



## ALA NC Legislative News

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*In the words of President Abraham Lincoln, who praised this “government of the people, by the people and for the people,” we, the people, are ultimately responsible for how we are governed.”* If you are wondering why this committee is important. The answer is: “To be responsible for how we are governed one must be informed. Responsibility means you must be informed”

**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.**

### Service Dogs for Veterans who suffer from PTSD

Julie Smith

Veterans who suffer from PTSD could qualify for service dogs through Legion support PAWS Act. The Senate passed on a voice vote a Legion-Supported measure called the Puppies Assisting Wounded Service for Veterans Therapy Act (PAWS). The House passed the bill in May. It is waiting on President Biden’s signature. The legislation would direct the VA secretary to launch a 5-year pilot program that provides service dogs for veterans diagnosed with PTSD. Currently the VA only covers some of the cost-of-service dogs with certain disabilities, blindness, hearing impairment and mobility issues. The Pilot programs at 5 VA Medical Centers will begin in early 2022. Hoping one of the 4 VAs in North Carolina are among the 5 pilot programs. This bill will help those of our veterans who suffer from PTSD and as all of you know this is a disorder that has touch many of our lives and our loved ones.



## **DATES TO REMEMBER IN SEPTEMBER**

**Patriot Day: September 11** This is the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the terrorist attack on our country. Please take a moment to remember and honor the nearly 3,000 Americans killed in the coordinated attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in Washington, DC. By a joint resolution approved by Congress on December 18, 2001, Public Law 107-89 designated September 11 of year as Patriot Day. This is a national day of service and remembrance.

**Friday September 17 POW/MIA Remembrance Day** Please take a moment to remember and honor those who were prisoner of war and those who are still missing. In 1979 President Jimmy Carter signed the proclamation to make the 3 Friday in September POW/MIA Remembrance Day

**September Sunday September 26, 2021**, Each year the last Sunday in September. This is a day to give honor to the mothers, fathers, and families of fallen military service members. Take a moment and send your Gold Star, mothers, and family members a note to let them know you are thinking of them and that you honor their sacrifice.

**September 28<sup>th</sup> is National Voter Registration Day. If you are not registered to vote don't miss the date. Contact for local Board of Elections for more information.**

**Call for Action: Military Pension NC Tax Exemption  
(J.C. Wood, Jr., Vice-Commander, North Carolina Veterans Council)**

**Rebecca Higgins**

We need YOU to immediately call/write/email both your NC Senators and NC Representatives! The effort to end state taxation on military pension cleared the House by a 100-5 vote and is currently contained in the Senate's proposed budget. The House and the Senate are currently in closed conference on the budget, and if it remains in the budget will to Governor Cooper for signature with the remainder of the budget. While this is great news there is a possibility it might NOT REMAIN in the budget and your Veterans Service Organization needs your help. A lobbying group focused solely on retirement tax exemption for state employees is undertaking an effort to include ALL state government retirees in the same group as the military. As you can imagine, this would greatly increase the price tag of the budget and there are several bills that proposed this already and none of them made it out of committee. A possible outcome is that the elected officials hear from several state employees and a decision is made to take NO ACTION. This is exactly what happened in past efforts. Therefore, your Senator and Representative need to

hear from you. You can find them at <https://ncleg.gov/FindYourLegislators> Please use the template for an actual letter, an email, or a script for phone call attached to this email.

## REMINDERS

### What Can You do?

Subscribe to the Legion's Legislative Action Alerts at [www.capwiz.com/legion/mlm/signup](http://www.capwiz.com/legion/mlm/signup) to subscribe.

Join the National Legislative Facebook page • ALA National Headquarters: [www.facebook.com/ALAForVeterans](http://www.facebook.com/ALAForVeterans) The national Legislative Committee Facebook group, search "ALA National Legislative Group Page" 4.

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

Download a copy of the **ALA Legislative Advocacy Guide** from [www.ALAForVeterans.org](http://www.ALAForVeterans.org).

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.**



Check out the North Carolina General Assembly page <https://ncleg.gov/> Near the bottom of the page click on find your Legislator, enter your address and you will find your North Carolina senators and

Representatives to the General Assembly. Click on their name and you can see their contact information