



April 10, 2026

WEEKLY GRASSROOTS NEWSLETTER

STAY INFORMED: LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES NOW AVAILABLE

Want to see the issues Legionnaires are discussing with lawmakers? The 119th Congress, 2nd Session Legislative Priorities materials are available now.

View and download them on the Legion website [here](#).

CALL TO ACTION

This week's legion family we are calling on you because combat-injured veterans face a reduction in their retirement pay for every dollar of disability compensation they receive.

The Major Richard Star Act aims to rectify this by allowing combat-injured veterans to receive both their earned retirement pay and disability compensation without offset.

Your action in advancing this crucial legislation is essential and greatly appreciated. Contact your Senators today!

The American Legion appreciates your advocacy efforts. Visit the [Action Center](#) to quickly email a letter of support to your members of Congress. Remember to report any recent meetings or calls to help showcase the impact of Legion advocacy [here](#).

HOW TRUMP WENT FROM THREATENING IRAN'S ANNIHILATION TO AGREEING TO A 2-WEEK CEASEFIRE WITH TEHRAN

This article's original publication can be found [here](#)

President Donald Trump, over the course of a single day, went from threatening Iran with “annihilation” to proclaiming that the battered Islamic Republic’s leadership had presented a “workable” plan that led him to agree to a 14-day ceasefire that he hopes will pave the way to end the nearly six-week war.

The dramatic shift in tenor came as intermediaries led by Pakistan worked feverishly to head off a further escalation. Even China, Iran’s biggest trading partner and America’s most significant economic competitor, quietly pulled strings to find a path toward a ceasefire, according to two officials briefed on the matter who were not authorized to comment publicly and spoke on the condition of anonymity.

“The reason for doing so is that we have already met and exceeded all Military objectives, and are very far along with a definitive Agreement concerning Longterm PEACE with Iran, and PEACE in the Middle East,” Trump said in a social media post Tuesday announcing the temporary ceasefire. It came about 90 minutes before his deadline for Tehran to open the critical Strait of Hormuz or see its power plants and other critical infrastructure obliterated.

But even as the White House was celebrating the moment as a victory, the fragile ceasefire appeared in danger of falling apart as the U.S., Iran and Israel offered differing statements on Wednesday on what was included in the deal less than 24 hours after it was brokered.

Iran insisted that an end to the Israeli war in Lebanon was part of the ceasefire agreement with the U.S. But Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Trump said the truce did not cover Lebanon and the Israeli operations there continued.

The U.S., meanwhile, demanded that Iran make good on reopening the strait after the Islamic Republic closed the waterway in response to Israel’s intensifying attacks against the Hezbollah militant group in Lebanon.

Vice President JD Vance, who is set to lead a U.S. delegation to Pakistan later this week for mediated talks with Iran aimed at finding a permanent agreement to end the conflict, downplayed the setbacks, saying “no ceasefire ever goes without a little bit of choppiness.”

“We’re seeing evidence that things are going in the right direction, but it’s going to take a little time,” Vance told reporters as he wrapped up a visit to Hungary.

Trump to hold talks with NATO secretary-general

The president also met at the White House with NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte on Wednesday. Trump has been angry that NATO member countries ignored his call to help reopen the vital waterway as gas prices soared during the war.

As the Trump deadline for Iran to open the strait neared, Democratic lawmakers decried Trump's threat to wipe away an entire civilization as "a moral failure." Pope Leo XIV warned that strikes against civilian infrastructure would violate international law and said the Republican president's comments were "truly unacceptable."

In the end, Trump may have backed down because of a simple truth: Escalation could risk involving the United States in the sort of "forever war" that had bedeviled his predecessors in the White House and that he had vowed he would keep the U.S. out of if voters elected him again.

Controlling the strait would have been long and costly

As Trump boasted about U.S. and Israeli military success over the past six weeks, he appeared to be working from the premise that he could bomb Iran into capitulation.

Starting with the killing of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in the opening salvos, he seemed to discount that the Iranian leadership could opt for a long and bloody war.

The Islamic Republic over the past 47 years has shown it is willing to dig in, even when it appears to America to be working against its own self-interest.

The clerical leadership held Americans hostage for 444 days, from late 1979 to early 1981, at the cost of the country's international standing. The mullahs allowed the Iran-Iraq war to go on for years, leaving hundreds of thousands dead. Iran stood by Hamas after the Oct. 7, 2023, attack that ultimately defanged the Iran-backed group in Gaza as well as Hezbollah in Lebanon, and created the conditions that led to the collapse of Bashar Assad's government in Syria, an authoritarian rule supported by Tehran.

Iran's leadership exuded confidence that it could bog down the world's superpower in a costly and extended conflict even if it might not defeat the U.S. military.

Defense analysts largely agreed that the U.S. military could quickly take control of the narrow Persian Gulf waterway between Iran and Oman through which roughly 20% of the world's oil flows on any given day. But maintaining security over the strait would require a high-risk, resource-intensive operation that could be a yearslong American commitment.

Ben Connable, executive director of the nonprofit Battle Research Group, said securing the strait would require the U.S. military to maintain control of about 600 kilometers (373 miles) of Iranian territory, from Kish Island in the west to Bandar Abbas in the east, in order to stop Iran from firing missiles at passing ships. It is a mission that Connable said would likely require three U.S. infantry divisions, roughly 30,000 to 45,000 troops.

“This would be an indefinite operation — so, you know, think: be ready to do this for 20 years,” said Connable, a retired Marine Corps intelligence officer. “We didn’t think we were going to be in Afghanistan for 20 years. We didn’t think we’re going to have to be in Vietnam as long as we were, or Iraq.”

The two-week ceasefire includes allowing both Iran and Oman to charge fees on ships transiting through Hormuz, a regional official said. The official said Iran would use the money it raised for reconstruction.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt on Wednesday noted that Trump has considered the idea of a toll for vessels passing through the strait. But in the near term, his priority “is the reopening of the strait without any limitations, whether in the form of tolls or otherwise.”

Vance played a bigger role close to the deadline

The White House confirmed that Vance will lead the U.S. negotiating team in talks with Iran aimed at finding a permanent end to war.

The delegation is also expected to include special envoy Steve Witkoff and Trump’s son-in-law Jared Kushner. The talks are expected to begin Friday in Pakistan’s capital, Islamabad.

“Vice President Vance has played a very significant and a key role in this since the very beginning,” Leavitt said.

Trump’s deadline was nearing with no resolution in sight when Vance, who has long pushed for restraint in U.S. military intervention overseas, got roped into the conversation, according to an official from one of the mediating countries who was briefed on the matter and spoke on the condition of anonymity to share sensitive diplomatic discussions.

Vance expressed measured confidence that a permanent deal could be reached if the Iranians act in good faith.

“I encourage the Iranians to come to the table seriously,” Vance said. “We’ve seen some signs that they’re going to do that, we’ve seen some signs of bravado. Fundamentally, we’re in a good spot.”

AUTOMATIC REGISTRATION FOR US MILITARY DRAFT-ELIGIBLE MEN TO BEGIN IN DECEMBER

This article’s original publication can be found [here](#)

AUTOMATIC REGISTRATION INTO THE U.S. MILITARY DRAFT POOL FOR ELIGIBLE MEN IS SLATED TO BEGIN IN DECEMBER, FOLLOWING EFFORTS

FROM LAWMAKERS AND THE SELECTIVE SERVICE AGENCY TO STREAMLINE THE PREVIOUS SELF-REGISTRATION PROCESS.

The Selective Service System, the federal agency that maintains a database of registered U.S. males who are considered draft-eligible in the event of a national emergency, submitted a proposed rule to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs on March 30, according to the office's dashboard.

Automatic registration into Selective Service was mandated in December 2025, when President Donald Trump signed into law the fiscal year 2026 National Defense Authorization Act, the agency's website says.

"This statutory change transfers responsibility for registration from individual men to SSS through integration with federal data sources," the website reads.

Putting the effort in motion by this December is a move to simplify the registration process and the equivalent "workforce realignment," according to the website.

The proposed rule is currently under review by the regulatory affairs office, awaiting finalization, per the dashboard.

The SSS coordinated with Congress throughout the 2026 NDAA process, the agency's website says. In May 2024, lawmakers worked to incorporate language about the automatic registration into the annual defense authorization bill, citing money and legal challenges. The SSS costs around \$30,000 a year.

"This will also allow us to rededicate resources — basically that means money — towards [readiness] and towards mobilization ... rather than towards education and advertising campaigns driven to register people," Rep. Chrissy Houlahan, D-Pa., who sponsored the language, said at the time.

Currently, almost all male U.S. citizens and immigrants aged 18 through 25 are required to self-register within 30 days of their 18th birthday, with late registration available until an individual turns 26.

Men who fail to register are considered to be in violation of the Military Selective Service Act and can face penalties, such as ineligibility for federal programs, a fine up to \$250,000 or five years imprisonment.

Registration for the draft has dwindled in recent years, partly because the option to register was removed from federal student loan forms in 2022, which accounted for nearly a quarter of all previous registrations.

Meanwhile, after some attempts from lawmakers, women are still exempt from registration.

The SSS was established in 1917 by President Woodrow Wilson after the U.S. entered World War I. President Gerald Ford suspended the draft in 1975, but it was reinstated

just five years later in 1980 by President Jimmy Carter when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan.

The U.S. hasn't activated the draft since 1973 during the Vietnam War and has relied on volunteers ever since.

NASA's Artemis II Crew Beams Official Moon Flyby Photos to Earth

This article's original publication can be found [here](#)

The first flyby images of the Moon captured by NASA's Artemis II astronauts during their historic test flight reveal some regions no human has seen, including a rare in-space solar eclipse. Released Tuesday, astronauts captured the images April 6 during the mission's seven-hour flyby of the lunar far side, showing humanity's return to the Moon's vicinity and opening a trove of scientific data.

NASA astronauts Reid Wiseman, Victor Glover, Christina Koch, and CSA (Canadian Space Agency) astronaut Jeremy Hansen, have used a fleet of cameras to take thousands of photos. The agency released several images, with more expected in the coming days as the crew members are more than halfway through their journey and now headed home toward Earth.

"Our four Artemis II astronauts — Reid, Victor, Christina, and Jeremy — took humanity on an incredible journey around the Moon and brought back images so exquisite and brimming with science, they will inspire generations to come," said Dr. Nicky Fox, associate administrator, Science Mission Directorate, NASA Headquarters in Washington.

During the lunar flyby, the crew documented impact craters, ancient lava flows, and surface fractures that will help scientists study the Moon's geologic evolution. They monitored color, brightness, and texture differences across the terrain, observed an earthset and earthrise, and captured solar-eclipse views of the Sun's corona. The crew also reported six meteoroid impact flashes on the darkened lunar surface.

Scientists already are analyzing the downlinked images, audio, and data to refine the timing and locations of these events and compare them with observations from amateur astronomers. The new imagery also will help NASA better understand the Moon's geology and inform future exploration and science missions that will lay the foundation for an enduring presence on the Moon ahead of future astronaut missions to Mars.

"It was remarkable listening to the crew describe the stunning views during the flyby," said Jacob Bleacher, NASA's chief exploration scientist at the agency's headquarters. "At first, their descriptions didn't quite match what we were seeing on our screens. Now that higher resolution images are coming down, we can finally experience the moments

they were trying to share and truly appreciate the scientific return provided by these images and our other research on this mission.”

Official NASA imagery for viewing and download is available on the agency website and digital platforms, including:

- [Artemis Image Gallery](#)
- [NASA Images and Video Library](#)
- [NASA 2 Explore](#)

Media should follow [NASA’s media usage guidelines](#) for all publication and distribution of these images.

NASA is targeting 8:07 p.m. EDT (5:07 p.m. PDT) Friday, April 10, for the return of Artemis II off the coast of San Diego. NASA+ live return coverage begins at 6:30 p.m. and will continue until NASA and Department of War personnel safely assist the crew out of Orion and transport them to the USS John P. Murtha.

Briefings, events, and 24/7 mission coverage are streaming on NASA’s [YouTube](#) channel and events will each have their own stream closer to their start time. Learn [how to watch NASA content](#) through a variety of online platforms, including social media.

As part of Golden Age of innovation and exploration, NASA will send Artemis astronauts on increasingly difficult missions to explore more of the Moon for scientific discovery, economic benefits, and to build on our foundation for the first crewed missions to Mars.

To learn more about the Artemis program, visit: <https://www.nasa.gov/artemis>

DID YOU KNOW...

HOW WILL YOU CELEBRATE COMPLETING THE USA 250 CHALLENGE?

This article’s original publication can be found [here](#)

WITH LESS THAN THREE MONTHS REMAINING, WE WANT TO KNOW WHAT EVENTS THAT PARTICIPATING POSTS, UNITS, SQUADRONS AND CHAPTERS HAVE PLANNED FOR COMPLETING THE CHALLENGE.

The American Legion Family is honoring the nation’s 250th birthday with a commitment to embracing physical activity, supporting mental health and serving its communities through our [USA 250 Challenge](#). The challenge encourages American Legion Family members, other veterans and all Americans to participate, and even raise additional money to support our disabled veterans and families in need through The American Legion [Veterans & Children Foundation \(VCF\)](#).

The VCF provides grants to Legionnaires and active-duty military facing financial uncertainty and with minor children in the home, as well as funding the Legion's veteran service officer training.

Launched on July 4, 2025, the USA 250 Challenge ends July 4, 2026. With less than three months remaining, American Legion National Commander Dan K. Wiley has issued a call to action: hitting \$150,00 in donations for the VCF before July 4. And for posts, American Legion Auxiliary units, Sons of The American Legion squadrons and American Legion Riders chapters participating in the USA 250 Challenge, we want to know if you have planned events to celebrate the end of the challenge and your accomplishments, however you chose to participate.

Please email sbrooks@legion.org with your plans, including any flyers or photos you may be using to promote the event.

There still is time to register for and complete the USA 250 Challenge. We've got multiple resources available for those already participating in the challenge and those who still want to register:

- Register for the challenge;
- How to raise money through Peer-2-Peer Fundraising;
- How to donate to the USA 250 Challenge;
- Various other resources, including ways to promote the challenge, hundreds of activities to support the challenge, a downloadable completion certificate and more.

DON'T GET CAUGHT WITHOUT THE COLORS

This article's original publication can be found [here](#)

THE TIME IS NOW TO ORDER FLAGS FOR DELIVERY BEFORE JULY 4 CELEBRATIONS.

Family,

Demand for U.S. flags and patriotic regalia is running high as our nation nears its 250th anniversary. The time is now to order your colors – historical banners, state flags, POW/MIA flags, bunting, poles, stands and other items – to ensure timely delivery for the big celebration.

We're encouraging all Americans to place their orders for U.S.-made flags from American Legion Emblem Sales. Remind your communities – schools, businesses,

government offices and residents – that Legion membership is not required to get high-quality, low-cost flags and patriotic merchandise from Emblem Sales.

Remember, too, that The American Legion is an official resource partner with America250 and the bipartisan U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission. There are many pathways to celebrate in collaboration with America250, one of which – ideally suited for the American Legion Family – is America Waves. The idea is simple: On July 4, coordinate a mass flag-waving event. Gather students, educators, Scouts, military personnel, business leaders, public servants and all who love this nation, and let's show our colors in a public space. Perhaps it is along the main street of town, at a park, school grounds or city square. Remember to share images on social media and use the hashtag **#rallyaroundtheflag**.

We strongly encourage all American Legion Families worldwide to join in this mass exhibition of pride for all our nation means and has meant for the last two-and-a-half centuries. Share images and news of your event on the Legiontown web platform for all to see.

Most of all, don't get caught without your colors. Order now to ensure timely delivery.

PNC Daniel J. Seehafer is chairman of the American Legion Ad Hoc Committee on the 250th Anniversary of America.

LEGION CONDUCTING THREE-DAY CLAIMS CLINIC AT CONVENTION

This article's original publication can be found [here](#)

THE FREE CLINIC, OPEN TO ALL VETERANS, WILL HAVE ACCREDITED VSOS ON SITE TO ASSIST VETERANS, SUBMIT CLAIMS AND CONDUCT C&P EXAMS.

Military The American Legion will hold its second annual claims clinic for veterans during the 107th National Convention this summer in Louisville, Ky.

The free clinic, which is open to all veterans and their families, is being conducted in partnership with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The clinic will be held from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Aug. 28 to 30 at the Kentucky International Convention Center, 221 S. 4th St., Louisville, Ky. 40202.

Accredited Veteran Service Officers (VSOs), staff from the Louisville VA Regional Office, and VA compensation and pension (C&P) examination contractors will be onsite to assist veterans, submit claims and conduct C&P exams.

What veterans should bring:

- Government-issued ID
- Pen and paper
- DD-214 (if applicable)
- Any documentation that may support their claim

No advanced sign-up is required. However, due to anticipated high attendance, veterans intending to file a new claim or request an increase are encouraged to contact one of the following American Legion VSOs beforehand to complete a Power of Attorney (POA):

- **Kevin Buckner** – kbuckner@legion.org | Office: (202) 263-5766 | Cell: (804) 677-2138
- **Eric Taylor** – etaylor@legion.org | Office: (202) 263-5765

Upon arrival, guests should enter the convention center through the doors closest to the corner of Market and Third streets. The claims clinic will be held in the Boardroom (through the glass doors) on the Main Concourse.

MILITARY DISCOUNTS FOR MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL GAMES

This article's original publication can be found [here](#)

Major League Baseball teams are showing their appreciation for service members, both past and present, with military discounts on 2026 game tickets. Many teams also hold military appreciation days to honor those who have served our country.

Look for your favorite team in the list below and take advantage of the military discounts that can help get you to the ballpark for less.

NEED TO FIND YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS?

<https://www.votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/Address>

THIS WEEKS TOP GRASSROOTS DEPARTMENTS:

| | |
|------------------|------------|
| Kansas | 344 |
| Tennessee | 227 |
| Wisconsin | 219 |
| New York | 110 |
| Texas | 105 |

Register more participants in your Department and help amplify the voice of veterans on Capitol Hill. Maybe your state just might earn a spot-on next week's Letter Board! Register with the link below:

<https://www.votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/Register>

GRASSROOTS INFORMATION

Interested in what the Legion is advocating for in Congress? Check out our [information papers and Legislative priorities](#). This is a great starting point for a conversation with your elected officials!

10 Tips for a Successful Meeting on Capitol Hill and the *Legislative Meeting Worksheet* are now available for viewing and download on The Legion's website. You can find them and other legislative resources on the [Legislative Advocacy Resources & Toolkit page](#).

As part of our ongoing Grassroots efforts, LegDiv staff is available to provide **Grassroots Training** tailored to the hosting Department's needs. If you are interested in hosting a Grassroots training event, please contact grassroots@legion.org

You can find relevant legislation and the Legion's stance on them in the [key legislation section of VoterVoice](#).

Register for Action Alerts today at

<https://www.votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/Register>



To recognize the weekly accomplishments of our Legionnaires, we spotlight an individual every week. These individuals demonstrate exceptional grassroots activism by meeting with/contacting their Congressional Representative/Senator to advocate for veterans. Efforts like these truly make a difference and give veterans a voice in Congress.

Keith Koster, Department of New York

Keith, thank you for your steadfast advocacy of Legion priorities; we are honored to name you Legionnaire of the Week!

Keith met with Paul Tonko to discuss key legislation, including H.R. 2623, H.R. 219, and H.R. 3151/S.1541. He also shared The American Legion's Legislative Agenda flyer and highlighted the importance of comprehensive, individualized approaches to veteran care.

Drawing from personal experience, Keith spoke about the reality of receiving late-night calls and the critical need for accessible support systems for veterans. He emphasized suicide prevention efforts, including disparities affecting women veterans, and discussed local treatment resources in New York such as Therapeutic Horses of Saratoga and Homeward Bound. Keith also highlighted The American Legion's "Be The One" initiative and presented the Congressman with a Be The One challenge coin as a reminder of the mission to prevent veteran suicide.

Thank you, Keith, for your report and the time you have dedicated to the Legion's legislative priorities.



UPCOMING CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS

As of 4/10, the following hearings are scheduled:

- Wednesday, April 15, 10:00 AM: House Committee on Armed Services – Member Day
- Wednesday, April 15, 10:15 AM: House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs - Faster Decisions, Stronger Outcomes: VA’s Work to Streamline the Disability Claims Backlog
- Wednesday, April 15, 3:00 PM: House Armed Services Subcommittee on Strategic Forces - FY27 Missile Defense & Missile Defeat Programs and Activities
- Wednesday, April 15, 3:30 PM: House Armed Services Subcommittee on Readiness - Military Readiness for Fiscal Year 2027
- Wednesday, April 15, 3:30 PM: Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs - Hearings to examine programs for justice-involved veterans.
- Thursday, April 16, 3:30 PM: House Armed Services Subcommittee on Intelligence and Special Operations - Defense Intelligence Enterprise – Challenges, Priorities, and Resourcing for Fiscal Year 2027

HVAC hearings can be viewed at: [Calendar Home | House Committee on Veterans Affairs](#)

SVAC hearings can be viewed at: [Hearings - U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs](#)

HASC hearings can be viewed at: [Hearings – House Armed Services Committee](#)

SASC hearings can be viewed at: [Hearings – U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services](#)

[View The American Legion Legislative Handbook Here](#)