

National Executive Committee  
May 2-4, 2008

## **Legislative Commission Report**

The meeting was opened at 9:45am on Saturday, May 03, 2008 by Chairman George Evans (IN)

Roll Call: Chairman George B. Evans (IN), David Lee (NY), Jeff Evans (VA), Roger Dees (MI), Carl Rossi (MA), Andrew Newman (PA)

Approval of Fall 2007 Legislative Commission Meeting Minutes

### Old Business

Washington Conference was successful. The feedback from the attendees about the bus and box lunches was favorable.

National Legislative Commission/Committee assignments for 2007-2008.

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation - Chairman Ronnie Grist (**Roger Dees**)

Children & Youth – Chairman Bill Towns (**Carl Rossi**)

Americanism – Gerald Hammerschmidt (**Andrew Newman**)

Community Service – Chairman Milton Chatham (**Jeff Evans**)

Finance & Member Train – Chairman Donald Allisot Jr. & Chairman Jeff Ryman (**George Evans**)

Sub Committee on Resolutions – Chairman Chris Huntzinger (**David Lee**)

National Legislative Web Site <http://www.sal.legion.org/legislative> as well as sent out via our E-Group <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/legislativesal/> for more information about the current priorities, the Washington Conference, the Grassroots Lobbyist Award and more.

The Grassroots Lobbyist of The Year Award Project needs more applications. Discussed giving out a Grassroots Lobbyist of The Year Award, Honorable mention certificates, and participation certificates. Forms are available on the Legislative Website and the Administrative Manual.

Legislative tools like the The American Legion Dispatch, the new American Online Newsletter you can sign up for off the American Legion Website. Improved Effective Grassroots Lobbying Training Presentation (on CD), Improved Resolution Writing Training Presentation (on CD), and Proposed National Sons of The American Legion Legislative Action Team (in progress).

### New Business

Ideas for the Washington Conference. Tickets for the bus and box lunches, and possible extra stops for the tour. If you cannot make it to the Washington Conference possibly order a wreath for your state to be presented at the WWII Memorial. Some people who have gone out after the conference a week or two later was proud to see there Detachment Memorial still at the WWII Memorial.

The following issues/bills were discussed:

TOPIC 1: Medicare Reimbursement for VA medical care

TOPIC 2: Mandatory Funding for VA medical care. Now has **121** cosponsors. Senator Johnson has introduced a companion bill, S. 2639 which has **7** cosponsors.

TOPIC 3: Disabled Veterans' Tax in the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress

TOPIC 4: Immigration Reform. The American Legion remains opposed to any measure that grants a de facto amnesty to those illegally in this country. We remain committed to first securing the border as a National Security concern.

TOPIC 5: VA Budget for FY 2009

The testimony is available on the Internet.

<http://veterans.house.gov/hearings/Testimony.aspx?TID=13345>

TOPIC 6: Flag Amendment. The American Legion fully supports a proposed constitutional amendment to prohibit the physical desecration of Old Glory.

**TOPIC 7: Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act**

H.R. 5740, the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act The measure has **217** cosponsors. Its Senate companion bill, S 22, has **56** cosponsors. A press conference is being held Tuesday in support of this measure that the Legislative Division. The American Legion fully supports an updated GI Bill to meet the needs of veterans who have served in the Global War on Terrorism.

**The following bills were approved by voice vote and ordered favorably to the House:**

**H.R. 2790**, as amended, introduced by U.S. Rep Phil Hare (D-Ill.), to amend title 38, United States Code, to establish the position of Director of Physician Assistant Services within the office of the Under Secretary of Veterans Affairs for Health.

**H.R. 3819**, introduced by U.S. Rep. Zachary Space (D-Ohio), to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to reimburse veterans receiving emergency treatment in non-Department of Veterans Affairs facilities for such treatment until such veterans are transferred to Department facilities, and for other purposes.

**H.R. 5729**, as amended, introduced by U.S. Rep. Brad Ellsworth (D-Ind.), to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide comprehensive health care to children of Vietnam veterans born with Spina Bifida, and for other purposes.

**H.R. 5554**, as amended, introduced by Health Subcommittee Ranking Member Michael Michaud (D-Maine), to amend title 38, United States Code, to expand and improve health care services available to veterans from the Department of Veterans Affairs for substance use disorders, and for other purposes.

**H.R. 5856**, introduced by Health Subcommittee Ranking Member Michael Michaud (D-Maine), to authorize major medical facility projects and major medical facility leases for the Department of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2009, and for other purposes.

**H.R. 3681**, as amended, introduced by EO Subcommittee Ranking Member John Boozman (R-Ark.), to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to advertise in the national media to promote awareness of benefits under laws administered by the Secretary.

**H.R. 3889**, as amended, introduced by EO Subcommittee Ranking Member John Boozman (R-Ark.), to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct a longitudinal study of the vocational rehabilitation programs administered by the Secretary.

**H.R. 4883**, as amended, introduced by Committee Chairman Bob Filner (D-Calif.), to amend the Service members Civil Relief Act to provide for a limitation on the sale, foreclosure, or seizure of property owned by a service member during the one-year period following the service member's period of military service.

**H.R. 4889**, as amended, introduced by Committee Chairman Bob Filner (D-Calif.), to amend title 38, United States Code, to rectify as part of that title chapter 1607 of title 10, United States Code.

**H.R. 5664**, as amended, introduced by U.S. Rep. Ciro Rodriguez (D-Texas), to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to update at least once every six years the plans and specifications for specially adapted housing furnished to veterans by the Secretary.

**H.R. 4884**, as amended, introduced by Committee Chairman Bob Filner (D-Calif.), to amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain improvements in the home loan guaranty programs administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

**H.R. 5684**, as amended, introduced by EO Subcommittee Chairwoman Stephanie Herseth Sandlin (D-S.D.), to amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain improvements in the basic educational assistance program administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

**H.R. 5826**, introduced by introduced by U.S. Rep. Ciro Rodriguez (D-Texas), to increase, effective as of December 1, 2008, the rates of disability compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for survivors of certain service-connected disabled veterans, and for other purposes.

**H.R. 5892**, introduced by Committee Member John Hall (D-N.Y.), to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to modernize the disability benefits claims processing system of the Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure the accurate and timely delivery of compensation to veterans and their families and survivors, and for other purposes.

Meeting Adjourned at 11:45am by Chairman Evans.  
DMR