



News from Livingston County

MEDIA CONTACT: DAVID TERRY, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, VETERAN SERVICES
(585) 243-7960

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LEGION Act Signed into Law

On July 30, 2019, President Donald Trump signed a bill that declares the United States has been in a state of war since December 7, 1941. The American Legion sought this declaration to honor approximately 1,600 United States service members who were killed or wounded during previously undeclared periods of war.

The LEGION (Let Everyone Get Involved in Opportunities for National Service) Act opens the door for approximately 6 million veterans to access American Legion programs and benefits for which they previously had not been eligible. The bill also allows family members of veterans to access benefits they previously missed as well as membership to the Sons of the American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary.

This new law impacts the provisions of Title 36 of the United States Code – the section of federal law governing membership in the American Legion.

As a result of this legislation, the American Legion's eligibility criterion has immediately changed from seven different eras to two: April 6, 1917 to November 11, 1918 and December 7, 1941 to a time later determined by the federal government. No other restrictions to American Legion membership have changed.

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The LEGION Act was introduced as S. 504 on February 14, 2019 by Senator Kyrsten Sinema, D-AZ, and Senator Thom Tillis, R-NC. A companion measure, H.R. 1641, was introduced in the House by Representatives Lou Correa, D-CA, and Ben Cline, R-VA. American Legion National Commander Brett Reistad expressed gratitude to bipartisan members of Congress for passing this legislation stating, “In an era of partisan gridlock, Republicans and Democrats in Congress overwhelmingly recognized the importance of allowing thousands of honorable but previously ineligible veterans the right to join the largest and most influential veteran organization in the country.”

Jason Skinner, Director of the Livingston County Veteran Service Agency, stated, “All of our veteran organizations do great things for our communities. Over the past four years, I have seen them struggle to get the word out on membership eligibility.” Skinner added, “The American Legion is, by far, the largest veteran organization in Livingston County. Now that the President has changed the law regarding eligibility, our communities will only grow stronger. More members mean more great activities and functions for veterans and their families to take part in.”

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