

**MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT VFW AUXILIARY**  
**LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN**  
**May 2023**

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Facebook Page: Legislative Michigan

UNWAVERING SUPPORT



FOR UNCOMMON HEROES™

*National Theme: Banding Together for Our Veterans*

*Department Theme: Our Veterans the Angels Among Us*

Welcome to the wonderful world of legislation in the VFW Auxiliary. This world is one that either you love it or you despise. If you despise it, is it because you do not fully understand the process? Or do you feel it is too much of them versus us?

The legislative process is basically the same between the federal government and the states. Under the founding fathers, in their desire to have equal representation, they adopted a two-tier structure – the upper house (Senate) gives each state an equal number of votes. Currently the Senate has 100 members. The lower house (Representatives) is based upon the population within each state and has been limited to a total of 435 members.

Michigan's two Senators to Congress are Debbie Stabenow and Gary Peters. Both are supporters of veteran issues. Debbie was a member of Auxiliary 701 when I first met her as a state senator. Gary was a reservist in the US Navy when I first met him with the PTA back in the 90's. This is what I mean when I say, "get to know your representatives". They are people the same as you and I. They put their pants on, one leg at a time. They have families. They make mistakes. They are human.

Unfortunately, or fortunately, depending on your thinking, this past November found new lines drawn for representatives and many of us have new representatives both at the state and federal level.

So, my charge is, if this is the case for you, for you to get to meet this person(s) and talk with them about the problems you or your veteran experience trying to navigate your way through the VA system. Yes, many veterans have a service officer to help guide the way – but with state term limits and a shift in Congressional members, one- on-one discussions are the best method of swinging votes favorable to the VFW legislative priority goals.

Invite the state representative or senator, or your congressperson of your post home district to your annual picnic, bar-b-que, golf outing, steak out, car show, or something. Ask if you can have an hour of their time during the day to talk with members about their experiences navigating red tape. Tell them to bring their family if it is a family picnic. They need to meet their constituents to better understand what is the prevailing opinion within the populace they represent.

## Legislative Bulletin

### June 2023

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I am sure there are many of you who think “Oh No! Not Legislative! I can’t do it.” Well, I am here to tell you that this chairmanship is not writing the actual bills to go before the State and Federal Legislative Branches.

This chairmanship is more about how to influence people to support the many bills that are written in support of the military and the veterans of our country.

It is important to remember that the first step is to vote for representatives who have a like mind when it comes to our veterans. This makes it easier to get them to support our cause – the GI Bill of Rights. But if your candidate did not win the election or has retired from public service the work begins. You need to invite the new representative to a meet and greet at your post home to hear firsthand the issues veterans and families incur on a daily, weekly, monthly basis.

The state of Michigan Legislature is in session on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. So, I suggest inviting your local state representative or senator to your local post picnic or bar-b-que. Ask them for special recognition for your WWII veterans. (Some of them like doing this.)

Reach out and touch them. Get to know them on a personal basis; maybe that individual is eligible for the VFW Auxiliary. You will never know until you talk with them.

It is very important that you familiarize yourself with the Legislative Guide Sheet. By doing so, you will always have your end goal in sight.

Loyally

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2023-2024 Legislative Chairperson

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