

National Executive Committeeman February 2026 Newsletter

Greetings, This is your monthly update of everything National in The American Legion.

Politics and Partisanship

It is election time and politicians are suddenly showing up everywhere asking for your vote. As a citizen, you have the right and responsibility to be involved in this political process; even promoting the candidate of your choice. As a Legionnaire, you must understand how your individual rights can fall into conflict with your responsibilities to our non-profit organization.

Our Federal Charter states “the (American Legion) shall be nonpolitical and may not promote the candidacy of an individual seeking public office.” Some advice, you can be political; you cannot be partisan! In modern language, “political” refers to the broad, inclusive process of government, civic engagement, and public decision-making, while “partisan” specifically denotes active, exclusive support for a single political party or faction. Everything that affects public life is political, but not everything is partisan.

What will get a Legionnaire or your Post in trouble is practicing partisan politics in your Post or while wearing Legion attire. As an individual, you can say what you like about any politician but if someone else might interpret that you are speaking on behalf of the Legion, you are probably crossing a line that could place your membership or Post Charter in jeopardy. Two areas that commonly get Legionnaires in trouble are promoting one candidate over others (partisanship) and displaying or wearing the Legion uniform hat or other clothing with our emblem when engaging in political events (appearance).

Allowing one candidate to come into your Post to “talk” to your members without inviting all candidates to that position is a no-no. If you choose to use your post as an event forum for political speeches, you should invite all candidates. It is also advisable to cover the Legion emblems and avoid taking picture with candidates while wearing your Legion cap. Candidates love blasting out pictures with them standing next to veterans to suggest their support. That Legion cover you are seen wearing can be used by them as an implied indorsement.

Be political – get involved in promoting legislative actions for our veteran and military members. Write to your elected representatives and ask them to sponsor or vote for needed legislation. Log in to Voters Voice and send them the prewritten messages that support the Legion’s Legislative Priorities. Be a responsible citizen. Just do not use the Legion as a partisan platform!

Member Discipline at Post Level

I, along with three other Arkansas Legionnaires, attended the National Regional Informational Conference (NRIC) Feb 7th in Atlanta, Georgia. These NRICs are lead by National-level instructors and cover such topics as Be The One, Post Operations, and American Legion Programs. When an NRIC comes closer to Arkansas, I encourage each of you to try and attend.

One topic that really held my attention was “Legal” taught by National Judge Advocate Mark Seavey. In his lesson he got down into the legal, moral, and ethical obligations each post has to properly

conduct any disciplinary action against its members. These obligations can get very broad and complex depending on how far a Post goes when dealing with behavior issues of their members.

A Post's authority to discipline its members comes from our National By-Laws that states "each Post of The American Legion shall be the judge of its own membership, subject to the restrictions of the Constitution and By-Laws." Our Department By-Laws along with the majority of Post By-Laws use similar language. While not specifically defined, a Post typically has available two levels of discipline they can apply to their members: suspension or expulsion.

Both of these processes can and should be applied through a Trial of Members following an established set of procedures. There are many resources available for a Post to use when conducting a trial. You may use the procedures found in our Department By-Laws Article VII or found in Section 20 of Robert's Rules of Order. Another resource is in the Officer's Guide and Manual of Ceremonies. On page 139 is located the "Practice and Procedure in the Expulsion or Suspension of a Member of The American Legion."

This procedure has been reviewed and approved by our National Organization. NJA Seavey explained that if you follow these steps and document each, you will meet the requirement of Due Process when taking action against a member of your Post. There is a Member Disciplinary Action Due Process Checklist included in the manual that serves to document each of the steps taken. I recommend that you use it if you should take action against any of your members.

Having to suspend or expel a member of your Post should always be the last resort after all other actions to correct the member's behavior have failed. If you choose to go to trial, following the correct procedures will prevent mis-steps and could avoid unfavorable actions by the Department Executive Committee who can overturn your trial if the disciplined member should appeal the decision of your Post membership.

Please let me know if there is anything I can do for you. Next month I will talk about the Washington Conference.



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