VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS
National Legislative Service
The Importance of Legislative Advocacy

- Veterans Benefits don’t just happen
  - Where we got our start
    - WWI War Bonuses
  - Along the way
    - Original GI Bill, Dept. of VA, AO presumption, Full year approps
  - Today
    - Caregiver, Toxic exposure, Access to care
    - Bad policy stopped
Why Legislative Activism Works

• All politics are local!
  • You are the employer
  • They will listen to you

• You bring an expertise
  • You know what affects veterans
  • Your perspective is important

Your Influence Counts
USE IT!
The Three Keys to Good Advocacy

• **Know the Issues**
  • Must be from the VFW point of view

• **Discuss the Issues**
  • Veterans, the public and Congress must know the VFW and its Auxiliary knows the issues and we have solutions

• **Taking Action**
  • Action alerts
  • Meet with members/Candidates
Know the Issues

- Finding information on VFW issues
  - Action Corps Weekly
  - Priority Goals
  - Congressional Testimony
  - Call and ask (202-608-8352) VFW Legislative Service (Ray Kelley)
  - Grassroots info/ideas (202-608-8363) (Ken Wiseman)

- All these can be accessed on the VFW website
  - Drop down box “VFW in DC”

www.vfw.org/VFW-in-DC
Discuss the Issues and How to be an Advocate

• At every Post, District and Dept. meeting
  • Talk about our successes
  • Talk about what still needs to be done
  • Get them to be involved/ask them to be an advocate

• When you have a booth set up
  • Recruitment, Veterans Day, Legislative Activism...

• The Key
  • Get people involved
Take Action

• Respond to Action Alerts
  • Last Alert – 300K received, 75K opened, 5K took action
    – Every member of the Auxiliary must be signed up for Action Corps
    – Families, Friends, Co-workers must sign up also

• Attend Town Hall Meetings – Asked question
  – Veterans, Service Members, Families

• Get to know your Legislative Committee Members

• Vote
Next Congress

• Much Left to be Done
  – Health Care Reform
    • Consolidated Payments, Urgent/Emergency Room Care, Improve Scheduling
  – Caregiver, Toxic Exposure, Blue Water Navy...
  – Infrastructure
    • Public-Private Partnerships, Leases
  – Appeals Reform
Questions?