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TO: National Executive Committee
Department Commanders and Adjutants
Benefits Protection Team Leaders

DATE: April 25, 2018

SUBJECT: BENEFITS PROTECTION TEAM LEADER PROGRAM

In 2016, DAV launched our revised Benefits Protection Team Leader (BPTL) Program. I am proud of our accomplishments during these two short, but challenged-packed years to protect and improve benefits for our nation's ill and injured veterans, their families and survivors.

During 2017, DAV's grassroots advocacy was able to stop the administration's plan to terminate Individual Unemployability Compensation for older veterans and stop Congress from rounding down disability compensation cost-of-living allowances. Additionally, our advocacy efforts helped to enact legislation that brought about sweeping overhaul of the appeals process; increased monthly Survivors' and Dependents Educational Assistance payments; granted full G.I. Bill benefits to Purple Heart recipients, regardless of total time in service; and provided G.I. Bill eligibility for reservists undergoing medical care for active duty injuries. Disabled veterans, their families and survivors have benefited greatly because of the strong advocacy of our BPTLs and their grassroots networks. Our unyielding efforts to reform the VA health care system and expand caregiver benefits to all generations of veterans is now getting serious consideration in Congress and the administration.

In addition to the [BPTL Toolkit](#) posted on our web site, the DAV National Legislative Department is developing a series of webinars to help BPTLs better understand the duties and responsibilities of this important position, including, learning how to develop local grassroots networks, and become more effective advocates to accomplish DAV's legislative goals on both the national and state levels. Webinars are available on DAV's advocacy page under "Resources." Departments that need extra help will be able to request an in-person BPTL briefing during district or department meetings or via a live webinar. I would strongly encourage you to take advantage of this information.

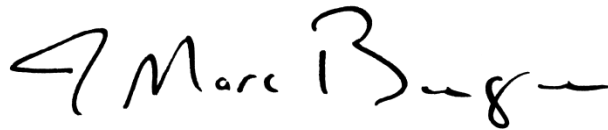
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As an additional incentive for our hard-working department BPTLs, we are developing an awards program for outstanding performance in advocacy. We will use objective metrics to measure advocacy on a national level, such as, the number of active DAV Commander's Action Network members that are signed up in your state; the number of emails sent to Congress on action alerts; and whether national resolutions (related to federal issues that affect veterans across the country, as opposed to legislative issues affecting local or state benefits) have been submitted for consideration at our national convention.

National Legislative Director Joy Ilem will be sending more information outlining the details of the awards program. Departments will be grouped into the same divisions used by the National Membership Department. We will use the 2018 membership year, July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019 to measure performance with the first BPTL awards presented at the 2019 DAV and Auxiliary National Convention.

Thank you for your continued efforts to protect and improve benefits and health care services for our nation's service-disabled veterans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Marc Burgess". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

J. MARC BURGESS
National Adjutant

JMB:lmb