

National Vice President of Legislative Affairs
Annual Report to the Board of Directors
June 2016

The Legislative Affairs Committee continues its strong string of success. The leadership team of Geoff Prosch, and co-chairmanship of Don Giles and Jim Bras has been effective at securing legislative successes, keeping Navy League members active and engaged, and meeting our Strategic Goals.

2016 was off to a more optimistic start, given the two-year Bipartisan Budget Act which stabilized defense funding. However, there was disagreement over whether the defense funding level was a base or cap, and Congressional hawks were frustrated to see that the Administration treated the level as the cap instead of the minimum, and so have generally plussed up the base and OCO accounts. We have seen our major priorities supported, including: over \$2 billion in additional shipbuilding, increased end strength funding for the Marine Corps, increased readiness funding, funding for the heavy polar icebreaker, funding for additional Fast Response Cutters, and funding to the authorized funding level of the Maritime Security Program. Unfortunately, the National Security Multi-Mission Vessel was not funded at the level we recommend in any of the committee marks.

In 2016, the Committee again set and followed a Strategic Plan and an Action Plan. The strategic plan has nine goals, and the action plan details how to achieve those goals. The goals set are:

1. Achieve a minimum of 65 MOC Appointments—IN PROGRESS
2. Complete assignment of NLT 85% of 535 MOCs to NLUS Members—IN PROGRESS
3. Invite 2015 “Fly-In” participants to serve on their Region Legislative Affairs Team—COMPLETE
4. Form at least three new Region “A Teams” and target completion of at least 50% of the participating regions; MOC Visits goals using Alternate Procedures-IN PROGRESS
5. Effectively train new Legislative Affairs Team Members and Council Presidents—ONGOING
6. Focus grassroots attention toward effective use of the Voice to Congress site-ONGOING and COMPLETE- over 15,000 emails this year alone
7. Effectively support Sea Air Space Exposition and use it as an opportunity to further orient priority Members of Congress regarding the Navy League’s purpose and mission-COMplete. We had more than three Members attend and significant numbers of staff attend—very difficult as defense bills were on the floor at the same time.
8. Review and update all four Legislative Affairs Presentation and Questions and Answers. COMPLETE
9. Validate and streamline Legislative Affairs data collection needs and reporting requirements at the region and national levels—NEEDS WORK.

- **Grass Roots Program**

Through May, 28 Congressional offices have received their Grass Roots presentations. The goals set by the Committee is 65, and we are on track to meet that goal as the majority of briefs take place over the summer recess.

- **Voice to Congress Program**

To date this year, 15,365 emails have been sent on 13 different campaigns. Several campaign goals have been reached, including:

- Blocking the McCain amendment to undercut the Jones Act
- Increasing MSP funding to the authorized levels (in Committee marks, full funding to be confirmed later)
- Passing the House version of the WWII Merchant Mariner Veteran bill
- Increasing Shipbuilding budget to over \$20B in committee marks

- **Capitol Hill Events**

The Navy League continues to carry out a significant amount of outreach and engagement on Capitol Hill. The Pizza Brief series continues to be a major successful partnership for the Navy and the Navy League. The Navy provides a speaker to talk to staffers in an informal setting, and we provide the lunch that helps attract staffers from multiple offices. This year, we supported 8 briefs for staff, with 6 more scheduled. We also hosted a brief for the Coast Guard on Arctic issues, and two for the Marine Corps on their priorities.

We also support a number of Caucuses. The Congressional Shipbuilding Caucus continues to draw prominent speakers. This year, the Caucus has hosted Sean Stackley, the Assistant Secretary of the Navy Research, Development, & Acquisition.

We hosted a Navy-Marine Corps Caucus event in January with the Secretary of the Navy, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, and the Chief of Naval Operations. Over 30 Members of Congress attended.

- **Committee Activities**

The Navy League is a trusted authority on many issues. Professional staff on various committees ask for our input, and the Navy League sends letters of support/opposition for various issues which are used to bolster various positions. We have an excellent reputation, and we get frequent calls for our input on various issues. To continue to be an authority, we must remain engaged and active on the Hill. Donations made to the Legislative Affairs program are used to help us fulfill our mission to educate Members of Congress. As we go through the budget process, we are doing everything we can to avoid scaling back our efforts on the Hill, which have yielded great success, but we need your support to help keep our programs going.

The Legislative Affairs Committee continues to hold monthly calls with the full committee and a monthly steering committee call. This consistent practice ensures that the committee leadership

stays engaged with the members in the field, monitors its strategic goals for the year, and trains enough Navy Leaguers for leadership roles within the committee. This year, the Legislative Affairs Committee has also increased its attention to the mentoring program. Given the turnover rate, the Committee is attempting to recruit Assistant RVPs in each region to be mentored and trained by the current RVP. The committee's goal through mentoring is to develop a strong team trained in best practices for legislative affairs. The Legislative Affairs Committee has been engaged with the larger Navy League mentoring program and is working with that committee on improving best practices for our internal mentorship program.