



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Department Commander 2019-2020

Impact of the COVID-19 Public Health Crisis on Local American Legion Posts

Delaware, Ohio (April 16th, 2020) – The American Legion Department of Ohio and its’ 540 American Legion Post within the state continue to adapt and overcome during these challenging times to meet the needs of its’ veterans and the local community. While our American Legion Posts are closed, many of our local Posts are coordinating local blood drives with The American Red Cross to help meet the urgent demand for blood donations. Our local Posts continues to coordinate local food drives with organizations - like M.A.S.H. Pantry and Resource Center - to provide their members and communities with fresh produce at no cost to the recipient. Our local Posts continues to support our Ohio Veterans Homes and VA Medical Centers with financial and physical donations required to help our veterans maintain a high quality of life and remain socially connected as we remain socially distant. Our membership is also conducting “buddy checks” by checking in on our members to ask if there is anything we can do for the member or to simply have a conversation with them.

The American Legion Department of Ohio is committed to continuing to serve our local communities in a manner that ensures the health and safety of our membership, employees, and our communities. The American Legion recognizes that our public health and the strength of our economy directly impacts our National Security.

The American Legion Department of Ohio is thankful for Governor DeWine’s leadership as Ohio continues to fight against the COVID-19 public health crisis. As Veterans, we are extremely familiar with war, selfless service, a regulated lifestyle, and with maintaining law and order for the greater good and the security of this great nation. As members of the largest and historic veteran-service organization, we adapt and overcome to continue our service.

The American Legion Department of Ohio is grateful for the Ohio General Assembly, specifically the Ohio House of Representative’s COVID-19 Economic Recovery Task Force for beginning the exploratory process - by soliciting input from small businesses across the state – of how we can safely re-open Ohio’s businesses.

As Ohio prepares to fully recover from the COVID-19 public health crisis, we respectfully ask for our American Legion Posts to be permitted to reopen in the month of May. American Legion Posts are open to our membership and limit – in most cases prohibit – guest visitors. American Legion Posts are willing and able to abide by additional and essential measures put in place to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

We respectfully ask that The Ohio General Assembly urgently pass House Bill 282. As Ohio begins the thoughtful process of recovery, our American Legion Posts will open its' doors again and continue the important mission of serving our local communities.

Many of our American Legion Posts operate charitable gaming programs to raise monies which they contribute to various local nonprofits and efforts to support local little league teams, school booster clubs, veteran support services, scouting programs, and scholarships. The charitable gaming programs also support the individual Post to cover the cost of its' operations. Our local non-profits and American Legion Post continue to answer the call to serve our communities, however, in most cases, community service efforts are directly impacted by the ability to fundraise.

House Bill 282 will allow our American Legion Post to operate electronic instant bingo charitable gaming programs. House Bill 282 does not expand or create new gaming in Ohio but will permit American Legion Post to offer both paper and electronic formats for instant bingo. However, if House Bill 282 is enacted, our Post will increase their capacity to support local non-profits and charities which are in critical need of support.

The American Legion Department of Ohio is thankful for Governor DeWine's leadership during this public health crisis and we remain committed to our important mission of serving our veterans and our communities while operating in a manner that prevents the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

For more information please contact Jermaine Ferguson, Department Legislative Coordinator at ferguson@ohiolegion.com or call 740-815-0765.