LEGISLATIVE NEWS!!!!!
Charles Goodin- Legislative Chairman

Legion Family Members there is a need for ACTION! There are two bills in the Missouri Legislature the will adversely affect the Missouri Veterans Commission’s ability to carry out its mission to maintain our Veterans Home and Cemeteries. To provide skilled nursing care for all our home residents and provide accredited Service Officers for Missouri Veterans to gain benefits. There are two bills that have cleared the House Veterans Committee.

**HJR 72:** This bill upon voter approval is a proposed constitutional amendment that requires beginning January 1, 2021 an amount equal to 10% of the total annual revenue collected up to $2 million dollars, of The Missouri Veterans’ Health and Care Fund. (The fund made up of fees and taxes resulting from the sale of medical marijuana be appropriated to the University of Missouri School of Law Veterans Clinic (a law clinic). The $2 million year cap will be adjusted every three years for inflation.

We are in opposition of the bill because the revenue from medical marijuana was earmarked for funding services the Missouri Veterans Commission provides veterans throughout the state and that this resolution would divert funding from those services provided by the commission.

**HB 1485:** This bill authorizes any veteran who is approved for admission into the Missouri veterans' home nearest to the veteran's residence but who has not been admitted to a Missouri veterans' home due to a lack of vacancy, resides at a location where there are no vacancies at a care facility that has contracted with the Department of Veterans Affairs for the care of veterans within 50 miles, meets the requirements for admission to a skilled nursing facility, and has not been notified by the Missouri Veterans Commission of a relevant vacancy, to receive a voucher from the state for an amount that is equal to the average cost to the state to house one veteran for one month in a Missouri veterans home. The voucher will be used to pay for the costs of being housed at a skilled nursing facility. The voucher will be issued on a monthly basis by the Missouri Veterans Commission as long as the veteran can pay for room and board at a facility in a timely manner. Issuance of a voucher will not affect any eligible veteran's position for placement in a Missouri Veterans Home.

We are in opposition because this bill will take funding from the Missouri Veterans Commission and that it also takes some authority away from the commission.

The Department of Missouri does not support passage of these two bills. The Department asks that all American Legion Family members call or email their Representatives and Senators and express our non-support of this legislation. HJR 72 and HB 1485. Please go to www.house.mo.gov and www.senate.mo.gov and search for your Representative and Senator and find their contact information.

**On the National Level:**
Contact your Senators and ask that they bring the “Coast Guard Authorization Act” to the floor for a vote as soon as possible. Additionally, ask that they support Section 221 provision within the authorization act to ensure that our Coast Guard does not go without pay ever again. Members of the U.S. Coast Guard should never again find their pay jeopardized because of partisan unrest in Washington DC. With the looming threat of yet another government shutdown, there is a real threat that without action in Congress, the Coast Guard may not be able to pay their members.

PLEASE ACT NOW!!!!!