

## ALA NC Legislative News

November 2021

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**The purpose of this newsletter is to encourage and empower members to be more knowledgeable to take action on The American Legion's legislative priorities.**

**Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!! I pray you have a wonderful Christmas enjoying family and friends. Please remember those less fortunate this year, especially our veterans.**

**How did the Voting go in your area???? Did you Vote???**

### **The American Legion's Buddy Check Program**

The Legion announced on November 4<sup>th</sup> that they will draft legislation to expand the Buddy Check Program to VA. The Senate approved legislation that would make the Buddy Check Program a National program. The House needs to act before Congress recesses this month. Join the Legion's Action Campaign today, Write your representative today. "S. 544 would direct VA to establish a "Buddy Check Week," provide educational opportunities, materials, and references for veterans to learn how to conduct personal wellness checks, as well as require increased resources for the Veterans Crisis Line to handle any potential increased usage during the designated week. The bill is modeled after the American Legion's "Buddy Check National Week of Calling" to connect veterans to better ensure that they receive the care they need.

The American Legion launched "Buddy Check Week" in 2019. It has since been expanded and encourages Legionnaires to conduct veteran outreach as part of their daily routine. The idea is to reconnect with veterans who may need assistance but don't know where to go or who to ask. We've seen successful stories arise out of buddy checks, before and during the pandemic. Thanks to these efforts, older veterans have received assistance in getting food and medicine, as well as having a comforting voice to talk with even for a few minutes.

Just think if that goodwill could receive the support of Congress and VA. The help veterans receive from buddy checks would skyrocket. You can help make this a reality by contacting your House representative to tell them to pass S. 544 today." Use the following link to find your representative and send them an email or letter.

"The American Legion proudly supports this legislation and asks that you call on your Representative to pass S.544 today! "

### **GWOT MEMORIAL PRESS CONFERENCE**

"The American Legion joined veterans' advocates, lawmakers, wounded warriors, and Gold Star families in front of the U.S. Capitol on Nov. 3 to call on Congress to pass legislation authorizing the construction of a Global War on Terrorism Memorial on the National Mall. Spearheaded by the Global War on Terrorism Memorial Foundation, they are urging the U.S. Senate to include the language for the "Global

War on Terrorism Memorial Location Act” in its version of the National Defense Authorization Act. Chanin Nuntavong, executive director of Government Affairs for The American Legion, highlighted the sacrifices of the 3 million veterans who have served in the Global War on Terrorism. The gift of freedom, he said, is preserved by the men and women who fought for something much greater than themselves. A national memorial for Global War on Terrorism veterans would serve as a place to gather, remember, and reflect. Veterans of past wars often did not live to see the completion of the memorials designed to honor their service and sacrifice. This does not need to be the case for the Global War on Terrorism generation as it begins to heal.”

“The Senate passed two more pieces of legislation related to veterans Tuesday night, sending both bills to the President for his signature. The Veterans and Family Information Act (HR 2093) requires that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) make all of its fact sheets available in English, Spanish, Tagalog, and the next 10 most commonly spoken languages in the United States. In addition, all of the fact sheets must be published on a public website. The second bill, HR 1510, requires the VA Secretary to report on policies and procedures related to how law enforcement uses video cameras at Department medical facilities.”

#### KEY LEGISLATION UPDATES

H.R. 1836: GI Bill and Reserve Parity Act Bill Status Update: 11/4/2021 Voted out of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee. Co-Sponsors: 9 Staff Notes: H.R. 1836 was brought to the House Veterans Affairs Committee for markup, where it underwent an amendment in nature of a substitute (ANS), which codified specific statutes of the bill. Specifically, the ANS moved the implementation date from 2022 to 2026 and codified all federal duty statuses except IDT (drill weekends) as eligible for GI Bill. The next step is a House floor vote, expected before the end of the year.

H.R. 5562: A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to expand eligibility for hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care from the Department of Veterans Affairs to include veterans of World War II. Bill Status Update: 11/4/2021 Voted out of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee. Staff Notes: The Senate version of this bill has already been passed by the Senate. Now that the house version of the bill has been reported favorably out of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, the next step is a House floor vote, expected before the end of the year. This legislation was the direct result of Resolution No. 3: WWII Veterans Hospital and Medical Eligibility from the Department of Kentucky.

S. 544: Buddy Check Week Act of 2021 Bill Status: 10/07/2021 Passed Senate without amendment by Unanimous Consent Co-Sponsors: 21 Staff Notes: Now that S.544 has passed the Senate, it is awaiting action in the House Veterans Affairs Committee. NLD staff is communicating with House side committee staff to have

S.544 swiftly moved National Legislative Division Weekly November 5, 2021 through markup and/or an omnibus end of year bill. American Legion Media Relations will do media outreach on this bill. S.796:

Protecting Moms Who Served Act of 2021 Bill Status: 10/07/2021 Passed Senate without amendment by Unanimous Consent Cosponsors: 7 Staff Notes: Alongside S.544, this bill was passed via unanimous consent. American Legion Media Relations will do media outreach on this bill.

H.R. 3967: Honoring our PACT Act of 2021 Bill Status: Reported out 14-11 of House Veterans Affairs Committee 6/24/21 Co-Sponsors: 49 Staff Notes: The House Veterans Affairs Committee marked up the Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2021 and the bill was reported out to the full House. S.J.Res.10 - A joint resolution to repeal the authorizations for use of military force against Iraq Bill Status: Reported out of Senate Committee on Foreign Relations 08/04/2021 Co-Sponsors: 40 Staff Notes: Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) has expressed support for repealing the Iraq AUMFs and has promised to bring this bill to the floor for a vote before the end of the year.

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## REMINDERS

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Join the newly created Department Legislative Facebook page NC ALA Legislative Facebook group

Download a copy of the ALA Legislative Advocacy Guide from Visit the Legion's legislative website,

[www.legion.org/legislative](http://www.legion.org/legislative) to keep current on legislative priorities. The site also contains the Legion's legislative priority sheets and point papers, available for download. The priority/drop sheets outline the Legion's priorities, and you can "drop" these in your elected official's office. The point papers provide more information on the issue and the Legion's position.

Actively post The American Legion's legislative priorities on social media.

Identify your U.S. representative and two U.S. senators and build a relationship and rapport with these individuals and/or members of their staff.

Subscribe to e-newsletters of your elected officials to monitor what they consider to be their priorities and to make sure the veteran/military and national security issues are among them. Follow them on social media as well.

**For Information on the Municipalities elections for North Carolina**

<https://www.ncsbe.gov/voting/upcoming-election> **Voting in local government elections is extremely important. Municipalities control our local tax rates,**

**(property taxes) make decisions about development, policing, trash services and other issues that affect our daily lives Most municipalities in NC conduct election in odd-numbered years. On this website you will find a tab “voting tool kit” that will show you county by county and what election will occur this year and dates for the elections.**

**\*Check out the tab for VOTE IN HONOR OF A VETERAN. You can receive a personalized pin. When you order your pin take a picture of you wearing your pin and post it on the Department Legislative Facebook page.**



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