



National Service & Legislative
Headquarters
807 Maine Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20024-2410
Phone: 202-554-3501
Fax: 202-554-3581

MEMO TO: Department Commanders and Adjutants
Benefits Protection Team Leaders

FROM: Joy J. Ilem, National Legislative Director

SUBJECT: ***Vision for Veterans* Congressional Candidate Outreach**

DATE: June 4, 2020

This week we are beginning the next phase of our *Vision for Veterans* initiative, designed to educate federal candidates and lawmakers about the top priorities facing our nation's veterans in the coming years, and seeking their support for DAV's concrete solutions.

Over the next two months, we are asking all of our departments to distribute DAV's *Vision for Veterans* to every Senate and House candidate and incumbent running in the 2020 federal elections. Importantly, we are seeking to get firm commitments from these candidates to support specific action items if they are elected (or re-elected) to serve in the next Congress. Here's what we ask you to do:

Share our Vision for Veterans Outreach Plans to Congressional Candidates

We need department commanders, adjutants and Benefits Protection Team Leaders to develop statewide plans to deliver the *Vision for Veterans* materials included with this memo to all Senate and House candidates or campaign staffs, and ask for firm, written commitments to support specific action items contained in our *Vision* policy proposals.

In deciding who should be the main contact to reach out to congressional candidates, you should determine if there are members in your departments or chapters who already have a relationship with a Member of Congress or a candidate. We fully understand that given today's pandemic conditions, many of these "meetings" will be either virtual online meetings or phone calls, and that's perfectly fine. Remember, it's important to have a resident from the congressional district participate in meetings for House candidates, if possible.

Connecting with Senate and House Candidates

Once you have identified the person or persons responsible for each of your Senate and House candidates, you will need to develop a list of contacts for each candidate's campaign. For incumbent office holders, you can call their Senate or House office and ask for a campaign contact to discuss DAV's *Vision for Veterans*; feel free to share these materials with the Senate or House office as well if the opportunity arises.

For other Senate and House candidates, some may be known to you or one of your members. Others can be found in a variety of ways, including through state and local political parties or through Internet searches. For your use, a sample email meeting request for congressional candidates is included with this memo. You can send the full *Vision for Veterans* candidate package with your meeting invitation, or you can send it separately as read ahead materials once you have a meeting time. Feel free to customize your outreach to show any local connection you have with the candidate.

At these meetings you should provide a short overview of DAV as a national organization as well as share relevant information about DAV chapter(s) and departments represented in your meeting. Then briefly present DAV's *Vision for Veterans* issues, emphasizing those that are particularly important to your department, chapter or you personally. If they have questions, you can answer them based on the information in the *Vision for Veterans*, but do feel free to refer them to our Legislative team at DAV's National Service and Legislative Headquarters.


The following materials are to be distributed to candidates and campaigns:

1. *Vision for Veterans* Handout (PDF)
2. DAV Press Release – *Vision for Veterans* (PDF)
3. DAV Identity Brochure (PDF)
4. DAV By the Numbers – February 2020 (PDF)

Finally, and most importantly, please seek support for some or all of the “Action Items” listed in the *Vision for Veterans*, and ask if they can provide a written statement supporting any or all of them. This could be done in a letter to DAV or by putting their position on their campaign website or in a campaign brochure.

After each meeting, please complete and email back a Congressional Candidate Outreach Feedback Form (attached) to legislativepublic@dav.org indicating who you met with and any of the Action Items they committed to supporting. But remember, we still want to get these commitments in writing so that after the next election, we can hold them accountable for these important campaign promises.

If you have questions about the *Vision for Veterans* Congressional Candidate Outreach initiative please contact DAV's Legislative Department at legislativepublic@dav.org. Thank you for all you do for your fellow veterans and especially for your support of DAV's legislative and policy agenda.



JOY J. ILEM
National Legislative Director

Attachments