



**VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS.**

**Department of New York**

# Department of New York New York State Legislative Member And Chairman's Guide



Thank you for accepting the responsibility as the New York State  
Legislative Chairman and/or Legislative Committee Member for the  
Department of New York

You are expected to perform your duties to the best of your ability and to become familiar with the requirements of the Department's New York Legislative Program. This Chairman's Guide will provide you some of the necessary guidelines in performing your duties. There may be additional references you may need to review either on the Department or National websites and/or other documentation that may be issued during the ensuing year.

It is important that you learn as much as you can about your position and ask questions if you are not sure of what you will be required to do. I and my staff are available to assist you in this endeavor to ensure you are successful in your efforts.

Legislative outreach is an essential element in alerting VFW membership to key legislation under consideration and to actively lobby Congress and the New York State Legislature on veterans' issues.

Please ensure that the New York State Legislative Program is advertised to our Districts, Councils and Posts and the annual New York State Priority Goals are advertised.

The Department of New York publishes its on-line newspaper, ***The Overseas Veteran*** quarterly and it is highly recommended that a short article explaining the New York State Priority Goals as well as the need to call for member support and action letters to their State Legislative Representatives on critical issues of import be prepared and submitted to the newspaper editor when the call goes out for articles.

This guide is for your use in managing New York State Legislative Program; however, it will also be disseminated to the National Legislative Committee members for their use as well. Should you be required to prepare an oral report to the membership you will be notified by letter prior to any conference or convention.

As the New York State Legislative Chairman, it will be your responsibility to prepare annually a New York State Legislative Goals pamphlet outlining the goals for the upcoming year. The pamphlet

draft should be provided to Department HQ at least two weeks in advance of any scheduled legislative meeting when required. This lead time is necessary to enable the administrative staff to print and collate the pamphlet.

Prior to the scheduling of any Legislative conferences or meetings, you will coordinate your scheduling with the Department Conference Chairman to preclude any issues involving other scheduled events, availability of office personnel for administrative support such as printing, and booking of hotel accommodations .

The State Commander is confident in your ability to manage the State Legislative Program and am sure you will be extremely successful in your endeavors.

Thank you for stepping up and accepting this challenging position.



## NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY

### Speaker Carl E. Heastie

[Assembly Members](#)[Legislative Info](#)[Public Hearings](#)[Speaker's Press](#)[Assembly Reports](#)

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[Committees & More](#)

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## Assembly Leadership

[View Full Assembly Member Listing](#)[Who is my Assemblymember](#)

## Assembly Majority Leadership



Speaker

Carl E. Heastie

1446 East Gun Hill Road  
Bronx, NY 10469  
718-654-6539  
Fax:718-654-5836

---

LOB 932  
Albany, NY 12248  
518-455-3791  
Fax:518-455-5459

[Speaker@nyassembly.gov](mailto:Speaker@nyassembly.gov)

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**Majority Leader**

**Crystal D. Peoples-Stokes**

---

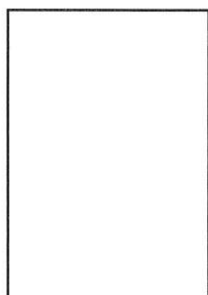
425 Michigan Avenue  
Buffalo, NY 14203  
716-897-9714

---

LOB 926  
Albany, NY 12248  
518-455-5005

[PeopleC@nyassembly.gov](mailto:PeopleC@nyassembly.gov)

---





## Chair, Ways and Means Committee

### Helene E. Weinstein

---

3520 Nostrand Avenue  
Brooklyn, NY 11229  
718-648-4700

---

LOB 923  
Albany, NY 12248  
518-455-5462

[WeinstH@nyassembly.gov](mailto:WeinstH@nyassembly.gov)

---



## Deputy Speaker

### Catherine Nolan

---

47-40 21 Street Room 810  
Long Island City, NY 11101  
718-784-3194  
Fax: 718-472-0648

---

LOB 739  
Albany, NY 12248  
518-455-4851

[NolanC@nyassembly.gov](mailto:NolanC@nyassembly.gov)

---



## **Assistant Speaker**

### **Phil Ramos**

1010 Suffolk Ave.  
Brentwood, NY 11717  
631-435-3214

LOB 648  
Albany, NY 12248  
518-455-5185

[ramosp@nyassembly.gov](mailto:ramosp@nyassembly.gov)

---



## **Speaker Pro Tempore**

### **Jeffrion L. Aubry**

98-09 Northern Blvd.  
Corona, NY 11368  
718-457-3615  
Fax:718-457-3640

LOB 646

Albany, NY 12248

518-455-4561

Fax:518-455-4565

[AubryJ@nyassembly.gov](mailto:AubryJ@nyassembly.gov)

---



**Chair, Committee on Standing Committees**

**Vivian E. Cook**

---

142-15 Rockaway Blvd

Jamaica, NY 11436

718-322-3975

---

LOB 939

Albany, NY 12248

518-455-4203

[CookV@nyassembly.gov](mailto:CookV@nyassembly.gov)

---



**Assistant Speaker Pro Tempore**

**N. Nick Perry**

---

903 Utica Avenue  
Brooklyn, NY 11203  
718-385-3336

LOB 736  
Albany, NY 12248  
518-455-4166

[PerryN@nyassembly.gov](mailto:PerryN@nyassembly.gov)

---



**Deputy Majority Leader**

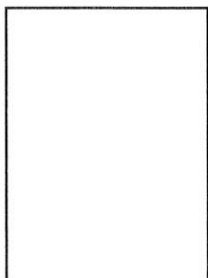
**Michaelle C. Solages**

1690 Central Court  
Valley Stream, NY 11580  
516-599-2972  
Fax: 516-599-3768

LOB 619  
Albany, NY 12248  
518-455-4465  
Fax: 518-455-5560

[SolagesM@nyassembly.gov](mailto:SolagesM@nyassembly.gov)

---





## Assistant Majority Leader

### Alicia Hyndman

232-06A Merrick Blvd.  
Springfield Gardens, NY 11413  
718-723-5412

LOB 702  
Albany, NY 12248  
518-455-4451

[hyndmana@nyassembly.gov](mailto:hyndmana@nyassembly.gov)

---



## Majority Whip

### William Colton

155 Kings Highway  
Brooklyn, NY 11223  
718-236-1598

LOB 733  
Albany, NY 12248  
518-455-5828

[ColtonW@nyassembly.gov](mailto:ColtonW@nyassembly.gov)



## Deputy Majority Whip

### José Rivera

One Fordham Plaza Suite 1008 10th Floor  
Bronx, NY 10458  
718-933-2204

LOB 536  
Albany, NY 12248  
518-455-5414

[RiveraJ@nyassembly.gov](mailto:RiveraJ@nyassembly.gov)



## Assistant Majority Whip

### Stacey Pheffer Amato

9516 Rockaway Beach Boulevard  
Rockaway Beach, NY 11693  
718-945-9550  
Fax: 718-945-9549

162-38 Cross Bay Blvd.  
Howard Beach, NY 11414

718-641-8755

Fax: 718-835-3190

LOB 827

Albany, NY 12248

518-455-4292

[amatos@nyassembly.gov](mailto:amatos@nyassembly.gov)

---



**Chair, Majority Conference**

**Pamela J. Hunter**

711 East Genesee Street 2nd Floor

Syracuse, NY 13210-1540

315-449-9536

LOB 553

Albany, NY 12248

518-455-5383

[HunterP@nyassembly.gov](mailto:HunterP@nyassembly.gov)

---



**Vice-Chair, Majority Conference**

**Jaime R. Williams**

5318 Avenue N 1st Floor Store  
Brooklyn, NY 11234  
718-252-2124  
Fax:718-252-2417

LOB 456  
Albany, NY 12248  
518-455-5211

[williamsja@nyassembly.gov](mailto:williamsja@nyassembly.gov)

---

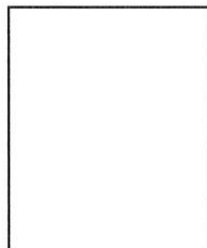
**Secretary, Majority Conference****Pat Burke**

1074 Union Road  
West Seneca, NY 14224  
716-608-6099

LOB 555  
Albany, NY 12248  
518-455-4691

[burkep@nyassembly.gov](mailto:burkep@nyassembly.gov)

---





## Chair, Majority Program

### Inez E. Dickens

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163 West 125th Street Suite 911  
New York, NY 10027  
212-866-5809

---

LOB 734  
Albany, NY 12248  
518-455-4793

[DickensI@nyassembly.gov](mailto:DickensI@nyassembly.gov)

---



## Chair, Majority Steering

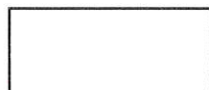
### Patricia Fahy

---

LOB 452  
Albany, NY 12248  
518-455-4178

[FahyP@nyassembly.gov](mailto:FahyP@nyassembly.gov)

---





## Vice-Chair, Majority Steering

### Monica P. Wallace

---

2562 Walden Avenue Suite 102  
Cheektowaga, NY 14225  
716-686-0080  
Fax: 716-686-3752

---

LOB 704  
Albany, NY 12248  
518-455-5921  
Fax: 518-455-3962

[wallacem@nyassembly.gov](mailto:wallacem@nyassembly.gov)

---



## Chair, Majority House Operations

### Al Taylor

---

2541-55 Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Blvd.  
New York, NY 10039  
212-234-1430

---

LOB 602  
Albany, NY 12248  
518-455-5491

[taylor@nyassembly.gov](mailto:taylor@nyassembly.gov)

---



**Chair, Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force**

**Maritza Davila**

249 Wilson Avenue  
Brooklyn, NY 11237  
718-443-1205  
Fax: 718-443-1424

LOB 637  
Albany, NY 12248  
518-455-5537  
Fax: 518-455-5789  
[DavilaM@nyassembly.gov](mailto:DavilaM@nyassembly.gov)

---

## Assembly Minority Leadership



**Minority Leader**

**William A. Barclay**

19 Canalview Mall  
Fulton, NY 13069  
315-598-5185

---

LOB Office 933  
Albany, NY 12248  
518-455-3751

[BarclaW@nyassembly.gov](mailto:BarclaW@nyassembly.gov)

---



**Minority Leader Pro Tempore**

**Andy Goodell**

Fenton Building 2 E. 2nd Street, Suite 320  
Jamestown, NY 14701  
716-664-7773 / Fax:716-483-0299

---

LOB 446  
Albany, NY 12248  
518-455-4511 / Fax:518-455-4328

[goodella@nyassembly.gov](mailto:goodella@nyassembly.gov)

---



## Assistant Minority Leader Pro Tempore

### Mary Beth Walsh

---

199 Milton Avenue Suite 3-4  
Ballston Spa, NY 12020  
518-884-8010 / Fax:518-884-8041

---

LOB 635  
Albany, NY 12248  
518-455-5772 / Fax:518-455-4650

[walshm@nyassembly.gov](mailto:walshm@nyassembly.gov)

---



## Ranking Minority Member, Committee on Standing Committees

### Joseph M. Giglio

---

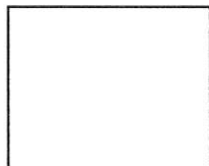
700 West State Street  
Olean, NY 14760  
716-373-7103 / Fax:716-373-7105

---

LOB 525  
Albany, NY 12248  
518-455-5241 / Fax:518-455-5869

[GiglioJ@nyassembly.gov](mailto:GiglioJ@nyassembly.gov)

---





## Deputy Minority Leader

### Stephen Hawley

121 N. Main Street Suite 100  
Albion, NY 14411  
585-589-5780 / Fax:585-589-5813

LOB 521  
Albany, NY 12248  
518-455-5811 / Fax:518-455-5558

[HawleyS@nyassembly.gov](mailto:HawleyS@nyassembly.gov)

---



## Assistant Minority Leader

### Philip A. Palmesano

105 E. Steuben St.  
Bath, NY 14810  
607-776-9691 / Fax:607-776-5185

LOB 448  
Albany, NY 12248  
518-455-5791 / Fax:518-455-4644

[palmesanop@nyassembly.gov](mailto:palmesanop@nyassembly.gov)



## **Assistant Minority Leader**

### **Ken Blankenbush**

40 Franklin Street Suite 2  
Carthage, NY 13619  
315-493-3909 / Fax:315-493-4045

LOB 322  
Albany, NY 12248  
518-455-5797 / Fax:518-455-5289

[blankenbushk@nyassembly.gov](mailto:blankenbushk@nyassembly.gov)

---



## **Minority Whip**

### **Michael Montesano**

111 W. Old Country Road Suite 202  
Hicksville, NY 11801  
516-937-3571 / Fax:516-937-3632

LOB 437  
Albany, NY 12248  
518-455-4684 / Fax:518-455-5477

[MontesanoM@nyassembly.gov](mailto:MontesanoM@nyassembly.gov)

---



## Deputy Minority Whip

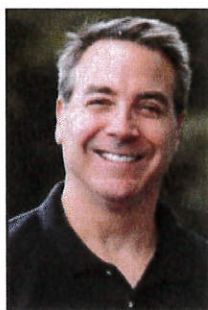
### Karl Brabenec

28 North Main St. Suite 2  
Florida, NY 10921  
845-544-7551 / Fax:845-544-7553

LOB 329  
Albany, NY 12248  
518-455-5991 / Fax:518-455-5929

[brabeneck@nyassembly.gov](mailto:brabeneck@nyassembly.gov)

---



## Assistant Minority Whip

### David DiPietro

411 Main St.  
E. Aurora, NY 14052  
716-655-0951 / Fax:716-655-0970

LOB 546

Albany, NY 12248

518-455-5314 / Fax:518-455-5691

[DiPietroD@nyassembly.gov](mailto:DiPietroD@nyassembly.gov)

---



**Chairman, Minority Conference**

**Michael J. Norris**

8180 Main Street

Clarence, NY 14221

716-839-4691 / Fax:716-839-4693

LOB 450

Albany, NY 12248

518-455-4601 / Fax:518-455-5257

[norrism@nyassembly.gov](mailto:norrism@nyassembly.gov)

---



**Vice-Chair, Minority Conference**

**Jake Ashby**

594 Columbia Turnpike

East Greenbush, NY 12061

518-272-6149 / Fax:518-477-5404

LOB 402

Albany, NY 12248

518-455-5777 / Fax:518-455-5923

[ashbyj@nyassembly.gov](mailto:ashbyj@nyassembly.gov)

---



**Secretary, Minority Conference**

**Brian Manktelow**

10 Leach Road

Lyons, NY 14489

315-946-5166 / Fax:315-946-5229

LOB 320

Albany, NY 12248

518-455-5655 / Fax:518-455-5407

[manktelowb@nyassembly.gov](mailto:manktelowb@nyassembly.gov)

---



**Chair, Minority Joint Conference Committee**

**David G. McDonough**

404 Bedford Ave.  
Bellmore, NY 11710  
516-409-2070 / Fax:516-409-2073

LOB 443  
Albany, NY 12248  
518-455-4633 / Fax:518-455-5559

[mcdonoughd@nyassembly.gov](mailto:mcdonoughd@nyassembly.gov)

---



**Vice-Chairman, Minority Joint Conference Committee**

**Melissa Miller**

2001 Park St.  
Atlantic Beach, NY 11509  
516-431-0500 / Fax:516-431-0412

LOB 439  
Albany, NY 12248  
518-455-3028 / Fax:518-455-5769

[MillerML@nyassembly.gov](mailto:MillerML@nyassembly.gov)

---



## Chairman, Steering Committee

### Angelo J. Morinello

800 Main Street, Suite 2C  
Niagara Falls, NY 14301  
716-282-6062 / Fax:716-282-4226

LOB 404  
Albany, NY 12248  
518-455-5284 / Fax:518-455-5964

[morinelloa@nyassembly.gov](mailto:morinelloa@nyassembly.gov)

---



## Vice-Chairman, Steering Committee

### Brian D. Miller

4747 Middle Settlement Road  
New Hartford, NY 13413  
315-736-3879 / Fax:315-736-3947

14 Central Ave, Suite 101 P.O. Box 247  
Wallkill, NY 12589  
845-895-1080

LOB 544  
Albany, NY 12248  
518-455-5334 / Fax:518-455-5391

[millerb@nyassembly.gov](mailto:millerb@nyassembly.gov)

---



## Chairman, Program Committee

### Kevin M. Byrne

3 Starr Ridge Rd. Suite 204  
Brewster, NY 10509  
845-278-2923 / Fax:845-278-2926

LOB 318  
Albany, NY 12248  
518-455-5783 / Fax:518-455-5543

[ByrneK@nyassembly.gov](mailto:ByrneK@nyassembly.gov)

---



## Vice-Chairman, Program Committee

### Michael J. Fitzpatrick

285 Middle Country Rd. Suite 202  
Smithtown, NY 11787  
631-724-2929 / Fax:631-724-3024

LOB 458  
Albany, NY 12248  
518-455-5021 / Fax:518-455-4394

[FitzpatrickM@nyassembly.gov](mailto:FitzpatrickM@nyassembly.gov)



## Ranking Member, Ways and Means

### Edward P. Ra

---

825 East Gate Boulevard Suite 207  
Garden City, NY 11530  
516-535-4095 / Fax:516-535-4097

---

CAP 444  
Albany, NY 12248  
518-455-4627 / Fax:518-455-4643

[rae@nyassembly.gov](mailto:rae@nyassembly.gov)

---

## Chair, Minority House Operations

---

[View Full Assembly Member Listing](#)

## Leadership of the Assembly<sup>[edit]</sup>

The [Speaker of the Assembly](#) presides over the Assembly. The Speaker is elected by the Majority Conference followed by confirmation of the full Assembly through the passage of an Assembly Resolution. In addition to presiding over the body, the Speaker also has the chief leadership position, and controls the flow of legislation and committee assignments. The minority leader is elected by party caucus. The majority leader of the Assembly is selected by, and serves, the Speaker.<sup>[5]</sup>

[Democrat Carl Heastie](#) of the 83rd Assembly District has served as Speaker of the Assembly since February 2015.<sup>[6]</sup> [Crystal Peoples-Stokes](#) of the 141st Assembly District has served as Assembly Majority Leader since December 2018.<sup>[7]</sup> [Republican Will Barclay](#) of the 120th Assembly District has served as Assembly Minority Leader since January 2020.<sup>[8]</sup>

Position	Name	Party	District
<a href="#">Speaker</a>	<a href="#">Carl Heastie</a>	<a href="#">Democratic</a>	<a href="#">83</a>
<a href="#">Majority Leader</a>	<a href="#">Crystal Peoples-Stokes</a>	<a href="#">Democratic</a>	<a href="#">141</a>
<a href="#">Minority Leader</a>	<a href="#">William Barclay</a>	<a href="#">Republican</a>	<a href="#">120</a>

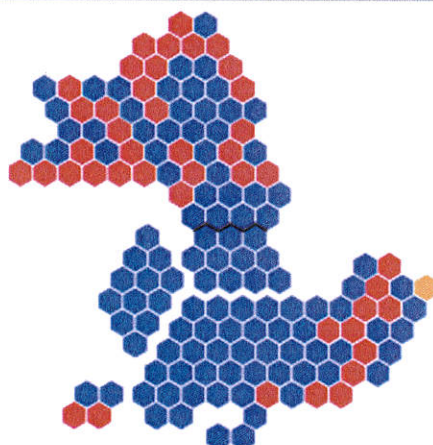
## Composition<sup>[edit]</sup>

The Assembly has been controlled by the [Democratic Party](#) since 1975.<sup>[9]</sup> As of October 2020, the Democrats hold 101 of the Assembly's 150 seats.

Affiliation	Party				Total	Vacant
	(Shading indicates Majority Conference)					
	<u>Democratic</u>	<u>Ind.</u>	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Con</u>		
End 2015–16 session	104	1	41	1	147	3
Start 2017–18 session <sup>[10]</sup>	106	1	43	0	150	0
End 2017-2018 session	102		1 <sup>[a][11][12]</sup>		42	146

Start 2019-20 session <sup>[13]</sup>	105	1	44	0	150	0
January 2020 <sup>[14][15]</sup>	104		43		148	2
February 2020 <sup>[16][17]</sup>	103		43		147	3
June 2020 <sup>[18][19]</sup>	101				145	5
Latest voting share	69.7%		29.7%			

## Members of the New York State Assembly<sup>[edit]</sup>



Membership of the Assembly represented by an equal-area projection since the 2018 election

District	Member	Party	First elected	Counties
<u>1</u>	<a href="#">Fred Thiele</a>	Ind	1995+	<a href="#">Suffolk</a>
<u>2</u>	<a href="#">Jodi Giglio</a>	Rep	2020	<a href="#">Suffolk</a>
<u>3</u>	<a href="#">Joe DeStefano</a>	Rep	2018	<a href="#">Suffolk</a>

District	Member	Party	First elected	Counties
<u>4</u>	<a href="#">Steve Englebright</a>	Dem	1992+	<a href="#">Suffolk</a>
<u>5</u>	<a href="#">Douglas M. Smith</a>	Rep	2018+	<a href="#">Suffolk</a>
<u>6</u>	<a href="#">Philip Ramos</a>	Dem	2002	<a href="#">Suffolk</a>
<u>7</u>	<a href="#">Jarett Gandolfo</a>	Rep	2020	<a href="#">Suffolk</a>
<u>8</u>	<a href="#">Michael J. Fitzpatrick</a>	Rep	2002	<a href="#">Suffolk</a>
<u>9</u>	<a href="#">Michael Durso</a>	Rep	2020	<a href="#">Nassau</a> , <a href="#">Suffolk</a>
<u>10</u>	<a href="#">Steve Stern</a>	Dem	2018+	<a href="#">Suffolk</a>
<u>11</u>	<a href="#">Kimberly Jean-Pierre</a>	Dem	2014	<a href="#">Suffolk</a>
<u>12</u>	<a href="#">Keith Brown</a>	Rep	2020+	<a href="#">Suffolk</a>
<u>13</u>	<a href="#">Charles D. Lavine</a>	Dem	2004	<a href="#">Nassau</a>
<u>14</u>	<a href="#">David McDonough</a>	Rep	2002+	<a href="#">Nassau</a>

<b>Distri ct</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>Part y</b>	<b>First electe d</b>	<b>Counties</b>
<a href="#"><u>15</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Michael Montesano</u></a>	Rep	2010+	<a href="#"><u>Nassau</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>16</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Gina Sillitti</u></a>	Dem	2020	<a href="#"><u>Nassau</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>17</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>John Mikulin</u></a>	Rep	2018+	<a href="#"><u>Nassau</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>18</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Taylor Darling</u></a>	Dem	2018	<a href="#"><u>Nassau</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>19</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Ed Ra</u></a>	Rep	2010	<a href="#"><u>Nassau</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>20</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Melissa Miller</u></a>	Rep	2016	<a href="#"><u>Nassau</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>21</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Judy Griffin</u></a>	Dem	2018	<a href="#"><u>Nassau</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>22</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Michaëlle C. Solages</u></a>	Dem	2012	<a href="#"><u>Nassau</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>23</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Stacey Pheffer Amato</u></a>	Dem	2016	<a href="#"><u>Queens</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>24</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>David Weprin</u></a>	Dem	2010+	<a href="#"><u>Queens</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>25</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Nily Rozic</u></a>	Dem	2012	<a href="#"><u>Queens</u></a>

<b>Distri ct</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>Part y</b>	<b>First electe d</b>	<b>Counties</b>
<a href="#"><u>26</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Edward Braunstein</u></a>	Dem	2010	<a href="#"><u>Queens</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>27</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Daniel Rosenthal</u></a>	Dem	2017+	<a href="#"><u>Queens</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>28</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Andrew Hevesi</u></a>	Dem	2005+	<a href="#"><u>Queens</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>29</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Alicia Hyndman</u></a>	Dem	2015+	<a href="#"><u>Queens</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>30</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Brian Barnwell</u></a>	Dem	2016	<a href="#"><u>Queens</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>31</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Khaleel Anderson</u></a>	Dem	2020	<a href="#"><u>Queens</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>32</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Vivian E. Cook</u></a>	Dem	1990	<a href="#"><u>Queens</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>33</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Clyde Vanel</u></a>	Dem	2016+	<a href="#"><u>Queens</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>34</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Jessica González-Rojas</u></a>	Dem	2020	<a href="#"><u>Queens</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>35</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Jeffrion L. Aubry</u></a>	Dem	1992+	<a href="#"><u>Queens</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>36</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Zohran</u></a>	Dem	2020	<a href="#"><u>Queens</u></a>

<b>Distri ct</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>Part y</b>	<b>First electe d</b>	<b>Counties</b>
	<a href="#">Mamdani</a>			
<a href="#">37</a>	<a href="#">Catherine Nolan</a>	Dem	1984	<a href="#">Queens</a>
<a href="#">38</a>	<a href="#">Jenifer Rajkumar</a>	Dem	2020	<a href="#">Queens</a>
<a href="#">39</a>	<a href="#">Catalina Cruz</a>	Dem	2018	<a href="#">Queens</a>
<a href="#">40</a>	<a href="#">Ron Kim</a>	Dem	2012	<a href="#">Queens</a>
<a href="#">41</a>	<a href="#">Helene Weinstein</a>	Dem	1980	<a href="#">Kings</a>
<a href="#">42</a>	<a href="#">Rodneyse Bichotte</a>	Dem	2014	<a href="#">Kings</a>
<a href="#">43</a>	<a href="#">Diana Richardson</a>	Dem <sup>[20]</sup>	2015+	<a href="#">Kings</a>
<a href="#">44</a>	<a href="#">Robert Carroll</a>	Dem	2016	<a href="#">Kings</a>
<a href="#">45</a>	<a href="#">Steven Cymbrowitz</a>	Dem	2000	<a href="#">Kings</a>
<a href="#">46</a>	<a href="#">Mathylde Frontus</a>	Dem	2018	<a href="#">Kings</a>

<b>Distri ct</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>Part y</b>	<b>First electe d</b>	<b>Counties</b>
<a href="#"><u>47</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>William Colton</u></a>	Dem	1996	<a href="#"><u>Kings</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>48</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Simcha Eichenstein</u></a>	Dem	2018	<a href="#"><u>Kings</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>49</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Peter J. Abbate Jr.</u></a>	Dem	1986	<a href="#"><u>Kings</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>50</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Emily Gallagher</u></a>	Dem	2020	<a href="#"><u>Kings</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>51</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Marcela Mitaynes</u></a>	Dem	2020	<a href="#"><u>Kings</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>52</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Jo Anne Simon</u></a>	Dem	2014	<a href="#"><u>Kings</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>53</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Maritza Davila</u></a>	Dem	2013+	<a href="#"><u>Kings</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>54</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Erik Martin Dilan</u></a>	Dem	2014	<a href="#"><u>Kings</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>55</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Latrice Walker</u></a>	Dem	2014	<a href="#"><u>Kings</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>56</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Stefani Zinerman</u></a>	Dem	2020	<a href="#"><u>Kings</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>57</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Phara Souffrant</u></a>	Dem	2020	<a href="#"><u>Kings</u></a>

<b>Distri ct</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>Part y</b>	<b>First electe d</b>	<b>Counties</b>
	<a href="#">Forrest</a>			
<a href="#">58</a>	<a href="#">N. Nick Perry</a>	Dem	1992	<a href="#">Kings</a>
<a href="#">59</a>	<a href="#">Jaime Williams</a>	Dem	2016+	<a href="#">Kings</a>
<a href="#">60</a>	<a href="#">Charles Barron</a>	Dem	2014	<a href="#">Kings</a>
<a href="#">61</a>	<a href="#">Charles Fall</a>	Dem	2018	<a href="#">Richmond</a>
<a href="#">62</a>	<a href="#">Michael Reilly</a>	Rep	2018	<a href="#">Richmond</a>
<a href="#">63</a>	<a href="#">Michael Cusick</a>	Dem	2002	<a href="#">Richmond</a>
<a href="#">64</a>	<a href="#">Michael Tannousis</a>	Rep	2020	<a href="#">Kings, Richmond</a>
<a href="#">65</a>	<a href="#">Yuh-Line Niou</a>	Dem	2016	<a href="#">New York</a>
<a href="#">66</a>	<a href="#">Deborah J. Glick</a>	Dem	1990	<a href="#">New York</a>
<a href="#">67</a>	<a href="#">Linda Rosenthal</a>	Dem	2006+	<a href="#">New York</a>

<b>Distri ct</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>Part y</b>	<b>First electe d</b>	<b>Counties</b>
<a href="#"><u>68</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Robert J. Rodriguez</u></a>	Dem	2010	<a href="#"><u>New York</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>69</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Daniel J. O'Donnell</u></a>	Dem	2002	<a href="#"><u>New York</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>70</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Inez Dickens</u></a>	Dem	2016	<a href="#"><u>New York</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>71</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Al Taylor</u></a>	Dem	2017+	<a href="#"><u>New York</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>72</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Carmen De La Rosa</u></a>	Dem	2016	<a href="#"><u>New York</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>73</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Dan Quart</u></a>	Dem	2011+	<a href="#"><u>New York</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>74</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Harvey Epstein</u></a>	Dem	2018+	<a href="#"><u>New York</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>75</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Richard N. Gottfried</u></a>	Dem	1970	<a href="#"><u>New York</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>76</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Rebecca Seawright</u></a>	Dem	2014	<a href="#"><u>New York</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>77</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Latoya Joyner</u></a>	Dem	2014	<a href="#"><u>Bronx</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>78</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Jose Rivera</u></a>	Dem	2000	<a href="#"><u>Bronx</u></a>

<b>District</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>First elected</b>	<b>Counties</b>
<a href="#"><u>79</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Chantel Jackson</u></a>	Dem	2020	<a href="#"><u>Bronx</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>80</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Nathalia Fernandez</u></a>	Dem	2018+	<a href="#"><u>Bronx</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>81</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Jeffrey Dinowitz</u></a>	Dem	1994+	<a href="#"><u>Bronx</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>82</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Michael Benedetto</u></a>	Dem	2004	<a href="#"><u>Bronx</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>83</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Carl Heastie</u></a>	Dem	2000	<a href="#"><u>Bronx</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>84</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Amanda Septimo</u></a>	Dem	2020	<a href="#"><u>Bronx</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>85</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Kenny Burgos</u></a>	Dem	2020	<a href="#"><u>Bronx</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>86</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Victor M. Pichardo</u></a>	Dem	2013+	<a href="#"><u>Bronx</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>87</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Karines Reyes</u></a>	Dem	2018	<a href="#"><u>Bronx</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>88</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Amy Paulin</u></a>	Dem	2000	<a href="#"><u>Westchester</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>89</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>J. Gary Pretlow</u></a>	Dem	1992	<a href="#"><u>Westchester</u></a>

<b>Distri ct</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>Part y</b>	<b>First electe d</b>	<b>Counties</b>
<a href="#"><u>90</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Nader Sayegh</u></a>	Dem	2018	<a href="#"><u>Westchester</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>91</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Steven Otis</u></a>	Dem	2012	<a href="#"><u>Westchester</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>92</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Thomas J. Abinanti</u></a>	Dem	2010	<a href="#"><u>Westchester</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>93</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Chris Burdick</u></a>	Dem	2020	<a href="#"><u>Westchester</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>94</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Kevin Byrne</u></a>	Rep	2016	<a href="#"><u>Westchester, Putnam</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>95</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Sandy Galef</u></a>	Dem	1992	<a href="#"><u>Westchester, Putnam</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>96</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Kenneth Zebrowski Jr.</u></a>	Dem	2007+	<a href="#"><u>Rockland</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>97</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Michael Lawler</u></a>	Rep	2020	<a href="#"><u>Rockland</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>98</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Karl A. Brabenec</u></a>	Rep	2014	<a href="#"><u>Orange, Rockland</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>99</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Colin Schmitt</u></a>	Rep	2018	<a href="#"><u>Orange, Rockland</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>100</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Aileen Gunther</u></a>	Dem	2003+	<a href="#"><u>Orange, Sullivan</u></a>

<b>Distri ct</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>Part y</b>	<b>First electe d</b>	<b>Counties</b>
<a href="#"><u>101</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Brian Miller</u></a>	Rep	2016	<a href="#"><u>Delaware</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Herkimer</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Oneida</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Orange</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Otsego</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Sullivan</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Ulster</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>102</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Christopher Tague</u></a>	Rep	2018+	<a href="#"><u>Albany</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Columbia</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Delaware</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Greene</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Otsego</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Schoharie</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Ulster</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>103</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Kevin A. Cahill</u></a>	Dem	1998	<a href="#"><u>Dutchess</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Ulster</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>104</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Jonathan Jacobson</u></a>	Dem	2018+	<a href="#"><u>Dutchess</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Orange</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Ulster</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>105</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Kieran Lalor</u></a>	Rep	2012	<a href="#"><u>Dutchess</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>106</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Didi Barrett</u></a>	Dem	2012+	<a href="#"><u>Columbia</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Dutchess</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>107</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Jacob Ashby</u></a>	Rep	2018+	<a href="#"><u>Columbia</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Rensselaer</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Washington</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>108</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>John T. McDonald III</u></a>	Dem	2012	<a href="#"><u>Albany</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Rensselaer</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Saratoga</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>109</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Patricia Fahy</u></a>	Dem	2012	<a href="#"><u>Albany</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>110</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Phillip Steck</u></a>	Dem	2012	<a href="#"><u>Albany</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Schenectady</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>111</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Angelo Santabarba</u></a>	Dem	2012	<a href="#"><u>Albany</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Montgomery</u></a> , <a href="#"><u>Schenectady</u></a>

<b>District</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>First elected</b>	<b>Counties</b>
	<a href="#">ra</a>			
<a href="#">112</a>	<a href="#">Mary Beth Walsh</a>	Rep	2016	<a href="#">Saratoga</a> , <a href="#">Schenectady</a>
<a href="#">113</a>	<a href="#">Carrie Woerner</a>	Dem	2014	<a href="#">Saratoga</a> , <a href="#">Washington</a>
<a href="#">114</a>	<a href="#">Matt Simpson</a>	Rep	2020	<a href="#">Essex</a> , <a href="#">Saratoga</a> , <a href="#">Warren</a> , <a href="#">Washington</a>
<a href="#">115</a>	<a href="#">Billy Jones</a>	Dem	2016	<a href="#">Clinton</a> , <a href="#">Franklin</a> , <a href="#">St. Lawrence</a>
<a href="#">116</a>	<a href="#">Mark Walczyk</a>	Rep	2018	<a href="#">Jefferson</a> , <a href="#">St. Lawrence</a>
<a href="#">117</a>	<a href="#">Ken Blankenbush</a>	Rep	2010	<a href="#">Jefferson</a> , <a href="#">Lewis</a> , <a href="#">Oneida</a> , <a href="#">St. Lawrence</a>
<a href="#">118</a>	<a href="#">Robert Smullen</a>	Rep	2018	<a href="#">Fulton</a> , <a href="#">Hamilton</a> , <a href="#">Herkimer</a> , <a href="#">Oneida</a> , <a href="#">St. Lawrence</a>
<a href="#">119</a>	<a href="#">Marianne Buttenschoen</a>	Dem	2018	<a href="#">Herkimer</a> , <a href="#">Oneida</a>
<a href="#">120</a>	<a href="#">William A. Barclay</a>	Rep	2002	<a href="#">Jefferson</a> , <a href="#">Onondaga</a> , <a href="#">Oswego</a>
<a href="#">121</a>	<a href="#">John Salka</a>	Rep	2018	<a href="#">Madison</a> , <a href="#">Oneida</a> , <a href="#">Otsego</a>

<b>Distri ct</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>Part y</b>	<b>First electe d</b>	<b>Counties</b>
<a href="#"><u>122</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Joe Angelino</u></a>	Rep	2020	<a href="#"><u>Broome, Chenango, Delaware, Otsego</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>123</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Donna Lupardo</u></a>	Dem	2004	<a href="#"><u>Broome</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>124</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Christopher S. Friend</u></a>	Rep	2010	<a href="#"><u>Broome, Chemung, Tioga</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>125</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Anna Kelles</u></a>	Dem	2020	<a href="#"><u>Cortland, Tompkins</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>126</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>John Lemondes Jr.</u></a>	Rep	2020	<a href="#"><u>Cayuga, Chenango, Cortland, Onondaga</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>127</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Albert A. Stirpe Jr.</u></a>	Dem	2012	<a href="#"><u>Onondaga</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>128</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Pamela Hunter</u></a>	Dem	2015+	<a href="#"><u>Onondaga</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>129</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>William Magnarelli</u></a>	Dem	1998	<a href="#"><u>Onondaga</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>130</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Brian Manktelow</u></a>	Rep	2018	<a href="#"><u>Cayuga, Oswego, Wayne</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>131</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Jeff Gallahan</u></a>	Rep	2020	<a href="#"><u>Ontario, Seneca</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>132</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Phil</u></a>	Rep	2010	<a href="#"><u>Chemung, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Yates</u></a>

District	Member	Party	First elected	Counties
	<a href="#">Palmesano</a>			
<a href="#">133</a>	<a href="#">Marjorie Byrnes</a>	Rep	2018	<a href="#">Livingston</a> , <a href="#">Monroe</a> , <a href="#">Steuben</a>
<a href="#">134</a>	<a href="#">Josh Jensen</a>	Rep	2020	<a href="#">Monroe</a>
<a href="#">135</a>	<a href="#">Jennifer Lunsford</a>	Dem	2020	<a href="#">Monroe</a>
<a href="#">136</a>	<a href="#">Sarah Clark</a>	Dem	2020	<a href="#">Monroe</a>
<a href="#">137</a>	<a href="#">Demond Meeks</a>	Dem	2020	<a href="#">Monroe</a>
<a href="#">138</a>	<a href="#">Harry Bronson</a>	Dem	2010	<a href="#">Monroe</a>
<a href="#">139</a>	<a href="#">Stephen Hawley</a>	Rep	2006+	<a href="#">Genesee</a> , <a href="#">Monroe</a> , <a href="#">Orleans</a>
<a href="#">140</a>	William Conrad	Dem	2020	<a href="#">Erie</a> , <a href="#">Niagara</a>
<a href="#">141</a>	<a href="#">Crystal Peoples-Stokes</a>	Dem	2002	<a href="#">Erie</a>
<a href="#">142</a>	<a href="#">Patrick B. Burke</a>	Dem	2018	<a href="#">Erie</a>

District	Member	Party	First elected	Counties
<a href="#">143</a>	<a href="#">Monica P. Wallace</a>	Dem	2016	<a href="#">Erie</a>
<a href="#">144</a>	<a href="#">Michael Norris</a>	Rep	2016	<a href="#">Erie</a> , <a href="#">Niagara</a> , <a href="#">Orleans</a>
<a href="#">145</a>	<a href="#">Angelo Morinello</a>	Rep	2016	<a href="#">Erie</a> , <a href="#">Niagara</a>
<a href="#">146</a>	<a href="#">Karen McMahon</a>	Dem	2018	<a href="#">Erie</a> , <a href="#">Niagara</a>
<a href="#">147</a>	<a href="#">David DiPietro</a>	Rep	2012	<a href="#">Erie</a> , <a href="#">Wyoming</a>
<a href="#">148</a>	<a href="#">Joseph Giglio</a>	Rep	2005+	<a href="#">Allegany</a> , <a href="#">Cattaraugus</a> , <a href="#">Steuben</a>
<a href="#">149</a>	<a href="#">Jonathan Rivera</a>	Dem	2020	<a href="#">Erie</a>
<a href="#">150</a>	<a href="#">Andy Goodell</a>	Rep	2010	<a href="#">Chautauqua</a>

- +Elected in a special election

## Committees<sup>[edit]</sup>

The New York State Assembly has the following committees:<sup>[21]</sup>

- Aging
- Agriculture
- Alcoholism and Drug Abuse
- Banks

- Children and Families
- Cities
- Codes
- Consumer Affairs and Protection
- Corporations, Authorities and Commissions
- Correction
- Economic Development, Job Creation, Commerce and Industry
- Education
- Election Law
- Energy
- Environmental Conservation
- Ethics and Guidance
- Governmental Employees
- Governmental Operations
- Health
- Higher Education
- Housing
- Insurance
- Judiciary
- Labor
- Libraries and Education Technology
- Local Governments
- Mental Health
- Oversight, Analysis and Investigation
- Racing and Wagering
- Real Property Taxation
- Rules
- Small Business
- Social Services
- Tourism, Parks, Arts and Sports Development
- Transportation
- Veterans' Affairs
- Ways and Means

# LEGISLATIVE HANDBOOK

A Guide to Being a Successful Veteran Advocate



VFW DEPARTMENT  
OF  
NEW YORK



# BEING AN ADVOCATE

No One Does More For Veterans. The Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of New York and Auxiliary are dedicated individuals working on behalf of veterans, active military and their families. Being an advocate is a lifelong job; a process that takes patience and determination. Advocacy is about recognizing what Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter". In recognizing our individual gifts and talents, we have the capability of changing our world. As advocates, we can create change and call for a more inclusive environment for not just veterans but everyone.

Of course, advocacy goes beyond just recognizing the need to speak up. It goes beyond just thinking to include action – standing up for something. Writing letters and sending emails to legislators is a very powerful and effective way of getting across ideas and concerns you may have as an advocate. It is important that we recognize the power of the pen (or keyboard) and personal conversations and develop connections with our representatives. As a government for the people, we must assert our right to be active advocates!

Legislators have major influence over services and supports to veterans, through funding and policy decisions. The job of legislators is to respond to the need of their constituents – that means you! It is important that legislators know that someone is paying attention to the issues of the veterans and their families – otherwise they are likely to ignore the issue or only listen to the other side. Therefore, it's important that strong voices for veterans be heard. This Legislative Handbook will serve as a tool to help you become a better and more confident advocate. Remember, change starts with you!

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No One Does More For Veterans. The Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Georgia and Auxiliary are dedicated individuals working on behalf of veterans, active military and their families. Being an advocate is a lifelong job; a process that takes patience and determination. Advocacy is about recognizing what Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter". In recognizing our individual gifts and talents, we have the capability of changing our world. As advocates, we can create change and call for a more inclusive environment for not just veterans but everyone.

Of course, advocacy goes beyond just recognizing the need to speak up. It goes beyond just thinking to include action – standing up for something. Writing letters and sending emails to legislators is a very powerful and effective way of getting across ideas and concerns you may have as an advocate. It is important that we recognize the power of the pen (or keyboard) and personal conversations and develop connections with our representatives. As a government for the people, we must assert our right to be active advocates!

Legislators have major influence over services and supports to veterans, through funding and policy decisions. The job of legislators is to respond to the need of their constituents – that means you! It is important that legislators know that someone is paying attention to the issues of the veterans and their families – otherwise they are likely to ignore the issue or only listen to the other side. Therefore, it's important that strong voices for veterans be heard. This Legislative Handbook will serve as a tool to help you become a better and more confident advocate. Remember, change starts with you!

# DEALING WITH LEGISLATORS

It is important to recognize that legislators, particularly those in the United States Congress, are extremely busy. There is often an impression that legislators don't care – however that is not typically the case. Legislators do care, but it is our job to help them care. The reality is that many people make demands on legislator's time, looking for help on a wide variety of issues. It can be very challenging for legislators to balance all the demands they have on them. It is also often difficult for our representatives to understand and be experts on every issue that comes before them. Representatives are subject matter experts on only a few issues, and they rely mostly on their staff and constituents to keep them informed on the wide array of topics they must deal with. Given the time demands on our legislators, and the wide variety of issues that come before them, it is therefore critical to be simple, clear, direct, and as brief as possible when communicating with them. It is also important to recognize that legislative staff are critical allies in efforts to influence legislators. Staff can assist in getting access to a legislator, and legislators often rely on staff to provide guidance on issues. Finally, and most importantly, it should be recognized that in most cases legislators will only pay attention to an issue if they are hearing about it from their constituents. Therefore, it is critical that legislators at the federal, state and local levels hear from us, and in sufficient numbers, so that they pay attention to issues impacting our veterans and their families.

# HOW TO WRITE A LETTER

You probably have written many letters before, whether to friends or family or long-distance pen pals; however, writing to a legislative member is a bit different. There are important things to keep in mind while drafting your letter such as length, format, etc. The more well written your letter is, the more likely your message will be powerful and lasting. Here are some suggestions to think about as you write your letter.

## **TYPE THE LETTER**

When possible, type your letter instead of handwriting it. If you don't have access to a computer and printer, then be sure to write legibly. Be sure to use business style formatting. Always print two copies of the letter – one for your records and one to send to your legislator.

## **IDENTIFY WHO YOU ARE**

Let your Legislator know you are a constituent from their District. Be sure to include your name and address and telephone number on the letter itself, as the envelope could get lost.

## **ADDRESS LETTER APPROPRIATELY**

Always address your letter to "The Honorable" (fill in name). Depending on who you are writing, you will use a different salutation to begin your letter.

For the United States Congress:

- House of Representatives use "Dear Representative" (Last name of Member).
- Senate use "Dear Senator" (Last name of Member).

For the State Legislature, follow the same rules.

## **KEEP IT SHORT**

No one likes to read a letter that is so long it loses focus and gets confusing. Try to keep your letter to one page or less and focus on one subject. In the first paragraph summarize your purpose or request, who you are and what you would like to see happen. The middle of the letter should list the specific issues or concerns. It's useful sometimes to list out or bullet a couple of points you want to make in your letter – not only does it help your legislator follow the letter, but it helps keep you on track. Short descriptions of just a couple words in bold type at the beginning of a bullet point or paragraph can also help in making your ideas stand out. The more direct you can be in your letter the better. The closing paragraph should once again state what you would like to see happen.

## **MAKE IT PERSONAL**

Explain how a proposal will affect you, your family, community or organization. While stating facts is helpful, the facts come alive when they are attached to a story about yourself or someone you know and is likely to make your letter more memorable. There is great power in the ability to share one's experience with others.

## **BE COURTEOUS**

No one likes to get a letter full of only complaints with no suggestions for improvements or change. If you have an idea you want to share, say it in a non-accusatory way and invite your legislator to consider an alternate viewpoint or take a different course of action. Part of building a relationship with your legislator is to include in your letter a statement of appreciation for their time and consideration of the matter at hand. A long list of threats or complaints will certainly not help your legislator adopt a position. As an added note, a follow up letter of thanks after legislation was passed is always appreciated by legislators and their staff.

## **DON'T PACK THE ENVELOPE**

Sometimes there are studies or press releases we know of that relate to the issues talked about in your letter, however, do not include them in your envelope. The more paper you have packed in the envelope, the more likely it is that your letter will be pushed aside or discarded. Instead, offer to send additional information if they would like it. Remember, it's about keeping it simple. **TELL THE TRUTH**

State only the facts. Do not try to guess at certain things you are not sure about. If you stretch the truth in your letter, it loses credibility. To be taken seriously, always tell the truth and stick to reliable information.

**BE TIMELY** It's important that when you have an idea or suggestion for your legislator about an issue, tell them right away. The longer you wait to act and use your skills as an advocate, the less likely it is your letter will be effective. Be aware of current legislation and what is going on in your district and state.

## **ASK FOR RESPONSE**

If you would like a reply, request it in the letter and include your street address. If you do not hear from your legislator, follow up with a phone call.



# SENDING AN E-MAIL

Today we have the ease and convenience of using the internet at our fingertips. Most legislators publicize an email address for receiving constituent communications. Some use form-filled systems which require you to enter your information and subject matter into an online form. Visit your legislator's website to find their preference for receiving email communication. If you choose to send an e-mail, there are some things to keep in mind like writing a letter.

- Be sure to put your name and contact information in the e-mail
- Share personal experiences the same as you would in a regular letter
- Think about what your message is, be brief and keep it simple
- Do not send an e-mail everyday – eventually you will be “spam”
- Send the e-mail only to one legislator – cc'ing many legislators diminishes the power of your email. If you wish to contact multiple legislators on an issue, send them each a separate e-mail
- Do not send attachments – you can offer to send additional information separately
- Be kind – do not be argumentative or overly critical in your email

Remember to proof read your e-mail – make sure it's free of spelling and grammatical errors and makes organizational sense.



# PHONE CALLS

Sometimes when we don't have a lot of time, it is easiest to make a phone call to your legislator. Again, as with letter writing and e-mail, there are things to keep in mind

- Introduce yourself as a constituent by giving your name, address and phone number. If it turns out they are not available, feel free to speak with one of their staff members. They can answer many of your questions and addressing concerns you may have.
- Think about what you want to say – sometimes having a written list of talking points is helpful in remembering the most important things.
- Put your fact together, know the name, number and sponsor to the bill in question. What specific section(s) of the bill concerns you. How does the legislation affect you, our veteran community?
- Do not ramble in your conversation – keep it short, simple and to the point. State your reason for calling and what actions you would like to see the legislator take
- Don't forget to ask your legislator their view on the bill. If the legislator supports your views, be sure to thank him or her. If they do not share your views, note your disappointment but say you want to continuing working together and if you feel talking further would be beneficial, make an appointment to meet with them in their office.

Remember, phone calls are a great way to make a personal connection, share your views and request action by your legislator. Never be rude, impolite or threatening.

# FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS

A visit to legislators and staff requires planning. It is very important that your meeting be effective. In order to have the best discussion possible, you must be prepared and ready to answer questions that your legislator and his or her staff may have. Here are some things to keep in mind.

- Know your stuff! The more you know what you're talking about, the more prepared and less nervous you will feel. Look at your legislators past vote on particular issues and know what the opposition is saying about the particular issue at hand.
- Express your views in a respectful manner.
- Be cognizant of the fact that you have a limited amount of time to meet. Legislators are busy so your meeting should not be more than 30 minutes
- Be sure to develop a strong relationship with the legislative staff as they are often times the main point of contact for the legislator.
- Be specific about what you would like the legislator to support – don't just ask for general support.
- Be prepared to answer questions. If you are unsure, don't make up something. Instead, tell your legislator that you will get back to him or her with more information.
- Leave behind information fact sheets that summarize the points you are making in your conversation with the legislator for future review.
- Exchange business cards: This contact information will prove invaluable for future meetings and correspondence.
- Follow up: Always follow up immediately with the person with whom you met to say thank you. Email is best. Handwritten notes will be respected but can take three weeks or more to arrive.
- When meeting, be sure not to speak in an argumentative manner. While you may or may not approve of certain aspects of your legislator's political party, do not make the meeting about "party politics". Remember why you are meeting – it's about the issue (s) at hand – not which party is better than the other

# HOW TO ATTEND A TOWN HALL MEETING

## What is a town hall meeting?

Most Members of Congress hold “town hall” meetings a several times each year to meet with constituents and give updates from Washington, D.C. They are usually held in a public setting and are free to attend. Town halls provide fantastic opportunities to gain face-to-face access to your U.S. Senators or Representative while they are back in the district. Town hall meetings typically consist of two parts: your Member will speak for about 15-30 minutes about activities in Washington. Then, your Member will open the floor to questions from constituents. This is your opportunity to ask your Member about a particular immigration issue or piece of legislation.

## Find out the dates & locations

To find out when town hall meetings in your Congressional district will be held, monitor your Member’s Congressional website, **sign up for your Member’s email alerts**, or periodically call for event updates. Members usually hold town hall meetings in different areas around their district. While it’s best to attend the one closest to your home, don’t hesitate to also attend meetings in other parts of your district.

## Before you ask a question:

- Make sure to have your question prepared in advance. Limit yourself to ONE question and try not to let the questions posed before yours influence what you say.
- Raise your hand immediately when the Congressman asks for questions. The longer you wait, the more competition you will have for the microphone.

## What should you ask?

- **Avoid yes or no questions or questions requiring a commitment.** If the media is present, Members will be more likely to resist making spontaneous commitments.
- If you ask questions about specific legislation, be prepared to quickly explain what the legislation does. Thousands of bills are introduced each Congress and Members of Congress don’t have them all memorized.
- Ask a question based on an action. A good way to phrase a question is to base it on an action. (“What will you do legislatively to solve X?” or “What have you done to hold President Obama accountable for Y?”) Doing so makes it harder for the Member of Congress to give an answer using only talking points.
- Do your homework! Don’t hesitate to do some extra research on your Member of Congress before the town hall. **If you feel they voted incorrectly on a bill or issued a statement in which you disagree, those are great points to bring up when you are given the microphone.** (“Could you tell me why you voted against the X bill last week, which would have done Y?”)

### Be polite!

Your question will be best received if it is phrased respectfully and tactfully. Rude or off-color language will ensure a more guarded response from the Member of Congress and could even turn the audience against you.

### Don't leave early.

- **Stick around after the meeting.** If you aren't given the chance to ask your question during the meeting, or you have additional questions, **hang around afterwards.** Most Members of Congress stick around for a few extra minutes to take additional questions one-on-one.
- **Find a staff member.** If your Member does not stick around after the town hall, or you have trouble accessing him/her, locate the Congressional staff and speak to them instead. They can take your comments, answer questions, and refer you to appropriate staff members.
- **Bring business cards.** Bring a business card to give to the staff member to help him or her follow up with your question.
- **Network with other attendees.** If anyone else in the audience asks questions about immigration that are in line with your views, talk to them after the meeting is over. That's a great opportunity to get them involved in activism.

## TOWN HALL MEETINGS



# COMMUNICATE WITH LEGISLATIVE STAFF

Building rapport with the legislative staff is necessary. The legislators rely heavily on their staff – for policy research, to help constituents and to keep the legislative process running. Also, legislators delegate staff members to represent them at public functions, so be sure to welcome the staff member warmly to events. Legislators with staff support assign a variety of duties to their staff. Most congressional offices include the following staff positions:

- Chief of Staff directs the staff, follows local, state and national news – especially those with political implications, evaluates the implications of legislative proposals and constituent requests and oversees office operations.
- Scheduler keeps the legislator's appointment calendar. This person is responsible for making travel arrangements and coordinating speaking dates, as well as constituent visits.
- Legislative Assistants are issue specialists. Almost all congressional offices will have an Assistant covering Veterans Affairs. Get to know this person!
- Committee or Subcommittee Staff. If legislator has substantial seniority on a committee or subcommittee, his or her work on the panel might be handled by committee or subcommittee staff. They are experts on the issues they cover.
- Director of the District or State Office: This staff member is closer to constituents and is particularly sensitive to their concerns. Though mainly concerned with local matters, they can be an excellent channel for conveying your views to a legislator.

# RESOURCES

## **[www.vfw.org/advocacy](http://www.vfw.org/advocacy)**

Sign up for VFW Action Corp and find our 2018 Priority Goals and Programs

## **U.S. Capitol Switchboard**

202-224-3121 or toll-free at 877-762-8762

## **[www.govtrack.us](http://www.govtrack.us)**

Use GovTrack to research and track legislation in the United States Congress, including Members of Congress, bills and resolutions, voting records and committee activity.

## **[www.congress.gov](http://www.congress.gov)**

The official website for U.S. legislative information. Provides access to complete legislative information for Members of Congress, legislative agencies and the public. It is usually updated the morning after a session adjourns.

## **[www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov)**

Latest news from the White House and live events.

## **[www.supremecourtus.gov](http://www.supremecourtus.gov)**

The transcripts of oral arguments are posted on the same day an argument is heard by the Court. Same-day transcripts.

## **[www.c-span.org](http://www.c-span.org)**

Get updates on congressional activities, voting schedules and the congressional calendar

# SAMPLE COMMUNICATION WITH LEGISLATORS

## Sample Letter

Sender's Name

Address

City, State ZIP

Date

Senator (FirstName Last Name)

United States Senate

Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator (Last Name),

I am writing you today as your constituent (in the state of New York or in the xxx District of the State of New York) and an advocate for veterans regarding proposed cuts to Individual Unemployability (IU) made by President Trump. I urge you to publicly oppose any measure that would claw back tens of thousands of dollars annually from veterans who are unable to work because of their service connected disabilities.

While there are many things in the budget proposal from the President that would add needed services at the VA, veterans must not be required to trade one benefit for another. Balancing budgets on the backs of veterans is not what veterans deserve after honorable service to our country and being disabled as a result of such service. I support the VFW and their opposition to the proposed cut to IU benefits. I call on you to do the same.

The simple fact is that the proposal, which would force veterans to surrender IU benefits when they reach retirement age, would financially devastate our most severely disabled veterans. The IU program pays a veteran at the 100 percent rate of VA disability compensation because of service connected conditions making them unemployable even if they are rated at a lower percentage for such conditions. This means that veterans would revert to the lower rating despite their continued inability to work because of their service connected disabilities and would lose other VA benefits, such as VA dental care for themselves as well as medical coverage for their family. Affected veterans would not only lose a significant portion of their VA disability compensation benefits, they would also receive lower Social Security retirement payments because they have not worked for many years due to their service connected disabilities. This proposal could also impact certain state and county benefits, such as property tax exemptions, further impacting their financial well-being.

As your constituent, I urge you to oppose this proposal. Thank you on behalf of all U.S. Veterans.

Respectfully,

Signature

VFW Department of New York and Auxiliary

# SAMPLE MEETING REQUEST

Coversheet format to fax or email meeting requests.

TO: Attention: Scheduler  
The Honorable [FirstName] [LastName]'

Email Address: XXX-XXX-XXXX

SENT BY:  
[Your name and email address]  
[Unit or department position (if you are serving in one)]  
[Unit [##], VFW and Auxiliary] SENDER'S PH:

000-000-0000 [work]  
00-00-0 [cell or home]

RE: Meeting Request for [Week/Day], [Month ##, 201#]

DATE: [Month ##, 201#]

Please accept this [fax/email] as a meeting request with the  
[representative/senator] for about 20 minutes on [Week/Day], [Month ##,  
201#], for me and [name(s) of others joining you]. Our schedule is flexible  
and open between [XX] and [XX]. Would the [representative/ senator]  
have some time available?

We are constituents of the great state of [state]. I am active in Post [##] in  
[city, state] and am currently [VFW Auxiliary position].  
[Name(s) of others joining you] is/are active in POST [##] in [city, state] and is/are  
[VFW and Auxiliary position].

The VFW and Auxiliary is the world's largest service organization with nearly 800,000 members in some  
9,000 communities. Our mission is to serve veterans, the military and their families.

Your assistance in coordinating a meeting time for us is appreciated. I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you.

## SAMPLE SCRIPT FOR CALLS

Here is a sample script you can use when you are calling your representative's office. OF course change it as you need to in order to fit what you are calling about. If you are calling to express thanks, then instead of asking for support, tell the staff member you would like to express your appreciation that \_\_\_\_\_ took a particular action.

You probably will not get to speak with the legislator personally, but you might be able to speak with one of his or her staff members. However, often constituents will be directed to talk with a secretary or intern in the office. But don't worry....your call is noted and very much appreciated.

**CALLER:** Hi my name is \_\_\_\_\_ I am a constituent of (Representative/Senator) \_\_\_\_\_. I am calling to ask for his/her support of a very important piece of legislation on \_\_\_\_\_ (name the issue the legislation is about). I ask that (Representative/Senator) \_\_\_\_\_ support the bill (name of the bill).

**STAFF MEMBER:** He/she may ask you some questions about why the legislator should support the bill.

**CALLER:** Than you for taking the time to speal with me today. If you have any questions I can be reached at (\_\_\_\_) – (\_\_\_\_). Thank you!

## THINGS TO REMEMBER

Remember that the legislative process is both slow and fast at the very same time. Sometimes action is needed right away to show support for a bill while a vote may not actually happen until many months later. This can be frustrating at times when it seems like nothing is moving forward. It is always good to remember that even if you feel like your letters, phone calls or emails are not making a big impact, they are! It is difficult sometimes to see what is going on behind the scenes in the policymaking world. There are often times many conversations that occur between representatives and their staff and other interest groups that you might not always be aware of, but remember that everyone has an important part to play in the legislative process.

Also, there are several parts to the legislative process at both the federal and state levels, and each state may have slightly different processes for passing legislation. It can at times be a very complicated process that involves a lot of back and forth debate between members.

Remember, regardless your method of communication with a legislator, it is important to report your communication and results to the Legislative Chair. Report information including the name of the legislator and office held, the topics covered, the legislator's response or commitments and whether any follow-up by the Legislative Committee is warranted.

Remember, **EVERY BENEFIT A VETERAN RECEIVES STARTS WITH LEGISLATION**

## NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE



### **Chairman**

Joseph Cognitore  
Rocky Point, NY



### **Vice-Chairmen**

Paul Dietrich  
Goshen, NY

### **Members**

Neil Jordan	Syosset, NY
Paul Dietrich	Staten Island, NY
Robert Shave	Schenectady, NY
John Fox	Remsen, NY
Lance Becker	Lancaster, NY
Art Scheuneman	Arcade, NY
Ken Gippe	Macadon, NY



GENE RATIGLIANO  
STATE COMMANDER

*Presents*



The 2019 Legislative Goals

## DEPARTMENT OF NEW YORK VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES



69 Sand Creek Rd  
Albany, N.Y. 12205

Tel: (518) 463-7427  
Fax: (518) 426-8904

*To:*

Members of the Congress  
Of the  
United States  
*and*  
The Legislature of The  
State of New York

## State Legislative Goals

- ◆ Acquire Funding for VFW Service Officers amend S2724 and A4269 to include all state level Veterans Service Organizations that are Congressionally Chartered with VA recognized Service Officers and to ensure that the cost of altering tax forms to include this option be aid for with funds generated by the option prior to disbursing any funds.
- ◆ TBI Bill S6089 and A9473 amend to provide training so that law enforcement officers can recognize veterans with TBI and PTSD and to provide the option of having a service connected disability status indicated on a veterans NYS Drivers Licenses or non Drivers Licenses Identification.
- ◆ Veterans Enterprise Opportunity Act amend S7489 and A10388 to provide all veteran owned businesses and enterprises the same preference for bidding on state contracts as those offered to other minorities and protected Classes.
- ◆ Alternative Veterans Property Tax Exemption S4387-2011 to amend subdivision 1 of section 458-a of the real property tax law by adding a new paragraph, defining "active duty member of the military".
- ◆ Civil Service Buy Back Bill S6904 and A8067 will allow the newest veterans and veterans who received expeditionary medals to buy back service time on government pensions. Reintroduce S3954 to include all expeditionary service.
- ◆ Veterans Courts Support the establishment of a Veterans' Court in each County of New York State.

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We thank the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives, the NYS Senate and Assembly, their Veterans Affairs Committees for their cooperation in the past and ask the continued support. We ask our members to support our legislators who have promoted our program.

The Department of New York, VFW is an active member of the NYS Council of Veterans Organizations. We are proud to cooperate with the council in meaningful legislation that will benefit all veterans in New York State.

## National Legislative Goals

- ◆ VA Health Care  
Insist Congress provide sufficient funding to the Department of Veterans Affairs so it continues providing the highest quality care to wounded, ill and injured veterans. Provide adequate funding to maintain current building structures and reduce the backlog of critical infrastructure gaps.
- ◆ Suicides & Homelessness  
Address the national crisis where 18 veterans commit suicide every day by ensuring that Congress properly fund DOD and VA awareness and support programs. Push Congress to properly oversee and fund homeless programs by increasing per diem rates, providing education and career training opportunities and making available substance abuse and mental health services.
- ◆ VA Benefits and Compensation  
Urge Congress to use its funding and oversight authority to require the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) to reduce the claims backlog while improving the overall quality of ratings decisions. Call on Congress to require VA to install an IT infrastructure that will help transform VA into a 21st century agency.
- ◆ Seamless Transition  
Demand the creation of one integrated electronic medical and service record that will follow service members from the time they raise their right hands to the time they are buried in a VA cemetery.
- ◆ Military Quality of Life  
Oppose all proposals that will damage morale and decimate the all-volunteer force. Support efforts to lower the Reserve Component retirement pay age to 55.
- ◆ Education & Employment  
Fight to sustain G.I. Bill benefits; ensuring veterans receive the opportunities they have earned.
- ◆ Defense & Homeland Security  
Fully support U.S. troops and their mission to prosecute the war on terrorism, as well as to protect our nation's citizens and interests around the world. Secure U.S. borders, shorelines and all ports of entry against foreign nationals' intent on doing us harm.
- ◆ POW/MIA  
Achieve the fullest possible accounting of U.S. military personnel missing from all wars.