



December 6, 2024

WEEKLY GRASSROOTS NEWSLETTER

This week, we are asking Legionnaires to contact Congress to request support for the *Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act!* This Act passed in the House last week and is now in the Senate for consideration. The Dole Act is a comprehensive veteran's package that includes several important provisions, including support for home and community-based services, authority to award grants for mental health support to family caregivers, and veteran directed care. *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 Senators.*

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 2nd Session of the 118th Congress is available online. To review our priorities, you can check out our [Advocacy Toolkit](#).

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

February 22-26, 2025 – The American Legion's 65th Annual Washington Conference will be held at the Washington Hilton Hotel. This conference provides an opportunity for Legionnaires to meet with their respective lawmakers and hear from members of Congress and VA leadership. The National Commander will also address attendees on legislative priorities during the National Commander's Rally. More details, such as agendas and schedules, will be updated [here](#).

National Legislative Council updates coming soon!

The 119th Congress will be sworn in on January 3rd at noon! This means there will be some turnover in Congress – some members are retiring, and others will be replaced due to election results. These changes will result in some adjustments to the NLC. Legislative Division staff will be working with the NLC Vice Chairs in each Department to adjust in early December to fill gaps and realign appointees. We will then have training on January 6th for all the new NLC members so that we can hit the ground running and have an increased influence on Congress! If you are on the NLC, stay tuned for further details as we work through this process. If you are a Vice Chair, expect detailed communications from D.C. soon!

NDAА ENDGAME IS IN SIGHT

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



The House and Senate lawmakers who are writing a final version of the fiscal 2025 defense authorization bill are nearing the finish line, knowledgeable congressional aides said Monday.

The chairmen and ranking members of the House and Senate Armed Services committees have concluded their deliberations and have written a compromise NDAA measure, one aide said.

“The only issues left to be resolved are at the congressional leader level,” the staffer said.

Most notably, Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., and Senate Majority Leader Charles E. Schumer, D-N.Y., have been discussing several dozen provisions pertaining primarily to controlling trade with China and fostering the development of artificial intelligence. But the clock is ticking on those leadership discussions. Lawmakers hope to file the bicameral National Defense Authorization Act compromise package by the end of this week and send it to the White House by Christmas.

Once the bill is filed, the House is likely to vote first on the measure, with the Senate expected to then clear the legislation for the president's signature as one of the last acts of this Congress before it adjourns for the holidays — most likely the week of Dec. 16.

Schumer addressed the NDAA negotiations in comments on the Senate floor Monday, saying he was "hopeful that we are close to beginning the process of moving a bipartisan bill through both chambers. The NDAA has been passed without fail for decades with the cooperation from both sides, and I hope this year there is no exception. Few priorities matter more than providing for our national defense and taking care of our troops in uniform and their families."

Topline and 'culture wars'

The House passed its version of the bill (HR 8070) in June, but the full Senate never debated its Armed Services Committee's version (S 4638).

Aides have not disclosed how the major defense issues that have separated the House and Senate bills have been reconciled.

One of the last sticking points, apart from the China and AI provisions, had been the question of how much in overall discretionary defense spending the bill would authorize.

The Senate bill clocked in at \$911.8 billion, not including some defense programs authorized by other panels, while the comparable House figure was \$883.7 billion.

The funds themselves must be decided on by appropriators, and they appear poised to punt that decision into the next calendar year by extending the current continuing resolution (PL 118-83), which expires on Dec. 20.

Other points of contention in the final NDAA negotiations had included questions about House-passed "culture war" provisions on issues ranging from diversity promotion in the Defense Department to whether to pay for some servicemembers' gender transitions, staffers have said.

The NDAA has become law for over six decades and, barring a last-minute snag, that streak should remain unbroken in this session.

TRUMP PICKS FORMER SOLDIER AND IRAQ WAR VETERAN TO SERVE AS ARMY SECRETARY

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

President-elect Donald Trump on Wednesday said he has selected investment banker and Army veteran Daniel Driscoll to serve as the next Army secretary.

“As a former soldier, investor and political adviser, Dan brings a powerful combination of experiences to serve as a disruptor and change agent,” Trump said Wednesday on Truth Social.

Driscoll is a senior adviser for Vice President-elect JD Vance. From Boone, N.C., Driscoll graduated in three years from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill so he could join the Army. His father served in the Army in Vietnam, and his grandfather in the Navy during World War II, according to the Asheville Citizen-Times.

Driscoll served in the Army for 3½ years as a cavalry scout platoon leader, including a deployment to Iraq in 2009. He attended Yale Law School on the GI Bill, where he met Vance.

In 2020, he ran for North Carolina's 11th congressional district but lost in a primary race to former Rep. Madison Cawthorn.

“Dan will be a fearless and relentless fighter for America's soldiers and the America First agenda,” Trump said.

Christine Wormuth serves now as the Army secretary, a role she has held since May 2021. Wormuth is the first woman to serve in the position.

Driscoll is Trump's second service secretary pick. Last week, Trump announced businessman and mega donor John Phelan as his election for Navy secretary. Unlike Driscoll, Phelan has never served in the military.

Phelan is a strong supporter of Trump's reelection, donating \$927,900 to the Trump 47 Committee since the start of 2024, according to the Federal Election Commission.

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.

Chad Page, Texas

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

Recently, Chad met with Representative Beth Van Dune (TX-24) and assisted the Congresswoman with selecting and presenting awards for veterans in the district.

Thank you, Chad, 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 with the details.

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 9:00 am on Friday, December 5, the following hearings are scheduled:

- December 11, 10:30 AM: House Veterans Affairs Committee – Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity Oversight Hearing: *Examining the Effectiveness of the Veterans Readiness and Employment (VR&E) Program*
- December 12, 8:00 AM: House Veterans Affairs Committee – Subcommittee on Technology Modernization Oversight Hearing: *Modernizing VA: Lesson Learned in the 118th Congress*

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](#)