of 2.7 million members and the "first run" projection of 2006 is a deficit of \$1 million. We're working hard to correct that. I think you all know there's a lot of things going on, especially dues to be talked about tomorrow.

Since I don't have any emergency things to do at this time, I would like to end this with a special thanks to Bob Spanogle, Paul Allen and George Buskirk for all the support they provide the Finance Commission of The American Legion. Mr. Commander, I have nothing else to report at this time and this concludes my report.

**Report: National Finance Commission
August 26, 2006
Kenneth D. Danilson, Iowa, Chairman**

The National Finance Commission convened at 8:30 a.m., Saturday, August 26, 2006, in the Canyon I Room, Hilton Salt Lake City Hotel. All members were present except James B. Coleman, South Carolina.

Reports were received from the National Treasurer, National Adjutant, National Judge Advocate, Executive Directors of the Indianapolis Office and Marketing Services Group, American Legion Insurance Committee, The Citizens Flag Alliance and The American Legion Magazine Commission.

The Finance Commission approved a transfer of \$282,000 to the Funded Depreciation Reserve. This transfer, which was made on July 13, 2006, was for the DC building and for the building at Fort Harrison. In 2005 The American Legion had a deficit year, so it was not necessary to make the 10 per cent contribution to the Restricted Fund.

The National Executive Committee at its meeting October 5-6, 2005, approved a 2006 Budget based on revenues of \$63,615,913 and expenditures of \$64,048,973 resulting in a 2006 operational deficit of \$433,060. The budget is based on a 2006 membership of 2,700,000 members. The "first run" projection of the 2006 Budget is a deficit of \$1,000,006.

The 2007 Preliminary Budget was reviewed and the Commission will further review the Budget for presentation to this body at the October Meetings in Indianapolis. It is recommended that the 2007 Budget be based on 2,600,000 members.

Total authorized positions for The American Legion is 258 as of August 1, 2006, with 95 positions at 700 N. Pennsylvania, 88 positions at Marketing Services Group (Ft. Harrison), and 75 positions in Washington, D. C.

Report: National Emblem Committee
August 27, 2006
Alvan T. Fuller, Massachusetts, Chairman

Thru: National Finance Commission

The National Emblem Committee met August 26-27, in a regularly called session at the Hilton Hotel, Meeting Salon I, Lobby Level, Salt Lake City, UT, with the following members present: Alvan T. Fuller (MA), Chairman; Robert J. Kimball (OH); Vice Chairman; Anthony E. Brogna (NY); Ernie P. Broussard (LA); Gerald L. Ernst (IA); Lloyd R. Henderson (IL); John C. Mann (PA); Lance D. Vanderhoof (UT); Ronald W. Wood (WY); and Jeffrey O. Brown (IN), Division Director.

Financial Statement

Revenues for the first six months of 2006 amounted to \$6,299,562.04—an increase of \$612,008.91 as compared with the first six months of 2005. Net profit after distribution established by the National Finance Commission was \$879,764.75—a decrease of \$102,856.40 for the same period of 2005.

2007 Marketing Plan

The 2007 marketing plan was reviewed and includes merchandise renewal, catalog creative & circulation, e-marketing initiatives and emblem licensing initiatives.

The Chairman expressed appreciation to the Committee members for their contribution to the meeting.

The unanimous appreciation of the Committee was expressed to the Emblem Staff for their dedicated service to The American Legion during the past year.

The Division Director thanked the Committee for their continued support throughout the year.

The meeting adjourned Sunday, August 27, 2006.

RES SUBCOM VICE CHRMN FOSTER: Commander, I move the report be approved.

...Second.

NATL COMDR BOCK: We have a motion and a second to approve the Finance Report. Any discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor give their consent by saying 'aye.' Opposed same sign. Motion carried.

Thank you, Ken, fine service. We're proud of you. Americanism, Joseph E. Caouette, Jr. New Hampshire.

Oral Report: Americanism Commission
Joseph E. Caouette, Jr., New Hampshire, Chairman

You've been provided with copies of the Americanism Commission Report so I will not insult your intelligence and read it. I do, however, feel compelled to make a couple of brief comments.

Youth programs of the National level are generally in pretty good shape. The quality of instruction continues at high levels as more and more programs embrace available technology. Participation numbers though are a different story. The Americanism Commission is rightly concerned about trends of decreasing participation. That issue we'll address at the upcoming Americanism Conference scheduled in Indianapolis on November 3, 4, and 5. Please make it an issue in your Department as well, as that's where the work needs to be done, at the Department level.

I would also like you to know that just a few days ago we concluded The American

Legion Baseball World Series, and that Post Number 175, Metairie, Louisiana, is the 2006 American Legion Baseball Champions.

Finally, if you have any doubts about the future of this country, work with some of our youth programs. Talk with our youth champion representatives at this Convention. The young people who participate in these activities are no different from those who preceded them years before. They just have brought more challenges to deal with.

Report: Americanism Commission

August 28, 2006

Joseph E. Caouette, Jr., New Hampshire, Chairman

The National Americanism and Children & Youth Commissions met jointly on Saturday, August 26, 2006, at the Hilton Hotel in Salt Lake City, Utah. More than 100 members of the Americanism Commission, the Americanism Council, the Counter-Subversive Activities Committee and the National Committee on Education were in attendance.

The joint session featured an address by Mark Krikorian, Executive Director of the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS), a non-profit, non-partisan research organization in Washington, DC. CIS promotes a pro-immigrant, low-immigration vision seeking fewer immigrants but a warmer welcome for those admitted.

In his remarks, Krikorian said "...the United States is not serious about national security and much of the blame has to be put square on the shoulders of Congress." He said, "every conflict we will face in the future will have an important component of homeland security imbedded in it."

Krikorian praised The American Legion for being one of only a few large interest groups who have come out publicly in support of enforcing our nation's immigration laws and securing our nation's borders. He said illegal immigration is everybody's problem and it affects everyone in this country.

The two commissions welcomed the Youth Champion Delegation and heard remarks from each of the young champions. In attendance were: Fernando Irizarry Moreno of Guaynabo, Puerto Rico, the 2005 American Legion Baseball Player of the Year; Nicholas Elledge (TN) now of Frisco, Texas, the 2006 National High School Oratorical Champion; John M. 'Max' Taylor of Palm Bay, Florida, the 2006 American Legion Boys Nation President; Thomas Santelli of Washington, Pennsylvania, Junior Shooting Sports Champion; and Nicholas Peter Coury of Glendale, Arizona, Eagle Scout of the Year.

Marty Justis (MD), Director of the Americanism and Children & Youth Division, spoke to the group on several issues including the Legacy Motorcycle Run to assist the American Legacy Scholarship fund. He said that he expects the activity to generate more than \$100,000 for the fund.

In the Americanism session, members heard reports and updates on programs from both volunteers and staff. Of particular concern is a decline in the number of participants nationwide in American Legion Boys State programs. The decline in enrollment will be the key issue brought before the Boys State Directors Conference in November.

RES SUBCOM VICE CHRMN FOSTER: Commander, move the report be received and filed.

...Second.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Moved and second that we receive and file the Americanism Report. Any discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor give their consent by saying 'aye.' Opposed same sign. Motion carried.

Mr. Chairman, you've done an outstanding job. America is strong because of your Americanism programs.

Children & Youth, Elmer Fuhrhop, Ohio.

**Oral Report: Commission on Children & Youth
Elmer Fuhrhop, Ohio, Chairman**

I approach you with a feeling of content that things are really great and that to make sure I don't go over in time, this *[indicating]* is the sheet they gave me to make a report off of. (Laughter.)

Speaking on behalf of the kids of this nation, we are in really good shape and the programs we're working with, CMN, is one of the outstanding things in the book and I'm glad to hear that we'll hear from the CEO of that organization.

The Foundation has done good. I've got a stack of applications to hold for the award on behalf of the Children & Youth Foundation. Funding is coming in, so, with that there's no matter of an emergency from this committee, which is unusual in that I'm not begging for something.

On behalf of the Commission, I want to thank you for your support and for the members of this organization and the work that the liaison committee has done with us. I think it's outstanding to see and I think you'll all agree. I remember back when we didn't see a red [NEC] cap at the Children & Youth meetings. But they do show up today and help out and we appreciate everything.

**Report: Commission on Children & Youth
August 26, 2006
Elmer Fuhrhop, Ohio, Chairman**

The members of the National Commission on Children and Youth met on Saturday, August 26, 2006 at 8:30 a.m. in the Hilton Salt Lake City Center Hotel, Grand Ballroom C, 2nd Floor in Joint Session with the National Americanism Commission.

This Joint Session provided an opportunity for both Commissions to be briefed on the other's activities. Following greetings, the National Youth Champions were introduced to offer their words of appreciation. The Commission heard remarks from Mark Krikorian, Executive Director of the Center for Immigration Studies and Marty Justis, Director of the National Americanism and Children & Youth Division.

The Joint Session adjourned at 10:15 a.m. and the National Commission on Children & Youth reconvened at 10:30 a.m. in the Hilton Salt Lake City Center Hotel, Grand Ballroom B, 2nd Floor to conduct its business. Commission minutes from the May meeting were approved.

Following remarks from Chairman Fuhrhop, the Commission heard three special presentations.

Adopted by The American Legion in 2001, Mercy Medical Airlift (MMA) is the national charity that operates Angel Flight America (AFA). Every day of the year, MMA and AFA are on the front lines ensuring that no child is denied access to medical care for lack of long-distance air transportation. For over 25 years, Mercy Medical Airlift has served medically indigent children and youth and their families by helping provide access to life-saving medical care, arranging flights of compassion and responding to victims in times of disaster.

Steve Patterson, Executive Vice-President for Mercy Medical Airlift, updated the Commission on the vital roll MMA and AFA played following Hurricane Katrina's devastation last year, working around the clock to assist hurricane victims.

At the request of state and local agencies, and numerous shelters run by The American Red Cross and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Mercy Medical Airlift and Angel Flight America moved high-risk people to safer locations and flew emergency workers, agency staff, volunteers and supplies into flood-ravaged areas. Over 2,200 missions were flown during the month of September.

Mission coordination teams, working 24/7 in several locations throughout the country, focused their professional efforts, limited funds and volunteer pilot resources on requests to:

- Reunite children with their families who were separated during the evacuation process; and
- Relocate families out of shelters to confirmed safe housing elsewhere.

Staff and coordination volunteers were on the ground in Baton Rouge, Louisiana spreading the word through shelters that transportation was available while teams in other areas of the country were working with regional and local agencies and hospitals.

Mercy Medical Airlift expressed their deep appreciation to The American Legion and the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation for the invaluable support both have provided during the past eleven years.

Dr. Neil Veydt is the Counsel for Marketing and Development for the Children's Organ Transplant Association (COTA) a nonprofit charity that exists to assist patients who require a life-saving organ, bone marrow, cord blood or stem cell transplant. COTA works with any patient who needs a transplant due to a genetic disease such as cystic fibrosis, and all patients 21 and younger for any disease or complication.

Since 1986, the Children's Organ Transplant Association has assisted nearly 1,000 families from almost every state and every economic situation by raising more than \$42 million to meet transplant-related expenses not covered by insurance. Their challenge grant program alone has generated more than \$1.5 million for their patients since January 2000. What makes COTA unique is that they do not charge a fee for their services.

COTA's current "Saving Kids' Lives For A Healthier Tomorrow" initiative started in 2000 and is a continuation of a six-year effort in the "Saving Kids Lives" program. Their main objectives in conducting the "Saving Kids" initiative are to provide additional fund-raising opportunities for children across the country; to raise awareness and increase organ and tissue donations; and to provide direct benefit to those patients who have not yet received their life-saving transplant.

Dr. Veydt stated that the Children's Organ Transplant Association has been successful due in many ways to the financial support provided by the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation and the grassroots support of The American Legion Family. Literally hundreds of Posts, Units and Squadrons throughout the nation have assisted in COTA's efforts to "Save Kids Lives." Mr. Lofgren expressed his personal thanks to the Foundation and the Legion Family for all they have done to save the lives of children.

Bob Lindsey, Commander of Post 77 in Ashland, Massachusetts, provided the Commission with a brief history on a very successful child safety program implemented in his community two years ago. Following his remarks, Bob introduced David Gordon, President and CEO of Child Safe Solutions, Inc., to provide a more detailed explanation of the "I'm Safe" Program.

According to Mr. Gordon, 30,000 times a day a child below the age of fourteen is injured seriously enough to require medical attention. As a result, accidental injury is currently the number one killer of America's children; taking more lives than disease, violence and suicide. (Source: Safe Kids Worldwide).

In an effort to address this ongoing threat, American Legion Post 77 partnered with Child Safety Solutions to develop a community based education program that is being successfully implemented throughout the elementary schools in the town of Ashland. Focusing on the key injury areas for young children, the program is providing families with life saving safety information, while also enhancing Post 77's reputation with local law enforcement, school administrators and parents, for being an invaluable community resource within the town of Ashland.

Mr. Gordon encouraged the Commission to stop by the Child Safety Solutions booth in the exhibit hall to explore how this program could be used to support child safety initiatives in Post communities across the nation.

The Commission concluded our session with program updates on the Temporary Financial Assistance program and the Family Support Network.

Mr. Commander, thank you for your support during this past program year. Thanks, also, to the National Public Relations Commission, *The American Legion Magazine*, and the American Legion *Dispatch* for providing visibility for our programs. This support is not only appreciated; it is critical to the successful accomplishment of the activities of your National Commission on Children & Youth.

RES SUBCOM MBR PROCTOR: Move the report be received and filed.

...Second.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Moved and second to receive and file the Children & Youth Report, any discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor give their consent by saying 'aye.' Opposed same sign. Motion carried.

Elmer, you and your commission have done an outstanding job. The CWF booth is up and taking donations. Keep up the great work.

Convention Commission, Jeffery L. Olson, Minnesota.

**Oral Report: National Convention Commission
Jeffrey L. Olson, Minnesota, Chairman**

A wonderful good morning to the members of the NEC and American Legion Family and friends all.

Commander, I have to report that my day started off sort of tough. A couple of minutes after 5:00 this morning I rolled over to get ready for my run. I like to watch the weather, turned on the TV and there's Bob Proctor. Now, Bob Proctor's a great Legionnaire (you do a very nice job by the way), but he's not the person I want to wake up to in the morning. (Laughter.)

Just a couple of quick comments, first of all going back to yesterday, the Patriotic Memorial Service was a tremendous event. What a beautiful facility! The choir was outstanding. Steve, you did a great job in weather in the afternoon, perfect weather for the parade. I think everybody had a great time.

Now a couple of matters of business: In the future, our next two conventions are both on track, Reno then Phoenix. We were very pleasantly surprised last week to find an ad in the Tucson Newspaper. The Biltmore Hotel in Phoenix—fire sale for the week of our convention this year—has \$165 dollars for the cheapest room in the place. We have rented the house for \$95 dollars guaranteed. We're very pleased with that.

A little business about tomorrow and Thursday. Obviously, we have some great speakers: Obviously, they come with security. The magnetometers will be setup at 7:00 a.m. both days Tuesday and Thursday. It's going to take a little longer to get in, and there will be some crowds. We know you're patient individuals; stay that way. We're going to have some buses anticipating crowds being a little heavy in the morning so transportation will go better. At this point, we understand that the Secret Service is going to ask that all doors be closed except for the south entrance. Obviously, that's up to change. They may change their mind. But plan on coming in the south entrance at this point in time if you would.

Because the Radisson, which is the closet hotel to the facility from the north, is now only a half-mile from the posted entrance, we will bus the Radisson Hotel guests.

**Report: National Convention Commission
August 28, 2006
Jeffrey L. Olson, Minnesota, Chairman**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jeffrey L. Olson (MN) at 8:00 A.M., August 26, 2006. There were five members of the commission excused from the meeting so that they could assist the contest committee in conducting the National Color Guard Contests.

Chairman Olson reviewed the assignments for each of the commission members during

this convention and reminded each member that a detailed convention report should be provided to the commission at the 2006 Fall Meetings. Four bands competed in the band contest with the Joliet American Legion Band from Joliet, Illinois being crowned as National Champions. Twelve color guards competed in four categories with the American Legion Post #49 Color Guard from Tilton, New Hampshire being crowned as National Champions.

We currently have three cities that have expressed an interest in bidding on the 2012 National Convention. Site visits to these cities will be scheduled in the near future. The cities are Charlotte, North Carolina, Indianapolis, Indiana and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

There were no items discussed that would require action by the National Executive Committee.

Dates for future Conventions, approved by the National Executive Committee are:

Reno, Nevada	August 24-30, 2007
Phoenix, Arizona	August 22-28, 2008
Louisville, Kentucky	August 21-27, 2009
Milwaukee, Wisconsin	August 27-September 2, 2010
Minneapolis, Minnesota	August 26-September 1, 2011

RES SUBCOM MBR PROCTOR: Mr. Commander, before the chairman leaves, I believe I do have to say one thing toward him. I'm glad that I wake up with Ruth next to me and not him. (Laughter.)

NATL COMDR BOCK: Mr. Proctor.

RES SUBCOM MBR PROCTOR: I move the report be received and filed.

...Second.

NATL COMDR BOCK: It's been moved and second to receive the Convention Report, any further discussion? Hearing none all those in favor give their consent by saying 'aye.' Opposed same sign. Motion carried.

Jeff, please give our congratulations and great thanks to Jennifer and Dick. They've done such a wonderful job in coordinating this convention. I'm excited about it. It's going well.

Legislative, Dave Rehbein, Iowa.

Oral Report: Legislative Commission David Rehbein, Iowa, Chairman

The National Legislative Commission met on Saturday in the Convention Center here in Salt Lake City, Utah. The meeting was devoted to a detailed discussion of recent Congressional activities involving the legislative mandates of The America Legion. The Commission received a thorough report prepared by the National Legislative Council Chairman, Edwin Dentz of Virginia, and was presented by Assistant Director Juan Lara.

The principal focus of the council's report was on grassroots lobbying activities and a Summary of the Annual Consolidated Activities Report. A complete copy of his report is attached to the Commission's written report for your review.

The Commission also heard from Len Sitek, Staff Director of House Veterans' Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations. Mr. Sitek served on the Minority side. He addressed several key veterans issues, which included an in-depth summary on the stolen VA computer data containing personal information on millions of veterans.

The Commission received a legislative update from the Director Steve Robertson. He highlighted the point papers distributed to the audience.

Thank you, Commander, for stopping by and addressing the Commission and our guests. We appreciated it very much.

On September 20, the newly elected National Commander will lead a delegation of Legionnaires to Capitol Hill and present testimony before a Senate Veterans' Affairs

Committee. He is also scheduled to participate in another hearing before the House Veterans' Affairs Committee. The National Commander there will be on a panel with other leaders of veterans and military service organizations. Unfortunately, the hearing in the House will have extremely limited seating and most Legionnaires will be unable to attend that hearing.

**Report: Legislative Commission
August 26, 2006
David Rehbein, Iowa, Chairman**

The National Legislative Commission met on Saturday, August 26, 2006 in the Salt Palace Convention Center, in Salt Lake City, Utah. Twenty-three (23) Commission Members, one (1) National Executive Committeemen Liaison, and twelve (12) guests were present. The meeting was devoted to a detailed discussion of recent congressional activities involving the legislative mandates of The American Legion.

The Commission Chairman offered opening remarks. Since the National Legislative Council Chairman was unable to attend the National Convention, Assistant Director, Juan Lara (MD) read the Chairman's prepared remarks. The report highlighted the Council' grassroots lobbying activities and a summary of the Annual Consolidated Activities Report. Then the Commission heard from Len Sistek, Staff Director, House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, Minority (Democratic) Staff. He discussed recent legislative activities on Capital Hill to include the recent theft of computer data from the Department of Veterans Affairs. His remarks were followed by a question and answer session.

Next the Commission received a legislative update from the Director, Steve Robertson (LA). He covered the Point Papers distributed to the audience.

The following report provides an abbreviated account of the congressional developments since this Committee met in May 2006.

109th Congress, Second Session

The Second Session of the 109th Congress convened on January 31, 2006. Major issues on the agenda for both chambers include the war on terrorism, the reconstruction of Iraq, the flag protection constitutional amendment, and the proposed FY 2007 budget. As of today, The American Legion has participated in ten congressional hearings during the Second Session.

The President's discretionary funding recommendations for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) reflect a \$3.3 billion increase over FY 2006 funding. The administration proposed \$77.7 billion for VA, \$35.7 billion going to discretionary accounts, including medical care—a 6 percent increase over FY 2006. However, the bulk of that increase includes fiscal assumptions by administration officials, also proposed and defeated last year, which The American Legion finds unacceptable. These proposals include:

- Charging a \$250 enrollment fee to cover the cost of enrolling veterans in Priority Groups 7 and 8 regardless of other health insurance coverage.
- Increasing pharmacy co-payments for certain veterans from \$7 to \$15 per prescription.
- Continuing the prohibition for the enrollment of any new Priority Group 8 veterans.
- Eliminating the practice of reducing the VA first-party co-payments debts with collections recoveries from third-party health plans.

In addition, the administration has set a goal of \$2.8 billion for VA to collect first- and third-party deductibles directly from veterans through the Medical Care Collection Fund (MCCF). The American Legion believes this estimate continues to be overly optimistic, as actual funds collected by MCCF to date have not met expected projections. According to VA's own statistics, VA only recovers about 40 percent of the costs billed. The American Legion believes VA must either improve its technology and training for its personnel, or consider contracting out the entire process.

Rather than consider ways to allow the VA health care system to accommodate the

veterans currently using it, the White House budget for VA seeks to drive almost a quarter million veterans away from the health care system, in addition to continuing to prohibit a million Priority Group 8-eligible veterans from enrolling in the VA medical system. The American Legion vehemently opposes this particular administration strategy.

On February 23, the House Veterans' Affairs Committee sent its majority VA budget recommendations for FY 2007 to the House Budget Committee. The VA panel's proposal calls for a \$1.9 billion increase in VA discretionary funding. The committee rejected the proposed prescription co-pay increase.

At the same time, the minority members of the House panel sent their own recommendations for VA FY 2007 budget to the House Budget Committee. In a letter to the Budget Committee, Rep. Lane Evans (IL)—the ranking member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee—said, "A flat-line budget for veterans' health care during a time of war is unconscionable." The VA committee's minority views and estimates would add \$4.5 billion to VA health care programs.

The first chart below shows: VA discretionary funding for the current year (FY 2006); proposed funding contained in the President's 2007 budget resolution; and both the majority and minority budget proposals set forth by the House Veterans' Affairs Committee (HCVA).

Programs	FY 2006 Actual PL 109-114	White House Request FY 2007	HCVA Majority Proposal FY 2007	HCVA Minority Proposal FY 2007
Medical Care	\$28.9 bil.	\$ 31.5 bil.	\$32.8 bil.	\$31.8 bil.
Medical Care Recovery Fund	[\$2.0 bil.]	[\$2.8 bil.]	[\$2.8 bil.]	[\$3.3 bil.]
Medical/ Prosthetic Research	\$412 mil.	\$399 mil.	\$427 mil.	\$450 mil.
Major/Minor Construction	\$119 mil.	\$290 mil.	\$306 mil.	\$406 mil.
Dedicated CARES Construction	\$687 mil.	\$307 mil.	\$307 mil.	\$833 mil.
State Veterans Homes Grants	\$85 mil.	\$85 mil.	\$85 mil.	\$150 mil.
State Cemetery Grants	\$32 mil.	\$32 mil.	\$32 mil.	\$37 mil.
Natl. Cemetery Administration	\$156 mil.	\$161 mil.	\$161 mil.	\$175 mil.
Information Technology	\$1.2 bil.	\$1.3 bil.	\$1.1 bil.	\$1.2 bil.
Genl. Operating Expenses	\$1.4 bil.	\$1.5 bil.	\$1.5 bil.	\$1.5 bil.

The next chart again shows FY 2006 funding, and the President's FY 2007 request. It also shows the FY 2007 budget recommendations of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs (SCVA) and The American Legion's FY 2007 proposal as presented in testimony by National Commander Bock last September as well as in February of this year.

Programs	FY 2006 Actual PL 109-114	White House Request FY 2007	SCVA Proposal FY 2007	Legion Proposal FY 2007
Medical Care	\$28.9 bil.	\$ 31.5 bil.	\$31.5 bil.	\$33.5 bil.
Medical Care Recovery Fund	[\$2.0 bil.]	[\$2.8 bil.]	[\$2.8 bil.]	—

Medical/ Prosthetic Research	\$412 mil.	\$399 mil.	\$429 mil.	\$469 mil.
Major/Minor Construction	\$119 mil.	\$290 mil.	\$309 mil.	\$617 mil.
Dedicated CARES Construction	\$687 mil.	\$307 mil.	\$307 mil.	\$1.0 bil.
State Veterans Homes Grants	\$85 mil.	\$85 mil.	\$36 mil.	\$250 mil.
State Cemetery Grants	\$32 mil.	\$32 mil.	\$32 mil.	\$44 mil.
Natl. Cemetery Administration	\$156 mil.	\$161 mil.	\$161 mil.	\$174 mil.
Information Technology	\$1.2 bil.	\$1.3 bil.	\$1.3 bil.	—
Genl. Operating Expenses	\$1.4 bil.	\$1.5 bil.	\$1.5 bil.	\$1.9 bil.

On March 9, the Senate Budget Committee released its version of FY 2007 budget resolution, Senate Concurrent Resolution (S Con Res.) 83. The Senate panel called for VA discretionary spending to be set at \$36.2 billion. Prior to final passage, the Senate agreed by a 100-0 vote to an amendment—offered by Sen. Conrad Burns (MT)—that would add \$823 million in funding for VA health care and medical/prosthetics research. However, an amendment championed by Sen. Daniel Akaka (HI) to add \$1.5 billion to VA medical care was rejected 54-46. On March 16, The Senate passed S Con Res. 83 by a recorded vote of 51-49.

The House began consideration of a similar measure, House Concurrent Resolution (H Con Res.) 376, authored by Representative Jeb Bradley (NH), in early April. However, prior to the spring/Easter recess, disagreements within the majority party caused work on the House budget resolution to collapse.

There were hundreds of provisions in H. Con Res. 376, taken as a whole represents a \$2.8 trillion budget blueprint for FY 2007. Some provisions addressed expiring tax cuts passed during the previous three years that would be extended. There were also some provisions that seek to rein in spending for health, education and labor programs. One provision of importance to The American Legion addressed administration proposals dealing with veterans' health care.

When President Bush's FY 2007 budget proposal was released in February, it contained policy initiatives that have been opposed by The American Legion since 2002. Namely, a) assessing an annual enrollment fee of \$250 for veterans using the VA health care system, and b) increasing the pharmacy co-payment from \$8 to \$15 for a 30-day supply. The Senate rejected these proposals during consideration of S Con Res. 83. The House Budget Committee did likewise on March 29, approving an amendment to H. Con Res. 376. The amendment would shift \$795 million from the foreign aid budget to the VA budget for FY 2007, as well as a total of \$3.97 billion over the next five years.

The House returned from recess on April 24. Deep differences over earmark rules, emergency spending restrictions and the level of spending on domestic programs continued to delay final action on the budget resolution. Finally, on May 18 by a vote of 218-210, the House agreed to H. Con Res. 376. House-Senate conferees will work out a version that each chamber can support. Once this is accomplished, a final blueprint for the Appropriations Committees will be in place. It should be stressed that the budget resolution is not law, but merely the guideline for spending bills.

Mid-term congressional elections will take place this November. All 435 seats in the House of Representatives and one-third of the Senate will be in play. As of August 16, four (4) senators are retiring or running for other offices, including Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (TN). One Senate incumbent—Sen. Joseph Lieberman (CT)—was defeat for re-nomination. In

the House, twenty-eight (28) members have announced plans to retire or are running for a Senate seat or governorship. Two (2) House incumbents were defeated for re-nomination, and there are two (2) vacancies.

In an unexpected announcement, Rep. Lane Evans (IL), ranking member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, announced in late March that he was not seeking re-election in November. Since announcing in 1998 that he had been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, Rep. Evans has continued his work as a member of Congress and as a staunch veterans' advocate. His retirement will be a great loss for all veterans.

Americanism

After 18 years of hard work, The American Legion and the Citizens Flag Alliance (CFA) were poised for final passage of a constitutional amendment to protect the American flag from physical desecration. A total of 60 senators became cosponsors of Senate Joint Resolution (SJ Res.) 12. A total of 67 votes are needed to approve a constitutional amendment and send it to the individual states for ratification.

The amendment has the full support of Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (TN). On March 7, Sen. Frist spoke on the floor of the Senate in favor of SJ Res. 12, saying in part, "Countless brave men and women have died defending the American flag. It is but a small, humble act to vote to defend it." Sen. Frist set a date for debate and a possible vote on the amendment—the week of June 26.

On Flag Day, June 14 The American Legion and the CFA held a news conference near the U.S. Capitol to highlight SJ Res. 12. In addition to senators, Legionnaires and CFA spokesmen, two speakers of note included Rick Monday, former major-league baseball player who in 1976 foiled an attempt to burn an American flag on the field at Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles; and, Heather French Henry, former Miss America who has been a staunch supporter of the flag amendment.

Finally, on June 27, the Senate began debate on SJ Res. 12. After a day of debate, a recorded vote was held. The final tally was 66-34, with 67 "yea" votes needed for passage. The American Legion and the CFA will continue the fight to protect the American flag in the 110th Congress.

On July 24, President Bush signed PL 109-243, the "Freedom to Display the American Flag Act." The law states that a condominium association, cooperative association, or residential real estate management association may not adopt or enforce any policy that would restrict or prevent an association member from displaying the U.S. flag on residential property within the association. This measure stems from two cases in Florida over the past three years where veterans were told to remove flagpoles from their properties by condominium association management. Despite a Florida law passed to allow display of the American flag, federal legislation was felt necessary.

The American Legion views the ACLU's continued assault on the Boy Scouts with increasing alarm. In the 109th Congress, efforts to assist the Boys Scouts continued. On March 16, Sen. Frist re-introduced his pro-Scouts legislation as S 642, the Support our Scouts Act of 2005. On April 11, Representative Jo Ann Davis (VA) introduced a companion measure, HR 1337. These measures' two major provisions would:

- Prohibit any federal law from being interpreted to limit a federal agency from providing any form of support for a youth organization (including the Boy Scouts of America or any group officially affiliated with them) that would result in the agency providing less support than was provided during each of the previous four fiscal years.
- Amend the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (PL 93-383) to prohibit any State or unit of general local government that has a designated open forum, limited public forum, or nonpublic forum and that is a recipient of assistance under the Act from denying equal access or a fair opportunity to meet to, or discriminate against, any youth organization, including the Boy Scouts of America or

any affiliated group, that wishes to conduct a meeting or otherwise participate in that designated open forum, limited public forum, or nonpublic forum.

S. 642 currently has 53 cosponsors, while HR 1337 has 88 cosponsors.

The House on July 19 passed a measure that would bar most federal courts—including the Supreme Court—from hearing constitutional challenges to the Pledge of Allegiance. HR 2389, introduced by Rep. Todd Akin (MO) is aimed at preventing federal judges from ruling that the phrase “under God” in the pledge is unconstitutional. The bill passed by a recorded vote of 260-167.

During consideration of the bill, Rep. Phil Gingrey (GA) said that passage of HR 2389 would “affirm that it is the American people, not a few activist judges, that have the right to make law.” Before final passage, the House adopted an amendment by voice vote that would clarify that, if enacted, the bill’s provisions would be effective immediately and would apply to all pending and future litigation. The measure now goes to the Senate for passage, where a companion bill—S 1046, introduced by Sen. Jon Kyl (AZ)—has seen no action.

Since its formation in 1919, The American Legion has been concerned with illegal immigration. It is estimated that between 10 and 12 million illegal immigrants reside in this country, with 500,000 illegals thought to be entering this country every year. Most recently, Americanism Resolution #1-05 urges Congress to enact an “immigration reform policy that will secure the borders against those individuals attempting to enter this country illegally.” Since the attacks of September 11, 2001 these concerns have been magnified.

On December 16 of last year, the House of Representatives by a vote of 239-182 passed HR 4437, the Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005. The bill, introduced by House Judiciary Chairman F. James Sensenbrenner (WI), focuses on border security and enforcement.

On May 25 by a vote of 62-36 the Senate passed S 2611, the “Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2006.” This bill goes into greater detail than the House bill. As a result, a conference committee will be asked to reconcile major differences between the two measures.

The differences in the two bills are not just skin-deep; they are deep and controversial. Outlined below are major provisions of each bill.

Border Agents: S 2611 would authorize 4000 new additional border patrol agents and at least 2500 port-of-entry inspectors. HR 4437 would authorize 2000 new border patrol agents for each of the next 4 fiscal years, as well as 8000 new beds per year over the same period for detaining apprehended illegal aliens.

Border Fencing: The House bill would require DHS to build a security fence across several sectors of the Mexican border. By contrast, the Senate measure would authorized the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to build a “virtual fence” to allow the border to be patrolled with unmanned aircraft, cameras, sensors and other technology. During Senate debate, an amendment was added to include a fence similar to that outlined in HR 4437.

Interior Enforcement/Verification: S 2611 would require a new program for employers to check Social Security numbers (SSNs) of new hires against a federal database, in addition to authorizing the hiring of 10,000 agents to enforce these beefed-up employment regulations. HR 4437 would mandate expanded use of a system called Basic Pilot that enables companies to screen employees’ SSNs and foreign identification numbers with DHS. The mandatory system would be implemented in phases over a six-year period, with all employers participating.

Guest Workers: Only the Senate bill would create a guest worker program that would allow up to 200,000 people outside the U.S. to enter and fill vacant jobs during the first year of the program. The measure would also allow workers to receive a three-year visa, which could be renewed once. After holding a visa for 4 years, an individual could apply for permanent status.

“Legalization”: This section of S 2611 is perhaps the most controversial. In essence, this

language would provide virtual amnesty for millions of illegal aliens who entered this country unlawfully. It has three tiers, as follows:

Short-term: The bill would make an additional 1.5 million agricultural workers eligible for permanent legal residence if they can prove that they had worked in U.S. agriculture before enactment of the new law, and if they worked three to five more years after enactment of the law.

Mid-term: Illegals who have been in this country between two and five years—as of January 2006—must register with DHS. Within three years, they would have to leave the U.S. and could return by applying for a visa at a land port of entry. After clearing a background check and meeting other requirements, these individuals would qualify for legal permanent residence status.

Long-term: This section of the bill would allow illegal aliens who have been in the U.S. since April 5, 2001 eligible for “earned adjustment” to their legal status. They would be required to work in the U.S. for six years after the bill’s enactment, pass a background check, pay back taxes, hold a job, learn civics and the English language, and pay a \$2000 fine. There would be no limit to the number of green cards issued under the long-term section of these rules.

In addition to these major provisions, there are some extraordinary provisions in S 2611 that are not receiving a great deal of attention. These include:

- Illegal aliens who use fake SSNs or other fraudulent documents will not face any criminal prosecution under the Senate bill.
- Employers who knowingly hire illegal aliens will similarly face no criminal prosecution, even if they were aware that the documents used in the initial hiring stage were fraudulent.

Despite having the support of the President, the House leadership signaled in mid-June that S 2611 would not be easily or quickly reconciled with HR 4437. House Speaker Dennis Hastert announced that hearings would be held on the immigration legislation, a highly unusual move when legislation is bound for conference. Whether this legislation will be finished prior to the summer recess, or even before the end of the Second Session, is unknown.

Children & Youth

On June 29 the House by a 393-23 recorded vote passed HR 5672, the FY 2007 spending bill for the Departments of Commerce, Justice (DOJ) and State and Science programs. Funding for DoJ would total \$22.4 billion, \$831 million more than funded for FY 2006, and \$1 billion above the President’s FY 2007 request. On July 13, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved its version of the measure, with DOJ funding set at \$22 billion. The American Legion continues to support the work of OJJDP to combat juvenile crime and delinquency. Under the bills’ provisions,

- The FBI would receive \$6 billion under each measure;
- The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) would be funded at \$1.7 billion in both bills;
- The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (BATF) would receive \$985 million under the Senate bill, while the House bill would fund the agency at \$950 million;
- The U.S. Marshals Service would be funded at \$856 million under the Senate measure, at \$826 million under the House bill; and,
- The programs of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) will receive \$286 million from the House—which is \$52 million less than current year funding—while the Senate version would fund OJJDP at \$300 million.

Economics

On June 13, the House Appropriations Committee approved HR 5647, the FY 2007

Departments of Labor (DoL), Health and Human Services (HHS) and Education funding measure. The Senate Appropriations Committee passed companion legislation, S 3708, on July 20. These measures contain funding for DoL's Office of the Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training (ASVET). The chart below outlines funding for ASVET for the current fiscal year, the Administration's FY 2007 request, and the amounts contained in the House and Senate versions for FY 2007. The "state administration grants" line in the below chart is responsible for funding DVOP's and LVERs in state employment services. The American Legion continues to vehemently oppose this funding mechanism and will work to have DoL revert to the former method of direct appropriations. The bills now go to their respective chambers for further consideration.

Programs	PL 109-149 FY 2006	White House Proposal FY 2007	HR 5647 FY 2007	S 3708 FY 2007
State Administration Grants	\$160.8 mil.	\$161.2 mil.	\$160.8 mil.	\$161.2 mil.
Federal Administration	\$30.1 mil.	\$32.4 mil.	\$32.4 mil.	\$32.4 mil.
Natl. Veterans Training Institute (NVTI)	\$2.0 mil.	\$2.0 mil.	\$2.0 mil.	\$2.0 mil.
Homeless Veterans Program	\$21.8 mil.	\$21.8 mil.	\$21.8 mil.	\$21.8 mil.
Veterans' Workforce Investment Programs	\$7.4 mil.	\$7.4 mil.	\$7.4 mil.	\$7.4 mil.
Totals	\$222.1 mil.	\$224.8 mil.	\$224.4 mil.	\$224.8 mil.

Foreign Relations

On June 9 by a vote of 373-34 the House passed HR 5522, the FY 2007 Foreign Operations spending bill. It contains \$21.3 billion in foreign aid, \$600 million more than contained in the FY 2006 bill, but \$2.4 billion less than requested by the White House. On June 29 the Senate Appropriations Committee approved its version of the bill, which included funding for the State Department. Among the earmarks in the bill:

- \$3.5 billion in global assistance to fight HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria in the Senate bill, while the House bill would allocate \$3.4 billion;
- \$2.5 billion in economic and military assistance to Israel from the Senate bill, while the House measure would appropriate \$2.3 billion;
- \$1.8 billion in economic and military assistance to Egypt in the Senate measure, while the House bill would fund assign \$1.7 billion;
- \$1.1 billion in various economic assistance to Afghanistan from the Senate while the House would fund this account at \$962 million;
- \$753 million in various economic assistance to Iraq in the Senate bill, while the House bill would assign \$522 million;
- \$699 million for the Andean Counterdrug Initiative from the Senate bill, \$507 million from the House measure;
- \$371 million in assistance for states of the former Soviet Union in the House bill, while the Senate would allocate \$293 million to this account; and
- \$300 million in military assistance to Pakistan from the Senate, while the House measure would assign \$200 million. Pakistan has been a valuable partner in the War on Terror.

The Senate must now act upon this measure, after which a conference committee will be required to produce a clean bill for enactment.

Internal Affairs

At the 86th National Convention recently held in Nashville TN two years ago, The American Legion approved Internal Affairs Resolution 326. The resolution urges Congress to make changes in 42 United States Code, Section 1988, which allows our nation's courts to award attorneys fees to plaintiffs in lawsuits regarding free exercise of religion. The ACLU has sought and obtained hundreds of thousands of dollars in attorneys' fees in similar cases.

Last year, Rep. John Hostettler (IN) introduced HR 2679, the "Public Expression of Religion Act of 2005." The bill seeks to amend the Revised Statutes of the United States to eliminate the effect on the constitutionally protected expression of religion by State and local officials that results from the threat that potential litigants may seek damages and attorney's fees. The American Legion will actively pursue changes to 42 U.S.C. Section 1988 to expressly preclude the courts from awarding attorneys fees—usually paid for by local taxpayers—in lawsuits brought to remove or destroy religious symbols. The measure has 60 cosponsors. On July 20, Sen. Sam Brownback (KS) introduced S 3696, the "Veterans' Memorials, Boy Scouts, Public Seals, and Other Public Expressions of Religion Protection Act of 2006," a companion measure. It currently has 6 cosponsors.

On August 2, a major victory was won in the campaign in support of legislation addressing the public expression of religion. On that date, the Senate unanimously passed HR 5683, a bill to preserve the Mt. Soledad Veterans Memorial in San Diego, California, by providing for the immediate acquisition of the memorial by the United States. The measure passed the House on July 19 by a vote of 349-74. The bill was signed by the President on August 14, and is now PL 109-272.

"I applaud the unanimous decision by the Senate to preserve this memorial to American heroes," stated National Commander Tom Bock. "This cross and all other crosses and Stars of David that mark the graves and honor the sacrifices of our fallen heroes are sacred ground to Americans. As a grateful nation, we must ensure that their memory will never be dishonored by those who would seek to remove them."

The mayor of San Diego asked President Bush in May to exercise his power to take over the Mt. Soledad War Memorial by accepting the offer of the people of San Diego provided for in a 2005 referendum in which 76 percent of voters approved transfer of the national memorial to federal custody. A May ruling by a San Diego federal judge—who issued an injunction against the Soledad cross in 1991—ordered the city of San Diego to take down the cross within 90 days or face \$5,000 in daily fines.

An atheist originally filed suit in 1989 against the cross. The city tried to sell the land to the nonprofit group that maintains the memorial, but federal judges repeatedly blocked the sale, ruling that the attempts were designed to favor a buyer who would keep the cross.

In a letter to the President recently, National Commander Bock wrote, "We are particularly concerned in this case that a dangerous precedent could be set that would endanger veterans memorials across America, perhaps even the nine thousand crosses that mark the final resting places of our World War II heroes at Normandy Beach."

National Security

On June 15, President Bush signed PL 109-234, an emergency supplemental appropriations measure for FY 2006. It sets forth \$94.5 billion in funding to sustain military operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and the war on terrorism, for homeland security and for emergency relief to states devastated by last year's major hurricanes. The House passed the measure by a vote of 351-67 on June 13, with the Senate following suit two days later, approving the bill by a 98-1 tally.

PL 109-234 provides supplemental funding in the following areas: (1) \$70.4 billion for military operations and foreign aid in the War on Terror; (2) \$19.8 billion for hurricane recovery efforts; (3) \$2.3 billion for preparation to battle a possible flu pandemic; and (4) \$1.9 billion for border security.

During Senate floor debate, Rep. John Salazar (CO) offered an amendment to add \$630 million to VA medical care for the current year. His amendment was ruled out of order and was not even voted upon. The bill did, however, contain a provision for \$586 million to be added to VA's major construction account for hurricane relief.

On June 20, the House voted 407-19 to pass HR 5631, the FY 2007 Department of Defense (DoD) spending bill. On July 20, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved its version of DoD funding. The House version would fund DoD programs at \$427.6 billion, an increase of nearly \$18 billion over the current year funding amounts. The Senate bill would fund DoD programs at \$453.5 billion. Included in each measure is \$50 billion earmarked for military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. The President did not request these funds, but Congress felt that it was more realistic to include them in a regular appropriations measure, in lieu of supplemental funding bills.

Some of the major accounts funded by these bills include:

- 9.3 billion for ballistic missile defense in the Senate version, \$9 billion in the House bill;
- \$5.1 billion for continued research and development of the Joint Strike Fighter in the Senate measure, \$4.2 billion in the House bill;
- \$3.5 billion for continued research and development of the Army's Future Combat System in the Senate bill, \$3 billion in the House measure;
- \$3.4 billion for 20 F-22A fighter planes in both measures;
- \$3 billion for procurement of 12 C-17 cargo planes in both bills;
- \$2.9 billion for 42 F/A-18 Navy fighter planes in both measures;
- \$2.6 billion for construction of the first DD(X) next-generation destroyer in the House bill, while the Senate allocated the same amount for two vessels;
- \$1.8 billion for the purchase of one Virginia-class submarine in each bill;
- \$1.3 billion for the Army's program to destroy chemical agents and munitions in both measures;
- \$978 million for DoD's counter-drug activities and to fight narco-terrorism in the Senate version, the House bill provides \$937 million; and
- \$372 million for DoD's Former Soviet Union Threat Reduction account in both measures.

On May 11 by a vote of 396-31, the House of Representatives approved HR 5122, the FY 2007 DoD authorization bill. The Senate on June 22 passed S 2766, a companion measure, by a 96-0 tally. This legislation sets yearly spending guidelines for DoD appropriations, and also includes various policy statements. A total of \$512.9 billion in budget authority was recommended in the House version, while the Senate bill's authorizations would total \$517.7 billion. It also includes \$50 billion in authorizations for funding to support the War on Terrorism and operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

It should be stressed that authorizing legislation only sets spending guidelines for appropriators. The final funding tallies for the accounts listed below will be set in the DoD appropriations bill. Some of the authorizing provisions of the bill include:

- \$17.1 billion for military construction and family housing in the Senate bill, while the House version contains \$16.7 billion;
- Increases in Army personnel by 30,000, and a Marine Corps personnel increase of 5000 in both bills;
- A 2.7 percent across-the-board pay raise for military personnel in the House measure, while the Senate bill would authorize a 2.2 percent pay raise;
- An additional \$100 million for Army recruiting and retention bonuses; \$100 million for the Army Reserve to fund Army-wide basic officer courses; and, \$59 million for Air National Guard bonuses in both measures;
- Prohibits DoD from increasing TRICARE Prime, Standard and TRICARE Reserve Select fees until the end of 2007, which is contained in both measures;

The two measures will now go to a conference committee to reconcile differences before President Bush can sign it into law.

On June 6 by a vote of 389-9, the House passed HR 5441, the FY 2007 Department of Homeland Security (DHS) funding measure. The measure provided a total of \$32.1 billion in discretionary funding for the newest Cabinet department, a 6 percent increase above FY 2006 funds. The Senate on July 13 passed its version of the measure, with total funding of \$31.7 billion, \$350 million less than the House version. The amounts in several major accounts include:

- \$8.2 billion for the U.S. Coast Guard in the Senate measure, \$8.1 in the House bill;
- \$6.6 billion for the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection in the Senate bill, with \$5.4 billion set aside in the House measure;
- \$4.7 billion for the Transportation Security Administration in both bills;
- \$3.9 billion for the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement in the Senate bill, with the House measure allocating \$3.8 billion;
- \$3.4 billion in grants for state and local “first responders”—firefighters, police and emergency response personnel to prepare for future terrorist events—in the House bill, while the Senate measure contains \$3.2 billion for this account;
- \$1.3 billion for the U.S. Secret Service in the House measure, \$1.2 in the Senate bill; and
- \$699 million for the Federal Air Marshals program in both measures.

Funding for the Selective Services System for FY 2007 is included in HR 5576, the Departments of Transportation, the Treasury, Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Judiciary, the District of Columbia and Independent Agencies spending bill. The House passed the bill by a vote of 406-22 on June 14. On July 20, the Senate Appropriations Committee passed its version of HR 5576.

Selective Service funding totaled \$24.2 million in both measures, a decrease of \$500 million from the previous year. Since its founding in 1948, the basic mission of Selective Service is to be prepared to supply manpower to the U.S. military to ensure the security of this country during a time of national emergency. Since 1973, the armed forces have relied on volunteers to fill manpower requirements. However, Selective Service remains the primary vehicle by which prospective recruits will be brought into the military if Congress and the President should authorize a return to the draft. The American Legion continues to support this program.

The American Legion continues to support legislation allowing concurrent receipt of military retired pay and VA disability compensation by military retirees. The concept of concurrent receipt dates back to 1891, when Congress passed a law prohibiting active-duty or retired personnel from also receiving disability pensions. The current law dealing with concurrent receipt was established in 1944, when PL 78-314 allowed retired military personnel to elect to waive an amount of their retirement pay equal to their veterans’ disability compensation payments. The advantage to this provision is that while military retirement pay is considered taxable income, veterans’ disability compensation is not subject to federal income taxes. As a result, the retiree who receives veterans’ compensation and the balance of the retired pay is financially better off than the retiree who receives only taxable retired pay.

Rep. Michael Bilirakis (FL) introduced HR 303, another version of legislation he has introduced in previous Congresses. This version would allow a service-connected retiree to receive both military retired pay and veterans’ disability compensation without regard to the level of his or her service-connected disability rating. Currently, only an individual with a disability rating of 50 percent or more is eligible to receive both types of compensation. HR 303 also repeals the 10-year phase-in of full concurrent receipt. Finally, the measure makes individuals who were retired or separated from military service due to a service-connected disability eligible for the full concurrent receipt of both veterans’ disability compensation and either military retired pay or combat-related special pay. HR 303 currently has 236 cosponsors.

Its Senate companion measure—S 558, introduced by Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (NV)—has 36 cosponsors.

In addition, Rep. Bilirakis has introduced a slightly different measure, HR 1366, to help address another long-standing inequity. Some service-connected disabled military retirees were forced to retire from service before serving 20 years because of combat, or operations-related conditions; these persons are referred to as Chapter 61 retirees. Currently, only members who served long enough to retire independent of any disability are eligible for Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC).

Presently, those who were medically retired short of 20 years have to forfeit \$1 of military retired pay for each \$1 they receive in VA disability compensation. This legislation would ensure combat-wounded members receive the retired pay they earned by service. It would exempt from the VA offset an amount of retired pay equal to 2.5 percent of their highest 3-year average basic pay times years of service. For example, it would provide a member who is disability-retired for combat wounds with 15 years of service at least 37.5 percent of high-3 average basic pay from DoD in addition to his or her VA disability compensation. This legislation is important to help address a current inequity whereby a member with 20 years of service and a 10 percent combat-related disability from the VA doesn't have VA compensation for that disability deducted from retired pay, but a member who is 100 percent disabled from combat wounds and medically retired at 19 years and 6 months suffers the full VA offset. HR 1366 currently has 45 cosponsors. Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (NV) introduced a companion measure, S 2385. This measure currently has 5 cosponsors.

During debate on S 2766, the FY 2007 DoD authorization bill, the Senate voted on an amendment that will affect an estimated 30,000 disabled military retirees. The amendment, introduced by Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (NV), would allow veterans whose 100 percent disability rating is tied to unemployability to receive both their military retired pay and their VA disability compensation. Sen. Reid's amendment passed the full Senate on June 22, with little debate and by a voice vote.

For the past several years, Congress has been chipping away at federal laws dating back to 1891 that have denied disabled military retirees their total retired pay and veterans' disability payments. A 2004 law (PL 108-375) included these veterans in a phase-in plan to allow veterans rated 50 percent or greater to incrementally receive their retired pay and disability compensation without deduction from either over a ten-year period. Those veterans with 100 percent disability ratings were to be immediately able to receive their full concurrent receipt.

However, DoD issued an administrative ruling in early 2005 that 100 percent disabled retirees who were rated by their unemployability were not going to be included in the immediate phase-in. Sen. Reid's amendment seeks to reverse this DoD ruling. The new policy would be made effective January 1, 2005.

The American Legion fully supports the intent of Sen. Reid's amendment. A conference committee will soon begin considering S 2766 and its House counterpart, HR 5122. The American Legion will continue to work in the 109th Congress to expand the elimination of this tax to include all disabled military retirees.

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

On May 19 by a vote of 395-0, the House approved HR 5385, the Fiscal Year (FY) 2007 Military Quality of Life and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) funding bill. On July 20, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved a slightly differing version of the VA spending bill.

The House bill contains \$77.6 billion for all VA programs, an 11 percent increase over the current fiscal year, while the Senate measure would fund VA programs at \$77.9 billion. The chart below shows the funding levels for VA discretionary funding programs in the current fiscal year, the President's FY 2007 budget proposal, the House-passed spending levels

contained in HR 5385, the Senate committee-approved funding amounts, and The American Legions proposed FY 2007 funding amounts contained in testimony earlier this year.

VA Programs	PL 109-114 FY 2006	President's Proposal FY 2007	House Funding FY 2007 HR 5385	Senate Funding FY 2007	Legion's Proposal FY 2007
Medical Services	\$22.8 bil.	\$25.5 bil.	\$25.4 bil.	<i>a</i> \$28.7 bil.	\$24.8 bil.
Medical Administration	\$2.9 bil.	\$3.2 bil.	\$3.3 bil.		\$5.1 bil.
Medical Facilities	\$3.3 bil.	\$3.6 bil.	\$3.6 bil.	\$3.6 bil.	\$3.6 bil.
Medical Care Total	\$28.9 bil.	\$32.3 bil.	\$32.3 bil.	\$32.3 bil.	\$33.5 bil.
Medical Care Collection Fund (MCCF)	\$2.1 bil.	\$2.8 bil.	\$2.3 bil.	\$2.3 bil.	<i>b</i> \$2.1 bil.
Medical/Prosthetic Research	\$412 mil.	\$399 mil.	\$412 mil.	\$412 mil.	\$469 mil.
General Operating Expenses	\$1.4 bil.	\$1.5 bil.	\$1.5 bil.	\$1.5 bil.	\$1.9 bil.
Information Technology	\$1.2 bil.	\$1.3 bil.	\$1.3 bil.	\$1.3 bil.	<i>c</i> —
Natl. Cemetery Admin.	\$157 mil.	\$161 mil.	\$161 mil.	\$161 mil.	\$174 mil.
Construction:					
Major Projects	\$607 mil.	\$399 mil.	\$284 mil.	\$429 mil.	\$343 mil.
Minor Projects	\$199 mil.	\$198 mil.	\$210 mil.	\$168 mil.	\$274 mil.
Dedicated CARES Funding	—	—	—	—	\$1 bil.
State Veterans' Homes					
Construction Grants	\$85 mil.	\$85 mil.	\$105 mil.	\$85 mil.	\$250 mil.
State Veterans' Cemeteries					
Construction Grants	\$32 mil.	\$32 mil.	\$32 mil.	\$32 mil.	\$44 mil.

a The Senate Appropriations Committee combined the medical services and medical administration accounts into a single account.

b The American Legion continues to believe that third-party reimbursements should supplement, rather than offset, discretionary funding. This would bring VA medical services to about \$27 billion

c Information technology proposed funding is included in the Medical Administration account.

With regard to military construction programs relating to military quality of life, both measures allocate \$4 billion for family housing construction, operations and maintenance to continue the goal of providing adequate housing for our servicemembers and their families. The Senate measure would provide \$5.5 billion for base realignment and closure (BRAC) activities, while the House bill would provide \$5.4 billion. Finally, HR 5385 also contains \$21 billion for the Defense Health Program, an increase of \$1 billion over the current fiscal year.

The Senate will take the next step in the appropriations process. After that chamber passes its VA funding measure, a conference committee will work out final details before the President can sign the bill into law.

On June 15 President Bush signed PL 109-233, the "Veterans Housing Opportunity and Benefits Improvement Act of 2006." The measure had passed the House on May 22 by a

372-0 recorded vote, and then passed the Senate three days later by unanimous consent.

Among its many provisions is one that authorizes VA to make grants available to assist with housing adaptations at a family member's home in which a severely disabled servicemember is temporarily residing. The grants range from between \$2000 to \$14,000.

PL 109-233 also makes permanent a pilot program that authorized VA to make direct housing loans to Native American veterans. It also makes some changes to VA's Advisory Committee on Veterans' Employment and Training, giving it new authority to assist in employer outreach. Language in the bill also authorizes funding for the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program account, in the amount of \$50 million for each of the next three fiscal years.

The law also allows servicemembers, those who are rated totally disabled at the time of their separations from the military, to have up to two years from their separation date to apply for Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) coverage. In addition, servicemembers will be enabled to convert their coverage to Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI), or an individual plan or policy, during the same two-year period.

On June 22 the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees each approved a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for veterans' benefits and veterans' survivors' benefits. The percentage increase would be calculated based on the Consumer Price Index; that figure is being estimated between 2.2 to 2.6 percent. The House bill is HR 4843, while the Senate measure is S 2562. The president's fiscal 2007 budget request estimated a cost-of-living increase of 2.6 percent.

The House panel also adopted, by voice vote, an amendment to its bill by Rep. Shelley Berkley (NV) that also would apply the COLA to a \$250 monthly payment given to surviving spouses with dependent children under the age of 18. This payment is for the first two years after the soldier's death. The provision for surviving spouses was included in last year's House version of the COLA bill, but it was taken out in conference because of its cost. On June 27 by a vote of 408-0, the House passed HR 4843, sending it to the Senate for further action.

Many Americans are concerned that the federal government is growing too large to serve the needs of the people, with federal appropriations increasing year after year. It is no secret that there are many federal programs that are simply not serving the American public. There are programs that are duplicative, that are no longer necessary, or that simply waste taxpayers' dollars.

On July 12, Representative Todd Tiahrt introduced HR 5766, entitled the "Government Efficiency Act of 2006." The legislation would authorize the establishment of a bipartisan "Federal Review Commission" to study whether a specific aspect of federal government operations would function more efficiently and effectively if some or all of the relevant federal programs and agencies were reorganized, consolidated, abolished, expanded, or transferred. Legislative proposals drafted by the bipartisan commissions would then be considered in Congress pursuant to expedited procedures.

Earlier in the 109th Congress, Rep. Kevin Brady introduced HR 3282, the "Abolishment of Obsolete Agencies and Federal Sunset Act of 2005." This legislation— which currently has 82 cosponsors—would establish a Federal Agency Sunset Commission to:

- Submit to Congress a schedule for review by the Commission, at least once every 12 years, of the abolishment or reorganization of each agency;
- Review and evaluate the efficiency and public need for each agency using specified criteria;
- Recommend whether each agency should be abolished or reorganized; and
- Report to Congress on all legislation introduced that would establish a new agency or a new program to be carried out by an existing agency.

Brady's bill also requires the abolishment of any agency within one year of the commission's review, unless Congress reauthorized that agency. It also authorizes the deadline for abolishing an agency to be extended for an additional two years by legislation enacted by a

super majority of the House of Representatives and the Senate. Finally, HR 3282 directs the Comptroller General and the Director of the Congressional Budget Office—in cooperation with the Director of the Congressional Research Service—to prepare an inventory of Federal programs within each agency for the purpose of advising and assisting Congress and the Commission in carrying out the requirements of the bill. HR 3282 currently has 112 cosponsors.

However, The American Legion and other veterans' service organizations (VSOs) were concerned about some of the provisions of HRs 3282 and 5766. Both measures would create unelected commissions that would be highly susceptible to partisan politics. Also, the commissions are not required to hold public hearings or seek public input into any deliberations to eliminate "unnecessary" programs. One congressional opponent even characterized the bills as creating "midnight commissions" because their unelected members would work in the dark to cut programs without public input, open meetings, and without allowing Congress to request documents and transcripts.

Under the provisions of these bills, there would be a fundamental shift in the responsibilities of authorizing, reauthorizing, and funding the federal government from an elected Congress to unelected and unaccountable commissions. Further, these commissions would bypass oversight powers of Congress, the Government Accountability Office and the various Inspectors General of federal departments. Many VSOs feel that veterans' programs could be subjected to scrutiny by these commissions.

On July 27, in a final rush to complete work prior to the August recess, the House leadership failed to act on either bill. Many moderate lawmakers on both sides of the aisle expressed opposition to the bills. With an October 6 adjournment target and much work needed to complete FY 2007 appropriations legislation, there is a slim chance that either measure will be acted upon in the 109th Congress.

On August 2, the Senate unanimously approved S 2694, the "Veterans' Choice of Representation and Benefits Enhancement Act of 2006." If adopted by the House, the legislation will overturn a Civil War-era policy that denies veterans the right to hire attorneys to help them seek benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs. Under current law, a veteran has to exhaust the VA process—which may take years—before hiring an attorney. The VA Secretary would be authorized to prescribe qualifications and standards of conduct for agents and attorneys acting on behalf of veterans in claim proceedings before VA, and restrictions on fees collected for such services.

"I am delighted that we are closer to providing veterans and their families with the option of hiring attorneys to help them navigate the VA system," said the bill's sponsor, Sen. Larry Craig (ID), chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs. "Doing away with this outdated law will allow veterans—like all other adults in this nation—to have the assistance of counsel if they so choose"

Other provisions of S 2694 would:

- Require the removal of the ashes of a convicted double murderer from Arlington National Cemetery. Russell Wagner brutally murdered an elderly couple in Maryland in 1994. He was later convicted and died in prison. Wagner's remains were then placed in Arlington as the result of a loophole in the law barring the burial of capital offenders in national cemeteries, which has since been closed;
- Make changes to the Montgomery G.I. Bill and the Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance benefits, allowing veterans and survivors eligibility for accelerated educational benefits for high-cost, short-term training leading to jobs in five areas of the economy: transportation, construction, hospitality, energy and high technology;
- Require VA to pay full costs for certain service-connected veterans residing in veterans' homes run by state governments, as well as provide medications for certain service-connected conditions for veterans in those state-run facilities. Under current

- law, the federal government only pays a portion of those costs;
- Allow Indian tribal organizations to apply for grants to establish veterans' cemeteries on Native American lands;
- Allow VA to designate beds in privately-run care centers as "state homes";
- Direct the VA Secretary to designate, establish, and operate at selected Department of Veterans Affairs health-care facilities at least six centers for Parkinson's disease research, education, and clinical activities, and at least two Multiple Sclerosis Centers of Excellence;
- Authorize a VA pilot program to provide caregiver assistance and non-institutional care services;
- Modify and extend the furnishing of government markers for graves of veterans at private ceremonies;
- Improve efforts to prevent homelessness among veterans, especially among those who served in Iraq and Afghanistan; and,
- Establish an Office of Rural Health in the Office of the Under Secretary for Health.

Earlier this summer, The American Legion called into question VA's Information Technology (IT) security measures. The triggering event was the theft in early May of a laptop computer containing sensitive information for 26.5 million veterans, their dependents and military personnel. The theft was not reported to the public until nearly a month after the incident.

The laptop was recovered in mid-July, but the theft triggered an unusually quick response from the VA. Following announcement of the incident, VA Secretary James Nicholson shuffled personnel in the department to concentrate on IT security. Mr. Nicholson also offered free credit monitoring to any veteran who felt that his information had been compromised.

On July 18, President Bush announced that the promised credit monitoring would not be offered, because it was determined that it was unlikely that the information in the laptop had been accessed. American Legion National Commander Thomas L. Bock stated, "Veterans should be able to have full faith and confidence in their government...The Secretary of Veterans Affairs has stated that free credit monitoring for a year would be offered to those who could potentially become victims of identity theft. It is not possible to guarantee with total certainty that the recovered data was not accessed. Therefore The American Legion calls upon the Administration and Congress to provide the promised protection to allow concerned veterans and members of the military a sense of well being and peace of mind they so rightly deserve."

A second incident occurred in August, when VA announced that a subcontractor lost a desktop computer containing personal information for 38,000 veterans and dependents who have used VA facilities in Pennsylvania. Commander Bock called on VA and the Bush Administration to keep its original promise to provide free credit monitoring for veterans.

"I'm not sure how many computers need to be stolen before veterans get some real assurances from the government that their information is not only safe, but that safe guards will be in place to help protect them against identity theft," said Commander Bock. "In light of the latest security breach, The American Legion once again calls on the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Bush Administration to keep its promise to veterans and provide free credit monitoring for one year."

This latest breach also reinforces the Legion's previous call on the Bush Administration to look very closely at IT security and procedures at all federal agencies. "Americans across the board, not just veterans, could be the next victims of a security breach," Bock explained. "From the Internal Revenue Service who mails out those refund checks to the Treasury Department who issues those savings bonds, personal information is stored all across the federal spectrum and must be protected...".

Congress also responded to the two incidents, with over 25 separate bills in the House and Senate aimed at addressing some facet of IT security or credit protection and monitoring

for veterans and their dependents. The American Legion will keep a very close watch on this issue for the remainder of the 109th Congress, and certainly into the 110th Congress.

**Annual Consolidated National Legislative Council
Activities Report 2005-2006**

In accordance with NEC Resolution No. 28 (October 1994), I am pleased to submit the following Annual Consolidated National Legislative Council Activities Report for 2005-2006. Summaries of the Department Reports are attached as an addendum to this report.

1. Legislative Alerts, Advisories and Updates sent out in the past year:

A. Number of Legislative Alerts received: 6

- 11/14/05—Flag Amendment Mark Up
- 02/07/06—VA Budget Request 2007: The “Good, the Bad and the Foggy”
- 05/09/06—Dean Stoline, Assistant Director/Grassroots Coordinator
- 05/18/06—Immediate Action for Senate support for HR 5037, Respect for America’s Fallen Heroes Act
- 05/25/06—HR 5037, Respect for America’s Fallen Heroes Act, Passes Congress
- 08/09/06—Public Expression of Religion Act, contact Congress to support bills

B. Number of Legislative Advisories received: 3

- 10/07/05—Senate Rejects Stabenow Amendment To DOD Spending Bill, Assured Funding for VA Health Care Rebuffed
- 12/29/05—Congressional Hearing
- 05/09/06—Flag Amendment Passes Senate Subcommittee

C. Number of Legislative Action Center Alerts and Updates: 15

- 06/20/05—Vote on Flag Amendment Set for Wednesday, June 22
- 07/29/05—Curbs on Predatory Lending Practices to Service members Sought
- 07/29/05—Senator Stabenow Introduces Assured VA Funding Amendment
- 09/15/05—Legion Appalled by Ruling on Pledge of Allegiance
- 09/21/05—Legion Commander Testifies Before Congress
- 09/21/05—Legion Thanks Congress, But Identifies Concerns
- 09/30/05—Additional Cosponsors Sought for “Combat-Related Special Compensation Act”
- 10/06/05—Senate Rejects Stabenow Amendment to DoD Spending Bill
- 10/28/05—Cosponsors Needed for Medicare Reimbursement Legislation
- 11/17/05—SBP Discharge Petition Launched
- 12/06/05—Senator Clinton’s “Flag-Burning Law” is Dead on Arrival
- 02/16/06—FY 2007 VA Budget Request Released
- 03/07/06—Contact House Budget Committee Today!
- 05/25/06—HR 5037, Respect for America’s Fallen Heroes Act, Grass Roots “Thank You” and Update on Important Provisions in the Bill
- 08/09/06—Public Expression of Religion Act, contact Congress to support bills

2. Grassroots Lobbying Activities in Washington, DC

National Commander’s Testimony—September 20, 2005.
Washington Conference—February 26 to March 2, 2006.
CFA Press Conference and Walk-the-Hill— June 14, 2006
CFA Walk-the-Hill—June 26-27, 2006

3. National Legislative Council Meetings Held

National Legislative Council Meetings are held by the individual states at appropriate times throughout the year. Nationally, no meetings are held, save for those who receive call-ins

to the Washington Conference and the Commander's testimony. Most Department meetings are held in conjunction with existing events such as the Mid-Winter Conferences, Department Conventions, On-The-Hill Days or similar events. Most Departments held between two to four meetings of the Council throughout the year, although there were many informal meetings of the Council. The Addendum to this report contains specific details regarding National Legislative Council meetings held this past year.

4. The American Legion *Dispatch* articles: 2005-2006

- August 19, 2005—"Supplemental Fiscal 2005-2006 VA Funding Enacted"
- September 23, 2005—"VA Funding Shortfalls Concern Legion"
- October 21, 2005—"Senate Rejects Waiving Budget Act"
- November 18, 2005—"Fiscal 2006 VA Appropriations Bill in Conference"
- December 16, 2005—"Key Legion Issues Prominent in 109th Congress"
- January 20, 2006—"Protection of Boy Scouts, Veterans Issues Faced 109th Congress"
- February 23, 2006—"Bush Administration Releases Fiscal 2007 Budget Request; GAO Exposes VA Problems; Legion Testifies on VETS Program"
- March 17, 2006—"OPM Challenges Veterans Preference Ruling; Immigration Measures Under Fire"
- April 21, 2006—"Disagreements Stall House Budget Resolution; Immigration Reform on Hold"
- May 19, 2006—"Senate Subcommittee Approves S.J. Res. 12; Funding Draft Passes"
- June 20, 2006—"Senate Expected to Vote on Flag Amendment; House Passes VA Appropriations; Senate Passes Immigration Legislation"
- July 14, 2006—"House Passes \$427 Billion DoD funding Measure"

5. Highlights of the Legislative Year

The American Legion once again was able to push ahead with several of our top legislative priority issues to the forefront in Congress. Representative Cunningham (CA) introduced the H.J. Res. 10, the Flag Amendment. The proposed amendment to the Constitution of the United States authorizes Congress to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States. The bill successfully passed the House with 286 Yeas and 130 Nays.

The bill went to the Senate for a vote on June 27, 2006. There were 66 Senate supporters of the Flag Amendment (S.J. Res. 12), but we still lacked one critical vote. The final vote was 66-34. We have begun a voter education program on this issue for the upcoming elections. We encourage everyone to help in securing the final vote.

On July 28, 2005, the Congress voted to approve an additional \$1.5 billion for veterans' health care for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2005 in the FY 2006 Interior Appropriations Bill (H.R. 2361). The President signed the Interior Appropriations Bill on August 2, 2005 and it became public law 109-54.

On May 26, 2005, the House approved H.R. 2528, the new Military Quality of Life and Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies appropriations bill for FY 2006 (MIL-QUAL Appropriations Bill). On July 21, 2005, the Senate Committee on Appropriations approved the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, FY 2006. The House Committee recommends a total of \$68 billion in fiscal year 2006. This is an increase of \$2.3 billion above the fiscal year 2005 enacted level and an increase of \$600 million above the budget request. The Senate Committee recommends \$70.7 billion for VA, including \$36.6 billion in mandatory spending and \$34.1 billion in discretionary spending. The amount provided for discretionary activities represents an increase of \$3.4 billion above the fiscal year 2005 enacted level and \$3.2 billion above the President's budget request. Most importantly, none of the President's legislative proposals, such as enrollment fees and

increased co-payments were enacted. The American Legion opposed these legislative proposals because they would restrict health care for veterans.

The American Legion joined with eight other veterans and military service organizations and formed the Partnership for Veterans Health Care Budget Reform (Partnership). The Partnership continues to lobby for change in VA appropriations for health care from its current, unpredictable discretionary funding to a more guaranteed, formula-driven mandatory funding process. The Partnership is composed of: The American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, American Veterans, Blinded Veterans Association, Jewish War Veterans, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Paralyzed Veterans of America, and Vietnam Veterans of America. The American Legion believes this would provide adequate fiscal stability for all enrolled veterans to receive timely access to quality health care provided by VA.

Successfully defeated several legislative initiatives contained in the President's budget request for FY 2007: create a \$250 annual enrollment fee for certain veterans enrolled in the VA medical care system; increase in prescription co-payments for certain veterans enrolled in the VA medical care system; and out-of-pocket changes in TRICARE beneficiaries of military retirees and their family members under the age of 65.

6. The American Legion Auxiliary:

The American Legion Auxiliary continues to be an invaluable asset to The American Legion Family and our grassroots lobbying ability. The prolific letter writing, countless phone calls and numerous office visits by Auxiliary members never ceases to amaze me. A special thanks as well to all Auxiliary Members who attended our National Leadership and Information Conferences. Only through a united effort of Legionnaires, Sons and the Auxiliary can our legislative goals be realized.

7. National Legislative Council Awards:

I am pleased to announce that two National Legislative Council members were selected for their outstanding contributions in advancing the legislative portfolio of The American Legion during this past reporting period: John Severa (NY) and Stanley Gold (FL).

Annual Consolidated National Legislative Council Activities Report 2005-2006 Addendum

Department Summaries

ALABAMA: (Vice-Chairman Dolores Hardin): The Department of Alabama National Legislative Council met four times in conjunction with department meetings. Two Council Members attended the Washington Conference and visited four congressional offices. The Vice-Chairman attended the National Commander's Testimony and visited Representatives Artur Davis and Terry Everett. No congressional members attended the breakfast. No congressional members attended the Department Convention. A Veteran's Forum was held in February. Representatives Spencer Bachus and Arthur Davis met with twenty-four veterans.

ALASKA: (Vice-Chairman Joseph T. Craig): The Department of Alaska National Legislative Council made contacts via e-mail or telephone Senators Lisa Murkowski and Ted Stevens regarding all legislative alerts received during 2006. Contacts were also made regarding the items presented in the Legislative Action Center Alerts. Copies of all replies were faxed to our Legislative Office. Senator Murkowski's letter regarding the Response for America's Fallen Heroes Act was forwarded to the Legislative Commission office in Washington, DC.

ARIZONA: (Vice-Chairman Neal S. Sundeen): The Department of Arizona National Legislative Council met with the Department Legislative Commission during the Fall Conference held in Mesa. In addition to discussion of national and state legislative priorities we were addressed by candidate for National Commander Paul A. Morin, the director of the

Arizona Department of Veterans Affairs, and National Commander Thomas Bock. Adjutant John Aldecoa and I attended the National Commander's Testimony in September and visited Senator John Kyl and Representative Raul Grijalva and with aides of the other congressional members. At the Washington Conference the committee held a reception for congressional members or their aides. After the reception the committee met with Senator Kyl and discussed the immigration bill. We also thanked him for his support of the Flag Amendment. We 'buttonholed' Senator Feinstein of California and thanked her for her support of the amendment as well. We also visited one other congressional office. Senator Kyl was presented the "Legislator of the Year" award at the Department Convention. He spoke to the auxiliary and SAL members as well as us. The award presentation was covered by one local TV station. We responded with letters to the congressional delegation when Legislative alerts and Legislative Action Center Alerts were sent to us. Several letters were sent to Senators Kyl and McCain regarding the Flag Amendment. Additional efforts included attendance at a legislative breakfast for Representative John Shadegg and a Veteran's Day function with Representative J. D. Hayworth and a visit to the local office of Senator McCain.

ARKANSAS: (Vice-Chairman Nick Bacon): The Department of Arkansas National Legislative Council met from July 7-9, 2006. Four Council Members attended the Washington Conference and visited six congressional members. Five Council Members attended the National Commander's Testimony, visited six congressional offices and had no congressional member attend the breakfast. No congressional members attended the Department Convention. No awards were presented. The Vice-Chairman is a member of the Congressional Veteran Disability Commission. No feedback was received regarding the Legislative Action Center and Dateline: Capitol Hill in *The American Legion Dispatch*.

CALIFORNIA: (Vice-Chairman James Nile Creacy): The Department of California National Legislative Council met at the Spring Conference on February 27, 2006. Fifteen Council Members attended the Washington Conference and fifty-five congressional offices were visited. Council Members were given team assignments to lobby representatives, first their local representative and then calling on other representative offices, using the Legislative Priorities Sheet. The Auxiliary participated in these "Walk the Halls" efforts. The teams were informed about the issues to discuss and the grassroots efforts went well. Seven Council Members attended the National Commander's Testimony. One congressional member attended the Department Convention. No congressional awards were presented. A "Legislative Council Member" and a "Runner Up—Legislative Council Member" were awarded. No feedback was received regarding the Legislative Action Center. Dateline: Capitol Hill in *The American Legion Dispatch* is regarded as very informative.

COLORADO: (Vice-Chairman Thomas L. Bock): The Department of Colorado National Legislative Council met one on one with the Vice-Chairman and communicated regularly by email and telephone. Three Council Members attended the Washington Conference and visited seven representative and two senatorial offices. Three Council Members attended the National Commander's Testimony and visited three congressional offices. No congressional member attended the breakfast. No congressional members attended the Department Convention. No awards were presented. We contacted both senators to confirm their co-sponsorship and continued support for SJR 12, the Flag Amendment. We also are working closely with them regarding the appropriations for the proposed new VA Hospital in Denver. No feedback was received regarding the Legislative Action Center and Dateline: Capitol Hill in *The American Legion Dispatch*.

CONNECTICUT: (Vice-Chairman Gerald Dierman): The Department of Connecticut National Legislative Council's Vice Chairman communicated individually as needed with each Council Member. Three Council Members attended the Washington Conference and seven congressional offices were visited. Two Council Members attended the National Commander's Testimony and two congressional offices were visited. No congressional members attended the breakfast or the department convention. No awards were presented. Several members

participated in selecting candidates for the military academies. The feedback on the Legislative Action Center is it is worth the effort. Feedback was also received on Dateline: Capitol Hill in The American Legion *Dispatch* and all agreed it was informative.

DELAWARE: (Vice-Chairman Thomas L. Burns): The Department of Delaware National Legislative Council met January 16, 2006 in Dover. Two Council Members attended the Washington Conference and visited three congressional offices. Two Council Members attended the National Commander's Testimony and visited three congressional offices. No congressional member attended the breakfast. Two congressional members sent representatives to the Department Convention and one sent a video. No awards were presented. We tried again to convince our senators to vote for the Flag Amendment but to no avail. Feedback on the Legislative Action Center included much discussion on the ruling on the Pledge of Allegiance. Dateline: Capitol Hill in The American Legion *Dispatch* contains good information.

FLORIDA: (Vice-Chairman Vincent Tubman): The Department of Florida National Legislative Council met after the National Commander's Testimony on September 9, 2005. Nine Council Members attended the Washington Conference and visited 27 congressional offices. Eight Council Members attended the National Commander's Testimony and visited 27 congressional offices. No congressional members attended the breakfast. No congressional members attended the Department Convention. No awards were presented. Legislative Alert faxes were sent to Representatives Cliff Stearns and John Mica. The Council has been busy developing relationships and educating members. No feedback on the Legislative Action Center or Dateline: Capitol Hill in The American Legion *Dispatch* was received.

GEORGIA: (Vice-Chairman Roger Tingler): the Department of Georgia National Legislative Council met in April at the Spring Conference in Macon with twenty-three members in attendance. Two Council Members attended the National Commander's Testimony and visited six congressional offices. One congressional member attended the breakfast. Subsequently at the Washington Conference four Council Members visited six congressional offices. One congressional member attended the Department's convention. No awards or recognition were presented. We had grassroots talks with both our Senators and several congressmen. We received feedback by telephone call and e-mail regarding the Legislative Action Center. No feedback was received regarding Dateline: Capitol Hill in The American Legion *Dispatch*.

HAWAII: (Vice-Chairman Michael McCloskey): fail to submit report.

IDAHO: (Vice-Chairman Arthur L. Gimpel): The Department of Idaho National Legislative Council met in Post Falls at the State Convention on July 14, 2006. Two Council Members attended the Washington Conference and visited four congressional offices. No council member attended the National Commander's Testimony. No congressional member attended the Department Convention; however, Senator Larry Craig and Representative Butch Otter sent representatives and letters to be read at our Convention Joint Opening on July 14, 2006. No awards were presented. We are privileged to have two Senators, Larry Craig and Mike Crapo, and two Representatives, Mike Simpson and Butch Otter, all of whom support most of The American Legion Actions. No feedback regarding the Legislative Action Center or Dateline: Capitol Hill in The American Legion *Dispatch* was received.

ILLINOIS: (Vice-Chairman Vincent A. Sanzotta): The Department of Illinois National Legislative Council did not meet this year. Twenty Council Members attended the Washington Conference and visited with fourteen congressional members. No congressional members attended the Department Convention. No awards were presented. Letters were written to Senator Obama to get his support for the Flag Amendment.

INDIANA: (Vice-Chairman Allan Titus): The Department of Indiana Legislative Council met several occasions. Six Council Members attended the National Commander's Testimony and made four congressional office visits. Six members of the congressional delegation attended the breakfast. One congressional member personally attended the Department Convention and one member appeared on tape. Six Council Members attended the Washington Conference and nine of the congressional offices were visited. At the State level the Legislative Council

presented special awards or recognition to three awardees, but no “Legislative Council Member of the Year” was awarded. Feedback regarding the Legislative Action Center has been received and feedback about Dateline: Capitol Hill in The American Legion *Dispatch* was very positive. With regard to the congressional delegation, grassroots “efforts with Congressman Buyer have proven fruitless.”

IOWA: (Vice-Chairman David Rehbein): The Department of Iowa National Legislative Council met at the Mid-Winter Conference in January 2006. Two Council Members attended the Washington Conference and visited seven congressional offices. Two Council Members attended the National Commander’s Testimony and visited three congressional offices. No congressional member attended the breakfast. No congressional member attended the Department Convention. No awards were presented. No feedback regarding the Legislative Action Center or Dateline: Capitol Hill in The American Legion *Dispatch* was received.

KANSAS: (Vice-Chairman Philip B. Finley): The Department of Kansas National Legislative Council met during February 3-5, 2006, at American Legion Post Home in Haps, Kansas, during May 6-7, 2006 while attending the National Spring Meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana, and from May 19-21, 2006, at the Department Convention in Great Bend, Kansas. Two Council Members attended the Washington Conference and visited six congressional offices. One Council Member attended the National Commander’s Testimony. One congressional member attended the Department Convention. The Department sponsored a debate for the candidates for Governor, as this is a gubernatorial election year. Telephone calls and personal visits were conducted with three congressional district offices. Special emphasis was Senator Sam Brownback who chairs the flag amendment committee. The Department Adjutant made numerous contacts throughout the year with each member of the House and Senate. During the Department Convention, several delegates debated how to best utilize The American Legion *Dispatch* and with whom. The consensus seems to be that while it is clear, repetition of its use would help the process.

KENTUCKY: (Vice-Chairman James Terrell): The Department of Kentucky National Legislative Council met at the Winter Conference in Louisville on January 28, 2006, and at the Department Convention in Louisville on June 16, 2006. Three Council Members attended the Washington Conference and visited eight congressional offices. One Council Member attended the National Commander’s Testimony and visited six congressional offices. Two congressional members attended the Department’s Convention. No feedback was received on the Legislative Action Center or Dateline: Capitol Hill in The American Legion *Dispatch*.

LOUISIANA: (Vice-Chairman William M. Detweiler): The Department of Louisiana National Legislative Council met at the Mid-Winter Conference and at the Department Convention, both held Alexandria. Three Council Members attended the Washington Conference and visited seven congressional members. No Council Members were in attendance for the National Commander’s Testimony due to the impact of Hurricanes Rita and Katrina. Two congressional members attended the Department Convention. No awards were presented. Because of our grassroots efforts Senator Landrieu became a co-sponsor of Senate Joint Resolution 12, the Flag Amendment. No feedback on the Legislative Action Center was received, but we always emphasize the availability of the staff as a knowledgeable source of information when we meet with our members of Congress and their staffs. No feedback was received regarding Dateline: Capitol Hill in The American Legion *Dispatch*.

MAINE: (Vice-Chairman Ronald Sailor): The Department of Maine National Legislative Council held no meetings. Four Council Members attended the Washington Conference and visited four congressional offices. No members attended the National Commander’s Testimony. Three congressional members attended the Department Convention. The Department did not present any special awards or recognitions. Positive feedback was received regarding Dateline: Capitol Hill in The American Legion *Dispatch*.

MARYLAND: (Vice-Chairman Alfred M. Schmidt): The Department of Maryland National Legislative Council met August 14, 2005 in Parkville; November 20, 2005 in Chesapeake

Beach; February 19, 2006 in Ocean City and May 21, 2006 in Westernport. Twelve Council Members attended the National Commander's Testimony, visited two congressional offices and seven congressional members attended the Department's reception. Six Council Members attended the Washington Conference and visited two congressional offices. All congressional district members met with their representative this past year.

MASSACHUSETTS: (Vice-Chairman Henry P. Bradley): The Department of Massachusetts National Legislative Council met with John P. Connor, Chairman, Paul Morin, Vice Chairman, John Julkern and Water Zaricher in attendance. Three Council Members attended the Washington Conference and visited eleven congressional offices. Seven Council Members attended the National Commander's Testimony and visited eleven congressional offices. No congressional members attended the breakfast. Representative Edward Markey was presented a special award. No "Legislative Council Member of the Year" was awarded. Part of our grassroots efforts included reprinting pertinent articles for further distribution. No feedback was received on the Legislative Action Center. Dateline: Capitol Hill in *The American Legion Dispatch* had feedback.

MICHIGAN: (Vice-Chairman Vernon Henrichs): The Department of Michigan National Legislative Council conducted no meetings. Three Council Members attended the National Commander's Testimony and visited three congressional offices. Three congressional members attended the breakfast. No congressional members were at the Department Convention. Five Council Members attended the Washington Conference and visited five congressional offices. No awards were presented. A lunch was held at the Cannon House Office Building in Washington DC. Nine congressional members attended and a wide range of issues was discussed. No feedback was received on the Legislative Action Center or Dateline: Capitol Hill in *The American Legion Dispatch*.

MINNESOTA: (Vice-Chairman Jeff Olson): The Department of Minnesota National Legislative Council met in July 2005 at the Department Convention. Four Council Members attended the Washington Conference and visited ten congressional offices. One Council Member attended the National Commander's Testimony and visited six congressional offices. No congressional members attended the breakfast. No congressional members attended the Department Convention. No awards were presented. The Legislative Council continues to be a very productive method to interacting with our congressional delegation. More use of e-mail to contact members could speed the delivery of information and reduce mailing costs. Very positive feedback was received on the Legislative Action Center and Dateline: Capitol Hill in *The American Legion Dispatch*.

MISSISSIPPI: (Vice-Chairman Robert Gosa): The Department of Mississippi National Legislative Council met February 27, 2006 at the Washington Conference, January 13, 2006 at the Mid-Winter Conference in Vicksburg and July 15, 2005 at the State Convention. Three Council Members attended the Washington Conference visiting six congressional offices. No Council Member attended the National Commander's. No congressional member attended the Department's Convention. No awards were given. We have received feedback on the Legislative Action Center and Dateline: Capitol Hill in *The American Legion Dispatch*.

MISSOURI: (Vice-Chairman Lynn M. Dorrell): The Department of Missouri National Legislative Council met at the Fall Conference in Jefferson City in October 2005; at the Spring Conference in Jefferson City on February 24, 2006 and during the Department Convention on July 8, 2006. Three Council Members attended the Washington Conference and visited four congressional offices. One Council Member attended the National Commander's Testimony and visited one congressional office. No congressional member attended the breakfast. Five congressional members attended the Department's Convention. The Department presented legislator of the year awards to state representatives. No "Legislative Council Member of the Year" was awarded. No feedback regarding Dateline: Capitol Hill in *The American Legion Dispatch* was received.

MONTANA: (Vice-Chairman David M. McLean): The Department of Montana National

Legislative Council met twice in 2005; at the Department Convention in June and at the National Commander's Testimony in September. Two Council Members attended the National Commander's Testimony and visited three congressional offices. Four Council Members attended the Washington Conference and visited three congressional offices. The Department did not present an award to a congressional member and no "Legislative Council Member of the Year" was awarded. The Department has a telephone "tree" and an e-mail "tree" so that the members of the congressional delegation can be contacted on legislative issues as needed. The Department has received very positive feedback about Dateline: Capitol Hill in *The American Legion Dispatch*.

NEBRASKA: (Vice-Chairman Michael D. Helm): The Department of Nebraska National Legislative Council met with each other while attending Legion conventions and conferences. All six Council Members attended the Washington Conference and visited all five congressional offices. One Council Member attended the National Commander's Testimony and visited three congressional offices. No congressional member attended the breakfast. No congressional member was presented an award and no "Legislative Council Member of the Year" was awarded. We look forward to a new representative replacing Representative Tom Osborne. We are concerned Representative Lee Terry does not seem to have time for us. It has been several years since he has made a point to meet with us. Senator Ben Nelson has been extremely helpful, for example on the mandatory funding issue. The Department has received positive feedback about the Legislative Action Center and members appreciate being kept up to date by Dateline: Capitol Hill in *The American Legion Dispatch*.

NEVADA: (Vice-Chairman Ron Gutzman): The Department of Nevada National Legislative Council met June 23, 2005, in Las Vegas, November 4 in Henderson, January 13, 2006, in Henderson, February 4 in Tonopah, February 10 in Tonopah and June 30 in Ely. Four council members attended the Washington Conference and visited five congressional offices. Three Council Members attended the National Commander's Testimony and visited five congressional offices. No congressional member attended the breakfast. Representative Shelley Berkley attended the Department Convention. Senator Harry Reid and Representative Jim Gibbons were presented awards at the Department Convention. The Department did not present a "Legislative Council Member of the Year" Award. The Department First Vice, all members of the Legislative Commission and the Department Commander wrote letters addressing our discontent with Chairman Steve Buyer's decision to cancel the September Legislative presentation to Congress. These letters were also printed in the Department newsletter to be used as models for grass roots responses to our representatives. At least fifty letters to representatives were generated and probably more. No feedback regarding the Legislative Action Center was received and positive feedback was received regarding Dateline: Capitol Hill in *The American Legion Dispatch*.

NEW HAMPSHIRE: (Vice-Chairman Richard F. Heon): The Department of New Hampshire Legislative Council met June 2006 at the State Convention. Five Council Members attended the Washington Conference and visited four congressional offices. Five Council Members attended the National Commander's Testimony and visited four congressional offices. No congressional members attended the breakfast. One congressional member attended the Department Convention. The Department presented an award to Representative Jeb Bradley. No "Legislative Council Member of the Year" was awarded. With regard to grassroots efforts, the vice-chairman serves on the State Veterans Advisory Committee of New Hampshire. It comprises voting members from The American Legion and eight other veteran and military service organizations and is tasked to address veteran issues, including health and personal development. Feedback regarding the Legislative Action Center was received from council members and no feedback was received regarding Dateline: Capitol Hill in *The American Legion Dispatch*.

NEW JERSEY: (Vice-Chairman Anthony Lori): The Department of New Jersey National Legislative Council met six times during the year at The American Legion Department

Headquarters in Trenton. The dates were June 28, August 13, October 15 and December 10, 2005 and February 4 and April 6, 2006. No Council Members attended the Washington Conference. Two Council Members attended the National Commander's Testimony. No congressional members attended the Department Convention. No "Legislative Council Member of the Year" or special awards were presented. We visited with Senator Robert Menendez and requested his support of the Flag Amendment. He responded 'Yes' and he did vote 'Yes'. Representative Rodney Frelinghuysen is in constant contact with Vice-Chairman Lori. No feedback was received on the Legislative Action Center or Dateline: Capitol Hill in The American Legion *Dispatch*.

NEW MEXICO: (Vice-Chairman Elizardo Sanchez): The Department of New Mexico Legislative Council met in July during the School of Instruction. Three Council Members attended the Washington Conference and visited five congressional offices. One Council Member attended the National Commander's Testimony and visited four congressional offices. No congressional members attended the breakfast. A Certificate of Appreciation was presented to Senator Pete Domenici for his support of the Flag Amendment. The Department did not present a "Legislative Council Member of the Year" award. Phone lines were set up during the School of Instruction to call congressional members urging them to support the Flag Amendment and other veteran's issues. No feedback was received on the Legislative Action Center or Dateline: Capitol Hill in The American Legion *Dispatch*.

NEW YORK: (Vice-Chairman John Patrick Tipping): The Department of New York National Legislative Council met: January 27, 2006 at Mid-Winter Conference, March 13, 2006 at Hill Day, and July 21, 2006 at the Department Convention. Eight Council Members attended the Washington Conference and visited 17 congressional offices. Two Council Members attended the National Commander's Testimony and visited seven congressional offices. No congressional member attended the Department Convention. The Department presented a special award to Representatives Brian Higgins, 27th Congressional District, and James Walsh, 25th Congressional District. The Department will recognize a "Legislative Member of the Year" at the Mid-Winter Conference in January 2007. All positive feedback was received on the Legislative Action Center. Dateline: Capitol Hill in The American Legion *Dispatch* is an excellent re-cap of pending issues.

NORTH CAROLINA: (Vice-Chairman Larry Tetterton): The Department of North Carolina National Legislative Council had no meetings. Two Council Members attended the Washington Conference and visited fifteen congressional offices. One Council Member attended the National Commander's Testimony and visited three congressional offices. No congressional members attended the breakfast. One congressional member attended the Department Convention. No award to a congressional member and no "Legislative Council Member of the Year" were awarded. Our grassroots efforts included keeping weekly contact with Representative Bob Etheridge and his office and maintaining a quarterly contact with Representative David Price. Positive feedback was received on the Legislative Action Center and no feedback was received regarding Dateline: Capitol Hill in The American Legion *Dispatch*.

NORTH DAKOTA: (Vice-Chairman Curt Twete): The Department of North Dakota National Legislative Council met in Dickinson on February 11, 2006, and in Williston on June 24, 2006. Three Council Members attended the Washington Conference and visited three congressional offices. Two Council Members attended the National Commander's Testimony and visited three congressional offices. No congressional member attended the breakfast. No congressional member attended the Department Convention. No awards were presented. A heavy effort was put forth on our two senators concerning SJR 12, but to no avail. We made a special effort to thank Representative Earl Pomroy for his continual support of a flag amendment. The Legislative Action Center is a good source of information. No feedback was received regarding Dateline: Capitol Hill in The American Legion *Dispatch*.

OHIO: (Vice-Chairman William Balsler): The Department of Ohio National Legislative

Council met in Dayton at the Crown Plaza Hotel on July 8, 2006. Nine Council Members attended the Washington Conference and visited twenty congressional offices. Four Council Members attended the National Commander's Testimony and visited four congressional offices. No congressional member attended the breakfast. Thirteen congressional members attended the Department Convention. Senator Mike DeWine was the keynote speaker. Our senators were thanked for their support of the flag amendment. The senators also recognized our oratorical contests give youngsters a greater input into our system of government. No "Legislative Council Member of the Year" was awarded. The Legislative Action Center reports are useful when formulating member opinions about current actions in Congress. Feedback regarding Dateline: Capitol Hill in The American Legion *Dispatch* indicated that e-mail updates seem to be 'more timely.'

OKLAHOMA: (Vice-Chairman Ray Champoux): The Department of Oklahoma National Legislative Council met at Reed Center during Mid-Winter Conference on January 14 and 15. One Council Member attended the Washington Conference and visited six congressional offices. One Council Member attended the National Commander's Testimony and visited six congressional offices. No awards were presented. Grassroots lobbying is discussed throughout the year at district meetings. Everyone likes the Legislative Action Center. No feedback was received on Dateline: Capitol Hill in The American Legion *Dispatch*.

OREGON: (Vice-Chairman Robert "Bob" Mariani): The Department of Oregon National Legislative Council held no meetings. Five council members attended the Washington Conference and visited all the congressional offices. Council Members attended the National Commander's Testimony and visited all the congressional offices. One congressional member attended the breakfast. No congressional member attended the Department Convention. No awards were presented. No feedback was received on the Legislative Action Center or Dateline: Capitol Hill in The American Legion *Dispatch*.

PENNSYLVANIA: (Vice-Chairman Ronald F. Conley): The Department of Pennsylvania National Legislative Council met on January 14, 2006, at the Crown Plaza in Pittsburgh. Twelve Council Members attended the Washington Conference and visited eighteen congressional offices. Four Council Members attended the National Commander's Testimony and visited eight congressional offices. One congressional member attended the Washington Reception. Two congressional members attended the Department Convention. No awards were given. We are concerned that congressional staff members take us to the public cafeterias for meetings. We think meetings conducted in cafeterias should be changed due to the cafeteria's activity and high levels of noise. These distractions defeat the purpose of grassroots visits to discuss our concerns and to encourage congressional members to support our issues. The Council members wish to express their thanks for the Legislative Action Center and note the information on it is always current. No feedback was received regarding Dateline: Capitol Hill in The American Legion *Dispatch*.

RHODE ISLAND: (Vice-Chairman Anthony DeQuattro): The Department of Rhode Island National Legislative Council met before every DEC meeting which is the third Monday of the month. Meetings are held at the Post where the DEC meeting is taking place. Five Council Members attended the Washington Conference and visited all congressional offices. No council members attended the National Commander's Testimony. Two congressional members attended the Department Convention. The Department did not present an award to a congressional member and no "Legislative Council Member of the Year" was awarded. No feedback was been received regarding the Legislative Action Center and Dateline: Capitol Hill in The American Legion *Dispatch*.

SOUTH CAROLINA: (Vice-Chairman R. M. 'Sonny' Singletary): The Department of South Carolina National Legislative Council met in October after the Washington meeting and are currently working with several members of the Congressional Delegation regarding important issues affecting veterans in South Carolina. Five Council Members attended the Washington conference in March and sponsored a breakfast for all members of the Congressional

Delegation. Two Council Members attended the National Commander's Testimony and visited two congressional offices. No congressional members attended the breakfast. One congressional member attended the Department Convention. Two South Carolina state legislators were recognized and presented special awards. The Department did not present a "Legislative Council Member of the Year" award. Conversations have taken place with Representatives Gresham Barrett and Lindsey Graham with concerns regarding veteran retirees. Our Department has worked diligently with Representative Henry Brown and Senator Jim DeMint regarding the merge of the Charleston VA and MUSC. No feedback was been received regarding the Legislative Action Center and Dateline: Capitol Hill in *The American Legion Dispatch*.

SOUTH DAKOTA: (Vice-Chairman Paul A. Evenson): The Department of South Dakota National Legislative Council met February 27 at the Washington Conference, January 19 at the Mid-Winter Conference in Mitchell and June 16 at the State Convention in Brookings. Three Council Members attended the Washington Conference and visited all three congressional offices. Three Council Members attended the National Commander's Testimony and visited three congressional offices. No congressional members attended the breakfast. All three congressional members attended the Department Convention. The Department did not present an award to a congressional member and no "Legislative Council Member of the Year" was awarded. Both Senators and our representative support mandatory funding, all three supported the Flag Amendment and one senator and our representative are on their respective Veterans Affairs committees. No feedback was been received regarding the Legislative Action Center and Dateline: Capitol Hill in *The American Legion Dispatch*.

TENNESSEE: (Vice-Chairman Howard Holt): The Department of Tennessee National Legislative Council met on February 4, 2006 at the Airport Marriott in Nashville and on February 28, 2006 at the Hyatt Hotel in Washington, DC. The Department had five Council Members attending the Washington Conference and visited nine congressional offices. One Council Member attended the National Commander's Testimony and visited two congressional offices. Two congressional members attended the Department Convention. The Department did not present an award to a congressional member and no "Legislative Council Member of the Year" was awarded.

TEXAS: (Vice-Chairman John Brieden): The Department of Texas National Legislative Council met July 2006 during the Department Convention with eight members present. Seven Council Members attended the Washington Conference and visited sixteen congressional offices. Six Council Members attended the National Commander's Testimony and visited eleven congressional offices. No congressional members attended the breakfast. One congressional member attended the Department Convention. An award was presented to Representative Sam Johnson. No "Legislative Council Member of the Year" was awarded. During the Washington Conference Texas had a breakfast for our delegation at the Capitol. Three Representatives attended plus aides from five other house offices and one senate office. We felt it was good for the first try. We also had two candidates for Governor address the Department Convention. We emphasize to our membership in Texas that the Legislative Action Center is a valuable tool in keeping up to date and informed. PNC Brieden speaks often to Post and District leaders about clipping the articles from Dateline: Capitol Hill in *The American Legion Dispatch* and keeping them in a folder. They then have more information than anyone else on legislation to use to make presentations or to answer questions.

UTAH: (Vice-Chairman William E. Christoffersen): The Department of Utah National Legislative Council met at the Department Executive Committee (DEC) meeting in Salt Lake City on December 3, 2005; February 27-28, 2006, in Washington, DC; at the DEC meeting on March 11, 2006; and at the State Capitol Flag Rally on June 5, 2006. Four Council Members attended the Washington Conference and visited all five congressional offices. Four Council Members attended the National Commander's Testimony and visited all five congressional offices. No congressional member attended the breakfast. Two congressional members

attended the Department Convention. Representatives Jim Matheson and Rob Bishop were presented plaques of appreciation. The Department did not present a "Legislative Council Member of the Year" award. During the year Council Chairman Christoffersen, Terry Schow and others attended congressional and state legislative meetings, socials and dinners. Legion proposals were presented when the appropriate time presented itself. Some feedback has been received regarding the Legislative Action Center and Dateline: Capitol Hill in *The American Legion Dispatch*.

VERMONT: (Vice-Chairman Milton Willis, Jr.): The Department of Vermont National Legislative Council met three times; twice in Barre and once in Montpelier at the Capitol with Jim Brouillete, Rodney Sherman and Milton Willis, Jr. Three Council Members attended the Washington Conference and visited two congressional offices. Two Council Members attended the National Commander's Testimony and visited three congressional offices. One congressional member attended the Department Convention. The Department did not present an award to a congressional member and no "Legislative Council Member of the Year" was awarded. Contacted our senators several times by way of letters, faxes, and personal contacts on issues received from the National Legislative Council. The Department apologizes for our congressional delegation not backing the Flag Amendment. As always, there were no negative comments about the Legislative Action Center. All commentators said Dateline: Capitol Hill in *The American Legion Dispatch* is great and very informative.

VIRGINIA: (Vice-Chairman Edwin J. Dentz): The Department of Virginia National Legislative Council met at the Department Convention, Spring Conference and Fall Conference Meetings. A report of the Department Legislative Council was part of the Legislative Commission agenda. Four Council Members attended the Washington Conference and visited two congressional offices. Thirteen Legionnaires, including five council members, attended the National Commander's Testimony and visited one congressional office. Five congressional members attended the breakfast. No congressional members attended the Department Convention. Ten Legionnaires, including five council members, met in the Cannon House Office Building in Washington, DC at Representative Frank R. Wolf's office and presented the Distinguished Service Award to the Congressman in recognition of his support of The American Legion and veterans in general and for the pro-veteran legislation he supported. The Congressman is a long-time member of Unknown Soldier Post 44. He was also given an award for support of the Flag Amendment. The Department did not recognize a "Legislative Council Member of the Year." No feedback was received on the Legislative Action Center or Dateline: Capitol Hill in *The American Legion Dispatch*.

WASHINGTON: (Vice-Chairman William F. Schrier): The Department of Washington had seven Council Members attend the Washington Conference and visited eleven congressional offices. Three Council Members attended the National Commander's Testimony and visited four congressional offices. No congressional member attended the breakfast. It is expected that four congressional members will attend the Department Convention. The Department contemplates presenting an award to a congressional member but no "Legislative Council Member of the Year" will be awarded. The Department has a strong presence with both the House and Senate members and has an open door policy with all eleven legislators. Furthermore, several congressional members are working closely with the department on many hot topic issues. We have received no feedback on the Legislative Action Center. With regard to feedback about Dateline: Capitol Hill in *The American Legion Dispatch*, Representative Ric Larsen (WA-2), has stated that he does read this and also many members of the department have made comments.

WEST VIRGINIA: (Vice-Chairman Robert E. Vass, Sr.): The Department of West Virginia National Legislative Council met on July 7, 2005, during convention in Wheeling and on February 3, 2006, in Bridgeport during the Mid-Winter Conference. Three Council Members attended the Washington Conference and visited all five congressional offices. Two Council Members attended the National Commander's Testimony and visited four congressional

offices. Two congressional members attended the breakfast. Two congressional members attended the Department Convention. All congressional members were recognized in the West Virginia Legion News. No "Legislative Council Member of the Year" Award was made. The Department contacts the congressional delegation on a regular grassroots basis. No feedback was received on the Legislative Action Center and feedback on Dateline: Capitol Hill in The American Legion *Dispatch* was 'all positive.'

WISCONSIN: (Vice-Chairman Russell Hanseter): The Department of Wisconsin National Legislative Council met at the Spring Meeting in Portage and at the Washington Conference. Five Council Members attended the Washington Conference and visited eight House and two Senate members. Two Council Members attended the National Commander's Testimony and one council member visited two senate offices and two representative offices. Two congressional members or staffers attended the breakfast. One congressional member attended the Department Convention. Wayne Jensen was presented the "Legislative Council Member of the Year" award. Representative Mark Green was presented the "Legislator of the Year" award. The Wisconsin Council is becoming a seasoned and effective force. Steve Robertson's daily emails are informational and current, therefore very helpful. Positive feedback from those that visit the Legislative Action Center and those that read Dateline: Capitol Hill in The American Legion *Dispatch* was received.

WYOMING: (Vice-Chairman Todd E. White): The Department of Wyoming National Legislative Council met at Moorecroft on September 24, 2005, at Sheridan on January 14, 2006 and at Cheyenne on June 23, 2006. One Council Member attended the Washington Conference and visited all three congressional offices. No Council Member attended the Commander's Testimony. Senator Craig Thomas attended and spoke at the Department Convention. Senator Michael Enzi sent a letter to be read and Representative Barbara Cubin sent an assistant who read her letter to the Convention. The Department did not present an award to a congressional member and no "Legislative Council Member of the Year" was awarded. Senators Thomas and Enzi were both cosponsors on the Flag Amendment. Senator Thomas spoke on the floor of the senate urging support of the passage of the amendment. Representative Cubin was a cosponsor of the Flag Amendment in the House of Representatives. Senator Enzi used The American Legion Post #6 Cheyenne to announce his sponsorship of a senate bill to increase the travel rate for veterans traveling to VA CBOCs and to VA hospitals. No feedback regarding the Legislative Action Center and Dateline: Capitol Hill in The American Legion *Dispatch* was received, but the vice chairman continued to use the Legislative Action Center to keep up with the proposed bills related to veterans issues and Dateline: Capitol Hill to keep informed of legislation related to veterans issues.

RES SUBCOM VICE CHRMN FOSTER: Move the report be received and filed.

...Second.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Moved and second to receive and file the Legislative Commission Report. Any discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor give their consent by saying 'aye.' Opposed same sign. Motion carried.

Dave, we have some challenges looming ahead in dealing with the Chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee and I'm sure that we will be successful as long as we keep our unity with the VFW, DAV, and AMVETS as we have this year. It's a tough battle, but we'll be back.

American Legion Magazine, Dennis Henkemeyer, Minnesota.

**Oral Report: *The American Legion Magazine* Commission
Dennis J. Henkemeyer, Minnesota, Chairman**

You have before you my report to the National Executive Committee that was prepared in August of this year. Since that time, we have some exciting happenings. October sales were

approximately \$1.2 million. Thus, we are presently \$203,000 ahead of budget, which should put us at year end at \$2,800,000 in surplus, which is \$200,000 ahead of budget. I am confident that the James G. Elliott & Company will reach their goal of \$9 million. They have set their goal for next year, 2007, at \$9,250,000. And as long as I've been on the Magazine Commission, we've never been anywhere close to that type of a budget in the past from them. That's the good news.

While we're projecting a postal increase next year of 10 percent, R.R. Donnelley & Co. reported at our Commission meeting on Saturday, it could be more like 12 percent based on their findings. In addition, they are predicting that the production costs could increase by approximately \$600,000. With that in mind, we are recommending the surplus of \$1,500,000 for 2007. A number of these things, of course, could change between now and the time that you actually approve the budget. We're hoping that we can continue reduced costs and increase income and I will present it to you for your approval.

I would like to thank the National Executive Committee for your continue support. I would like to thank John Raughter, the Editor of the Magazine and his staff. That staff is second to none. And also, if I may Mr. Commander, I would like to thank a man who wears many hats and that includes offering guidance to the Magazine Commission, Mr. Dan Wheeler. Thank you, Dan.

Report: *The American Legion Magazine Commission*

August 9, 2006

Dennis J. Henkemeyer, Minnesota

As of this date, the Magazine has sold \$6.76 million of advertising space, which is about \$180,000 behind budget. Considering that the annual sales goal this year was increased to \$9 million, the advertising sales force has performed solidly and is very much within striking distance of achieving its goal. Both the August and September issues produced more than \$800,000 each in advertising and revenue per page has continued to increase.

The appearance of the Magazine is enhanced by the quality of its advertising. New advertisers include Paramount Pictures, the U.S. Army, AARP, Aetna and Sharper Image. Mercury and Jeep also continue to advertise.

We moved much of our printing to the new wide-web 32pp I-Web press at the R.R. Donnelley plant in Glasgow, Kentucky. We will evaluate with Glasgow the efficiency of this after six months. Paper continues to be relatively stable. We're moving our LDC (last date of change) back to the date of ad closing. The trucking situation that motivated the move forward (after Hurricane Katrina) has eased enough to allow us to resume a shorter ordering cycle. We will begin to bring our inventory in Glasgow back down so that we are printing on a more just-in-time manner.

Postage remains our biggest concern. We are looking at an increase next year that could be as high as 10 percent. Such a hike could have the potential of costing an additional half million dollars to mail the Magazine.

The Magazine continues to attract top writers and recently published an exclusive interview with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and an in-depth series on CARES.

Staffing is stable and turnover remains very low. On behalf of the entire commission and the staff, I would like to thank this body for its support and guidance in our publishing operations.

RES SUBCOM VICE CHRMN FOSTER: Move the report be received and filed.

...Second.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Moved and second to receive and file *The American Legion Magazine Commission* report. Any discussion? Hearing none all those in favor give their consent by saying 'aye.' Opposed same sign. Motion carried.

Dennis, the magazine, and as far as my travels throughout this country this year, as well as the summary from the membership study report that we received, is the number one membership retention tool that we've got. Keep up the great work and thank you.

Public Relations, Mr. Robert L. Morrill, New York.

**Oral Report: Public Relations Commission
Robert L. Morrill, New York, Chairman**

The Public Relations Commission has nothing of an emergency nature this morning to present to you. We would ask that you look at our report and read it carefully that's been placed on your seats.

I would like to bring to your attention just a couple of things. You probably heard that over the next couple of days there will be a lot of demonstrations around the city protesting against the President and other things. On Wednesday morning at 8:30, The American Legion will have a rally outside of the building here in support of Resolution 169 in our troops. We ask that you all participate in that rally to show your support for our troops. I'm sure there will be media there and we'll get our point across as to how we feel about our war on terrorism.

Also, the Commander mentioned briefly this morning about the booklet for our hometown heroes' welcome back home. I would urge you to pick up a copy of that over at the PR office and if we run out of them in stock, give us a call at National Headquarters and we'll be glad to provide those for you. It gives us a chance to welcome home our troops and to provide the services that they need to get adjustment to living back at home after their great effort in the war on terrorism.

Lastly, a gentleman by the name of Tom Valenzuela spoke to us Saturday morning. He's a retired Air Force General. He's the Commander of the 29th District in California, and he's a great supporter of The American Legion. He also has deep pockets. He has a lot of money to help us. He's in the production business, Hollywood production, and he's in the process right now of producing a television program documentary that will air around Christmastime, specifically about The American Legion and American Legion Family. He'll be floating around this convention hall over the next couple of days. If he stops by and asks you to do an interview, please do so. Maybe you'll be on TV. There's already a big demand from the *History Channel* and the *Military Channel*. They're waiting for this documentary to come out and we would ask you to support it in anyway you can if you're asked to participate.

Commander, I want to thank you for your year of leadership; you've been outstanding. I've seen you talk in large crowds and one-on-one, the cable stations, and editorial boards. You've also been our message and you make our job in PR very easy. We appreciate all of your efforts and we thank you for your year of service. The Commission wishes you well in the future.

**Report: Public Relations Commission
August 26, 2006
Robert L. Morrill, New York, Chairman**

The Public Relations Commission of The American Legion met in room 205A upper level of the Salt Palace Convention Center Saturday, August 26 2006.

Commission members received copies of the booklet, *When They Come Home—A Post Guide to Establishing a Successful "Heroes to Hometown" Program in Your Community*. The publication, prepared jointly with the VA&R Commission, provides plans and public relations fill-in-the-blank media products to coordinate establishment of a 'Hero Transition Team' with community resources to assist returning severely injured veterans and their families. With a recently signed memorandum of understanding with the Dept. of Defense and a full time Legion office at the Pentagon, this program will enable Legionnaires to energize their

communities to ensure smooth transitions of these comrades back home, helping them find housing, jobs, recreation and assisting with myriad needs. The booklets were mailed last week to post, district and Department commanders. Copies are available here at the headquarters office.

Staff is developing a number of event planning products posts can use to hold public and community events in support of Legion initiatives. Examples include updated Blue Star Salute guides and a new video; a new *In the Footsteps of the Founders* guide filled with promotional and media materials in support of holding town hall meetings; and new public service media spots promoting Americanism and patriotic events. Commission members agreed that these products need to be promoted heavily within Departments to ensure that Posts are aware of their availability and potential to greatly assist their local public relations efforts. All American Legion Public Relations Commission products are available for downloading on the website: www.legion.org.

Legionnaire and motion picture producer Tom Valenzuela and director Jerry Lippert briefed the commission on the status of the documentary about The American Legion they are producing for the *History Channel* and other venues. Comrade Tom is producing the extensive production at no cost to the Legion and provides tremendous marketing potential. The commission will publicize airdates and provide detailed information in forthcoming *Dispatch*, Magazine, Website and promotional releases.

After hearing that actor Tom Hanks is under consideration to narrate the production, the commission revisited presenting Hanks with a special recognition award for his commitment to veterans since his appearance in *Saving Private Ryan*. Hanks served as spokesman for the national World War II Memorial and produced the motion picture, *Band of Brothers*. Members unanimously approved moving forward with the award.

From its presence in the nation's capital, the National Public Relations Commission continued to facilitate major-media coverage of The American Legion's advocacy. National stories with American Legion input included: the VA data theft/security breach and later recovery of the stolen laptop, the Flag Amendment, the Public Expression of Religion Act and the ACLU, (all major news wires and publications including the *Associated Press*, Gannett News Service, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Washington Times*, *The Washington Post*, *USA Today*, *Congressional Quarterly*). Other stories included underestimated cost of PTSD (*Kansas City Star*, *USA Today*); the war in Iraq and Afghanistan and Resolution 169; Heroes to Hometowns Program agreement between the American Legion and DoD (Scripps Howard News Service, American Forces Information Service); VA health care and funding (Associated Press, *Congressional Quarterly*, *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, NPR, *USA Today*, *National Journal*, *The Hill* Newspaper). Other media hits include World Net Daily, Scripps Howard News Service and numerous regional and national radio talk programs). In addition, hundreds of local and regional media queries were answered on a wide range of national security, veterans affairs and Legion program issues.

Legionnaire, Department of California District 21 Commander and Former ACLU Attorney Rees Lloyd of Banning, California, provided a comprehensive report on legislation supporting the Public Expression of Religion Act that would prevent the ACLU from collecting taxpayer dollars in litigating against religious icons such as crosses and veterans memorials. Legislation will be introduced in both the House and Senate of the 110th Congress next year. The commission unanimously agreed to spearhead an aggressive public information campaign to continue the effort to activate a grass roots movement to inform the American public of this usurpation of tax monies in the attacks on American values and veterans memorials.

Citizens Flag Alliance Executive Director Marty Justis provided an update on plans for the flag protection amendment, in light of the defeat of SJR 12 in the U.S. Senate. Missing passage by just a single vote bodes well for success in the 110th Congress. The commission will activate all potential public relations tools and techniques as appropriate. He also provided

a report on the American Legion Legacy Run by riders to the convention raising over \$100,000 for the American Legacy Scholarship Fund.

PNC Butch Miller introduced driver Jerick Johnson of Johnson Motorsports, driver of The American Legion's Freedom Car No.76. He briefed the commission on the latest progress in getting the car ready for the circuit. He reiterated the need for Legionnaires to help fund the car through purchases of Legion Racing merchandise and recommendations for associate sponsorships. Johnson discussed the "post packs" and die cast model cars.

The Commission received a report on steps being taken by the National American Legion Press Association (NALPA) to enhance its customer service to members and to The American Legion. The NALPA handbook, a "how to" guide for posts wanting to start or to improve their newsletter, will be released soon.

One of the taskings of the 21st Century Plan was to implement, adapt and innovate communications efforts to reach as many people as possible using the most current technological capabilities. In keeping with current research revealing that more and more Americans, regardless of age, are getting their news from the Internet, the commission implemented the Weekly Legion Update.

The Update is an electronic newsletter providing current happenings and developments that occur the week it is released. Among its key features is the weekly National Commander's message, news from headquarters, news from Washington D.C., news from across the Legion and military outreach.

Response to the Weekly Legion Update has been ongoing and positive. The email address list has grown from a few hundred to over 2,000. These recipients are not just Legionnaires, but include government agencies including the Department of Defense, a number of military installations, active duty, National Guard and Reserve personnel. Reportedly, they in turn send the weekly Legion update out to their colleagues, thus serving as a "force multiplier."

Future plans include developing a comprehensive email list through IT to reach every single Legionnaire who has provided their email address.

Vice Chairman Morris briefed the commission on his committee's findings regarding the potential of outdoor advertising by American Legion Posts.

PR's support of membership efforts including recruiting and retention is a major focus of the commission and staff. Plans for 2007 include the development of media products that will complement Americanism, Children and Youth programs and activities, membership drives, National Emergency Fund, and other initiatives that will gain the Legion visibility in local communities across America.

The commission reviewed the latest Public Relations Training video on DVD and segments from three other video training modules for Internal Affairs and Membership produced by PR staff. All together the modules amount to nearly four hours of video training. The Public Relations video is being distributed individually by the commission free on request and is also a part of the District Commander training program and the Post Operations and Membership packages.

In production is a training video documenting a successful Blue Star Salute event that will assist Legion Posts in developing and holding their own events in conjunction with their communities. 2007 projects include the production of videos for Legislative Council Members, Boy's State chairmen and an updated radio and television public service announcement package focusing on membership.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

RES SUBCOM MBR PROCTOR: Move the report be received and filed.

...Second.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Moved and second to receive and file the Public Relations Commission Report. Any discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor give their consent by saying 'aye.' Opposed same sign. Motion carried.

Working with the Public Relations staff this year has been incredible. I would like to do two things. First of all, my name is Tom Bock, National Commander. For those of you that missed the beginning of the parade this year, Tom Cadmus got another shot. (Laughter.)

Well, we have unprecedented press coverage at this Convention, and it's also posted at the booth in the office over, and congratulations on that, that's really getting The American Legion train on track.

COMM CHRNM MORRILL: I'll investigate and find out who may have made that statement, sir. (Laughter.)

NATL COMDR BOCK: Membership, Mr. Randall L. Mitchell from Tennessee.

Oral Report: Membership and Post Activities Committee
Randall L. Mitchell, Tennessee, Chairman

It is definitely a privilege to stand before you as your Membership and Post Activities Chairman with a great report. The report that I have here you have in your packet, but I would like to highlight a few things.

The M&PA Committee met jointly with the Internal Affairs Commission on August 26, 2006 at the Hilton Salt Lake City Hotel. We also got to meet jointly with the new National Commander's Ad Hoc Committee on Retention, where we reviewed the report to be presented and the results will be presented to the NEC in the Fall Meetings in Indianapolis.

Membership for 2006, as of Friday, August 25, is at 2,609,639. We have five Departments that acquired All-Time Highs this year: Delaware, Nevada, Virginia, Arizona and Florida. France was the only Department to obtain both 100 percent and 101 percent memberships through traditional efforts. Good job, France, my buddy, Bill, back there.

For membership for the 2007 year, I have brand-new numbers as of August 28, 2006. We now stand at 1,226,978 and this is without adding the DMS numbers. This is a total number membership of 61,824 members more than one year ago today. The first target date for 2006 is the 50 percent target date of September 13, 2006.

The DMS Plus program is once again doing a fantastic job. The first of two mailings has already produced 92,393 members. The Post development program continues to be very successful. This is the 9th year of this program. During the nine-year history, we have grown approximately 500 posts that have been successfully revitalized and/or developed, and the numbers continue to grow. However, the number of Posts being requested for cancellation continues to rise as well.

I want to extend the sincere appreciation to our parent commission, Internal Affairs, and this committee for your support, vision, and involvement concerning the 2006 membership campaign. We believe that the 2007 membership year will end with much more favorable results.

One favorable result is numbers which were just now given to me. The American Legion Riders group has raised for the Legacy Fund, checks are still coming in mind you, but right now I can tell you that the ALR has raised \$97,000. (Applause.) When I say, more is to come, more is to come, Commander.

Finally, the Committee would love to thank our Commander, Thomas Bock, for his support in the membership program over this past year. It will reflect in the numbers this upcoming year also Commander. And I would be remiss if I did not thank Billy Johnson and the membership staff at National Headquarters. They are instrumental in making my job look good.

Report : Membership & Post Activities Committee
August 26, 2006
Randall Mitchell, Tennessee, Chairman

The Membership and Post Activities Committee met jointly with the Internal Affairs Commission at 8:30 a.m. on August 26, 2006, in the Hilton Salt Lake City Hotel, in the Grand Ballroom A, 2nd Level. Findings from the Ad Hoc Committee on Retention were reviewed. Results will be submitted to the NEC during the Fall Meetings in Indianapolis.

Membership for 2006, as of Friday, August 25, 2006, was 2,609,639. Five Departments acquired All-Time-High's in membership this year - Delaware, Nevada, Virginia, Arizona and Florida. France was the only Department to obtain both 100% and 101% membership through traditional efforts.

Membership for 2007, as of August 25, 2006, is 1,213,544 (total without DMS), which is 67,610 members more than one year ago. The first target date for 2006 is the 50% target date, September 13, 2006.

The DMS Plus Program is performing well. The first of two mailings has produced 92,393 members

The Post Development Program continues to be very successful going into its ninth year. During the nine-year history, approximately 500 Posts have been successfully revitalized and/or developed and the number continues to grow. However the number of Posts being requested for cancellation continues to rise as well.

We extend our sincere appreciation to our parent Commission, Internal Affairs, and this Committee for your support, vision and involvement concerning the 2006 membership campaign. We believe the 2007 membership campaign will end with more favorable results.

Finally, our Committee would like to thank Thomas L. Bock for his support of the membership program over the past year.

With no further business to discuss the meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

RES SUBCOM MBR PROCTOR: Move report be received and filed.

...Second.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Moved and second to receive and file the Membership Report. Any discussion? Hearing none all those in favor give their consent by saying 'aye.' Opposed same sign. Motion carried.

Randall, the excitement you have brought to the Membership Committee this year *is* making a difference.

Internal Affairs, Larry J. Besson, Illinois, Vice Chairman. Mr. Vice Chairman, welcome.

**Oral Report: Internal Affairs Commission
Larry J. Besson, Illinois, Vice Chairman**

You have the report of our actions and your deliberations on Saturday, August 26, here in Salt Lake City. I want to point out that the Internal Affairs and Membership & Post Activities in joint session assigned action on the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee on Membership and Retention Report to the National Commander.

At the Fall Meeting, we will give you a detailed report on the status of this action. Thank you for allowing me to serve and personally thank you for a great year of service.

**Report: Internal Affairs Commission
August 28, 2006
Larry J. Besson, Illinois, Chairman**

The Internal Affairs Commission met in the Salt Lake City, Hilton Hotel, on Saturday, August 26, 2006. We have no resolutions to go before the National Executive Committee during this pre-convention meeting.

Our meeting was a joint session including members of the Internal Affairs Commission

and Membership and Post Activities Committee as well as the Trophies Awards and Ceremonials Committee for the purpose of hearing the report from the National Commander's Ad Hoc Committee on Membership Retention. The joint committee made recommendations on the report to what standing commission would take action on the appropriate portion of the report. A full report will be made to the National Executive Committee at the fall meetings.

The Internal Affairs Commission informally reviewed all resolutions that were to come before the National Convention Committee on Credentials and Internal Matters, Section II.

As Chairman of the National Internal Affairs Commission, on behalf of all our members, I wish to extend to all members of this body my appreciation for your support and encouragement during the past year. A special thanks to our National Commander Thomas L. Bock (CO) for active support and his positive approach to our programs.

RES SUBCOM VICE CHRNM FOSTER: Move the report be received and filed.

...Second.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Motioned and second to receive and file the Internal Affairs Report. Any discussion? Hearing none all those in favor give their consent by saying 'aye.' Opposed same sign. Motion carried.

Please, Larry, if you will, extend our concerns for Chairman Herman Harrington from New York. I understand there are some health issues but he's back on the road to recovery, and we look forward to seeing him back in the saddle soon.

VICE CHRNM BESSON: I will do that, Commander.

NATL COMDR BOCK: The NEF did an outstanding job this year; \$2.3 million came in, so you guys did one heck of a job. The Legacy Ride, as you heard, has the money is still rolling in. That's really brought prominence to The American Legion Riders, and they have been really stepping forward on this taking care of the children of our soldiers killed in action.

National Security, Clarence Hill from Florida.

Oral Report: National Security Commission Clarence E. Hill, Florida, Chairman

The National Security had a pre-convention trip Friday that was attended by 115 members and their guests. We got to walk the line on how the Air Force upgrades the A-10, the F-16, and the C-130 aircraft. It was very interesting.

At our meetings yesterday, we had some very informative and interesting speakers starting with Admiral Thad Allen, Commandant of the Coast Guard now. You may remember him from the Hurricane Katrina and Rita episodes that we had. He was the voice of reason out there. He gave us a very detailed presentation on the scope of the problem of port security that they face. The container problem you saw gets all the publicity, but his real concerns are all the smaller private boats and the smaller ships, 300 gross tons or less that don't have to give all the preconditions that all the bigger ships have to give. How to account for them and how to get them in and out, that is his real concern and what he's going to be spending a lot of time on.

We also had a brief from Colonel Lloyd for the Army's Freedom Team Salute. They have a booth at the exhibit hall, and we encourage you all to stop by and visit.

In the afternoon, our six subcommittees and our two ad hoc committees considered the 69 resolutions that we have, and you'll be receiving that report.

Report: National Security Commission August 26, 2006 Clarence E. Hill, Florida, Chairman

On Friday, August 25th, 115 members of the National Security and Foreign Relations Commissions and their guests attended the Pre-Convention Trip to Hill Air Force Base near

Salt Lake City, Utah. Legionnaires enjoyed the complete exposure to Air Force logistics to include overall maintenance of A-10, F-16 and C-130 aircraft.

On Saturday morning, August 26th, a joint session of the National Security and Foreign Relations Commissions met at the Salt Palace Convention Center. Several speakers addressed various national security and foreign policy issues of concern to both commissions. The first speaker was Admiral Thad Allen, the Commandant of the United States Coast Guard. The Commandant discussed the overall missions of the Coast Guard and its responsibilities including port and maritime security.

The second speaker was Claudia Anyaso with the Department of State who spoke on African affairs and improving conditions on that Continent.

Our third speaker was Colonel Scott Lloyd who addressed the Army's Freedom Team Salute Program, which is highly endorsed for presentation to Veterans Service Organizations like The American Legion.

In the afternoon, the National Security Commission and its six Standing Committees and two Ad Hoc Subcommittees conducted a comprehensive informational review of the 69 resolutions assigned to the Convention Committee on National Security.

I want to thank the National Commander and all members of the National Executive Committee for your support during the past year. We look forward to working with you in the future.

RES SUBCOM MBR PROCTOR: Move the report be received and filed.

...Second.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Moved and second to receive and file the National Security Report. Any discussion? Hearing none all those in favor give their consent by saying 'aye.' Opposed same sign. Motion carried.

Clarence, National Security has been moved to the top because of this global war on terror. I appreciate you and your staff's support and your entire Commission. We need you to stand up for America and you're doing it proudly.

Foreign Relations Commission, Michael D. Helm, Nebraska.

**Oral Report: Foreign Relations Commission
Michael D. Helm, Nebraska, Chairman**

My report is before you and there is nothing that requires urgent action in this report. The Foreign Relations Commission continues to formulate policy to promote democracy and freedom throughout the world to help alleviate those suffering oppression and violation of their human rights.

Of course, we continue to be actively involved in the POW/MIA issue and will strive for the fullest accountability of all our servicemen and women lost in conflict.

Mr. Commander, it has been a pleasure for our Commission to serve you as you have brought a complete and increased awareness of the good that The American Legion does not only for our membership, but the public and the world at large.

**Report: Foreign Relations Commission
August 26, 2006
Michael D. Helm, Nebraska, Chairman**

On Saturday, August 26, 2006, the Foreign Relations and National Security Commissions met in joint session in the Ballroom F, lower level of the Salt Palace Convention Center, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Our first and keynote speaker was Admiral Thad Allen, Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard. The Commandant spoke on the challenges faced by the Coast Guard and its increased

role as a primary agency within the Department of Homeland Security.

Our final speaker was Ms. Claudia Anyaso, Director of the Office of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs at the Department of State, Africa Desk. Ms. Anyaso, gave a broad overview of the major issues facing the African Continent and the diplomatic concerns of the United States. Both speakers were well received by the commissions.

In the afternoon the Foreign Relations Commission and its Ad Hoc Subcommittees conducted a comprehensive courtesy review of the resolutions assigned to the Convention Committee on Foreign Relations.

The Foreign Relations Commission thanks National Commander Bock and the National Executive Committee for its support throughout the year and will continue to work diligently to provide The American Legion with a thoughtful and focused national foreign relation's policy.

RES SUBCOM VICE CHRMN FOSTER: Move the report be received and filed.

...Second.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Moved and second to receive and file the Foreign Relation Commission Report. Any discussion? Hearing none all those in favor give their consent by saying 'aye.' Opposed same sign. Motion carried.

Michael, the State Department's motto is *E Pluribus Unum*. (Laughter.) Diplomacy is the first line of defense. And their relations with countries around this world is—hey, listen, it's early for me, too. (Laughter.) Thank you for the great job you and your Commission has been doing.

Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation, K. Robert Lewis from Connecticut.

Oral Report: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission K. Robert Lewis, Connecticut, Chairman

The written report of the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission meeting is in your packet. I would like to highlight a very few items and to start by recommending each you to look at your System Worth Saving Task Force Report. Observe the efforts of 12 volunteers and the professional staff of the National Field Service who have visited 45 more VA hospitals in this current year; forty reports are contained herein. This will be delivered to Capitol Hill to make a difference as it supports the efforts of our National Commander when he makes his presentation on Capitol Hill. We know we're making a difference, when they're squirming, and, Mr. Commander, the efforts of the Task Force as it relates in my opinion, may have led to our demise in the House Veterans' Affairs Committee and for that we don't apologize. (Laughter.)

Comrades, one of the newest members of the National staff is Dave Marsh, who is manning a booth out in the hall for the Heroes to Hometowns program. Dave is ensconced in an office for The American Legion in the Pentagon carrying out the efforts and the outreach of this wonderful organization to our comrades in arms who desperately need our help. So, in conjunction with every other commission, which is involved with the Heroes to Hometowns program, we are actively involved and we thank everybody in advance for your anticipated efforts.

Mr. Commander, as the report is in hand, I want to recognize the wonderful National staff lead by National VA&R Division Director Peter Gaytan, his staff—Mark Regan, Steve Smithson, again David Marsh, and our Deputy Director for Health Care Cathy Wiblemo who is responsible for much of this effort.

Thank you for visiting our VA&R Commission meeting. I would point out that the Commission met from 9:00 a.m. and we adjourned at 5:10 p.m., central time.

Report: Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission
August 26, 2006
K. Robert Lewis, Connecticut, Chairman

Your National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission held its session in the Salt Palace Convention Center, Room 254-B, Upper Level, on Saturday, August 26, 2006. In attendance were 47 members of the Commission, the NEC Liaison Chairman, and 6 members of the National Cemetery Committee.

The following Department of Veterans Affairs officials addressed the Commission: Ronald R. Aument, Deputy Under Secretary for Benefits; Dr. Barbara Sigford, VHA National Program Director; Lawrence Biro, Network Director; Ms. Regina Mack-Abney, National Associate Director; Dr. Elizabeth Yano, Deputy Director; Laura Balun, Director, Voluntary Service Office; Richard Wannemacher, Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs; Michael E. Kilpatrick, MD, Deputy Director, Deployment Health Support Directorate, Department of Defense; The Honorable Alan G. Lance, Judge, Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, Tamara Sloan-Anderson, Director of Program and Development, The American Pain Foundation; Commander Dave Julian, Director, Military Severely Injured Center and David Marsh, The American Legion, Heroes to Hometown.

The Commission was apprised of the activities of the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division. There were 8 Certificates of Appreciation given between the Mid-Winter Conference and the National Convention.

The Commission, upon completion of business, adjourned at 5:10p.m.

RES SUBCOM VICE CHRNM FOSTER: Commander, move report be received and filed.

...Second.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Motion to receive and file the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission Report. Any discussion? Hearing none all those in favor give their consent by saying 'aye.' Opposed same sign. Motion carried.

Mr. K. Robert, the Heroes to Hometowns is incredible! We all need to know that The American Legion not only being the world's largest and greatest veterans' organization, it is the only one that has a desk inside the Pentagon at the Severely Injured Unit, right there on the mall. We're making a great headway. We're proud of that program and the System Work Saving Report is really the bullet we need to use to take to Congress to make sure that our veterans are cared for.

Economic Commission, James E. Koutz from Indiana.

Oral Report: Economic Commission
James E. Koutz, Indiana, Chairman

The National Economic Commission met in the Hilton Hotel in Salt Lake City on August 26, 2006 to hear speakers about a variety of subjects important to veterans' ability to support their families. The speakers included the Hon. Charles Ciccolella, Assistant Secretary of Labor, for the Veterans Employment and Training; the Hon. R. Allen Pittman, Assistant Secretary of Human Resources and Administration at the Department of Veterans' Affairs; and we heard representatives of the General Services Administration Program; the Small Business Administration; the Department of Defense's Transition Assistance Program; the VA Educational Service; the *New York Times*; the Avue Technologies Corporation and the Twenty-First Century Group. Members also heard from the Community Financial Services Association and the National Veterans Business Development Corporation.

On Sunday morning, August 27, the Convention Committees on Economic Matters convened to consider resolutions. Assisting their deliberations were speakers from the VA

Advisory Committee on Education and from private industries.

On Thursday and Friday, August 24-25, the Economic Commission in partnership with the Utah Employment Service sponsored a series of seminars on establishing a small business and on becoming a supplier of the federal government. These were not quite as well attended as had been hoped for, but much was learned which will enable the commission to make next year's seminar and training sessions on transition a complete success.

We've had a great success at the Job & Benefits Fair in the exhibit hall the last two days. National Commander Bock that completes the report of the Economic Commission, and it's been an honor to serve.

Report: Economics Commission

August 26, 2006

Jim Koutz, Indiana, Chairman

The National Economic Commission met in the Hilton Hotel on August 26, 2006, to hear speakers about a variety of subjects important to veterans' ability to support their families 33 members attended. Speakers included the Honorable Charles Ciccolella, Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training; the Honorable R. Allen Pittman, Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration at the Department of Veterans' Affairs; and representatives from General Services Administration, Small Business Administration, DOD's Transition Assistance Program, the VA Education Service, and several private-sector companies including *The New York Times*, Avue Technologies Corporation, and the Twenty-First Century Group. Members also heard from the Community Financial Services Association and the National Veterans Business Development Corporation.

On Sunday morning, August 27, the Convention Committees on Economic Matters convened to consider resolutions. Assisting in their deliberations were speakers from the VA Advisory Committee on Education and from private industry.

Small Business Development Training

On Thursday and Friday, August 24 and 25, the Economic Commission, in partnership with the Utah Employment Service, sponsored a series of seminars on establishing a small business and on becoming a supplier to the Federal Government. These were not quite as well attended as had been hoped for, but much was learned which will enable the commission to make next year's similar training a complete success.

RES SUBCOM MBR PROCTOR: Move the report be received and filed.

...Second.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Moved and second to receive and file the Economic Commission Report. Is there any discussion? Hearing none all those in favor give their consent by saying 'aye.' Opposed same sign. Motion carried.

Those job fairs and connection with *The New York Times* and the Small Business Association were right on. I attended one up in Boston and it was an incredible success. Actually, I encouraged our National Vice Commanders and the National Commander's Aide Doug, to visit the job fair this year. He said he will visit the job fair because they're out of work come Thursday. Laughter.)

Announcements from the National Adjutant.

Announcement

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: You never know, some of the rest of us might be out of work. (Laughter.)

You have an agenda that was passed out to you and Chairman Olson talked to you in his

report about the security measures on Tuesday and Thursday prior to, as far as the magnometers, but I'd like to just briefly go over this a little bit.

If you'll notice on Tuesday, we have our traditional opening where we'll feature our Youth Champions, a speaker, we'll have the presentation of Spirit of Service Awards, the junior enlistees of each branch of the service chosen by their branch for their military excellence and their community service.

One special note this year. You'll note the presentation of the Gold Medal of Remembrance. This is a Congressional Medal authorized by Congress and will be presented to the children of those who have given their life in defense of our country in the global war on terrorism. The Commander will present those medals. He will be assisted by the Hon. Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld.

Following that there will a patriotic event, and Secretary Rumsfeld will address the Convention at 10:00 a.m. You'll notice there's a special presentation at 10:30 a.m., Chris Smith, Congressman from New Jersey who was the former Chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee.

On the second page, you'll note the time about 12:10 p.m. where we will present the special presentation to Senator Orrin Hatch for his help as a cosponsor of the Flag Amendment, SJR-12. At 1:15 p.m., there'll be an address to the Convention by Secretary Rice, who's the Secretary of the Department of State.

There will be a special report on the Flag Amendment. Mr. Wheeler in his report will recognize the A-Team, the 18 volunteers who went that extra mile and will present the Distinguished Service Award to General Brady.

On Wednesday, Lt. Gen. Hal Moore, *We Were Soldiers Once ... and Young: Ia Drang—the Battle That Changed the War in Vietnam* and Joe Galloway; they will address us on the National Museum of the United States Army. The Secretary of the Department of Veterans' Affairs will follow. Following that, hopefully, we will make a presentation to the ranking Minority Member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee the Hon. Lane Evans of Illinois. Congressman Evans has Parkinson's Disease and we're hoping that day is good for him that he can come and we can honor him. He may not be there but we will have an audio visual in his honor.

On Thursday, although we cannot confirm it or deny it, but it seems like *The Salt Lake Tribune* can do that, the President of the United States will appear before the Convention on Thursday morning. Chairman Olson has talked about the magnometers.

Now, before you think your National staff and National Officers have gone completely bonkers, we know that you're out of here on airplanes and it's pretty tough to change a reservation. We know that there's other commitments. We worked very hard with the White House to try to move back that address by the President to Wednesday, but, you know, the President's schedule, something about a bear in the woods. We're honored by his presence no matter whatever time he chooses to come. I mean, quite frankly, we have the global war on terror, and he's the world's leader, and we will make that work. The Auxiliary will be joining us. In fact, the Auxiliary is moving, as I understand, their installation up for their new president to 7:00 a.m. so they can join us. I think it's indeed an honor to The American Legion to have the President of the United States in this list of speakers.

Reimbursement checks will be available to you. This is very important. Those checks can be cashed in two downtown branches of the Chase Bank at no charge. If you want to cash a check, stop by the Finance Office for directions to those two branches.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Confirmation of Interim Committee Report.

RES SUBCOM CHRNM HEDRICK: May I address the National Adjutant?

NATL COMDR BOCK: Yes, sir, you bet.

RES SUBCOM CHRNM HEDRICK: Mr. Adjutant, do you certify the list of Interim Appointments is it true and correct?

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: I so certify.

RES SUBCOM CHRNM HEDRICK: Without being read, I move that this list of appointments be approved.

...Second.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Moved and second to approve the report without being read. Any discussion? Hearing none all those in favor give their consent by saying 'aye.' Opposed, same sign. Motion carried.

...*The list of Confirmation of Interim Appointments is as follows:*

Interim Appointments

Harry J. Moore (Maryland), Americanism Council, 2006 Vice Chairman

(Replaces Kenneth E. Slarb-deceased)

Michael J. Miskell (Pennsylvania), Americanism Council, 2006 Vice Chairman

(For purpose of a call-in only)

Kerrie G. Gill, Sr. (Pennsylvania), Americanism Council, 2006 Vice Chairman

(For purpose of a call-in only)

Don Sapic (Pennsylvania), Americanism Council, 2006 Vice Chairman

(For purpose of a call-in only)

Webber LaGrange (Indiana), Convention Commission, 2006 National Commander's Representative (Replaces William H. Hicks-deceased)

David L. Jackson (Ohio), Distinguished Guests Committee, 2006 Vice Chairman

(Replaces Paul Michael-membership cancelled)

William P. Holter (Maryland), Economic Commission, 2007 Member

(Replaces George W. Harrison-deceased)

William G. Clark (Indiana), Foreign Relations Council, 2006 Vice Chairman

(Replaces Webber LaGrange-resigned)

Tracy E. Ridenour (Pennsylvania), Foreign Relations Council, 2006 Vice Chairman

(For purpose of a call-in only)

Angel Juarez (Arizona), Internal Affairs Commission, 2006 Member

(Replaces Jeff Johnson-resigned)

William Cleveland (Pennsylvania), National & Homeland Security Council, 2006 Vice

Chairman (For purpose of a call-in only)

James Gallagher (Pennsylvania), National & Homeland Security Council, 2006 Vice Chairman

(For purpose of a call-in only)

NATL COMDR BOCK: Cancellation of Post and/or Squadron Charters.

RES SUBCOM CHRNM HEDRICK: May I address the National Adjutant again?

NATL COMDR BOCK: Yes, sir.

RES SUBCOM CHRNM HEDRICK: Do you certify that the list is true and correct and everything has been done to keep the Post Charters and Squadrons Charters?

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: I so certify, Mr. Chairman, but if I may make a brief remark. At the Spring Meeting of the National Executive Committee, we cancelled 75 posts. In this report, we're cancelling 93 posts that have been submitted. We're recommending cancellation of 89 and that four be held over for further study for the October Meeting. Eighty-nine posts and 75 posts, please reflect on the Chairman of the Membership and Post Activities Committee's remarks. That's a tremendous number of posts.

So, I so certify that it's correct.

RES SUBCOM CHRNM HEDRICK: Mr. Commander, with what the National Adjutant said I move that report without it all being read be approved.

...Second.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Moved and second to approve the report. Any discussion? Hearing none all those in favor give their consent by saying 'aye.' Opposed same sign. Motion

carried.

...The list of Cancellation of Post and/or Squadron Charters is as follows:

Cancellation of Post and/or Squadron Charters

On May 10, 2006, at the Spring Meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana the National Executive Committee approved the cancellation of seventy-five (75) Posts. The research done on each Post prior to any recommendation made as an attempt to see whether these Posts could be revitalized is based on the following criteria: *Community Size and Veteran Population.*

Ninety-three (93) Posts have been submitted for cancellation consideration during the NEC Convention Meeting in Salt Lake City, Utah. Eighty-nine (89) Posts are recommended for cancellation. It is recommended that the remaining four (4) Posts not being cancelled be reconsidered after work can be done to revitalize this Post before the October 2006 Fall NEC Meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana.

It is recommended that the following eighty-nine (89) Posts be cancelled:

<u>Department</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Post #</u>	<u>Location</u>
Arizona	Chase and Nelson	71	Indian Wells
California	Weed (<i>to merge with Cheula Post 92</i>)	71	Weed
	Craft (<i>to merge with Cheula Post 92</i>)	157	Mt. Shasta
	Hornbrook Memorial (<i>to merge with Ross Neilon Post 122</i>)	403	Hornbrook
Connecticut	LaBelle-Lemieux	183	Ballouville
Florida	Jane A. Delano	122	St. Petersburg
	Indian Rocks Beach	128	Indian Rocks Beach
	Alachua	160	Alachua
	Gateway	357	St. Petersburg
	The Florida Highway Patrol Memorial	376	Orlando
Illinois	Niles-Northtown	29	Niles
	La Grange	41	La Grange
	Roseland	49	Chicago
	General "Ike" Eisenhower	98	Chicago
	Ray Freeman	194	Hindsboro
	Villa Grove	215	Villa Grove
	Wheeling Memorial	221	Wheeling
	Nebo	223	Nebo
	Roy P. Benavidez Memorial	226	Chicago
	General Benjamin O. Davis, Sr.	236	Chicago
	Board of Trade	304	Chicago
	General John Swift	363	Chicago
	Medora	399	Medora
	Franklin A. Dennison	410	Chicago Heights
	Federal	437	Chicago
	London Mills	470	London Mills
	Bellwood	500	Bellwood
	Grobengieser-Fischer	512	Altamont
	Harry Sullins	536	Vienna
	Arlie B. Lawrence	563	Johnston City
	Clifford M. Sanderson	572	Noble

	Charles A. Young	591	Rock Island
	Melvin	642	Melvin
	Aviation	651	Chicago
	Shabbona	677	Shabbona
	Chesterfield	695	Chicago
	Danvers	732	Danvers
	Pioneer	768	Chicago
	Aaron	788	Chicago
	Walter Stelmaszek	792	Chicago
	General Schwengel-Seagram	807	Chicago
	Budlong District	837	Chicago
	Hillside	863	Hillside
	Moss-Walton	953	Jacksonville
	Nathan Goldblatt	957	Chicago
	Ours For Victory	971	Chicago
	John V. Beulick	984	Lincolnwood
	Cannata-McDonough-Curcuru	994	Chicago
	Fred Zeplin	1005	Chicago
	Maquon	1099	Maquon
	W. Lucille Jervis	1105	Aurora
	Carrier Mills	1140	Carrier Mills
	Hopedale	1157	Hopedale
	Hanson Park	1177	Chicago
	Wesley Johnson Memorial	1195	Wasco
	Coal Valley	1248	Coal Valley
	Lee	1253	Lee
	Phoenix	1254	Phoenix
	Tamaroa Memorial	1277	Tamaroa
	Joliet	1284	Joliet
	Draza Mihailovich	1946	Chicago
	Joe Neill	1960	Mounds
	Scudiero	1978	Chicago
	Philippine-American Veterans	1995	Chicago
	Charleston Memorial	1999	Charleston
Indiana	Kurtz-Booker	217	North Salem
Michigan	Chester F. Mikulski	430	Grand Rapids
Missouri	Berger	168	Berger
New Jersey	Jack W. Young	225	Lyons
Ohio	Memorial Square (<i>to merge with Euclid Post 343</i>)	61	Cleveland
	Lorain Brown (<i>to merge with Ross County Post 62</i>)	126	Chillicothe
Pennsylvania	Curtis Bok Memorial (<i>to merge with John Wanamaker Post 661</i>)	45	Philadelphia
	Yeomen F (<i>to merge with John Wanamaker Post 661</i>)	50	Philadelphia
	Yeadon	179	Yeadon
	Frankford (<i>to merge with Bridesburg Post 821</i>)	211	Frankford
	Tioga (<i>to merge with Bustleton Memorial Post 810</i>)	319	Philadelphia

	Lake Meade (to merge with Dillsburg Post 26)	349	Lake Meade
	Samuel H. Kehl	370	Shenandoah
	Olney (to merge with John Wanamaker Post 661)	388	Philadelphia
	Helen Fairchild Nurses (to merge with John Wanamaker Post 661)	412	Philadelphia
	Sanford-Diletto (to merge with Knowles-Doyle Post 317)	433	Morrisville
	Eckweiler-DeGroat-Haser (to merge with Staff Sgt. Paul A. Sweeney Memorial Post 807)	784	Paupack
	Tripp Park	886	Scranton
	Womens Post of Delaware County	892	Upper Darby
	Cumbola	958	Cumbola
	William Forman Memorial (to merge with John Wanamker Post 661)	993	Wyndmoor
South Carolina	Milledge Gordon	42	Clemson
Tennessee	Lobelville	247	Lobelville
Washington	Hoey-Kjargaard	185	Lopez

It is the recommendation of the Membership and Post Activities Committee that the following four (4) charter cancellations not be approved until additional research can be done:

<u>Department</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Post #</u>	<u>Location</u>
California	Lester D. Grigsby (to merge with Tredway Post 194)	764	Lucerne
	Fallbrook (to merge with Alvin Myo Dunn Post 365)	776	Fallbrook
Minnesota	Crow Valley	628	Rockford
Montana	Flathead (to merge with Kalispell Post 137)	7	Kalispell

SAL CHARTERS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION PRESENTED TO THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR CANCELLATION AT THE AUGUST 28, 2006 MEETING

On May 10, 2006, at the Spring Meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana the National Executive Committee approved the cancellation of eleven (11) Squadrons.

Eight (8) Squadrons have been submitted for cancellation consideration during the NEC Convention Meeting in Salt Lake City, Utah. Six (6) Squadrons are recommended for cancellation. It is recommended that the remaining two (2) Squadrons not recommended for cancellation be held until work can be done on the Post before the October 2006 Fall NEC Meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana.

It is recommended that the following six (6) Squadrons be cancelled:

<u>Department</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Squadron #</u>	<u>Location</u>
Connecticut	Labelle-Lemieux	183	Ballouville
Delaware	Glen Rayne	15	Delmar

Illinois	Tamaroa Memorial	1277	Tamaroa
	Joliet	1284	Joliet
	Philippine-American Veterans	1995	Chicago
Michigan	Chester F. Mikulski	430	Grand Rapids

It is the recommendation of the Membership and Post Activities Committee that the following two (2) Squadron cancellations not be approved until additional research can be done with the Post:

<u>Department</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Squadron #</u>	<u>Location</u>
California	Lester D. Grigsby	764	Lucerne
Montana	Flathead	7	Kalispell

NATL COMDR BOCK: Any other business to come, unfinished Business?

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: I know of none sir.

NATL COMDR BOCK: You know of none, and I had to say it any way. Mr. Hedrick.

Technical Motion

RES SUBCOM CHRNM HEDRICK: Excuse me, Mr. Commander. I'd like to make a motion that the National Adjutant be given authority to make any technical corrections to these minutes and be printed in digest form and mailed.

...Second.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Moved and second. (And clean up my errors!) All those in favor give their consent by saying 'aye.' Opposed same sign. Motion carried.

Mr. Wamble.

NECman WAMBLE (AR): Mr. Commander, I'd like to take a personal privilege here to introduce the Alternate NEC from the Department of Arkansas, Ross Rogers.

NECman HERBISON (WI): Mr. Commander, it's my honor this morning to introduce the new Department Commander for the State of Wisconsin, Charles Cooney; our new Adjutant for the Department of Wisconsin, Terry Troutman, who has been our Alternate NEC; and our new NEC David Gough of the Department of Wisconsin.

DEPT ADJ (D.C.)KURRE: I would like to present our new NEC Walter W. Norris.

NECman TURNER (AL): I would like to take a personal privilege to introduce our new Alternate National Executive Committeeman Delores Hardin, we're partners in crime.

NECman WARNKEN (KS): I would like to take the privilege to introduce our Alternate National Committeeman, Elgin Wahlborg.

NECman SCHMIDT (MD): NEC Schmidt from Maryland. I would like to introduce Gordon Browning the new National Executive Committeeman for Maryland.

NECman GUTZMAN (NV): I'd like to introduce the new Alternate for the State of Nevada, Mr. Jack Ford.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Perry, are you up or are you just standing to look around? Never mind. (Laughter.)

ALT NECman ROBERTS (TN): I'm here representing Joe Young whose health is very bad so that's not a very good feeling for me, but at least I'm here representing him. I introduce our NEC who will become NECman at the end of this Convention, J. B. Loring from Nashville. He's on the City Council down there You had your convention down there, he helped do a good job.

NECman LANDKAMER (NE): I introduce to you our Department Commander for the Department of Nebraska, my little brother Jerry Landkamer. Also Alternate National Executive Committeeman Doug Boldt and Past National Commander Bill Galbraith.

NECman OWEN (ME): I introduce to you our newly elected NECA, William Bickford, Immediate Past Commander and candidate for National Vice Commander, Lloyd Woods.

NECman HANNI (ID): I introduce Idaho's new NEC Cleve Rice and our newly elected, Alternate NEC Morris Bentley.

NECman ANDERSON (CT): I introduce the new Department Commander for the great State of Connecticut, Jim LaCoursiere.

NECman JORGENSEN (NM): I introduce to you our newest Alternate NEC, Prospero Sanchez from New Mexico.

NECman LANGLEY (MS): I introduce my new Alternate NEC from Mississippi, Bob Gosa.

NECman SCHMIDT (OR): I introduce the new Commander for the Department of Oregon, Bernie Healy and our new Vice Commander, Ed Horne.

NECman HEDRICK (NC): I thought you were going to miss me I'm so small. I introduce our new Department Commander, Jeff Joyner, from North Carolina.

NECman FOSTER (AK): I introduce to you our newly elected NEC for Alaska, from Ketchikan, Jim Van Horn. Our new Alternate NEC, the best looking one in Alaska, Peggy Dettori.

NECman TURNER (AL): May I raise a question in the form of a personal privilege? First of all, I want to congratulate you and the Legion Riders for preparing yourself to ride across this country. I know you had a good time, but if you recall, yesterday, I asked you how the trip went. You told me all the hardships that you had to endure on that trip. I think everybody here should know what a wonderful Commander you have made and the hardships that you endured on that trip to make that a successful ride. So, would you relate to this great audience what kind of a hardship that you went through? Thank you for your time sir. (Laughter.)

NATL COMDR BOCK: Thank you, Wayne. There are those out there who thought I was going to ride a Harley from Indianapolis all the way to Salt Lake City, 1,900 miles. They were insane. (Laughter.) I rode in a 45-foot motor home. But we did encounter difficulty, Wayne, and I would like to share that with you all.

The first day out we had trouble getting the air condition balanced. On the second day I couldn't get the clock set on the microwave. The third day, we got into Leavenworth, Kansas, we drove under some trees and lost our satellite reception. We had to resort to DVDs. But the toughest part was when we arrived in Hays, Kansas after driving across there in and out of rain. When I stepped out of the motor home, the condensation on the air conditioner dripped right on my shirt. It was a tough ride but very enjoyable. (Applause.)

Closing Remarks

**Thomas L. Bock, Colorado
National Commander**

It is a pleasure to be here in Salt Lake City. I welcome you here as I should have done at the beginning but I didn't.

We have some wonderful speakers and some very important people coming to address us. As we leave this group and head out to the convention floor, we have our reports from the Convention Committees. They have made some very strong recommendations and very important recommendations to The American Legion. We need to pay close attention to them. Understand that The American Legion has unity and strength when we work together.

We've had some great discussions this weekend in our committees, some of them a little more heated than others. A lot of them in-depth and that's very important. But as these committees submit their recommendations to us on the floor, I think we need to appreciate the hard work that has been put into them and support our committees.

Finally, I would like to say that I've had two days at home this month and it was really enjoyable. But the second day I woke up and my wife rolled over and looked at me and she

says, "Don't think that two days in this house makes you a resident." (Laughter.) I'm glad and happy after this week that we can move back to Colorado and setup residency there.

RES SUBCOM CHR MN HEDRICK: Mr. Commander.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Yes, Mr. Hedrick?

RES SUBCOM CHR MN HEDRICK: I'd like to, as a member of the NEC, express my sincere appreciation for your year of service to our organization. In spite of the time you spent away from home and hard times you had in that motor home coming across the Divide, you've done an outstanding job in representing The American Legion this year, not only in Washington and foreign countries, but throughout the world. You've been a great leader and a great inspiration to us. The NEC needs to show an express our appreciation for your service.

...(Standing Applause.)

NATL COMDR BOCK: We call upon our Chaplain Steven Wright for Benediction.

Benediction
Rev. Steven E. Wright, Utah
National Chaplain

Oh, God of our fathers, we thank Thee for the work that was presented by these reports that we heard this morning. We thank Thee for those on commissions and on committees that have worked so hard.

We especially thank You for the work done this past year by all Legionnaires throughout this great land and throughout the world that the purposes of this great organization may be fulfilled.

Now, God bless us, as we leave this meeting, may we go from here with optimism and with positive attitudes, and with renewed determination to do those things which we have committed ourselves to do. Wilt Thou bless our Commander as he leads us throughout the remainder of this convention. Wilt Thou bless all those who are here in attendance that they may truly serve and give, be uplifted and able to leave here and to bless the lives of Legionnaires throughout the country, we humbly pray. Amen.

NATL COMDR BOCK: Please help me in paying respect to the colors of our nation. Hand salute. Ready! Two!

I declare this meeting of the National Executive Committee adjourned.

...At 10:15 a.m., the National Executive Committee adjourned.

PROCEEDINGS
of the
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
THE AMERICAN LEGION
POST-CONVENTION MEETING

Thursday, August 31, 2006

...At 2:15 p.m., August 31, 2006, the Post-Convention Meeting of the National Executive Committee of The American Legion was called to order by National Commander Paul A. Morin, and the following proceedings were held:

...National Adjutant Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan, acted as Secretary.

NATL COMDR MORIN: I call the NEC to order. Please rise, salute the Colors of our country by the numbers.

... The National Executive Committee stood and saluted the Colors.

NATL COMDR MORIN: The invocation will be offered by Chaplain Stanley Gruneich of Flandreau, South Dakota.

Invocation
Rev. Stanley Gruneich, South Dakota

Let us pray. Holy God, you've been with us in the past, You're with us now. Guide us in your faithful way. Give us hope as we know that you're already in our future, help us seek guidance as we seek to do Your will to this great organization. Amen.

NATL COMDR MORIN: Please join me in the Pledge of Allegiance.

...The members recited the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

NATL COMDR MORIN: Please cover and join me in reciting the Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion.

...The members recited the Preamble to The American Legion Constitution.

NATL COMDR MORIN: I now call on the National Adjutant for roll call.

Roll Call

National Officers

National Commander

Paul A. Morin, Massachusetts

National Vice Commanders

Byron W. White, Alabama
Elgin Wahlborg, Kansas
Lloyd H. Woods, Maine
Robert C. Lahiere, Tennessee
Allan C. Setterberg, Utah

Past National Commanders

William E. Galbraith, Nebraska–Excused	Bruce Thiesen, California
John H. Geiger, Illinois	William M. Detweiler, Louisiana–Excused
Joe L. Matthews, Texas–Excused	Daniel A. Ludwig, Minnesota
William J. Rogers, Maine–Excused	Joseph J. Frank, Missouri
John M. ‘Jack’ Carey, Michigan–Excused	Anthony G. Jordan, Maine
Michael J. Kogutek, New York–Excused	Butch L. Miller, Virginia–Excused
Clarence M. Bacon, Maryland	Hon. Alan G. Lance, Sr., Virginia–Excused
Judge James P. Dean, Mississippi–Excused	Ray G. Smith, North Carolina–Excused
John P. ‘Jake’ Comer, Massachusetts	Richard J. Santos, Maryland–Excused
Hon. H. F. Gierke, North Dakota–Excused	Ronald F. Conley, Pennsylvania–Excused
Miles S. Epling, West Virginia–Excused	John A. Brieden, III, Texas
Robert S. Turner, Georgia–Excused	Thomas P. Cadmus, Michigan
Dominic D. DiFrancesco, PA–Excused	Thomas L. Bock, Colorado

National Executive Committeemen

Department	Committeemen	Alternate
Alabama	F. Wayne Turner	
Alaska	Jim Van Horn	
Arizona	Julius Maklary	
Arkansas	Bob Wamble–Excused	
California	James W. Hackney	
Colorado	Joseph E. Ross	
Connecticut	Richard W. Anderson	
Delaware	John J. Jackson–Excused	
D.C.	Walter W. Norris	
Florida	Robert J. Proctor	
France	William E. Marshall	
Georgia	Ray Hendrix	
Hawaii	Andrew Johnson	
Idaho	Cleve Rice	
Illinois	Rodger A. Bennett	
Indiana	Thomas Henderson	
Iowa	Michael E. Wanser	
Kansas	David O. Warnken	
Kentucky	Randall Coffman	
Louisiana	Charles D. Aucoin–Excused	
Maine	Robert A. Owen	
Maryland	Gordon B. Browning	
Massachusetts	Lawrence Connors	
Mexico	John E. Hayes	
Michigan	Kenneth Dittenber	
Minnesota	Virgil V. Persing	
Mississippi	Charles E. Langley–Excused	
Missouri	David N. Voyles	
Montana	Arthur Ellison	
Nebraska	Michael J. Landkamer	
Nevada	Ron Gutzman	
New Hampshire	Benjamin F. Talford	
New Jersey	William A. Rakestraw, Jr.	

New Mexico	Bruce Jorgensen	
New York	Richard C. O’Keefe	
North Carolina	Jerry L. Hedrick	
North Dakota	Curtis O. Twete	
Ohio	Carl W. Swisher	
Oklahoma	Wayne L. Pedigo	
Oregon	Charles Schmidt	
Pennsylvania	Alfred Pirolli—Excused	Richard A. Coccimiglio—Excused
Philippines		
Puerto Rico	Carlos Orria-Medina	
Rhode Island	Eugene Pytko—Excused	
South Carolina	R. M. Singletary, Jr.—Excused	Billy W. Bell
South Dakota	Paul A. Evenson	
Tennessee		
Texas	Ronald G. Cherry	
Utah	William E. Christoffersen	
Vermont	Rodney ‘Stub’ Sherman	
Virginia	Rob R. Gordon, Jr.—Excused	George Lussier
Washington	William Schrier—Excused	James Angell
West Virginia		
Wisconsin	Arthur D. Herbison	
Wyoming	Irvin A. ‘Tiny’ Quick	

NECman NORRIS (DC): I’m here for D.C.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: I’m sorry.

NECman NORRIS (DC): My fault, I didn’t hear you.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Count D.C. present.

NECman ROSS (CO): Mr. Commander, Joe Ross, I’m here I finally made it.
 ...From the floor, Colorado.

NECman ROSS (CO): Colorado, yes. (Laughter.)

NATL COMDR MORIN: The Chair declares a quorum.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Thanks, Joe, without you we wouldn’t have had a quorum.
 (Laughter.)

NATL COMDR MORIN: Reading of the minutes of the preceding meeting.

Minutes of the Previous National Executive Committee Meeting

RES SUBCOM CHRNM HEDRICK: Mr. Commander?

NATL COMDR MORIN: Recognize Jerry Hedrick.

RES SUBCOM CHRNM HEDRICK: Even though the minutes have not been printed in digest form and mailed yet, I move they be approved without being read.

...Second.

NATL COMDR MORIN: Motion’s been made, seconded to approve the minutes when they’re printed and mailed in digest form. Any questions? Hearing none all in favor. ‘Aye.’
 Opposed. ‘Ayes’ have it. Minutes are approved.

Disposition of Letters or Communications

NATL COMDR MORIN: For the Disposition of Letters and Communications, I call on the Adjutant.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: There are none, Mr. Commander.

NATL COMDR MORIN: There are none. Now let’s receive resolutions and motions and petitions. I recognize Jerry Hedrick from North Carolina.

RES SUBCOM CHRNM HEDRICK: There are none, Mr. Commander.

NATL COMDR MORIN: Appointments of members standing special Commissions and Committees, or Subcommittees to the National Executive Committee. I call on the National Adjutant.

Appointments to Commissions, Committees or Subcommittees

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: National Commander Paul A. Morin recommends the following to the National Executive Committee:

The Advisory Committee to the National Commander

To serve until the close of National Convention, 2007:

Thomas L. Bock, Colorado, Chairman

Thomas P. Cadmus, Michigan, Vice Chairman

Bruce Thiesen, California

Ray Hendrix, Georgia

Kenneth D. Danilson, Iowa

William M. Detweiler, Louisiana

John P. 'Jake' Comer, Massachusetts

Daniel A. Ludwig, Minnesota

Joseph J. Frank, Missouri

Richard M. Pedro, New York

Jerry L. Hedrick, North Carolina

Ronald F. Conley, Pennsylvania

Resolutions Subcommittee

To serve until the close of National Convention, 2007:

Jerry L. Hedrick, North Carolina, Chairman

Robert J. Proctor, Florida, Vice Chairman

David O. Warnken, Kansas

Robert A. Owen, Maine

Richard C. O'Keefe, New York

Carl W. Swisher, Ohio

William W. Kile, West Virginia

Subcommittee on Committees

To serve until the close of National Convention, 2007:

Richard W. Anderson, Connecticut, Chairman

Paul A. Evenson, South Dakota, Vice Chairman

Ray Hendrix, Georgia

Kenneth Dittenber, Michigan

Ronald G. Cherry, Texas

William Schrier, Washington

RES SUBCOM CHRNM HEDRICK: Move that the appointments be approved.

...Second.

NATL COMDR MORIN: Motion's been made and seconded to accept the appointments as read by our National Adjutant. Hearing no questions, all in favor. 'Aye.' Opposed? 'Ayes,' have it. You're all appointed. Congratulations and good luck. (Laughter.)

Miscellaneous business. The appointments are the following National Officers by the National Executive Committee. I so recommend the following appointments:

Appointment of National Officers

National Adjutant, Robert W. Spanogle, Michigan
 National Judge Advocate, Philip B. Onderdonk, Maryland
 National Treasurer, George A. Buskirk, Jr., Indiana
 National Chaplain, Stanley J. Gruneich, South Dakota
 National Historian, Michael J. Miskell, Pennsylvania
 National Sergeant-at-Arms, Joseph M. Steen, Massachusetts

PNC GEIGER: Introduce them now when you get them up here.

NATL COMDR MORIN: Okay. Bob Spanogle, in case any of you don't know, please rise. Philip Onderdonk, George Buskirk, Stanley Gruneich, National Chaplain, National Historian, Michael Miskell, National Sergeant-at-Arms. This is truly a great pleasure for me, someone who's done a lot on my behalf. Is he in the room? Where is he, Joe Steen? Stand up Joe. (Applause.)

RES SUBCOM CHRNM HEDRICK: Mr. Commander, I move the appointments that you just recommended be approved by the National Executive Committee.

...Second.

NATL COMDR MORIN: Could you repeat those in case I forgot them?

RES SUBCOM CHRNM HEDRICK: National Treasurer Bob Spanogle. (Laughter.)

NATL COMDR MORIN: Is that a recommendation for consolidation of positions? (Laughter.) All right. They all accept with great thanks. Under question. Hearing none, all in favor. 'Aye.' Opposed? The 'ayes' have it. Welcome. You're all on the payroll.

At this time we will install the National Chaplain, Historian and Sergeant-at-Arms. Please come to the front.

Oath of Office and Installation Ceremony

NATL COMDR MORIN: National Chaplain's obligations. To you is given the spiritual leadership of this great veterans organization. You will, I know, lend dignity and respect to your office. You should remain in close confidence with the Commander and the other National Officers of The American Legion. You should be ready upon occasion to take part in performing such divine and nonsectarian services as may be necessary; adhering to such ceremonial rituals as may be recommended by the National Headquarters from time to time. Into your keeping, we place the spirit of comradeship of this organization. May harmony and unity prevail.

National Sergeant-at-Arms. You are the sentinel or tiler, the outer guard of this organization. You will guard especially against the loss of one of The American Legion's greatest possessions, our deep and abiding spirit of comradeship. You will learn the identity of and introduce to the Commander all visiting comrades and quests. You are responsible that no one shall remain a stranger in our midst. Be ready at all times to assist your Commander. Into your hands is given the charge of the stand of our colors, which you will properly display at all national meetings and on ceremonial occasions.

If you will both raise your right hand and repeat after me giving your name when I say mine.

...The members recited the oath of office as follows:

I, *[name]*, do solemnly pledge myself to perform faithfully and impartially the duties of the office of The American Legion I'm about to assume, and I further pledge I will uphold the principles outlined in the National Constitution and Preamble of The American Legion in service to our veterans, their families, their communities, state and nation.

Congratulations. Welcome. To this body I present to you the National Chaplain and Sergeant-at-Arms. (Applause.) You wear one out, you get another cap. *[presenting their caps]*

NATL COMDR MORIN: Ratification of Resolutions adopted by the 88th National Convention. I recognize NECman Jerry Hedrick.

RES SUBCOM CHRNM HEDRICK: Mr. Commander?

NATL COMDR MORIN: Yes, sir?

RES SUBCOM CHRNM HEDRICK: Pursuant to Rule 8B of the National Executive Committee, I move that 222 resolutions with legislative intent adopted at the 88th National Convention become the legislative program for the first session of the 110th Congress.

...Second.

NATL COMDR MORIN: You've heard the motion and the second that 222 resolutions adopted by this convention become the mandate of our organization. Under question, hearing none all in favor. 'Aye.' Opposed. The 'ayes' have it.

Resolutions 88th National Convention August 29, 30, 31, 2006

Pursuant to Rule 8B of the National Executive Committee, the following 222 resolutions, with legislative intent, were adopted at the 88th National Convention are submitted for this Committee's consideration. If approved by the Committee, this list of resolutions will comprise The American Legion's legislative program for the first session of the 110th Congress.

Res. No.

AMERICANISM

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 2 | Support the Pledge of Allegiance |
| 326 | Eliminate Damages and Attorney Fees in Establishment Clause Lawsuits |
| 336 | Internal Security of the United States |
| 337 | The English Language be Declared as the Official United States Language |
| 338 | Return Patriotic Holidays to Traditional Dates |
| 339 | English Language be used in Naturalization Ceremonies |
| 340 | Illegal Aliens |
| 341 | Immigration Reform |
| 342 | Injured or Disabled Non-Citizen Veterans Applying for Naturalization |
| 343 | School Prayer |
| 344 | Constitutional Amendment to Protect the Flag of the United States |
| 345 | Oppose Foreign Manufacture of Flags of the United States |
| 346 | Conscientious Objectors Tax Diversion |
| 347 | Oppose Changes to "Title V of the Immigration and Nationality Act" |
| 348 | Oppose Amnesty for Illegal Immigrants |
| 349 | Oppose Financial Aid for Illegal Alien Students |
| 350 | Reform of the Student Visa System |
| 351 | Immigration Policy for the 21st Century |
| 352 | Amend the "Temporary Protected Status" Portion of the Immigration Act of 1990 |
| 353 | Tracking Arrival and Departure of Foreign Visitors to the United States |
| 354 | Support Fairness for Immigrant Spouses |
| 355 | Reform of the Non-Immigrant Visa Program |
| 356 | Oath of Renunciation and Allegiance |
| 357 | Prohibit use of Foreign-Issued Forms of Identification |
| 358 | Oppose Dual Allegiance; Enforce Citizenship Oath |
| 359 | Call for Action on Illegal Immigration Issue |
| 360 | The Boy Scouts of America and the Department of Defense |
| 362 | A Plan to Reduce the Illegal Population in the United States |

Res. No. CHILDREN & YOUTH

- 317 Adequate Foster Care
- 318 Admission of Children of United States Citizens
- 319 Catastrophic Illness in Children
- 320 Child Care Services
- 321 Child Maltreatment
- 322 Child Safety
- 323 Children in Pornographic Literature
- 324 Comprehensive Health care for Children and Youth
- 325 Drug Trafficking
- 327 Missing Children
- 328 National Family Week
- 329 Production, Sale and Distribution of Obscene Literature
- 330 Protect Children from the Unrestricted Media
- 331 Reaffirming Immunization Program
- 332 School Nutrition Program
- 333 Sexual Exploitation of Children
- 334 Teenage Pregnancy
- 335 Intellectual Disabilities

Res. No. ECONOMIC

- 10 Veterans Entrepreneur Training Program
- 15 Support Reinstatement of Employment and Veterans Preference
- 16 Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program
- 17 Allow Military Retirees to Apply for Positions in Federal Law Enforcement after Age 37
- 20 Oppose DVOP/LVER Personnel to Work on Public Assistance Related Programs
- 23 Reaffirm Support for the Transition Assistance Program
- 24 Reaffirm Support Service Members Occupational Conversion and Training Act (SMOCTA)
- 39 Exemption of Federal Tax on Saving Bonds for Wartime Veterans
- 40 Extension of the President's National Hire Veterans Committee
- 41 Provide Payment of Death Benefit if Montgomery GI Bill is not used
- 42 Support Legislation for Activated Reservists
- 43 Add Active Reservists to those Eligible for certain Job Training Services
- 45 Hire a Veteran Week
- 47 Support Job Protection for Service Connected Veterans Requiring Visits at VA Facilities
- 48 Delimiting Date for Using the GI Bill
- 127 Reaffirm Support of the Small Business Administration's Office of Veterans' Business Development
- 129 Support the Small Business Loan Program in VA
- 158 Veterans Small Business Opportunities
- 161 Federal Procurements and Contracts for Veteran Owned Businesses
- 200 Support Priority of Service for Veterans in all State Employment
- 203 Require VETS to Hire Veterans
- 204 Support Improvements of Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) Performance Standards
- 206 Oppose the Transfer of Veterans' Employment and Training Service to the Department of Veterans Affairs
- 207 Oppose Consolidation of Employment Service Program and Veterans Employment Program into the WIA Programs

- 209 Oppose any Weakening of the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program and Local Veterans Employment Representative Programs
- 210 Restore Oversight of Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) Programs
- 212 Support the National Veterans' Training Institute
- 213 Urge State Employment Security Agencies to Report Veterans' Wages at Placement
- 231 Adequate Funding for the Local Veterans Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists
- 232 Oppose the Job Loss of Veterans with the Proposed Outsourcing of Federal Jobs in the Federal Government
- 233 Employment and Training Administration to Develop a Data Collection System to Monitor Veterans' Priority of Service
- 234 Support Veterans' Preference in Public Employment
- 241 Raise Ceiling on VA Home Loans for Two Legally Married
- 246 Veterans to Pay Existing Education Loans with Montgomery GI Bill Benefits
- 293 Support Staffing Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVERS), as required by Law
- 368 Employment of Veterans in Government Workforce
- 369 Reimbursement for Correspondence and Distance Learning Courses
- 370 Amend the Internal Revenue Code for Qualified Veterans Definition
- 371 Housing Preference for Low-Income Veterans in the Department of Housing and Urban Development
- 372 Support Major Enhancements for the Montgomery GI Bill
- 373 Support Licensure and Certification of Active-Duty Service Personnel
- 374 Funding for Homeless Programs
- 375 Homestead Privilege to Veterans
- 376 Veterans Hiring Preference from Employers with Federal Contracts or Grants
- 377 Support the Development of Veterans On-the-Job Training Opportunities
- 378 Support Tax Credits for Certain Employers
- 379 Home Loan Guaranty Program
- 380 Support Recognition of Military Service and Pay when Calculating Starting Federal Civilian Salaries
- 381 Credit Service of Military Retirees towards Federal Employment Benefits

Res. No.**FOREIGN RELATIONS**

- 3 Policy Regarding Support of the Republic of Korea
- 5 Support for Taiwan
- 26 DPMO Interagency Policy Coordination
- 27 Vietnam Underwater Recovery Policy
- 28 Vietnam POW/MIA Policy Objectives
- 29 Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command Funding
- 34 Middle East/Gulf States Foreign Policies
- 35 POW/MIA Priority Policies
- 36 The American Legion's United Nations Policy
- 37 Vietnam Human Rights
- 120 The American Legion Policy on Africa
- 121 The American Legion Foreign Policy Objectives
- 122 Taiwan Defense Arm Sales
- 123 Enhanced Funding for USAID
- 124 Support for US-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIAs
- 185 The American Legion's Cuban Policy
- 187 Latin American Drug Interdiction Policy

- 188 Central America's Democracy Promotion
- 191 Social Security Benefits for Non-Resident Alien Spouse and Dependents

Res. No. INTERNAL AFFAIRS

- 6 Support the National Moment of Remembrance

Res. No. NATIONAL SECURITY

- 9 Domestic Energy and Production
- 11 Recycling Spent Nuclear Fuel Rods
- 13 Alternative Energy Sources
- 18 Energy Conservation
- 19 Nuclear Energy and Nuclear Waste
- 70 Support for the United States Air Force
- 71 Funding National Aeronautics and Space Administration Budgets
- 72 Supporting The National Space Program
- 73 Aeronautical and Space Exploration
- 78 Total Force Policy
- 79 Military Commissaries
- 81 National Security Principles
- 82 Second Amendment
- 83 Foreign Investments in American Defense Industries
- 84 Rebuilding America's Defense Industrial Base
- 85 American Battle Monuments Commission Funding
- 86 Combating Cyberspace Threats
- 87 Ensuring a Strong National Defense
- 88 The Uniformed Services University of the Health Services
- 89 Buy American
- 90 National Missile Defense System
- 91 The Armed Forces Retirement Homes
- 92 Transformation of the Armed Forces
- 93 Support and Appreciation for the Armed Forces and their Families
- 94 Funding Homeland Security
- 95 Support for Homeland Security and the War on Terrorism
- 96 Support for the Non-Federal Roles of the National Guard
- 97 The American Legion in Homeland Security
- 98 The Citizen Corps
- 99 Financial Anti-Terrorism Law Enforcement
- 100 Combating Crime in America
- 102 Support for the Jones Maritime Act and Related Cabotage Law
- 103 Commercial Shipbuilding for Defense
- 104 Department of Defense Healthcare for Military Beneficiaries
- 105 Listing of Veterans Service Organizations for Discharging Service Members
- 106 Military Funeral Honors
- 107 Reducing the Reserve Retirement Age
- 108 Military Quality of Life
- 109 The American Legion's Position on the Department of Defense Force Health Protection Program
- 112 Support for the Selective Service System Registration Program
- 113 Tri-care Eligibility for Members of the Reserve Components
- 114 Reforming the Military Absentee Voting System
- 115 Burial Eligibility for Arlington National Cemetery
- 116 Status of Forces Agreement

- 117 Concurrent Receipt of Military Retired Pay and Severance Pays and Disability Compensation for Disabled Retired
- 118 Fully Funding the United States Navy and Marine Corps
- 119 Support the United States Coast Guard in Homeland Security
- 153 Requesting Military Funeral Honors
- 169 Support for the War on Terrorism
- 229 Oppose Proposed Tricare Fee Increases
- 367 Boots on the Ground—The United States Army

Res. No.**VETERANS AFFAIRS AND REHABILITATION**

- 30 Support the Automatic Waiver of Veterans Benefits Administration Debts of \$250 or Less
- 62 Request Congress provide the Department of Veterans Affairs Adequate Funding for Medical and Prosthetic Research
- 63 Oppose any Reduction of Eligibility Criteria for Department of Veterans Affairs Per Diem Payments to State Veterans Homes
- 64 Support Presumption of Service Connection for Hepatitis C
- 65 The American Legion Policy on Gulf War Veterans Illnesses
- 66 Improve the Disability and Death Pension Program
- 67 The American Legion Policy Regarding Community-Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCS)
- 130 Recognize Operations in Lebanon (1958), Grenada (1983) and Panama (1989-1990) as Periods of War for Department of Veterans Affairs Pension Purposes
- 131 Clarification of “Service in the Republic of Vietnam” for the Purpose of Agent Orange Presumption
- 132 The American Legion Policy on Radiation
- 133 Provide Full Funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs Construction Program
- 134 The American Legion Policy on Prostate Cancer Research and Treatment
- 135 Support Medicare Reimbursement for the Department of Veterans Affairs
- 136 Revision of Work-Rate Standards for Department of Veterans Affairs Adjudicators
- 138 Support Legislation to Place Mariner Medal Recipients in Priority Group 3 for Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care
- 139 The American Legion Policy on Department of Veterans Affairs Nursing Home Capacity
- 141 The GI Bill of Health
- 142 Amend the Eligibility Requirements and Extend the Eligibility time Period for Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance
- 143 The American Legion Policy on the State Veterans Home Program
- 145 The American Legion Policy on Department of Veterans Affairs National Service Life Insurance
- 146 The American Legion Policy on Department of Veterans Affairs Pharmacy Benefits
- 147 Open-ended Presumptive Period for Undiagnosed Illnesses for Gulf War Veterans
- 148 The American Legion Policy on Department of Veterans Affairs Mental Health Services
- 149 The American Legion Position on Attorney Representation before the Department of Veterans Affairs
- 150 The American Legion Policy on Opening the Federal Supply Schedule for Pharmaceuticals to Medicare and Medicaid

- 214 Include World War II Veterans in Priority Group 6 for Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care
- 218 The Establishment of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) as a Gulf War Presumptive Disease
- 219 The American Legion Policy on the Correction of Military Records
- 221 All Veterans Receive “Wartime” Benefits for Active Military Service between February 28, 1961, and August 5, 1964
- 238 Exempt certain Income from VA Pension Rate Determination
- 239 Exempt Enrolled Purple Heart Recipients from VA Prescription Co-Payment
- 240 Increase the Maximum Coverage under the Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance Program
- 242 Remove the Specific Date to Award Dependency and Indemnity Compensation benefits to Surviving Spouses of Former Prisoners of War
- 243 Allow Beneficiaries to Retain \$90 of their Benefits while in Medicaid-Covered Nursing Homes
- 244 Reduce the Number of Year of One-Hundred Percent (100%) Service Connection required for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation Purposes
- 245 Amend Title 38, United States Code, to increase the Special Monthly Compensation (K) Award
- 252 Extend the Filing Period of an Appeal Notice to the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims
- 253 VA Role in National Emergency Preparedness
- 254 The American Legion Policy on Assured Funding for VA Medical Care
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- 257 The American Legion Policy on Former Prisoners of War
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NATL COMDR MORIN: At this time, the Chair will recognize Past National Commander John Geiger for the purpose of the presentation.

PNC GEIGER: Thank you, Commander. Can I work from here?

NATL COMDR MORIN: Wherever you wish, sir.

PNC GEIGER: Where’s the guy with the camera? You haven’t got any time left. (Laughter.) So they’ll recognize you back in Colorado, here is a blue cap. Past National Commander, Colorado, Post 23. Is that you?

PNC BOCK: I have a promotion.

PNC GEIGER: When you get home, they’ll recognize you now. On behalf of all the

committeemen here, and distinguished visitors with your family and friends, I want you to have that cap. I want you to go home, rest up a day or two and go down to the Post and take over. (Laughter.) Very humbly, of course. Now, you've got you blue cap, got a package of nice red caps that says Past. And you have a badge to wear on your official uniform that indicates you're a Past National Commander. You have that lapel button there but one of the girls can put the button on later, you know that. South Dakota pheasant or what is that on there? (Laughter.)

Wear it proudly, wherever you go, wherever you travel. Legionnaires will recognize you by those two. I commend you for your year of office and we all enjoy having been with you, but you're not done yet. You've got work to do in The American Legion. We all understand that? Good luck to you, Tom. (Applause.)

NATL COMDR MORIN: You've been off the payroll since noon. You're a great volunteer now. (Laughter.)

For the dates of the Annual Meetings, I call upon the National Adjutant.

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: Thank you, Mr. Commander. There are no dates to confirm, but we have the dates of the Fall Meetings, the C&A, the Commissions, Committees and Subcommittees, the National Executive Committee, the Legislative Meeting, and the Washington Conference and the Spring Meetings on your agenda. Those are the meetings for this year to be accepted, 2006-2007, with the exception of the National Convention.

...The list of Annual Meetings is as follows:

Confirmation of Dates for Future Meetings

2006 Fall Meetings

Commissions and Committees	October 16-17
Commanders and Adjutants Conference	October 16-17
National Executive Committee	October 18-19

2007 Washington Conference

March 4-7

2007 Spring Meetings

Commissions and Committees	May 7-8
National Executive Committee	May 9-10

2007 Fall Meetings

Commissions and Committees	October 15-16
Commanders and Adjutants Conference	October 15-16
National Executive Committee	October 17-18

2008 Washington Conference

March 30-April 2

2008 Spring Meetings

Commissions and Committees	May 5-6
National Executive Committee	May 7-8

2008 Fall Meetings

Commissions and Committees	October 13-14
Commanders and Adjutants Conference	October 13-14
National Executive Committee	October 15-16

2009 Washington Conference

March 1-4

2009 Spring Meetings

Commissions and Committees	May 4-5
National Executive Committee	May 6-7

2009 Fall Meetings

Commissions and Committees	October 12-13
Commanders and Adjutants Conference	October 12-13
National Executive Committee	October 14-15

2010 Washington Conference

Feb. 28-March 3

2010 Spring Meetings

Commissions and Committees May 3-4
 National Executive Committee May 5-6

2010 Fall Meetings

Commissions and Committees October 11-12
 Commanders and Adjutants Conference October 11-12
 National Executive Committee October 13-14

2011 Washington Conference

March 6-9

2011 Spring Meetings

Commissions and Committees May 2-3
 National Executive Committee May 4-5

2011 Fall Meetings

Commissions and Committees October 10-11
 Commanders and Adjutants Conference October 10-11
 National Executive Committee October 12-13

NATL COMDR MORIN: Thank you, Mr. Adjutant. Let me introduce to those of you who don't know, who will travel with me this year, serving as my Aide, Mr. Mark Avis of Massachusetts. (Applause.)

Also, this evening from 5:30 to 7:30, at the Grand Ballroom, at the Hilton across the street, you're all invited to come over and have some libation and a little nourishment with me in celebration of this day. So, I extend it to all of you and your guests to come on over. If you bring too many guests you may have to wait. (Laughter.)

Bob Baranowski is the Chairman of the Homecoming. He will inform you of the Homecoming.

CHRMN BARANOWSKI: The reception for National Commander Paul A. Morin will be October 14, 2006 at the Radisson Hotel City Center. Hosted Bar at 6:00 p.m., dinner at 7:00 p.m.

NATL COMDR MORIN: Hosted Bar means it's open and free.

CHRMN BARANOWSKI: Dinner at 7:00 p.m. The dinner will be as follows: there will be a New England Clam Chowder to start with Frankfurt and stuffed Shrimp, toss salad and choice of two dressings, starch, vegetables, butter, coffee and tea. And a New England favorite for dessert, carrot cake. The price will be \$45.00 per person. We have mailed as of 1:06 p.m. today, your invitations from Massachusetts. We will be passing them out at the end of the session out here in the hall.

NATL COMDR MORIN: Any questions on the Homecoming and entertainment?

CHRMN BARANOWSKI: Plus entertainment which is going to be an Irish singer and comedian, Donny K. Hill on Saturday, October 14.

NATL COMDR MORIN: I'm going to give you all an inside tip, so you'll be aware of this that is also my birthday.

For Positions and Programs of The American Legion, gentlemen, ladies, this *[indicating to the guide]* is an outstanding Quick Reference Guide. It's been provided to some of you and some of you probably don't have it. But if you don't, there are many up here on this table and there's some in the back as you go out. It's also great to use as a speaking guide. It is an outstanding piece of work by our national organization once again. It's very simple and fits in your suit coat pocket. It can be used at anytime you need it.

The thing that's upsetting to me is the knowledge of our organization to those who are in our leadership. It's hard to believe that people who receive appointments and are NEC members, don't know that there is an NEC meeting immediately following the National Convention. You are the veterans in this organization and you've been truly mentored by someone with knowledge of this organization, those things wouldn't happen. I know I'm singing to the choir because they're all here. But it's our responsibility and I'm seeing it as it

happens as I travel, that we must mentor those to come forth within our organization. It's up to you. You are the leaders of your Departments. You understand what it is about to make those who follow in your footsteps to know what it's about to serve as a national officer. You need to teach those who are serving within your Department to be the true leaders they need to be. Yes, you and I have that responsibility to the next generation to leave it better than we found it and we need to do that for them. Let's work together.

Purpose of the introductions by Departments with requests in the room. Ray.

Introductions

NECman HENDRIX (GA): Mr. Commander, I'd like to introduce my Alternate NEC, Mr. Charles Wessinger, my State Adjutant, Mr. Charlie Knox, and the new Secretary and Treasurer of the Southern Block. Also Faye Casper, Past National Historian.

[NEC are introduced in turn.]

NECman CHRISTOFFERSEN (UT): I'd like to introduce my Alternate National Committeeman. He's also the State Chairman in the Utah Office of Veterans Affairs. He's doing a great job. At this convention, it's unbelievable the way he accepted all the dignitaries and I'm talking about politicians. He was there, and he did a great job. Thank you, Mr. Schow

NECman ANDERSON (CT): I introduce my Alternate NEC, Frazier Brinley, my new Department Commander, Jim LaCoursiere, and our new Senior Vice Commander, Andrew Baranowski.

NECman WARNKEN (KS): I re-introduce our National Vice Commander from Kansas, Elgin Wahlborg, our outgoing Department Commander, Ernie Cooper and if everything goes according to plan, he'll be appointed to replace Elgin as Alternate NEC.

NECman DITTENBER (MI): I re-introduce my Alternate, Jerry Dennis for the State of Michigan, our new Department Commander, Mr. Roger Webster and our Past Department Commander, John Skinner.

NECman SCHMIDT (OR): I introduce our new Department Commander, Bernie Healy, and our Department Adjutant, Barry J. Snyder.

NECman HERBISON (WI): Here is our NEC from Wisconsin and our new Alternate, David Gough, from the Department of Wisconsin.

NECman GUTZMAN (NV): I introduce our new Alternate and our new Department Commander, Tony Vaughn and Jack Ford.

NECman LANDKAMER (NE): Here is Alternate NECman Doug Boldt.

NECman VAN HORN (AK): I introduce our new Alternate NEC, Peggy Dettori, from Kodiak and immediate Past NEC, Jimmie Foster who's wearing that pretty blue cap. (Applause and laughter.)

NATL COMDR MORIN: Looks like a dunce cap. (Laughter.)

NECman ELLISON (MT): I introduce our Alternate NEC, Bob Beals and our newly elected Department Commander, the holder of two consecutive Gold Brigade Awards, and working on the third, Mervin Gunderson.

NECman RAKESTRAW (NJ): I introduce from New Jersey our Commander Chuck Robbins and our Alternate NEC Billy Mack.

NECman RICE (ID): I introduce Morris Bentley, the Alternate NEC.

NECman BENNETT (IL): I introduce the leading candidate for next year's National Commander, Marty Conatser.

NATL COMDR MORIN: If you're interested, you've got 364 days to go. (Laughter.)

NECman BENNETT (IL): Here is our Department Vice Commander, Myron Kirby and his Aide, Chuck Zelinsky.

NECman EVENSON (SD): I introduce our Department Commander, Gunner Baatrup, our Department Adjutant, Ron Boyd, Department Historian Charemon Dunham, member of the Legion, Matt Dunham, and membership Chair, Ron Kazmierczak and my best friend and wife, Kathy.

NECman WANSER (IA): I introduce our new Department Commander, Milt Heifner.

ALT NECman ANGELL (WA): There is a card going around here for NEC Bill Schrier. It will be going down the aisle here. Please sign it.

PNC THIESEN (CA): I introduce a fellow Californian, California's new National Executive Committeeman, James Hackney.

NECman VOYLES (MO): I introduce our guest to you, Jim Whitfield. He is our Honorary Former Commander for the State of Missouri.

NECman PROCTOR (FL): I introduce our immediate Past Department Commander, Lawrence White, our Department Sergeant-at-Arms Phil Hearlson and our Past Department Commander, Clarence Hill.

NECman SCHMIDT (MD): I introduce our incoming National Executive Committeeman, Dr. Gordon Browning. He's going to do an excellent job.

NECman TURNER (AL): In her absence, I will reintroduce or mention our new Alternate, NEC Dolores Hardin from the Department of Alabama. Also, I introduce our new Department Commander, Willis Frazier. Also, I have the pleasure of introducing our new National Vice Commander, Mr. Byron White.

While I'm here, can I mention about the health of the person who went to the hospital today who was treated and taken to the emergency room?

NATL COMDR MORIN: Permission granted.

DEPT ADJ KNOX (GA): His name is Walter Pollack and won the LVER Award yesterday morning. He had some gallstones or something that caused him to be nauseous so they sent him to the hospital. The last I heard they were running an EKG on him and hopefully, when I get back to the hotel I'll know more about it and pass it onto you.

NATL COMDR MORIN: Call on the National Adjutant for further announcements.

Announcements

NATL ADJ SPANOGLE: As you came into this room as an NEC, you were handed a memo to list your three preferences to serve on the National Executive Committee Liaison Commission Committee to the National Commissions. If you fill it out, give it to John Sommer who will get the ball rolling and get the administrative year rolling.

This booklet [*indicating*] is gold. Put it in your pocket. I carry one. I'm here 365 days out of the year. I have it so if I get stopped, or give a speech, I always have reference to it. It is a great book and it's for 2006-2007. There's some here.

For all the newly elected officers of The American Legion, from the National Adjutant to the National Vice Commanders and all appointed officers who are here present, appointed by the NEC, "Red Caps" I mean, stay after the close of the Executive Committee. That's when we'll take your picture. If you can't do that, we can't do a hometown news release. We want to make you famous when you get back. (Laughter.) You are famous people. If we don't send the paper anything, then you can't complain about not getting any press.

NATL COMDR MORIN: Call upon the National Chaplain for benediction.

Benediction

**Rev. Stanley J. Gruneich, South Dakota
National Chaplain**

The Commander said, keep things fast or one fast thought. I have two of them. If you ask me to keep you in prayer, be specific, it helps me. Also, we work for a great God and yet who else should we pray for? One said for my dog and the congregation started laughing. I looked at the congregation and said, if you can't heal that dog, you can't help us with big problems. You work with a great God. Let us pray.

Lord, what we do as individuals in this group is admirable. Yet by Your spirit multiply

our works beyond our expectations.

Thank You for raising up our new Commander Paul, for the Vice Commanders and this group of NEC. Thank you for bringing them into your leadership. Bring them new strength. Remembering, we have to do to people, the survivors and families, that there are other veterans that look to us. Even though we've sat for a long time, move us now to action. Amen.

NATL COMDR MORIN: Sergeant-at-Arms, lead us in a salute to the Colors of our country.

NATL SGT-AT-ARMS STEEN: The Colors being in place, right-hand salute.

...At this time the members of National Executive Committee saluted the flag.

NATL COMDR MORIN: I declare this NEC Meeting adjourned.

...At 2:45 p.m., the Post-National Executive Committee of The American Legion adjourned.

Abbreviations

AARP	American Association of Retired Persons
ACLU	American Civil Liberties Union
AFA	Angel Flight America
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ALR	American Legion Riders
AMVETS	American Veterans
ASVET	Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veterans' Employment and Training
BATF	Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
BRAC	Base Realignment and Closure (Commission)
C&A	Commanders and Adjutants (Conference)
CARES	Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services
CBOC	Community Based Outpatient Clinics
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFA	Citizens Flag Alliance, Inc.
CIS	Center for Immigration Studies
CMN	Children's Miracle Network
COLA	Cost-of-Living Adjustment
COTA	Children's Organ Transplant Association
CRSC	Combat Related Special Compensation
CWF	Child Welfare Foundation
DAV	Disabled American Veterans
DD(X)	Next-generation Destroyer
DEA	Drug Enforcement Administration
DEC	Department Executive Committee
DEPT	Department
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DMS	Direct Membership Solicitation
DoD	Department of Defense
DoJ	Department of Justice
DoL	Department of Labor
DPMO	Defense POW/MIA Office
DVD	Digital Video Disc
DVOP	Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program
EKG	Electrocardiograph
FY	Fiscal Year
GAO	Government Accountability Office
H Con Res	House Concurrent Resolution
H Res and HR	House Resolution
HCVA	House Veterans' Affairs Committee
HHS	Health and Human Services
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus

HR	House Resolution
HUD	Housing and Urban Development
IT	Information Technology
LDC	Last Date of Change
LVER	Local Veterans' Outreach Representative
MCCF	Medical Care Collection Fund
MMA	Mercy Medical Airlift
MUSC	Medical University of South Carolina
NALPA	National American Legion Press Association
NEC	National Executive Committee
NVTI	National Veterans Training Institute
OJJDP	Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention
OPM	Office of Personnel Management
PL	Public Law
PR	Public Relations
POW/MIA	Prisoner of War/Missing in Action
S Con Res	Senate Concurrent Resolution
SAL	Sons of The American Legion
SGLI	Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance
SJ Res or SJ Res.	Senate Joint Resolution
SMOCTA	Service Members Occupational Conversion and Training Act
SSNs	Social Security Numbers
USC	United States Code
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
VA	Department of Veterans Affairs
VDABC	Veterans' Disability Benefits Commission
VFW	Veterans of Foreign Wars
VSOs	Veterans' Service Organization
WIA	Workforce Investment Act

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