



Americanism Commission MINUTES

Meeting date | time 2/19/2024 6:30 PM | Zoom meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman-Chris Casey (NE), Vice Chairman Gerald Hammerschmidt (KS), Paul Hayse (IL), Daniel Maurin (LA), Robert "Bud" Neel (NE), Keith Murdough (NH), PNC Liaison Danny Smith (NE), Consultant William Murphy, III (MA), NEC Liaison John Hook (NH), NEC Liaison Fran Riddell (HI), C&Y Committee Chairman Joseph Lohman (MD) excused, C&Y Committee Member Jeff Trout (IL).

SPECIAL GUESTS: NVC Northeast John Cook excused, NVC Southeast Linwood Moore, NVC Central Robert Bristo, NVC Midwest Terry Harris, PNC Jeff Frain (AZ)

VISITORS: Jim Borgman (AZ), Herman Downer, Jr. (NY), Todd Kabella (NE), Casey Lenort (MN), Rick Evans (PA), Jon Miller (DE), Patrick Gallagher (NJ), Gene Theroux (MA), John Kingston (VA&R), Rick Evans (PA), Charles Curtis (CA), Samuel Johnson (IA).

CHAIRMAN OPENING REMARKS:

- Chairman Casey welcome to members and guests.
- Roll call of members
- The Americanism Commission will meet the 3rd Monday (**bi-monthly**) for future meetings.
 - Upcoming 2024 Dates: April 15th, June 17th, August 19th

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- Americanism Action Alert (5th alert was sent in November) feedback requested. The plan is to publish these bi-monthly during the months when the Commission does not host a business meeting.
- Committee Reports
 - Child Welfare Foundation
 - Chairman Mark Nave (PA)- Not present
 - Children and Youth
 - Chairman Joseph Lohman (MD)- Excused and provided the following update: COTA is a program of focus and the Delaware Legion Family raised upwards of \$6,000 this past weekend for COTA. Continues to focus on American Legion Family Day and Children & Youth Month in April.
- Regional Call Representation / Commission Members
 - Northeast - Keith Murdough (NH)-talked about commission goals, youth/parent initiative, and American Legion Family Day.
 - Southeast – Daniel Maurin (LA)-meeting next month.
 - Central - Paul Hayse (IL)- meeting later this month.
 - Midwest - Gerald "Hammer" Hammerschmidt (KS)- talked about commission goals and American Legion Family Day.
 - West – Robert "Bud" Neel (NE)-nothing to report.

- 2023-2024 Goals
 1. **Increase Boys State participation numbers by 10%.**
 - Update by Chris Sherbourne.
 - Noted that Boys State is moving ahead strongly and reports from across the country show an increase in participation between 5-10%.
 2. **Increase flag education programs by 10%**
 - Update by Daniel Maurin
 - Discussed Indiana scholarship fund that relies on a test regarding the flag. Noted the need to get into schools and discuss what they do for flag education. Suggestions on how to increase flag education programs.
 3. **Support the Flying Flags for Heroes program by increasing detachment participation by 10%.**
 - Update by William Murphy
 - Chairman Casey and William Murphy continue to work on adding flag placements. Discussed the need for a guidance sheet for FFFH. William is adding the Action Alert in a mailer to all squadrons in his Detachment.
- 2023-2024 Action Items
 1. American Legion Family Day April 27, 2023, and the role of Americanism
 - Discussed the “guidance sheet” and how it was well received. The sheet post was shared nearly 100 times from the Americanism Facebook page.
 2. The Americanism Commission will work to improve the National Children & Youth Academy with the assistance of the Children & Youth Committee. (Keith Murdough, Paul Hayse, and Jeff Trout-C&Y Committee) **Assigned tasks.**
 - Develop age-appropriate curriculum with hands on activities. **(Everyone)**
Discussion ensued regarding the curriculum. Flag education, Jr. Auxiliary Patch Program (Americanism patch), and “How a Bill Becomes a Law” presentation by the Legislative Commission. Chairman Casey will follow up with the Legislative Commission on their education piece and how much time they will need. William Murphy will provide “Schoolhouse Rocks” videos that may pertain to what they will present.
 - Develop a registration form with emergency contact information. **(Paul Hayse)**
Paul has drafted a one-page (front and back) document that includes a registration form and emergency contact information. This will be reviewed by Chairman Casey and disseminated to the NVCs. Keith Murdough suggested a participant feedback form. Paul Hayse and Gerald Hammerschmidt will work to get a form developed for New Orleans.
 - Develop a participant patch and rocker (year specific). **(Chairman Casey)**
Chairman Casey reached out to Kevin Mook and pricing will be determined with Emblem Sales and an outside vendor.
 - Incorporate The American Legion Auxiliary Junior Patch Program. **(Jeff Trout)**
Discussed previously.
 - Reach out to former participants (parent/guardians) for feedback. **(Keith Murdough)** Keith expressed continued difficulty in receiving participant contact

information. The decision was made to move forward without reaching out. We will collect feedback moving forward.

3. Youth/Parent Program Initiative

- Future Blood Donor program through the American Red Cross. The pilot will be completed by Chairman Casey's squadron in Omaha, Nebraska. The education piece (youth) is set for American Legion Family Day April 27th. The blood drive is set for May 8th (parent buy-in). Follow up will be provided by Chairman Casey by the middle of May.

4. Work to increase the number of Departments that have Jr. Law Cadet Programs

- Update by Keith Murdough included discussion on how to provide guidance to Departments on why and how they can start their own programs.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Americanism Guidance Sheets
 - Chairman Casey requested bullet points for each goal (approximately 10 bullets) that can be developed into a guidance sheet. The request is that the information be provided within the next month.

FOR THE GOOD OF THE SONS:

- The fillable SAL Flag Appreciation Certificate PDF has been added to the national website. Visit legion.org/sons <MEDIA <Publications & Forms <Under "Forms"
- Child Welfare Foundation Committee November 16, 2023, 7:00pm (EST)
 - <https://legion.zoom.us/j/98470314786?pwd=bEtYRXVrSWISZ0kvYmc5VjhWQzJsQT09>
 - Meeting ID: 984 7031 4786; Passcode: 780858
 - (877) 853-5257 US Toll-free
- Children & Youth Committee November 13, 2023, 7:00pm (EST)
 - <https://legion.zoom.us/j/95116226587?pwd=NHRWRTh2OXEvMEI0YmpMNHFkemU4Zz09>
 - Meeting ID: 951 1622 6587; Passcode: 799095
 - (877) 853-5257 US Toll-free
- Americanism Commission December 18, 2023, 7:30 PM (EST)
 - <https://legion.zoom.us/j/93540660918?pwd=YU5nK0JON2Y2OEIwYm9uMlp5Z05WZz09>
 - Meeting ID: 935 4066 0918; Passcode: 571659
 - (877) 853-5257 US Toll-free
- Thank you for all you do for the Sons!