



AFA Congressional Engagement ad hoc Committee

Report to the Chairman

5/19/2011

The Air Force Association educates the public about the critical role of aerospace power in the defense of our nation; advocates aerospace power and a strong national defense; and supports the United States Air Force, the Air Force family, and aerospace education. The Congressional Engagement ad hoc Committee seeks to improve and enhance the ability of all levels of AFA in addressing AFA's mission with Congress.

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AFA Congressional Engagement ad hoc Committee

Report to the Chairman--May 2011

I. Committee Members:

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Bill Grider

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Bill Grider, Chair, "RP/SP Headquarter Training Initiative"

Dave Dietsch

Rick Sine

II. Charter Identified Key Tasks:

- a. Keeping contact with Members of Congress and the staffers of member home districts
- b. Urging Members of Congress to become members of the Air Force Caucus
- c. Keeping visibility of Congressional Members of Airpower issues
- d. Reporting to HQ on the status of Congressional contacts
- e. Determine the effectiveness of the September Annual Reception on the Hill and suggest appropriate changes.
- f. Target key Members of Congress on specific issues
- g. Determine the need (or not) to increase the number of Airpower Advocates
- h. Review other groups effectiveness on the Hill...see what ideas AFA could "borrow" from others (AUSA, Navy League, AFCEA, AIA, etc.)
- i. Review of AFA's field successes (Wyoming's and Arnold Memorial Chapter's are models from AFA HQ's viewpoint)—see if these could be infused into the rest of the association.

III. Statements of overreaching problems associated with Charter tasks

a. From the Increased Effectiveness of local AFA Legislative initiatives:

AFA Field Units need to do a better job of being “local”. That means getting involved with the local Congressional offices. As it is now the most uniform and consistent involvement that Congressional members see is the work of the AFA’s Government Affairs staff. Conversely, field or “local” involvement is not uniform or consistent from state to state or chapter to chapter. If Congressional contacts are important to support the Government Affairs staff, then the local efforts need to be uniform, consistent, measured and reported.....Activity updates to the field from the Government Affairs staff would also be helpful in supporting local efforts. These updates could be sent to all state and chapter Government Relations VPs by way of the AFA website, Twitter, email blast or Facebook.

b. From the Peer Military Association Initiatives:

There’s a need to establish and implement an automated/electronic method for tracking and conveying information and issues to Congressional representatives, to local Congressional offices, and, in turn, to AFA State and Chapter Leadership.

c. From the Annual Congressional Reception Investigation:

The current format of the Annual Legislative Reception (ALR) is not meeting the needs of the AFA enterprise nor the field units. Specifically, the event is not well attended by those from Congressional offices. Additionally, those that do attend from these offices are usually not decision makers that can influence legislative action and the event occurs too late in the legislative cycle to influence legislative action. Further, the ALR is, for the most part, disjointed and disconnected from overall requirements and needs of the AFA organization. Some States and Regions have great success in attracting Legislative leaders and USAF decision makers, while others, seem not to.

d. From the RP/SP Headquarter Training Initiative

The ability of AFA Chapters and State leaders are not effective in following the Field Operations Guide (FOG) in developing and maintaining ongoing relationships with Congressional District offices. Many of our Chapter and State organizations are not able to provide input and influence on issues important to AFA. One telling statistic is that the latest membership records reveal that only 107 of 535 Senators and Representatives are AFA members.

IV. Subcommittees recommendations for addressing the problems associated with the Charter's tasks

a. From the Increased Effectiveness of local AFA Legislative initiatives:

- 1) Make an organized effort to have relationships with staff in the Congressional District office.
- 2) Focus on getting more Senators and Representatives as AFA members.
- 3) Attend local roundtable/town hall and Veteran events.
- 4) Encourage District office to have a Veteran Advisory Board.
- 5) Encourage Veteran Roundtable briefings
- 6) Asking to be a member of the military academy selection process is a great way to become involved.
- 7) Invite member/staffer to speak at Chapter/State events.
- 8) Plan to visit Congressional Representatives in their offices during the annual convention.
- 9) Join the local Chamber of Commerce Military Affairs Committee.
- 10) Cooperate with other veteran organizations to achieve similar Congressional results within the district.
- 11) Identify a Point of Contact (POC) at each chapter to be the main contact with each local member. State POC recommended for the two Senators.
- 12) Have State Presidents come to RP/SP meeting with names of chapter Government Affairs VPs and number of representatives and senators who are AFA members.
- 13) Need training video for field training of local members

b. From the Peer Military Association Initiatives:

- 1) Establish a list of organizations AFA HQ has currently a working relationship with on common congressional/public officials with (APA list, etc.)
- 2) Integrate web based software for HQ and the field for use to track appointments and/or issues with members of Congress/public officials
 - i. Budget software costs @ \$5,000 per year for outreach and coordination of the legislative involvement for all AFA members.
 - ii. Secure Solidarity software @ \$75 per month for a current list of legislative staffer's bios—establish one user per Region so, \$75per month times each Region and HQ.
- 3) Secure print material for each AFA POC assigned to work with Congressional Representatives.
 - i. Book – Citizens in Action \$17.95 at www.columbiabooks.com

- ii. U.S. Congress Pro -- \$59 per month
- iii. Leadership Directory for Congress/Public Service Officials

c. From the Annual Congressional Reception Investigation:

- 1) Establish a team to implement fully defined, actionable operating instructions that focuses on 3 main areas:
 - i. Define a year round legislative action plan that will be implemented by Regions, States, and Chapters in a coordinated and consistent manner that focuses on a sustained engagement and delivering of key enterprise AFA message(s).
 - ii. Insure that the plan focuses on (at a minimum) a yearly meeting with the appropriate legislative teams (actual Congressional member(s) and their professional staff).
 - iii. Insure that the rank and file AFA members are offered an opportunity to meet with the legislative branch around the annual convention, i.e. grip/grin session.
- 2) Determine and identify those key legislative personnel and organizations (i.e.: Veterans Affairs, Armed Services Committee, etc.) the AFA should be working with in a consistent and sustained manner and assign the most appropriate AFA POC's to work with them. There is a need to recognize that a priority needs to be established to focus on those individuals/committees that are of the highest strategic value to AFA. Simply put, AFA does not have the bandwidth to treat all equally. (Note: the AFA Region, State or Chapter) POC may change from year to year based on elections and changing legislative make up.)

d. From the RP/SP Headquarter Training Initiative

- 1) Allocate a 60 minute time slot for legislative training at the October RP/SP meeting.
- 2) Develop a training syllabus that provides the following elements:
 - i. Training Objective – explain the need for legislative involvement, demonstrate appropriate action steps and motivate RPs and SPs to action.
 - ii. Resources available – Legislative Engagement Sub-Committee members, AFA HQ Staff, trade association lobbyists, FOG explanations, and examples of successful programs conducted by selected state organizations and chapters.
 - iii. Desired Outcome – motivate RPs and SPs to commit to developing strong and effective local Congressional

relationships as a priority for their activities in the coming year. Also, provide them with the tools to be successful and track their progress by measuring the increase in the number of Congressional AFA members.

V. Associated timeline for instituting corrective actions associated with the recommendations made in response to the Charter's tasks:

a. From the Increased Effectiveness of local AFA Legislative initiatives:

The timeline is highly dependent on convincing the AFA State and Chapter leadership that this action is needed and steps are established to hold them accountable. (This should include using the recommended web-based software.) A reasonable time estimate would be 120 to 180 days.

b. From the Peer Military Association Initiatives:

The timeline is dependent on professional AFA staff in the integration of the planned software. (Estimate time 180 days) Further, the same time is estimated to be necessary for the education of the Region, State and Chapter users.

c. From the Annual Congressional Reception Investigation:

Upon receipt of appropriate approvals, establish a working committee staffed by both the AFA Regional/State representatives and the AFA professional legislative staff to develop a detailed action plan to implement the three recommendations from Section IV c. The committee should not require more than 30 days completing and presenting a detailed plan. It is recommended that the committee not start from scratch but instead take the structure from those organizations that already have a strong legislative program and use these as the starting point for a National AFA Plan.

d. From the RP/SP Headquarter Training Initiative

The proposed RP/SP enhanced legislative training should be initiated at the October 2011 RP/SP meeting. A satisfaction survey should be conducted with those participating in 2011, and the information gained will enable the RP/SP training to be refined for 2012.

VI. Identification of individuals or entities responsible for instituting the proposed corrective actions associated with the assigned Charter tasks.

a. From the Increased Effectiveness of local AFA Legislative initiatives:

A cooperative effort needs to exist between AFA Government Relations and selected representatives (POCs) from AFA States and Chapters

b. From the Peer Military Association Initiatives:

The Sub-Committee chair for this initiative, once the budget is approved, needs to work with AFA HQ IT staff and Governmental Affairs staff in the acquisition, establishment and operation of the proposed web-based software.

c. From the Annual Congressional Reception Investigation:

Noting the Annual Congressional Reception is projected to be replaced by a comprehensive year long initiative, the primary task belongs to AFA Field Organizations. However, HQ Governmental Affairs staff will be required to be an integral part of the team to insure access and support.

d. From the RP/SP Headquarter Training Initiative:

Field leaders who have been successful in establishing relationships with Legislative Representatives, to include members of this sub-committee, should serve as primary trainers for the RP/SP event at HQ. Additionally, the HQ Governmental Affairs staff needs to be involved to provide key information on Legislative Representatives and their staffs. Added emphasis on this training event would occur if a "lobbyist" from a trade association were invited to serve as a guest speaker.

VII. Additional statements or recommendations on the part of any of the sub-committees:

a. From the Increased Effectiveness of local AFA Legislative initiatives:

Roles and Responsibilities for local AFA Legislative Initiatives

Chapter – Basic

- 1) Appoint a Chapter VP for Government Relations (Chapter president assumes responsibilities for this function in lieu of Chapter VP, GR).

- 2) Establish a relationship with each congressional district office within the Chapter area of membership.
 - (a) Appoint a member as the point of contact for each office and insure that person has a good understanding of the allowable actions when representing AFA.
 - (b) Meet at least quarterly with a staff member to brief them on AFA activities
 - (c) Invite representative and/or staff to attend all Chapter functions, regardless of representative's membership status
- 3) Encourage each representative to become an AFA member through the Congressional membership Program.
- 4) Provide a copy of each Chapter quarterly newsletter to each congressional office, regardless of membership status.
- 5) Have an AFA member attend each congressional function within the district that has a military or veteran theme.
- 6) Report all significant contacts or activities to AFA HQ, Government Relations.
- 7) Include a summary of all activities in the chapter quarterly activity report

Chapter – Expanded (build on the relationship)

- 1) Provide the representative's military liaison staffer periodic updates on issues vital to the AFA
- 2) Support the work of the staff by being available to explain military organizations, terms and programs as background for their work
- 3) Provide suitable constituents to serve on the district military academy selection committee.
- 4) Schedule an office meeting with each representatives at least once a year when he/she is in the local office to brief the AFA Top Issues
- 5) Maintain a relationship with similar organizations in the chapter area (Navy League, AUSA) to enable coordination of activities towards common goals and to make use of their contacts and relationships where appropriate.
- 6) Participate in local military affairs committees organized by Chambers of Commerce or city/county/state government agencies.

State – (or chapter if no state organization in place)

- 1) Appoint a state VP of Government Relations (State President, assumes responsibility in lieu of VP, GR.
- 2) Insure each chapter is fulfilling the responsibilities assigned for the congressional representatives in their area.

- 3) Perform the functions outlined above for the Senators and their staffs within the state.
- 4) Invite appropriate Legislative staff members to the annual State Convention.
- 5) Provide training and guidance to the chapters on how to conduct congressional contacts and how to avoid conflicts with the AFA charter and non-profit status.

Region

- 1) Insure each state organization and chapter in the region is fulfilling their responsibilities in this area.
- 2) Provide guidance and focus to specific congressional contact programs identified as time sensitive and high priority by AFA HQ, Government Relations.
- 3) Provide training and guidance to the state organizations at the annual Region Workshop on how to conduct this program

VC, Field Operations

- 1) Insure that each region is fulfilling its responsibilities in this area.
- 2) Provide updated guidance and direction to the Region Presidents on specific subjects or contact programs to support specific AFA goals
- 3) Provide training and guidance about this program to the Region Presidents and Chapter Presidents during the annual RP/SP meeting
- 4) Provide input to the Field Council about this program

AFA HQ, Government Relations

- 1) Provide overall guidance and direction to the Congressional Contact Program
- 2) Set priorities for state and chapter activities regarding legislative activities
- 3) Distribute periodic reports directly to the chapter, state and region organizations that outlines the priorities for contact subjects, shares "best practices" from other organizations and informs the membership of the successes and challenges in this area
- 4) Coordinate all activities relating to relations and contact with Representative and Senators in the DC area
- 5) Where appropriate, coordinate AFA activities with other organizations in the DC area to help assure focused and organized efforts to achieve common goals.

- 6) Extract from chapter and state activity reports all relevant congressional contact information and provide feedback where necessary.

General Comments:

There is a need to establish and keep current an information data base that field people can access showing data on each legislator, to include, address, telephone number, staffers position and name, committee assignments in congress etc. An example of a data base offered on the MOAA website is Elected Officials. It is user friendly and factual for all 535 national legislatures. The user can click on his/her state or Zip Code and obtain the desired data.

b. From the Peer Military Association Initiatives:

History: In the past, the AFA has had a policy, or at least a perceived attitude of “go it alone” with its educational actions as well as using its influence in support of the USAF. Over the last several years, this has had mixed to poor results. We now have a much smaller force, with a great many aging weapons systems, and a bleak future for their modernization and/or replacement.

Solution: Create a partnership with other organizations/groups/associations that will educate, influence, and develop an understanding of the importance of the fulfilled needs of the USAF.

Partnering with several existing associations will both add numbers as well as increase AFA’s influence. The list of organizations that follow, in the opinion of the sub-committee, is in rank order of their influence. Altogether they would greatly help AFA’s and the USAF’s future.

1) Adjutants General Association of the US – AGAUS

The association is made up of the 54 Adjutants General of the US, who represent 458,000 soldiers and airmen.

2) National Governor’s Association – NGA

The NGA has enormous influence with the executive and legislative branches of the US Government. The Governors are Commanders-in-Chief of the militia or National Guard which are in 3,800 communities across our nation. These Governors are extremely concerned about their force capabilities and the futures. This association could help AFA and our Air Force in many ways.

3) National Guard Association -- NGAUS

This association is open to all officers of the Air and Army National Guard. They currently have about 45,000 members. They have a full-time legislative staff in Washington, DC, as well as meeting rooms, and museum in a large

office building at One Massachusetts Ave. They also have a communications staff, industrial relations department⁵, and the National Guard Education Foundation. The membership is from all 54 states and territories, and the District. What is good for the Air and Army National Guard is also good for the USAF. The National Guard Association also maintains a very close relationship with the US House of Representatives thru the Guard and Reserve Caucus, of which there are 229 members, chaired by Congressmen Duncan Hunter (R) California, and Tim Walz (D) Minnesota. The Senate Guard caucus, of which 96 of 100 senators belong, is headed by Senators Pat Leahy (D) Vermont and Lindsey Graham (R) South Carolina.

- 4) Reserve Officers Association -- ROA
This is another organization which brings the concerns of the citizen soldier, sailor, and airmen to the forefront of Congress.
- 5) Enlisted Association of the US – EANGUS
This is an organization very similar to NGAUS, though smaller in membership, with full-time staff and offices in DC.
- 6) The Association of the US Army – AUSA
This is an association that has got it! They have figured out the influence they can leverage for their branch by using the above organizations. They have a very friendly and mutually effective relationship with the Guard. This relationship is collaborative and productive for the Army.
- 7) The Navy League – NL
The Navy League Office of Legislative Affairs monitors legislative issues related to maritime security and the current and future operational readiness of the uniformed maritime services.

Specific things that AFA must do to leverage influence with Congress:

- 1) Partner and align with all of the above associations.
- 2) Cultivate a relationship of trust between AFA and these associations.
- 3) Influence USAF leadership to quit “go-it-alone” mentality and partner with the ANG, before they have even fewer aircraft, people and missions.
- 4) Learn from AUSA on how to grow USAF, ANG, ROA, NGA influence for the good of the USAF and the nation.
- 5) Use relationship that currently exists between the ANG Council and Reserve Council to further this influence.
- 6) Identify AFA members who can assist our Washington DC staff, with names and contacts, in their effort to educate members of Congress.

- VIII. Editor's Summary of Key Committee Recommendations for Improved AFA Engagement of Congress (Not by Priority)**
- a. Establish key objectives for AFA members in contacting District Offices of Congressional Representatives**
 - b. Identify trained and equipped Chapter AFA members to serve as Points of Contact (POC) for educating Congressional Representatives and their staffs**
 - c. Create and distribute a training video for improving the ability of local AFA members in meeting with their Congressional Representatives**
 - d. Obtain and install a Web-based data-base to record and report all AFA Congressional Engagements by AFA members**
 - e. Subscribe to a Web-based service for reporting on current Congressional Representatives and their staffs**
 - f. Maintain an annual opportunity for AFA members to meet and greet their Congressional Representatives in Washington D.C.**
 - g. Don't depend on an annual meeting for satisfying AFA's need for Congressional Engagement. Establish a year round Legislative Engagement plan for all of AFA Regions, States and Chapters.**
 - h. Develop a new training syllabus and allocated time for RP/SP legislative engagement training in October**
 - i. Include new resources and speakers for RP/SP legislative engagement training in October**
 - j. Adopt and implement new roles and responsibilities for Congressional Engagement for Chapter, State, Regional and National AFA entities**
 - k. Create new partnerships with other organizations/groups/associations that will educate, influence, and develop an understanding of the importance of the fulfilled needs of the USAF**