

## Legislative Division Weekly

### GRASSROOTS ACTION UPDATES

This week, we are asking Legionnaires to contact President Joe Biden to request that he award the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Legionnaire Diane Carlson Evans for her work on the Vietnam Women's Memorial! The American Legion supports this recognition, and we appreciate Senator Tester of Montana leading the way. **We are excited to introduce to you the capability to email the White House directly and ask the President to act! Go to the [Action Center](#) to quickly email a letter of support to the White House. Last week, we sent more than 1,400 emails to the President!**

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.

The American Legion's legislative agenda for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Session of the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress. To review our priorities, you can check out our [Advocacy Toolkit](#).

### AUTOMATIC SELECTIVE SERVICE REGISTRATION

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

A new plan from House lawmakers would automatically register men for a potential military draft when they hit age 18, avoiding potential legal consequences connected to failing to file the paperwork at the proper time.

Language included in the House Armed Services Committee's draft of the annual defense authorization bill would mandate the automatic registration of all males between ages 18 and 26 living in America in the Selective Service System, the federal database used for a military draft in case of a national emergency.

The system hasn't been used for that purpose for 52 years, but men who fail to register can face a host of legal consequences, including forfeiture of eligibility for federal programs and possible jail time. But the number of individuals who have skipped registering has increased in recent years, in large part because registration options were removed from the federal student loan process two years ago. That had accounted for nearly a quarter of all registrations in prior years.

Rep. Chrissy Houlahan, D-Pa., sponsored the automatic registration language and called it both a money-saving and common-sense reform.

"By using available federal databases, the [Selective Service] agency will be able to register all of the individuals required and thus help ensure that any future military draft is fair and equitable," she said during debate on the idea Wednesday night.

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“This will also allow us to rededicate resources — basically that means money — towards reading readiness and towards mobilization ... rather than towards education and advertising campaigns driven to register people.”

The Selective Service System costs roughly \$30 million a year. Lawmakers have proposed a number of reforms to the database in recent years, including adding women and completely eliminating the agency altogether, but none have made it through Congress.

The latest proposal was approved unanimously by the committee but still must advance through the full House and Senate before it can become law. The authorization bill, which contains a myriad of military budget and policy priorities, is expected to be finalized by the two chambers sometime this fall.

### MANCHIN REGISTERING AS INDEPENDENT IN WV

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

Sen. Joe Manchin is registering as an independent, according to a person familiar with the matter — a move that is sure to stoke speculation he could run for Senate or governor without a party affiliation this fall.

A longtime Democrat, Manchin's decision comes ahead of a deadline for filing as an independent in West Virginia. He'll have several more weeks to decide whether to run for his Senate seat or mount a bid for his old job as governor. The move is no guarantee he will run for either office, however.

Manchin previously announced he would not run for reelection, a move that essentially ceded his seat to Republicans. But Democrats have held out hope he'd make a last-minute decision to run as an independent, and Friday's move is sure to increase pressure on him to do so. Gov. Jim Justice, a Manchin rival, won the GOP primary and is heavily favored in November.

State Republicans are divided after a fierce primary in the governor's race, which Attorney General Patrick Morrisey won. Manchin defeated Morrisey in the 2018 Senate race. Manchin is friends with the Democratic nominee Steve Williams, but he would likely be a more viable general election candidate.

Manchin will be the fourth independent in the Democratic Caucus and has long flirted with leaving a party he thinks is far too liberal. In recent interviews, he's said his biggest fear is a future Senate that weakens the filibuster, a move he opposed last Congress.

West Virginia is one of the most conservative states in the nation, so either bid would be challenging for Manchin. But running as an independent would be easier than running as a Democrat in the deep-red state. And Manchin is a talented retail politician who has won both offices in the past.

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Manchin likes to stay in the mix both nationally and regionally and may ultimately decide against running for anything. He turned down an independent presidential bid, for example, after considering one for months.

### 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.

#### Frederic Kinkin, Virginia

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

Frederic recently met with Congresswoman Jen Kiggans's during a 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District Service Academy information night in Virginia. In Frederic's report, he shared that he was invited to participate as a panelist due to his relationship with Rep. Kiggan's office and staff.

Thank you, Frederic, for your report and the time you have dedicated to the Legion's legislative priorities.

If you have made a Grassroots effort and would like to be considered for next week's "Legionnaire of the Week," please fill out the Congressional Contact Report Form [here](#). You can also email us at [grassroots@legion.org](mailto:grassroots@legion.org) with the details.

### LEGISLATIVE DIVISION UPDATES

We had a short week due to the Memorial Day holiday, and Congress was in recess this week. The Legislative Division staff took this opportunity to focus on drafting letters of support for MilCon/ VA FY25 appropriation bill and NDAA FY25 bill, and we continued preparing testimony for the House Veteran Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity Hearing scheduled for June 12<sup>th</sup>, where VE&E will testify in person.

We also supported VE&E's efforts to invite members of Congress to the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the GI Bill reception on June 20<sup>th</sup>. The LegDiv staff has been working on the plans for the upcoming National Convention in August, and we continued to review various bills and lobby for those with Legion support, work on outreach and grassroots efforts, and perform other administrative functions.

And as always, we worked with other Government Affairs Divisions of The American Legion to coordinate efforts and expand the voice of Veterans in DC!

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Look for a National Legislative Council meeting to be announced this month!

### 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 paper](#) 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](mailto:grassroots@legion.org) or [ejohnson@legion.org](mailto:ejohnson@legion.org).

Register for Action Alerts today at <https://www.votervoicenet.com/AmericanLegion/Register>



### UPCOMING CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS

As of Friday, May 31st, at 2:00pm, the following hearings are scheduled:

June 4<sup>th</sup>, 10:15am – House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Oversight Hearing

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](#)