



# **Legislative Advocacy Excellence**

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# Stay informed and take action

The VFW is one of the most respected voices in Washington, D.C., and within State and Local governments across the United States



Join *Action Corps!* Text “VFW” to 50457 or Visit [vfw.org/JoinActionCorps](http://vfw.org/JoinActionCorps)

# Legislative Structure



On the National level

The VFW Washington Office in D.C.

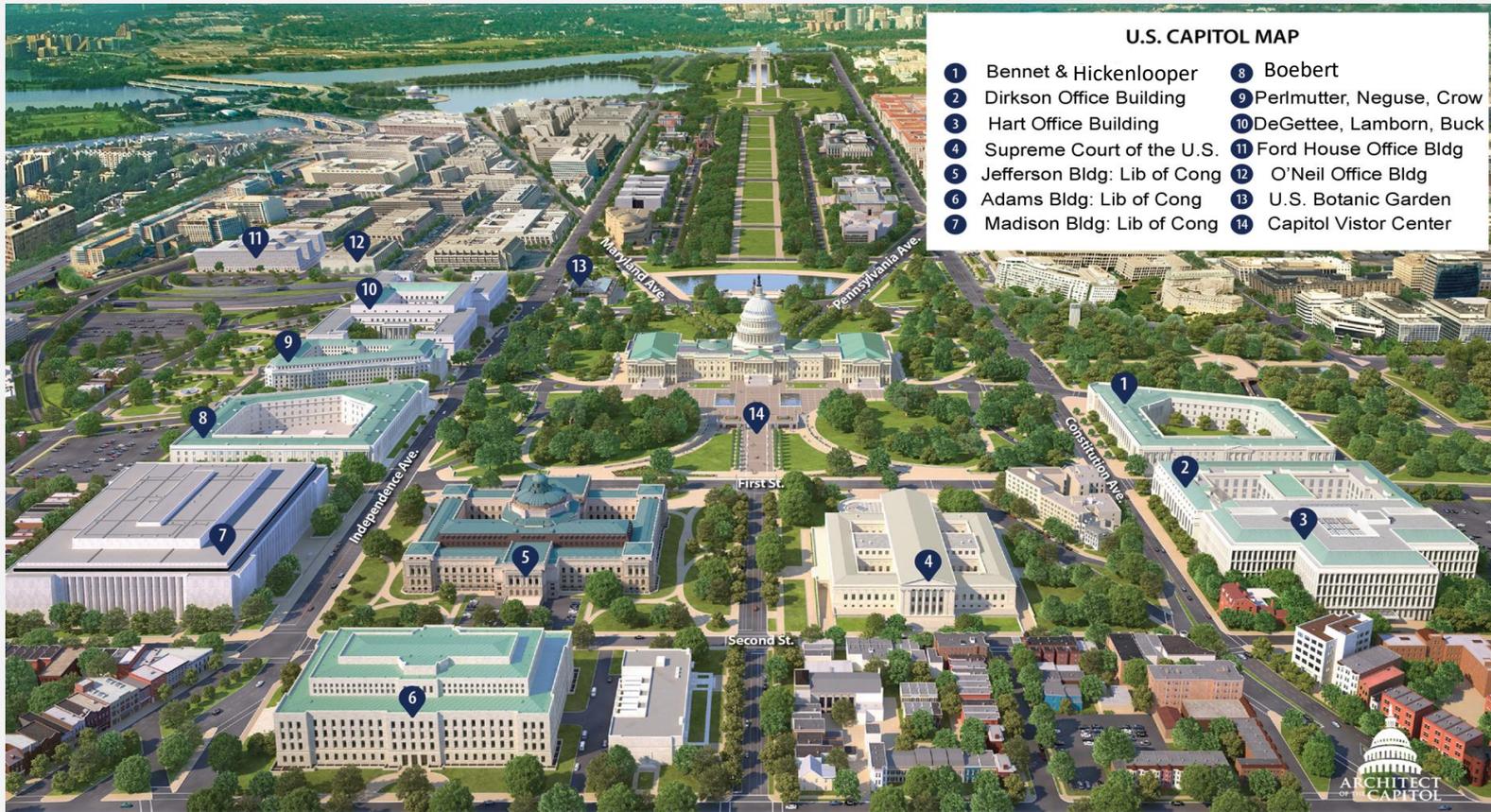
Staffed by thirteen of the best legislative advocates

On the State level

The VFW Colorado Legislative Director

Districts and Posts may or may not have a Legislative Chair

# The U.S. Capitol



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# We Vote!



## What do we know and how do we leverage action

1. Everyone loves Veterans
2. Appreciation for the sacrifices of veterans and family members
3. There are a ton of us
  - a. Worldwide, there are over 1 Million VFW Members
  - b. In Colorado there are ~22 thousand VFW and Auxiliary members
  - c. We know through surveys that 99% are registered to vote and that 97% vote

**Your influence counts, so use it!**

# “All Politics is Local”



Your goal is to be the first Veteran Service Organization leader the Mayor thinks about when he or she wakes up in the morning

Be the go to VSO, be the veteran they turn to for ideas and answers



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# Veteran Advocacy: DON'Ts



Don't endorse candidates on behalf of the VFW National Organization, Department, District, or Post

Don't wear your VFW cap when actively campaigning for a candidate, such as soliciting donations or knocking on doors asking people to pledge their vote for a candidate

# Veteran Advocacy: DO's



Attend candidate town hall meetings and other events and ask candidates where they stand on our issues

Set up voter registration drives / Get Out the Vote Campaigns on the local level

Provide carpool service on Election Day to help the elderly and disabled get to the voting booth

Support and work for your favorite candidates as an individual voting constituent

Wear your VFW cap at public events such as town halls, rallies, forums, or debates

# Be Nonpartisan!

*Your influence counts, so use it!*



They all have one drive that makes them predictable; their values

The values an office holder or a candidate possesses is the compass to which he or she will steer towards

Have faith in the American people for who they elect, respect their choice, and work with the office holder the community elected

# Be Nonpartisan!

*Your influence counts, so use it!*



The political persuasion of the office holder is neither here nor there

Be it a left wing liberal democrat or someone who is so far right that you can't see them from here, they all share a love for Veterans

They are all human, love Veterans, and need votes

Ultimately, a person runs for office with the deep belief that they will correct past wrongs and pave a path to a great future

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# Hot & Pressing Legislation



In order to address all exposures (Agent Orange, burn pits, firefighting foam, and others) our desire is to have legislation which creates a framework that can deal with past, present, and future exposures

The bipartisan legislation presented by the House Veterans Affairs Committee H.R. 3967 *The Honoring our Promises to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act* and previously submitted H.R. 2111 (Michael Lecik Military Firefighters Protection Act) addresses these and other concerns around the subject of toxic exposures

Congress has the opportunity and the responsibility to ensure that vital care and benefits are provided for those who served and sacrificed for our nation

# We want you to tweet



The most effective social media channel to influence legislators is through Twitter

@RepDianaDeGette @RepJoeNeguse @RepBoebert @SenatorHick  
@RepKenBuck @RepJasonCrow @RepPerlmutter @SenatorBennet

- Keep tweets focused,
- Engage news organizations with the idea they will also ask the Representative what support they are lending toward toxic exposure,
- Engage people and ultimately the Representative's Party on supporting toxic exposure,
- This plan isn't meant for the Representative to read the tweets, but for Staff and the Representative followers to ask the office, "are you supporting Veterans?"
- Create tweets from news stories tagging one or more U.S. representatives from Colorado, tag a news organization with the Representatives District, and tag other people who are toxic exposure supporters
- Retweet with comments from other organizations and the House Veterans Affairs Committee when they tweet on toxic exposure

# @VFWCO Tweets



**VFW Colo State HQ** @VFWCO · Jul 20

...

#ToxicExposure legislation is the #1 legislative priority  
Now is a great time for @RepJasonCrow and @RepBoebert to  
familiarize themselves with the “Honoring Our PACT Act” and come  
together in support of Colorado’s veterans  
[@DailySentinelGJ](#) [@denverpost](#) #BurnPits



**IAVA** @iava · Jul 20

In #IAVA's most recent #AdvocacyUpdate by @USNavy veteran  
@KaitHetrick, you'll get an update on the Special Immigrant Visas,  
read about #ToxicExposures media, and much more...check it out



[iava.org/blog/advocacyu...](http://iava.org/blog/advocacyu...)



# @VFWCO Tweets



**VFW Colo State HQ** @VFWCO · Aug 12  
.@johnfeal2 is correct!

#ToxicExposure and #BurnPits are a bipartisan issue and H.R 3967 needs support from, @RepPerlmutter @RepKenBuck @RepJoeNeguse

@9NEWS @CBSDenver @DenverChannel

**House Veterans' Affairs** @VetAffairsDems · Aug 12  
The Honoring our PACT Act is a bill that shows long-overdue empathy to the generations of veterans living with the effects of toxic exposure.

Hear from @johnfeal2, a 9/11 First Responder and advocate for toxic-exposed veterans



▶ 11.4K views 0:01 / 0:41

# @VFWCO Tweets



VFW Colo State HQ @VFWCO · Jul 15



Staff from [@RepDLamborn](#) heard firsthand from 7 Vietnam Vets at VFW Post 5221 about their VA Claims that been denied and denied for 50+ years for disabilities from [#AgentOrange](#). H.R. 3967 will help those 7 plus millions more  
Doesn't the [#CostOfWar](#) extend to disabled veterans too





**You can contact me anytime with  
questions**

**steve@vfwco.org or 719.229.7087**

**Thank you for all that you do!**