

Good evening, Comrades,

This month, the Legislative Team traveled to Washington, D.C., for the Legislative Convention, where we received valuable training and established our legislative priorities for the remainder of the year.

While in D.C., our team was proud to help secure the 218th signature on the Richard Star Act Discharge Petition from our very own Representative Nancy Mace. This is an important accomplishment for our committee and for the veterans of South Carolina. Reaching this milestone demonstrates the impact that continued advocacy and engagement can have on legislation affecting our veterans.

Since returning home, the Legislative Team has continued working to advance our legislative priorities. We ask that you continue monitoring Action Corps and remain engaged with current legislative efforts. Your involvement is essential to making sure the voices of our veterans are heard.

We also saw progress regarding another one of our legislative priorities when the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) updated its Written Informed Consent policy. While this is a step in the right direction, there is still more work to be done.

The VFW's position is that the VA's new informed-consent policy is a positive step, but it does not replace the need for Written Informed Consent legislation. Beginning in 2027, the VA will require written consent for veterans prescribed both opioids and benzodiazepines, as well as for veterans under age 30 who are prescribed antidepressants. Other psychotropic medications will still require only oral consent.

The VFW believes that stronger informed-consent protections should be established in law so that veterans consistently receive clear information about the risks, side effects, benefits, alternatives, and safe methods for discontinuing these medications. The VA's updated policy demonstrates that stronger informed-consent protections are possible,

while legislation would help ensure those protections remain in place beyond current VA policy.

As always, please help us sign members up for Action Corps and encourage them to remain involved in legislative advocacy. Additionally, make sure you are submitting your legislative reports using the form located on the Legislative tab of the Department website:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfGnvGE0hs-JNadCa6Vpo4Nw360N-XE70vpwH29dfu57-8Aqw/viewform?usp=publish-editor>

It is also time to prepare for voting. Please make sure our members know how to register to vote if they are not already registered. South Carolina voter registration information is available through the South Carolina State Election Commission:

<https://na01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fscvotes.gov%2Fvoters%2Fregister-to-vote%2F&data=05%7C02%7C%7C66b34ec905454098344c08dcb324a92d%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C638582217237500488%7CUnknown%7CTWFPbGZsb3d8eyJWljoimC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTil6lk1haWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=yEpYeysnFOVYMyg%2BT%2F8xlfTvwD%2F74G57B5blrSbhfSM%3D&reserved=0>

I have also attached a copy of the VFW Legislative Priorities for your review and reference.

Thank you for your continued commitment to our veterans and to the legislative process. Together, we can continue making sure veterans' voices are heard.

Respectfully,

Shannon Gaskins

VFW National Legislative Member