

JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL OF VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

CONSTITUTION

Preamble

For God and Country, we the veterans of the Commonwealth of Virginia, have joined together to acknowledge our faith in our Creator; to reaffirm our belief in the principles of justice, freedom, democracy and loyalty to our country; to rededicate ourselves to the sanctity of our homes and our families; to re-establish the comradeship begun in our periods of service to our nation; and to pledge ourselves anew to the ideal of serving the veterans of the Commonwealth, their families and survivors, and each other through our association of our various service organizations and this Joint Leadership Council.

Article I - Organization

1. Organization Name. The name of this organization shall be the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations, hereinafter referred to as the JLC or the Council.
2. Organization Membership. The Council shall be composed of one representative from each qualifying veterans service organizations or his/her designated alternate. Representatives shall be appointed by the Governor. The Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services and the Chairmen of the Board of Veterans Services and Veterans Services Foundation shall serve as non-voting, *ex officio* members.
3. Location of Headquarters. The Headquarters of the JLC shall operate in a manner and place as determined by the Chair to be most effective. The office of the Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services is available to the Chair and elected/appointed officials at their request.
4. Mission Statement. The Council provides advice and assistance to the Governor, General Assembly and the Department of Veterans Services on matters of concern to the veterans community and provides a conduit of information to and from the veterans service organizations on policy and legislation, pending and enacted, as well as information on existing services.

Article II – Operating Principles

1. Aim and Purpose. As a separate and distinct entity of veterans service organizations of Virginia, it is the JLC's objective to be mindful of and to address and advocate for the needs of Virginia's veterans.

2. Jurisdictional Control. The JLC consists of volunteer, non-profit organizations and is self-governing. It exercises control over procedures and matters discussed in accordance with this Constitution and all duly approved By-Laws and operating procedures.
3. Solidarity. The JLC is organized as a single body that expresses its purposes at meetings held at times and places approved by its members.
4. Constitution and By-Laws. The Constitution and By-Laws of the JLC, along with duly approved procedures, once ratified, will be the governing authority of the JLC.
5. Non-partisan. The JLC shall be non-partisan and shall not be used for the dissemination of partisan principles, or for the promotion of the candidacy of any person seeking public office.
6. Support of Veterans Programs. The JLC, through its elected/appointed officials, and through its member organizations, shall publicize, promote, educate, and advocate for priority veterans programs that are presented to, approved by, and prioritized by the JLC at its Regular or Special Meetings. The JLC recognizes the individuality and sovereignty of each service organization. In some cases, support and prioritization of issues may differ. In the rare instances in which differences arise, each organization shall have the right to abstain from support, or to establish its own legislative priorities.

Article III – Eligibility and Representation

1. Eligibility. Qualifying veterans service organizations shall be 1) composed principally of and controlled by veterans of the United States Armed Forces, 2) a registered nonprofit organization in good standing, incorporated for the purpose of promoting programs designed to assist veterans of the armed forces of the United States and their Virginia-domiciled surviving spouses, orphans, and dependents, and 3) active and in good standing with its parent national organization, if such a parent organization exists. In order to qualify for membership, veterans service organizations should provide the following documentation to the Secretary of the Commonwealth and the Department of Veterans Services:
 - a. Congressional Charter or Articles of Incorporation – To show that the organization is “composed principally of and controlled by veterans of the United States Armed Forces” and that the organization was “incorporated for the purpose of promoting programs designed to assist Virginia-domiciled veterans of the armed forces of the United States and their eligible spouses, orphans, and dependents”;
 - b. By-Laws – To show that the organization is “composed principally of and controlled by veterans of the United States Armed Forces” and that the organization was “incorporated for the purpose of promoting programs designed to assist Virginia-domiciled veterans of the armed forces of the United States and their eligible spouses, orphans, and dependents”;

- c. Letter from the Internal Revenue Service designating its status as a 501(c)(3), 501(c)(4), or 501(c)(19) organization – To show that the organization is “a registered nonprofit organization in good standing”;
 - d. A statement of good standing from the parent organization, if such an organization exists – To show that the organization is “active and in good standing with its parent national organization”; and
 - e. Confirmation from the State Corporation Commission of the current status of the organization, if available – To show that the organization is “in good standing.”
2. Representation. Each member organization is responsible for recommending a member for appointment to the Council by the Governor. When appointed, this member will act on behalf of his/her organization.
- a. Representatives shall be appointed for terms of three years.
 - b. Appointments to fill vacancies shall be for the un-expired terms.
 - c. No person shall be eligible to serve for or during more than two successive three-year terms.
 - d. If a representative cannot attend a Council meeting, he/she may designate an alternate to attend the meeting in his/her place. When representing his/her organization, the alternate shall have the same responsibilities and duties as the appointed representative.

Article IV – Meetings and Voting

1. Meetings.
 - a. Regular Meetings may be held according to the following schedule:
 - i. First quarter (January – March): one meeting per month while the General Assembly is in session
 - ii. Second quarter (April – June): one meeting
 - iii. Third quarter (July – September): one meeting
 - iv. Fourth quarter (October – December): two meetings
 - b. Unscheduled Meetings may be called by the Chair, upon the written request of two or more organization representatives.
 - c. Special Meetings with the Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services may be called by the Chair, upon the written request of two or more organization representatives.

- d. Meeting Locations: Council meetings may be held in any locality in the Commonwealth, with the exception of the first quarter meetings, which will be held in Richmond.
- e. Quorum Determination: A majority of the voting members of the Council, including an elected officer, shall constitute a quorum.

2. Voting.

- a. Each organization shall have one vote.
- b. If the appointed representative is not in attendance, the designated alternate may vote.
- c. An individual may represent only one organization.
- d. The Department of Veterans Services will record the vote of each organization.
- e. A majority of the votes cast will decide the issue unless otherwise specified by the Constitution and/or By-Laws. Roll call votes will be taken under the following circumstances:
 - i. Upon a proposed change of the Constitution or By-Laws; and
 - ii. When requested by at least three member organization representatives.

Article V - Officers

1. Elected Officers. The following officers will be elected:

- a. Chair; and
- b. Vice-Chair.

2. Appointed Officers. The following officers may be appointed by the Chair, subject to confirmation of the JLC membership. The Chair and Vice Chair shall not be eligible to serve in the appointed positions.

- a. Legislative Officer
- b. Assistant Legislative Officer
- c. Chaplain

3. Election of Officers.

- a. Election of officers will be held every year during the regular third quarter meeting.
- b. The Chair may serve any number of terms, but shall not serve more than two consecutive terms.
- c. Candidates must declare their intention to run for office at the second quarter meeting. If a candidate cannot attend the meeting, he/she should declare his/her intent in a letter to the Chair, who will read the letter at the meeting.
- d. Elections will be by voice vote unless the presiding officer deems a show of hands to be needed.
- e. Elections shall be decided by a majority of the votes cast. If a candidate fails to achieve a majority vote on the first ballot, the two candidates with the most votes will be voted on by a second ballot.
- f. Newly elected officers will assume the responsibility of the position to which they were elected at the conclusion of the meeting during which election occurs.
- g. Prior to the fourth quarter meeting, the new Chair may nominate Appointed Officers. The nominations will be submitted to the members one month prior to the fourth quarter meeting.
- h. Appointed officers will be confirmed by a majority of votes cast. Confirmation will take place at the fourth quarter meeting.
- i. Outgoing officers will turn over all official records pertaining to their office to the newly elected or appointed officers.

Article VI - Finances

Organizational Dues. No organizational dues will be assessed.

Article VII – By-Laws

1. Authorization for By-Laws. Suitable By-Laws shall be enacted by the JLC to establish operating procedures. Adoption will require approval of two-thirds of those members present and eligible to vote.
2. Amendment of By-Laws. By-Laws may be amended, repealed or altered, in whole or in part, at any Regular Meeting, or at any Special Meeting called for that purpose, by the vote of two-thirds of the total authorized votes cast by the organizational representatives present and

voting at that particular meeting, provided that the proposed changes shall have been furnished, in writing, to each organizational representative at least fifteen days in advance of the meeting at which the proposed changes will be voted upon.

Article VIII – Constitutional Amendments

Constitutional Amendments. This Constitution may be amended at any Regular or Special Meeting of the JLC, provided the following conditions are met:

1. All organizational representatives have been furnished copies of proposed changes at least thirty days in advance of the proposed meeting date.
2. All organizational representatives have been advised of the date, time, and place of the JLC meeting at which the proposed changes will be voted upon.
3. Proposed changes are approved by two-thirds of the members present and voting.