



May 30, 2025

WEEKLY GRASSROOTS NEWSLETTER

This week, we are asking Legionnaires to contact Congress to request support for the *GI Bill Parity Act*! Currently, National Guard and Reserve servicemembers only earn credit toward their Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits when they mobilize and deploy for federal missions. National Guard and Reserve servicemembers activated under state orders do not accrue eligibility for Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits. This legislation aims to count every day spent on weekend drills, annual training, attending military school, participating in an exercise, or responding to a disaster toward GI Bill eligibility. *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.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

The American Legion's 106th National Convention is from August 22-28 in Tampa Bay, Florida. To stay up to date on information, schedules, and more, go to the information page [here](#).

PENTAGON LEADERS NAME NEW SENIOR ENLISTED ADVISER

This article's original publication can be found [here](#).



Fleet Master Chief Petty Officer David Isom, right, walks with Chief Master Sgt. John Storms, senior enlisted leader for North American Aerospace Defense Command, during a visit to Peterson Space Force Base in Colorado on Sept. 26, 2024. (Joshua Armstrong/Defense Department)

Defense Department officials on Tuesday announced plans to replace the military's top senior enlisted adviser, marking the [latest leadership shake-up at the Pentagon](#).

[Navy Master Chief David Isom](#), who currently serves as command senior enlisted leader for U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, will replace [Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. Troy Black](#) as the senior enlisted adviser to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, department leaders said.

The senior enlisted adviser role is designed to advocate for [enlisted personnel](#) in command discussions among senior Pentagon leaders. The role also requires a significant amount of travel and public forums with military families, making it one of the more visible leadership posts in the armed forces

Black's departure comes amid a significant shake-up of leadership posts within the military since President Donald Trump's inauguration, including the dismissals of Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. CQ Brown, Chief of Naval Operations [Adm. Lisa Franchetti](#) and Air Force Vice Chief Gen. James Slife.

Black has served in the post since November 2023. Last month, senior defense leaders said that new [Joint Chiefs Chairman Air Force Gen. Dan Caine](#) would not renew Black's assignment for a second two-year term, and that his replacement would take over sometime this summer.

Isom previously served in several special forces roles, including command senior enlisted leader of Special Operations Command Pacific and command senior enlisted leader of Special Operations Command North.

During his time with the Navy SEALs, he deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan and the Horn of Africa.

Isom will be the sixth person and the first sailor to serve in the senior enlisted adviser role. The position could play an outsized role in Pentagon policy moves, given Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth's past emphasis on issues affecting rank-and-file troops.

INDIVIDUAL INFLUENCE

By Eric C. Johnson, Grassroots Manager

Grassroots advocacy is a powerful way for Legionnaires to influence the decisions that shape their communities, especially when it comes to issues close to our hearts—like pay raises for military personnel, healthcare for veterans, or educational benefits for military families. Whether you are a member of a well-known group like The American Legion or simply an engaged citizen, you have the power to make a real difference. Here's how you can act and create lasting change.

Understanding Grassroots Advocacy

For decades, The American Legion has championed important causes through grassroots efforts, ensuring that vital issues get the attention they deserve in Washington, DC. When you engage with lawmakers through grassroots advocacy, you help keep critical issues, like veterans' benefits and military family support, at the forefront of legislative discussions. And you don't have to have an official Legion title or be part of a particular council or committee to take part and be effective!

The Importance of Staying Informed

To be an effective advocate, it's essential to stay informed about what's happening in Washington, DC. Keeping track of key legislation and understanding the policies being debated is crucial. The American Legion's Legislative Division is dedicated to keeping you updated on the latest developments and provide a range of tools to help you stay in the loop. From our Grassroots Action Center to Legislative Testimony sections, we give

you the resources you need to follow bills, stay on top of Congressional hearings, and prepare for your interactions with your own Congressional delegation.

Building Relationships with Lawmakers

One of the most impactful ways you can influence policy is by building personal relationships with your lawmakers. Reaching out through emails, phone calls, or attending town hall meetings shows that you care and are engaged. Sharing real-life stories about how specific policies affect your community can make a powerful impact, especially when those policies are related to veterans' benefits or the support of military families.

If you are uncertain about who your elected officials are, The American Legion website has a Find Officials button on our Grassroots Action Center to let you know who your two Senators and your Member of Congress are based on your home address. Don't forget about events like our Washington Conference, where you can meet with elected officials, share your story, and raise awareness about the issues that matter most to you. It's a great opportunity to learn more about the legislative process and discover how your voice can make a real difference.

Tapping into the Power of Local Networks

Another key to successful grassroots advocacy is tapping into your local community. By joining forces with others who share your concerns, you amplify your voice and create a larger movement. Local Legion posts are great platforms for organizing campaigns, gathering support, and spreading awareness about important issues. Working together with others gives you access to valuable resources and expertise, making your advocacy efforts more effective.

Using Digital Tools to Advocate

In today's world, digital tools make it easier than ever to get involved. Websites like our Legislative Action Center allow you to contact lawmakers directly via emails, phone calls, or petitions. These tools provide helpful templates and talking points to ensure that your message is clear and powerful. Social media is also a great tool for raising awareness and mobilizing others. Platforms like X, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram allow you to spread the word quickly and apply pressure to lawmakers. By tagging your representatives in posts on social media or using hashtags, you can amplify your message and encourage others to join the cause.

The Power of Public Testimony

One of the most effective ways to influence lawmakers is through public testimony in Congressional hearings. When lawmakers hear directly from constituents who will be impacted by proposed legislation, it humanizes the issues and shows why change is necessary. The American Legion is proud to regularly provide written and oral testimony at hearings to share personal stories that help inform policy decisions. Your voice, whether shared in writing or in person, can make all the difference.

Staying Consistent and Engaged

Advocacy isn't a one-time event—it's an ongoing effort. Consistency is key to creating real change. Whether you're following up on legislation, attending regular meetings with your lawmaker's office, or continuing to raise awareness on social media, staying engaged ensures that important issues stay front and center. The American Legion offers resources to keep you connected and active, including legislative updates, action alerts, and follow-up opportunities. The more consistently you engage, the more impact you'll have.

Conclusion

Grassroots advocacy is a powerful tool for creating change and ensuring that important issues get the attention they deserve. By staying informed, building relationships with lawmakers, leveraging local networks, and using digital tools, you can help make a real difference. With consistent effort and a strategic approach, you can be part of a movement that shapes policies benefiting communities across the country. Every action you take—big or small—helps create the change we need. Together, we can make our voices heard and advocate for a brighter future for our veterans, military families, and communities everywhere.

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.

Gary Schacher, New York

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

This week, Gary met with Representative Elise Stefanik at an event. They discussed the importance of the Major Richard Star Act, as well as the significance of identifying the remains of unknown sailors from the USS Turner Explosion.

Thank you, Gary, 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 on ***The Veteran's Role in Supporting the Military?*** Check out our [information papers](#) in the [Legislative Toolkit](#). 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 5/30, the following hearings are scheduled:

- Wednesday, June 4, 10:00 AM: House Committee on Armed Services, Full Committee Hearing -- *"Department of the Army Fiscal Year 2026 Posture"*
- Wednesday, June 4, 4:00 PM: Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs -- *"Hearing to Consider Pending Nominations"*

- Thursday, June 5, 9:30 AM: Senate Committee on Armed Services, Full Committee Hearing -- *“OPEN/CLOSED: To Receive Testimony on the Posture of the Department of the Army in Review of the Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2026 and the Future Years Defense Program”*
- Wednesday, June 11, 10:00 AM: House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity Legislative Hearing (**Legion Staff testifying**)
- Wednesday, June 11, 2:15 PM: House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations Legislative Hearing (**Legion Staff testifying**)
- Thursday, June 12, 2:15 PM: House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, Subcommittee on Health Legislative Hearing (**Legion Staff testifying**)

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](#)