

# 2017-2022 American Legion Auxiliary Programs Action Plan

## Constitution & Bylaws

The Constitution & Bylaws program informs and educates members of the American Legion Auxiliary on the importance and power of properly written, reviewed and updated documents, policies and procedures at all levels. Constitution & Bylaws are the basis for governance of your district, and unit. Preparing and adhering to updated Constitution and Bylaws will ensure a more successful organizational process, and provide the structures to follow at all levels of our organization.

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### What can you do?

The following is provided as a guideline to help facilitate reviews of your current Constitution and Bylaws. *Please remember that department, district, and unit Constitutions, and Bylaws cannot be in conflict with national governing documents.*

### Guidelines for Units

#### A. Constitution & Bylaws:

- a. are the foundation of the organization
- b. contain the most essential provisions relating to the organization, its name, purpose, membership, officers, meetings, governing board, committees, parliamentary authority and amendments to prescribe structure changes
- c. are the law of the organization
  - should be reviewed, but not changed, every year
  - have direct bearing on the rights of members
- d. should have a standard form and content
- e. define the primary characteristics of the organization
- f. prescribe how the organization is structured and functions
- g. include all rules that are so important that they cannot be changed without prior notice.

**B. Parliamentary Authority** – The most recent edition of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* shall govern this organization in all cases that are not in conflict with state statute, the constitution, the bylaws, or any special rules of order adopted by the organization.

#### C. Definitions

- a. Resolution: An elaborate, formally written motion. A resolution may contain a preamble that lists the reasons for adoption. Each reason is listed in a separate

paragraph starting with the word “whereas.” A resolution must have at least one “resolved” clause that specifies the action or position being proposed.

b. Amendment: Proposes a change to the Constitution and Bylaws. It is also used to modify a motion under consideration.

### **Ideas:**

#### **Member**

- Volunteer to create a game of Constitution & Bylaws questions for members to play at unit meetings; make Constitutions & Bylaws fun!
- Volunteer to write a resolution or amendment to be brought before your unit.
- Volunteer to help your department, district and/or unit to update governing documents to conform to the national organization’s governing documents.
- Become familiar with the most recent edition of *Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised*

#### **Unit**

- Update Constitution and Bylaws, as well as policies and procedures, to conform to the national organization’s recent update.
- Plan a parliamentary procedure seminar at a unit/district function.

### **Year-End Reports**

Annual reports reflect the program work of units. Each Constitution & Bylaws chairman is required to submit a narrative report to the Department Constitution & Bylaws chairman by April 15, 2018. Members and units should follow the department’s protocol and deadlines.

#### **As part of your Narrative Report, please include answers to the following questions:**

- Have you done an annual review of your Constitution & Bylaws?
- When was your unit’s Constitution & Bylaws last revised?
- How was your unit inspired to review their governing documents?
- Has your unit sponsored any Constitution & Bylaws activities? If so, what were those activities?

#### **Additional Resources You Can Use** (\*available through Emblem Sales [emblem.legion.org](http://emblem.legion.org))

1. Your national Constitution & Bylaws committee members (see Constitution & Bylaws program page on the national website or Annual Supplement for contact information)
2. National Constitution and Bylaws\* (also available for download at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org))
3. Policies and Procedures Manual\*
4. Unit Guide Book\*
5. Parliamentary Procedure\*
6. *Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised*\*
7. C&B program page at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org)
8. *ALA Department Operations Guide* at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org)