



# American Legion Auxiliary

*A Community of Volunteers Serving Veterans,  
Military, and their Families*

**TO: National Executive Committee Members, National Officers, National Chairmen,  
Past National Presidents**

**CC: Dept Presidents; Dept Secretaries, NHQ Staff; National Committee Members**

From: Kelly Circle, Executive Director

Re: **Weekly Briefing 10-30-2020**

## **Development**

I want to start off this week's briefing with some great news. The ALA has been awarded a \$12,000 grant from Enbridge Community Investment to support the AEF! We still need your support as this funding allows us to assist even more members who need our help so please continue your fundraising efforts!

Here's more great news: With the approvals from the October meeting, the ALA Foundation has officially awarded over half a million dollars in grants to ALA entities!

## **Platform Changes**

Currently we are using Go To Meetings (GTM) for our larger meetings (committees, staff meeting, etc.) and webinars (trainings). Our contract is expiring with GTM and we will not renew. Instead we will be switching from GTM to Zoom. Our contract with GTM officially ends Dec 16 and Zoom is letting us start with them now, for free. This means we will be running Zoom and GTM simultaneously for about a month and a half. We did this to make sure we could transition everyone at a comfortable pace and so that we did not disrupt any trainings/webinars already scheduled in GTM.

We are making this change for a couple of reasons: the GTM contract was over and the membership (volunteer leadership) has expressed a strong desire for us to look into using Zoom. Our members seem to enjoy the interface and most people are already familiar with Zoom especially in their personal lives. As we researched Zoom and met with our rep, we learned that Zoom has all the GTM features plus some extras AND Zoom now costs less than GTM. BONUS! We hope this change allows more members to engage in our virtual trainings and meetings.

## **Training**

And speaking of virtual trainings, I'd like to give a big shout out to our volunteer trainers for their hard work over the past several months, converting trainings to an online format, and presenting new material in our new format with little time to prepare while juggling jobs, family, and their personal lives! They have done amazing work and their dedication is a great example to us all! Here's the full list (in alphabetical order by department): **Lisa Williamson (AK), Denise Conrad (CA),**



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**Beth McGinn (DE), Trish Ward (KS), Debra Albers (NE), Amanda Washburn (NE), Terri Wallace (NY), Diane Duscheck (WI).** Thank you for all you do!

## **Legion Press Release**

The following is an excerpt from the Legion press release yesterday:

As COVID-19 cases rise and the holidays approach, [The American Legion](#) is activating its **Buddy Check** program to save veteran lives through peer support check-in calls...The American Legion is also urging Congress to unanimously pass the **Buddy Check Bill** introduced with bi-partisan support from Sens. Joni Ernst, R-Iowa; Doug Jones, D-Ala.; and Maggie Hassan, D-N.H. The legislation will require VA to establish a “Buddy Check Week,” as well as provide educational opportunities, materials and references for veterans to learn how to conduct personal wellness checks. The bill also compels VA to expand resources for the Veterans Crisis Line to handle any potential increased volume during the designated week.

As part of The Legion Family, here’s an opportunity for us to show our support for The Legion and the Buddy Check Bill by contacting our legislative representatives to urge them to pass this bill.

Don’t know how to reach your Senator? Here’s the link to the Senate contact info:

[https://www.senate.gov/general/contact\\_information/senators\\_cfm.cfm](https://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm)

Here’s the House contact info link:

<https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative#:~:text=If%20you%20know%20who%20your,the%20U.S.%20House%20switchboard%20operator.>

Just as veterans need this kind of support, so do their family members. Take time this weekend to make a phone call to a friend you haven’t talked with in a while and make sure they are doing okay. They will feel good and so will you! As the old jingle said, “Reach out, reach out and touch someone!”