AMERICAN LEGION

LEGISLATIVE WEEKLY

September 12, 2025

## WEEKLY GRASSROOTS NEWSLETTER

This week, we are asking Legionnaires to contact Congress to request support for the *Shipbuilding and Harbor Infrastructure for Prosperity and Security (SHIPS) Act!* This legislation aims to improve the maritime security of the United States. Our members served the nation in wartime and know the dangers of poor readiness. We cannot let the burden of these security failures fall on our service members. *The American Legion supports this legislation, and we appreciate all the emails you have sent so far.*

***Go to the Action Center to quickly email a letter of support to your members of Congress.***

Have you had a recent meeting or phone call with your member of Congress? Report your contact today! Click here to register your Congressional contact and demonstrate the power of The American Legion advocacy in action.

## NEED TO FIND YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS?

**https://www.votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/Address**

## TOP GRASSROOTS DEPARTMENTS

| | |
|---|---|
| **Wisconsin** | **152** |
| **Kansas** | **137** |
| **New York** | **96** |
| **Tennessee** | **83** |
| **Ohio** | **75** |

These are the number of e-mail messages these Departments sent to Congress on the VoterVoice campaigns this past week.

Register more participants in your Department to increase the number of veteran voices advocating on the Hill!

***https://www.votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/Register***

## LEGISLATIVE TOOLKIT UPDATES

*10 Tips for a Successful Meeting on Capitol Hill* and the *Legislative Meeting Worksheet* are now available for viewing and download on The Legion's website. You can find them and other legislative resources on the Legislative Advocacy Resources & Toolkit page.

## HOUSE PASSES DEFENSE POLICY BILL WITH PROPOSAL TO REPEAL IRAQ WAR AUTHORIZATIONS

*This article's original publication can be found here*

The House on Wednesday voted to pass its version of the National Defense Authorization Act, with a bipartisan amendment to repeal the two laws authorizing the use of military force (AUMF) in Iraq.

The legislation, which authorizes funding and sets policy for the U.S. military, passed 231 to 196. Four Republicans voted in opposition of the bill while 17 Democrats joined the rest of the GOP in voting for it.

The AUMF amendment, part of nearly two dozen amendments added in a series of votes, would repeal the 2002 Iraq War and 1991 Gulf War authorizations as well as make it more difficult for presidents to bypass Congress on military actions.

Lawmakers voted 261 to 167 to pull the AUMFs, which critics say have been abused by presidents as they grant the commander-in-chief authority to use military force without issuing a formal declaration of war. All Democrats voted in support of the amendment, joined by 49 Republicans—about one-fifth of the GOP lawmakers.

Presidents routinely use AUMFs to legally justify military action, with President Trump relying on the 2002 AUMF to authorize the January 2020 strike that killed Iranian General Qassem Soleimani as he traveled within the country.

The vote came after three members of the House Freedom Caucus – Reps. Ralph Norman (R-S.C.), Chip Roy (R-Texas) and Morgan Griffith (R-Va.) – on Tuesday broke with Republican leaders in the House Rules Committee.
The three voted in favor of a motion from Rep. Jim McGovern (Mass.), the top Democrat on the House Rules Committee, to allow a vote on the amendment.

A bill to repeal the 2002 AUMF last passed the House in 2021, while a bill to repeal both the 2002 and 1991 authorizations passed the Senate in 2023.

The AUMF proposal was among the most contentious amendments included in the NDAA, which has a topline of $892.6 billion. Also included in the bill were a pair of amendments that would restrict the Pentagon's coverage of gender-affirming care.

Top House Democrats earlier this week signaled that they would oppose must-pass defense legislation if Republicans pushed through contentious amendments, forcing Republicans to stay united to pass the bill should they not have had the support of any Democrats.

The bill typically passes with wide bipartisan support.

## CHAIRMAN BOST SECURES KEY TAP PROGRAM REFORMS IN FY26 NDAA

*This article's original publication can be found here*

Today, House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Chairman Mike Bost (R-Ill.), released the following statement after the House passed H.R. 3838, *the Streamlining Procurement for Effective Execution and Delivery and National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year (NDAA) 2026,* which included key Transition Assistance Program (TAP) reforms Chairman Bost secured to add accountability in the program and improve pathways for servicemembers and their spouses to take TAP.

Under current law, TAP program must begin no later than 365 days prior to separation for those who are transitioning out of the military. While TAP has evolved over the years, the most recent Congressionally mandated report as well as committee oversight hearings have revealed that only 50% of transitioning servicemembers make it to TAP on time at the 365-day mark. This number is concerning, as the Committee continues to look at ways to improve TAP – both through legislation and oversight – to ensure that veterans are equipped with all the resources and knowledge of the VA benefits they are eligible for to prepare them for their next mission after they leave the military.

"As Chairman, I have met with servicemembers, and their families stationed at home and around the world and heard firsthand their struggles when it comes to navigating the transition from active-duty to civilian life. We have worked hard to move the needle on TAP to get servicemembers – regardless of rank – the best program that meets their individual needs, but there is always more work to be done," **said Chairman Bost**. "My amendment in this year's NDAA builds on our efforts and will bring needed improvements to TAP by requiring pre-transition counseling, allowing servicemembers to attend TAP more than once and with their spouse, modernizing the financial planning section, improving coordination between all federal agencies that participate in TAP and more. These changes will make a real difference in our servicemembers overall experience with TAP and I am grateful to my friend, Armed Services Chairman Mike Rogers, for working with me to secure these vitally important provisions in this year's NDAA on behalf of servicemembers and their families."

**Chairman Bost fought for the following provisions which were included in the House-passed version of the FY26 NDAA:**

- **Requirement of Separation Counseling** – Requires servicemembers to attend at least three days of separation counseling unless they have accepted a job offer or are enrolled in an educational or vocational training program.
- **Waiver for Certain Members of the Reserve Components** – Provides a waiver for certain members of the Reserve, allowing them to attend TAP every three years, unless there is relevant new information.
- **Pilot Program for Military Spouses** – Allows servicemembers to attend TAP multiple times and are encouraged to bring their spouses along, so they can prepare for their next phase in life together.
- **Minimum Amount of Counseling Regarding Financial Planning** – Enhances the financial planning section of TAP to cover topics such as debt management, taxes, and investing.
- **Coordination Between Departments of Defense, Veterans Affairs, and Labor** – Improves the warm handover process by fostering a personal connection between the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Department of Defense (DoD), and Department of Labor (DOL).

- **Yearly Surprise Audits** – Includes plans for regular audits of the TAP program, updates to the TAP curriculum, and improvements to the website where veterans and their families can find TAP resources.
- **Solid Start Program**: Interaction with TAP – Implements a review of the TAP program when servicemembers are contacted as part of the Solid Start Program, as well as additional reporting requirements to ensure veterans receive the best support for their next mission.

## LEGIONNAIRE OF THE WEEK

To recognize the weekly accomplishments of our Legionnaires, we will spotlight an individual every week. These individuals demonstrate exceptional grassroots activism by meeting with/contacting their Congressional Representative/Senator to advocate for veterans. Efforts like these truly make a difference and give veterans a voice in Congress.

# Allan Jensen, Washington

Allan, thank you for your steadfast advocacy of Legion priorities; we are honored to name you Legionnaire of the Week!

Last week, Allan accompanied National Commander Wiley to meet with Congressman Rick Larsen and his legislative aide as a part of the National Commander's visit to the Department of Washington. They discussed the Congressman's support for the Major Richard Star Act and other current legislation. They also discussed bills that were before his committees and the impact they would have on veterans and active-duty military. Allan offered his assistance to the Congressman's aide to help secure a location in Whatcom County for a veteran roundtable meeting in the next few weeks.

*Thank you*, Allan, for your report and the time you have dedicated to the Legion's legislative priorities.

## GRASSROOTS INFORMATION

Interested in what the Legion is advocating for in Congress? Check out our information papers and Legislative priorities. This is a great starting point for a conversation with your elected officials!

As part of our ongoing Grassroots efforts, LegDiv staff is available to provide **Grassroots Training** tailored to the hosting Department's needs. If you are interested in hosting a Grassroots training event, please contact grassroots@legion.org or ejohnson@legion.org.

You can find relevant legislation and the Legion's stance on them in the key legislation section of VoterVoice.

***Register for Action Alerts today at***
***https://www.votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/Register***

## UPCOMING CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS

As of 9/12, the following hearings are scheduled:

- Monday, September 15, 3:00 PM: House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Subcommittee on Technology Modernization Oversight Hearing -- "*Advancing VA Care Through Artificial Intelligence*."
- Wednesday, September 17, 4:00 PM: Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs Hearing -- "*Strengthening Services for Veterans with Spinal Cord Injury and Disorder*"

HVAC hearings can be viewed at: Calendar Home | House Committee on Veterans Affairs

SVAC hearings can be viewed at: Hearings - U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs
HASC hearings can be viewed at: Hearings – House Armed Services Committee
SASC hearings can be viewed at: Hearings – U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services

View The American Legion Legislative Handbook Here