



Americanism Commission MINUTES

Meeting date | time 4/15/2024 6:30 PM | Zoom meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman-Chris Casey (NE), Vice Chairman Gerald Hammerschmidt (KS), Paul Hayse (IL), Daniel Maurin (LA), Keith Murdough (NH), Consultant Chris Sherbourne (OK), Consultant William Murphy, III (MA), NEC Liaison John Hook (NH), NEC Liaison Fran Riddell (HI), CWF Committee Chairman Mark Nave (PA), C&Y Committee Member Jeff Trout (IL).

SPECIAL GUESTS: NVC Northeast John Cook, NVC Southeast Linwood Moore, NVC Central Robert Bristo, NVC Midwest Terry Harris,

VISITORS: Todd Kabella (NE), Rick Evans (PA), Jon Miller (DE), Patrick Gallagher (NJ), Charles Curtis (CA), George Sevick (NE), Mike Vozar (IL), Gene Bellando (NC).

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: June 17th, August 19th

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- Americanism Action Alert (7th 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)- As of the April 12, 2024 report, the SAL has donated \$258,750. That represents 60% of all donations for this year. We are \$146K short of reaching the \$10 million mark. 48 out of 55 detachments have already donated. Remember the 100% per capita form to national by no later than June 1, 2024. 2024 CWF merchandise: 20 oz. hot/cold tumbler, both black and red CWF aprons. Youth/Parent initiative is still in the works (Kids for Kids). Looking to recognize youth who choose to raise money for the CWF.
 - Children and Youth
 - Chairman Joseph Lohman (MD) excused. Committee member Jeff Trout provided the update-The Children's Organ Transplant Association (COTA) is a 501-C3 organization that provides fundraising assistance to transplant families. They also collaborate with individuals of any age with single gene disorders. American Legion Family Day reminder to have fun for all and education materials available. Remember the Be The One program and introduce the Post Service Officer to visitors. April is Children and

Youth Month. Remember to get donations to the Veterans and Children Foundation (VCF). Stacy Cope provided promotional links for the VCF and they are available upon request. Youth/Parent initiative is being piloted by a squadron in Maryland. The squadron received a grant to help build the "pizza garden". They have already planted ingredients. The hope is that they can have a pizza party or fundraiser after harvest.

- Regional Call Representation / Commission Members
 - Northeast - Keith Murdough (NH)-no new report
 - Southeast – Daniel Maurin (LA)-provided info regarding Americanism to the region.
 - Central - Paul Hayse (IL)-provided goals and action items of Americanism. Nothing was reported by the Detachments.
 - Midwest - Gerald "Hammer" Hammerschmidt (KS)- provided goals and action items of Americanism. Nothing was reported by the Detachments.
 - West – Robert "Bud" Neel (NE)-not present.
- 2023-2024 Goals
 1. **Increase Boys State participation numbers by 10%.**
 - Update by Chris Sherbourne.
 - Boys Nation staffers have been discussing numbers and everyone is trending 10-15% higher than last year. Oklahoma is up 30%. Oklahoma has changed their recruitment by telling students they have been selected rather than asking for participants.
 2. **Increase flag education programs by 10%**
 - Update by Daniel Maurin
 - American Legion Family Day should help drive flag education programs. Discussed materials that are available on Emblem Sales. Consider pushing the flag protection amendment again by putting pressure on representatives.
 3. **Support the Flying Flags for Heroes program by increasing detachment participation by 10%.**
 - Update by William Murphy
 - 12,431 flags have been registered by 8 Detachments (Illinois, Nebraska, South Dakota, California, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Florida, Maryland). Please encourage numbers being reported on the FFFH website. It appears that the domain name has expired for FFFH and Chairman Casey will investigate getting this issue corrected. Chairman Casey noted that flag placements can be emailed to Bill or himself to get added to FFFH if people are struggling with the website.
- 2023-2024 Action Items
 1. American Legion Family Day April 27, 2024, and the role of Americanism
 - Update by Chairman Casey
 - There have been numerous flyers posted on Facebook from across the country. There seems to be quite an increase in advertising. Remember to update with pictures after your event.

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)
 - Develop age-appropriate curriculum with hands on activities. **(Everyone)**
 - Begin to finalize curriculum. The National Legislative Commission is moving in another direction. Americanism members have been tasked with coming up with additional curriculum.
 - Develop a registration form with emergency contact information. **(Paul Hayse)**
 - The form has been emailed out and added to the Facebook page.
 - Develop a participant patch and rocker (year specific). **(Chairman Casey)**
 - Chairman Casey reached out to Kevin Mook and we should see the patches and rockers at the Spring NEC.
 - Incorporate The American Legion Auxiliary Junior Patch Program. **(Jeff Trout)**
 - The materials on Emblem Sales may help assist in completing the Americanism patch. Chairman Casey will look to obtain a copy of each of the materials for reference. William Murphy will investigate the Schoolhouse Rocks videos to see what may be utilized for the kids.
3. Youth/Parent Program Initiative
 - Future Blood Donor program through the American Red Cross. Pilot will be completed by Benson Sons of The American Legion Squadron #112 in Omaha, Nebraska on April 27, 2024. Feedback will be available for Centcomm.
4. Work to increase the number of departments that have Jr. Law Cadet Programs
 - The guidance sheet has been completed and distributed.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Americanism Guidance Sheets
 - FFFH, Boys State, Flag Education

FOR THE GOOD OF THE SONS:

- The fillable SAL Flag Appreciation Certificate PDF is available on the national website. Visit legion.org/sons <MEDIA <Publications & Forms <Under "Forms"
- Chairman Casey thanked the National Vice Commanders for the job they do making sure that our information is being distributed.
- NVC Cook reminded everyone that May 18th is National Veterans Assistance Day.
- Rick Evans shared the following from PA:
 - Doug Romberger (Detachment Judge Advocate) and Ray McDonald (District 17 Commander) received a message that there were 17 kids who did not get sponsored for Keystone Boys State. We had several Districts and Squadrons who answered the call. Within 48 hours, we had those 17 kids covered and extra money to cover 4 more kids.
- Child Welfare Foundation Committee May 16, 2024, 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 July 8, 2024, 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 June 17, 2024, 7:30 PM (EST)
 - <https://legion.zoom.us/j/93540660918?pwd=YU5nKOJON2Y2OEIwYm9uMlp5Z05WZz09>
 - Meeting ID: 935 4066 0918; Passcode: 571659
 - (877) 853-5257 US Toll-free
- Thank you for all you do for the Sons!