

# THE BLUE HATTER



The Official Newsletter of The American Legion Department of Utah

MARCH-APRIL 2024

VOICES OF VETERANS

[utlegion.org](http://utlegion.org)

## FINANCIAL READINESS FOR MILITARY FAMILIES

As global conflicts compound and uncertainties grow about the United States' homeland security, operational readiness has a prime concern among officials in the defense community. A well-trained military with robust manpower and sophisticated equipment are all critical to developing readiness but are superfluous if military families do not have financial stability and the necessary resources to perform wartime duties.



A 2022 report by the Congressional Research Service dives into the concept of financial readiness and why it is a challenge for Department of Defense (DOD) operations. On top of frequent and unpredictable relocation and employment and spouses, about half of active duty enlisted members are under the age of 26 meaning that they have had very little time to build savings.

Last week, the House Armed Services Committee Military Quality of Life Panel discussed military spouse employment, childcare, housing, and financial uncertainty as barriers to servicemembers' readiness.

Much of the legislation on these topics will be found in the annual National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). But, with the support of The American Legion, there are many lawmakers taking the initiative to create stand-alone legislation benefitting military families and operational readiness. The Military Family Protection from Debt Act (H.R. 5190) was introduced by Congressman Andy Kim (DNJ-3) in August of 2023.

The bill aims to ensure that the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, which caps interest rates for servicemembers at 6%, can be extended to both military spouses and dependents. According to the Congressman, "Military families sacrifice along side servicemembers when on deployment and Congress should provide them with any protections they need to be able to keep food on the table and a roof over their head."

Through Resolution No. 342: Support and Strengthen the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, The American Legion is proud to support this bill, and applauds Congressman Kim's efforts to support military families.

# COMMANDER'S CALL

Last month, I was in a small conference room for a meeting at the SLC VA where a small, framed picture hung on a wall in a corner by a window. Someone unknown to me had carefully stitched every word, a beautiful tribute to veterans.

It reads:



Ninzel Rasmuson

## Remember This...

*It is the veteran, not the preacher who has given us freedom of religion.*

*It is the veteran, not the reporter, who has given us freedom of the press.*

*It is the veteran, not the poet, who has given us freedom of speech.*

*It is the veteran, not the campus organizer who has given us freedom to assemble.*

*It is the veteran, not the lawyer who has given us the right to a fair trial.*

*It is the veteran, not the politician who has given us the right to vote.*

*It is the veteran, who salutes the flag, serves under the flag, whose coffin is draped by the flag.*

*-Author Unknown*

As I reflect on the countless number of veterans who have served and sacrificed their lives, the Veteran Service Organizations and auxiliaries who constantly serve in their communities, and you, the Legionnaire, who makes an impact every day, I express my gratitude to you for your tireless and constant dedication and commitment to Be the One.



**THE BLUE HATTER** is an American Legion Department of Utah publication intended for American Legionnaires, Sons of The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, Legion Riders and friends of The American Legion. It is published bi-monthly. Submissions, comments and suggestions are always welcome.

## Utah Legion Leadership meets with Congressional delegation

Last week, members of our Department leadership attended the Washington Conference. We enjoyed our visits with Senator Mitt Romney, the staff of United States Senator Mike Lee, and a Capitol tour with staff



from Congressman Burgess Owens office. We appreciated the time they all took to listen to the legislative priorities of The American Legion. We encourage everyone to go to [legion.org/action](https://legion.org/action) to take action on legislation that impacts the lives of veterans and their families.

On February 22, 2024, NEC Terry Schow, Department Commander Ninzel Rasmuson, and Department Adjutant Rick Mead met with U.S. Congressman Burgess Owens to discuss The American Legion legislative priorities and the importance of the Be the One mission. We greatly appreciated Congressman Owens time and willingness to support legislation that supports veterans and their families.

Burgess Owens is the Congressman from Utah's Fourth Congressional District. Born in the segregated South, he saw people of all backgrounds come together to work tirelessly against adversity.



## NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEEMAN

This past few several weeks have been most challenging for the American Legion Service Officer. Greg Popp and Wayne Jackson have had serious health struggles. Please keep them n your thoughts and prayers. It is during times like these that you find out who will step up and render assistance.

I want to recognize our Adjutant Rick Mead for rendering tremendous support to the Service Officer and those Veterans and families needing Service Officer assistance. Thank you Rick.

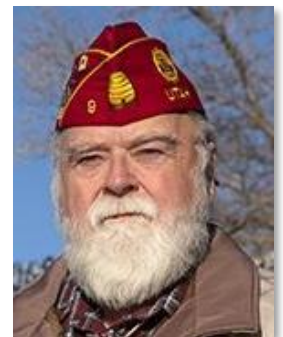
The Utah Legislature is in session and will conclude on March 1. A few bills of interest:

### HB 143 SHOOTING RANGE REQUIREMENTS

*Chief Sponsor: Doug Owens Senate Sponsor: Don L. Ipson*

This bill modifies provisions relating to shooting ranges.

Highlighted Provisions: This bill defines terms; waives fees at certain public shooting ranges (Department of Natural Resources) for military service members, veterans, peace officers and retired peace officers, and firefighters and retired firefighters; exempts Department of Public Safety shooting ranges from certain requirements;



Terry Schow



**HB 210S2 DISABLED PARKING AMENDMENTS**

*Chief Sponsor: Ashlee Matthews*

This bill allows certain individuals with a disability to obtain a permanent disability special group license plate or removable windshield placard. allows a person to establish parking spaces for a veteran or service member.

**HCR12 EMPLOYER DISCLOSURE FOR VETERANS**

*Chief Sponsor: Gay Lynn Bennion    Senate Sponsor: Todd D. Weiler*

General Description: This resolution encourages Utah employers to post a notice of benefits for veterans.

Highlighted Provisions: This resolution encourages public and private employers to post for their employees a list of resources made available through the Utah Department of Veterans and Military

Affairs to active military members, veterans, and their spouses.

**SB 108 VETERAN ACCESS TO STATE PARKS**

*Chief Sponsor: Karen Kwan    House Sponsor: Matthew H. Gwynn*

General Description: This bill expands veteran access to state parks.

Highlighted Provisions: This bill renumbers a provision that expands the State Parks Honor Pass

Program to all veterans with any percentage of disability rating from the Veterans Administration;

And creates a one-year pilot program that expands free access to state parks on a limited basis to veterans who have an Interagency Military-Lifetime Pass for national parks and are a resident of the state.

Please contact your State Legislator if you have interest in any of the above bill.



**Doug Case**

# Alternate National Executive Committeeman

## Did You Know?

*All it takes for an organization to fail is for good people to do nothing.*

**Did you know:** Leadership understands that your membership is a thing of value to you, but did you know that the value you find in your membership increases in direct correlation to the investment you make, participation, time, effort, “mutual helpfulness” makes your life better. Your elected leadership is

committed to helping you make your Legion experience worthwhile but only you can make it happen. To paraphrase a saying, the path to failure is paved with good intentions (would a, should a, could a) but the road to success is paved with actions.

As the old saying goes, “curiosity killed the cat” but curiosity makes good Legionnaires. **Did you know:** being inquisitive leads to interest, interest leads to learning. Involvement in the Nation’s largest wartime veteran’s organization requires study. Please visit [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org) there you’ll find no shortage of good scoop. It might take a little surfing around but it’s there. Did you know, apathy is an antonym (opposite) of curiosity = where do you fit?

**Did you know:** The Department has two seats available for our members to attend The National American Legion College. [www.legion.org/college/about](http://www.legion.org/college/about). Applications are due to National by July 31, 2024. At the website you can find the application and read about eligibility.

**Did you know:** an orientation slide show is available to learn about the Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) program and process at [www.legion.org/youth/presentations](http://www.legion.org/youth/presentations), look for TFA Investigator Orientation. A fillable application can be obtained from the Department Adjutant or the Department TFA Representative, email [adjutant@utlegion.org](mailto:adjutant@utlegion.org) or [anec@utlegion.org](mailto:anec@utlegion.org).

**Did you know:** the policy is to be uncovered with your cover (cap) over your heart while reciting the Pledge of Allegiance? [www.legion.org/publications/pledge](http://www.legion.org/publications/pledge). **“Question:** Wearing a Legion cap, is it proper to render the military salute while reciting the “Pledge of Allegiance?” **Answer:** No. If a person in uniform renders a military salute during the “Pledge” they are to “remain silent.” While on the website you can purchase a copy of the pamphlet, Lets Be Right on Flag Etiquette. Every member should have a copy. Before you ask, according to Resolution No. 46, passed in spring of 1965 by the National Executive Committee, “A Legionnaire is considered to be in uniform if wearing an official American Legion Cap.”

**Did you know:** a new, completely revised (draft) Department Constitution, Bylaws and Standing Rules document has been distributed to all Posts, Districts and Areas. The intent is to vote on and adopt this new/updated set of procedural rules at the Department Convention June 21-23, 2024, hosted by Post 11 in Vernal.

**Did you know:** a full day has been added to the Utah Boys State program this year. Applications for Utah Boys State class of 2024 (June 9 – 15) open March 1 and close April 15, 2024, cost for this year is \$350. Did you know, the Boys State program is your program, it needs staff and counselors to be involved year-round, visit [www.utahboysstate.org](http://www.utahboysstate.org) to learn about the program and how to get involved.

**Did you know:** you can go to [www.utahboysstate.org](http://www.utahboysstate.org) to donate to the program. Donations will go into the Utah Boys State Foundation, a 501(c)3 and will be used as you prescribe or if not prescribed, they’ll go toward helping keep the cost of attendance down, to assist boys that can’t find the money to attend and provide limited scholarships to “needs based” boys that would otherwise not qualify for financial assistance to institutions of higher learning. Your donation is likely tax deductible but consult with your tax advisor before taking the deduction.

**Did you know:** Anything worth doing is worth doing right. Kudos to SAL member and Great American Jim Shaw a longtime Boys State helper and mentor who recently passed away. Jim gave freely of his time and energy for many years, he was a caring and considerate man. His final act regarding Boys State was to leave a hefty contribution to the Utah Boys State Foundation designated for tuition assistance and scholarships. Thank you, Jim!

**Finally, NEWS FLASH! Did you know:** none of us knows everything, but generally it’s what we don’t know that most often causes problems. Lifelong learning is part of the solution. If you have questions, or you’re facing challenges, or you need to know, or if you have ideas, or have input including criticism you can always reach out. A visit to [www.utlegion.org/contact](http://www.utlegion.org/contact) will get the ball rolling.

Thanks for your service and support of the Legion.

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## From the Adjutant’s Desk...

As we approach spring, there is much going on in the Department. First, the next DEC meeting is March 16, 2024, at the Health and Justice Building, 151 S University Avenue, Provo, UT 84601.

The Finance committee will meet at 9:00 am with the DEC meeting at 10:30 am. As is always the case, we have much to accomplish so Committee chairs are asked to provide written reports which will be shared on the department website.

Next up are the spring conventions. Information on dates and locations I have are as follows:

District 1 will be meeting on May 18, 2024.



**Richard Mead**

District 2 will be meeting on April 13, 2024, at Davis Memorial Courthouse, 28 East State Street, Farmington, UT. Lunch at 1100 (\$10) – meeting to convene at noon.

District 3 will be meeting on May 4, 2024.

District 4 will be meeting on April 20, 2024.

District 5 will be meeting on April 27, 2024.

District 6 will be meeting on March 2, 2024.

District 7 will be meeting on June 1, 2024.

District 8 will be meeting on April 6, 2024.

District 9 will be meeting on May 25, 2024.



If any of this information is incorrect, please contact me so it may be corrected. This information will be updated on the department website.

I have had several questions regarding the multi-year membership which was implemented in December 2023 by National. First, there is not a way to reflect this in the transmittal process for the Posts or the Department. The only way is through the website [www.legion.org/renew](http://www.legion.org/renew) which allows this to be selected and would require that the payment be made with a debit or credit card. Second, several departments, Utah included, noted that it was not fair to not extend this option to members who had already renewed prior to this option being provided. This has been addressed. If a member has renewed, they may go to the website noted above and select multi-year to extend their membership. The only multi-year option is for three years.

I appreciate those who have confirmed their plans to attend the Department Convention; the National Convention in New Orleans in 2024; and the National Convention in Tampa in 2025. If you have not yet notified me, I would appreciate your update. Conventions are not just about the meetings but about learning more about the legions and connecting with other legionnaires. It is well worth the time.

Finally, I will once again invite you to set up an account on [mylegion.org](http://mylegion.org). It provides you with information and the ability to update your profile and renew your membership online. If you have any questions on how to do this please contact me.

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## Department Chaplain



Steve Steed

### The US Constitution

The **Constitution of the United States** is the supreme law of the United States. It superseded the Articles of Confederation, the nation's first constitution, on March 4, 1789.

The drafting of the Constitution, often referred to as its framing, was completed at the Constitutional Convention, which assembled at Independence Hall in Philadelphia between May 25 and September 17, 1787. Delegates to the convention were chosen by the state legislatures of 12 of the 13 original states; Rhode Island refused to send delegates. The

convention's initial mandate was limited to amending the Articles of Confederation, which had proven highly ineffective in meeting the young nation's needs. Almost immediately,



however, delegates began considering measures to replace the Articles. The first proposal discussed, introduced by delegates from Virginia, called for a bicameral (two-house) Congress that was to be elected on a proportional basis based on state population, an elected chief executive, and an appointed judicial branch. An alternative to the Virginia Plan, known as the New Jersey Plan, also called for an elected executive but retained the legislative structure created by the Articles, where in Congress all states had one vote. Ultimately it was decided that House members be elected on a proportional basis on the state population and in the Senate each state would have two votes.

Since the Constitution was ratified in 1789, it has been amended 27 times. The first ten amendments, known collectively as the Bill of Rights, offer specific protections of individual liberty and justice and place restrictions on the powers of government within the U.S. states. The majority of the 17 later amendments expand individual civil rights protections. The original U.S. Constitution was handwritten on five pages of parchment by Jacob Shallus.

The U.S. Constitution was greatly influenced by the study of the Magna Carta and other federations, both ancient and recent. The Due Process Clause of the Constitution was partly based on common law and on Magna Carta (1215), which had become a foundation of English liberty.

The American Legion Oratorical Contest had its first national competition in 1938. It is a constitutional speech contest. Competitors must study and know the Constitution to succeed. They must prepare orations they have researched, written, and rehearsed as well as impromptu speaking on randomly assigned constitutional topics.

The Lord had His divine hand in the establishment of the Constitution and the rights and freedoms of religious liberty that it protects.

A reminder to email me the names of legionnaires who have passed away since our last convention.

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**AMERICAN  
LEGION**

**Utah Boys State**



**Kent Hansen**

Sir Robert Baden-Powell, the founder of the Boy Scouts, told scouts to “try to leave this world a little better than you found it” in his last message. As veterans, we have lived – and some of us have died – by this philosophy. It’s simply part of who we are and what we stand for.

For most of us, the uniformed portion of our service to our country has ended. Yet the desire in many of our hearts brings to mind the reality that other, younger stalwarts will be taking over where we left off. The future of our country will inevitably fall into younger hands. But we cannot just walk away and leave the fire unattended.

For this reason, The American Legion established the Boys State program. It would be unrealistic and perhaps even unfair to require the time and energy expected of the Boys State staff. But there is much that every Legionnaire can do to bolster the Legion’s premiere youth program. We all live in communities that include outstanding young high school students. It takes very little effort to share some enthusiasm about Boys State with them. It’s especially effective if you educate their parents on the benefits of attending: three hours of college credit and a portion of nearly \$2 million in scholarships. If you’re not in a position to do that, a donation to Utah Boys State in any amount is always helpful.



## SPOTLIGHT ON POST 28

The **Springville-Mapleton American Legion Post 28** will host a Veterans Open House on Wednesday, April 17, 2024 at 7:00 pm. Patrons may assemble at the Mapleton City Office Events Room, 125 West 400 North, Mapleton UT 84664.

Terry Schow, Utah American Legion

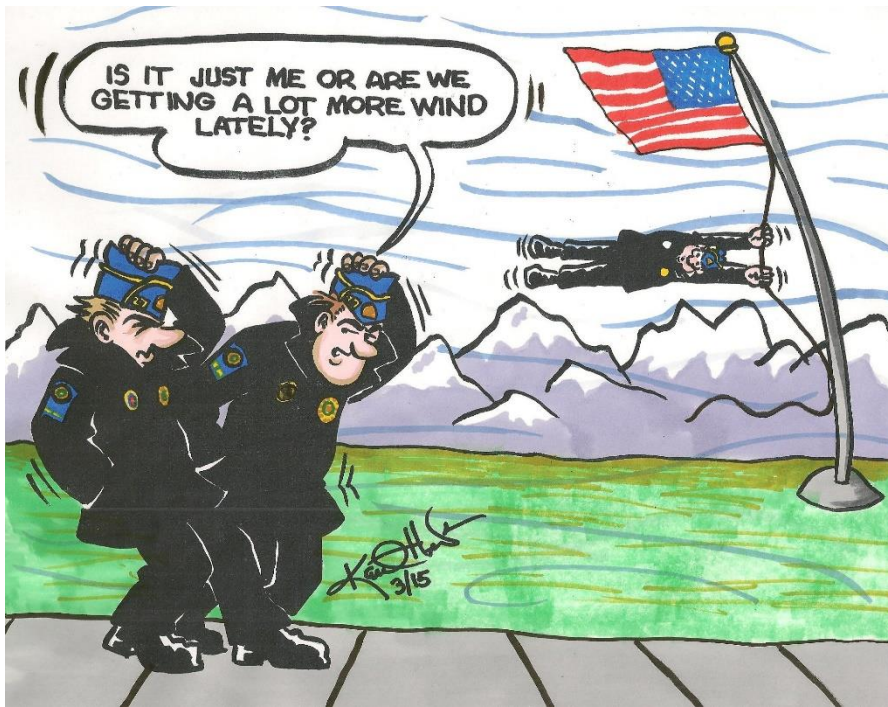
Service Officer, will provide an overview of services, benefits, and resources available to Veterans and will assist any Veteran or Family Member who would like to file a VA Claim.



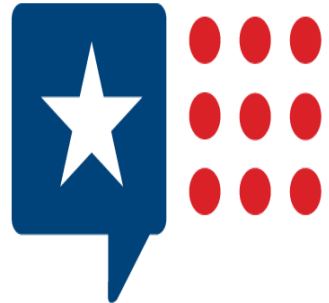
Mapleton City Office

Meet & mix with fellow Veterans and American Legion members from our Springville-Mapleton community.

### **Legion Laffs** BY KENT HANSEN



## Veterans Crisis Line



**DIAL 988** then  
**PRESS 1**

# AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF UTAH TRAINING THURSDAYS

**WHEN:** FIRST THURSDAY EACH MONTH THRU MAY 2024, 6:00–7:00 PM  
ADDED SUBJECTS AS NEEDED LAST THURSDAY EACH MONTH

**ZOOM.COM:** MEETING ID: 895 1643 2296 PASSCODE: 716204



## SUBJECT OF THE MONTH

MARCH 7	HOW TO APPLY FOR VA BENEFITS
MARCH 28	HONOR GUARDS & MILITARY FUNERAL HONORS
APRIL 4	CONSOLIDATED POST REPORTS (CPRS)
MAY 7	LEGION FAMILY PROGRAMS WORKING TOGETHER

**ALL LEGION FAMILY MEMBERS ARE WELCOME TO JOIN THE ZOOM TRAINING.**