

From: [March, Joseph H.](#)
To: [Public Relations Division](#)
Subject: Release: The American Legion calls VA's so-called death book an "awkward attempt to help"
Date: Wednesday, August 26, 2009 11:32:45 AM

The American Legion

For God and country

**NATIONAL CONVENTION HEADQUARTERS LOUISVILLE,
KENTUCKY**

(502) 815-6763 Office

(502) 815-6765 Fax

(317)-748-1926 Cell

(202) 406-0887 Cell

Web Site: www.legion.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The American Legion calls VA's so-called death book an "awkward attempt to help"

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Aug. 26, 2009) – The National Commander of The American Legion says the so-called "death book" posted on the Department of Veterans Affairs website may be well-intentioned, but needs to be reconsidered.

"We share a mission with the VA to work always in the best interests of our military veterans," said the Legion's National Commander, David K. Rehbein, "and we are certain that the Department of Veterans Affairs made this controversial publication available with the best of intentions.

"However," Rehbein continued, "elements of the booklet 'Your Life, Your Choices' – in our opinion – can be easily misconstrued and appear insensitive. Somewhat like

the improperly vetted Department of Homeland Security report to which we objected strongly some months ago, the release of this publication demonstrates poor planning, no matter how well intentioned it was.”

The controversial booklet, “Your Life, Your Choices” has been dubbed “the death book” by some commentators due to its subject matter and method of presentation in advising veterans on end-of-life decision-making. “While The American Legion does not believe this publication is in any way designed to influence veterans to end their lives prematurely,” said Rehbein, “we can understand how some might interpret it that way, At best, it is an awkward attempt to help.”

“Your Life, Your Choices” is not an official publication of the Department of Veterans Affairs, but it has been made available in printed and electronic formats by the VA.

Commander Rehbein made his remarks in Louisville, Ky. where The American Legion is in the second day of its 91st national convention.

With a current membership of 2.5-million wartime veterans, The American Legion was founded in 1919 on the four pillars of a strong national security, veterans affairs, Americanism,

and youth programs. Legionnaires work for the betterment of their communities through more than 14,000 posts across the nation.

- 30 -

Media contact: Through noon, August 27, contact or Craig Roberts or Joe March (502) 815-6763.