



About the United Veterans Legislative Council (UVLC)

Background: The UVLC started after veterans involved in legislative matters noticed the veteran community was divided on issues and lacked credibility with lawmakers. At times, the veteran community canceled out each other during testimony at legislative hearings, causing lawmakers great confusion and indecision. A group of veterans began meeting to collaborate about the issues at hand, and while this was a better process, many organizations were absent. Early organizers campaigned among themselves to get every Veteran Service Organization (VSOs) and other nonprofits that selflessly support veterans to come to the table to create a statewide veterans' legislative group. It took a few years and lots of work to get the UVLC where it is today.

UVLC Structure: The UVLC is a formidable, unified voice for veterans, military, and their families to find, identify, and lobby for legislative action. There are several things that are unique to the structure of the UVLC. It has **NO** treasury, thus the UVLC is not registered as a nonprofit, nor with the IRS, nor with the State. Membership is free to all veterans. If funding is ever needed, it comes through the membership's organizations as a sponsorship. The UVLC operates under a constitution without bylaws or standing rules. The organization follows 'Robert's Rules of Order.' The UVLC partners with the Nevada Department of Veterans Services (NDVS) in many matters. Leadership is elected among UVLC members every two years. The UVLC is **absolutely non-political and non-partisan**. As such, all political parties respect the perspective and generally support the UVLC's viewpoint. The UVLC speaks to issues, not politics, and its track record gives emphasis to this successful strategy.

Who UVLC Represents: There are approximately 250,000 veterans within the State of Nevada. There are more when active-duty military, families, and veteran advocates are counted. The primary Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) in Nevada include the American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, Marine Corps League, Vietnam Veterans of America, and Veterans of Foreign Wars. Many of the 250,000 veterans are members of one or more of these VSOs, which also include the smaller VSOs as well. Leadership of the VSOs actively participate with the general meetings, legislative symposia, and legislative summits to fashion the veterans' agenda for each legislative session. The UVLC, in conjunction with these active VSOs, serves as the unified voice for the majority of Nevada veterans.

How UVLC Operates: UVLC has a structured approach to getting these things done. The Nevada Legislature meets every two years for 120 days. When not in session, lawmakers are still working "interim" via committees and commissions. The issues the UVLC tackles come from many sources, including the leadership and members of veterans' organizations, NDVS, as well as various lawmakers who need our military experience and help. Other examples of sources where issues surface include various local Congressional events, political events, State agencies (that cannot lobby for fiduciary reasons), law enforcement, and more. The UVLC then conducts a reasonable review of identified issues for accuracy and truth, vetting each issue fully for a legislative remedy, if possible.

Sometimes, the answer may not be legislative but administrative. The key is to find a solution. The UVLC is very visible during the session but almost invisible otherwise; however, even during quiet times, the UVLC continues its advocacy for veterans.



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Among the biggest events used to identify and prioritize issues are the NDVS/UVLC Legislative Symposia held in Reno, Las Vegas, and other cities as scheduled. The symposia are held during the spring in the off-session years. Then, just before the beginning of the session, an NDVS/UVLC Legislative Summit is held in the north and south to share the resulting progress of the symposia. There is a lot of data to sift through, vet, and prioritize by the State agencies, Congressional staff [if federal], Legislative Council Bureau [LCB] on behalf of the lawmakers, and the UVLC, too. Sometimes an issue is so great that it may take several avenues before settling into a bill.

UVLC is always listening for any kind of issue that may arise where it can help. Among these are the Legislative Interim Committees and Commissions [ILC] meetings. These Interim meetings bring experts and reports from all kinds of sources from within and from out of state. These ILC's can hold meetings [hearings] based on the information presented or engulf another relevant issue.

There are times these issues can involve issues about veterans, military, or their families. In this setting, usually, the UVLC is the fly on the wall, just observing and listening. However, UVLC leadership takes the opportunity to meet the movers and shakers who may matter to us in the future – like any good lobbyist.

Lastly, many of the ILC have legislative authority to introduce one or more Bill Draft Requests [BDR] to the legislature, which may become a bill. It is the UVLC's responsibility to be aware of its foundation for a legislative head start.

Meetings and Officers: The UVLC has periodic meetings during the session and the interim years. The meetings are held upon the call of the Chairman.

EXCEPTIONS: sub-committee meetings are individually called.

Meetings will be held upon the call of the Chairman during the sessions [February, March, April, May, June] due to the rapid changes and reactions required.

For anyone (veteran or advocate) who wishes to get involved, you can contact any one of the officers or board members listed below:

Chairman- Chris Harvey, chrisharvey@sbcglobal.net

Vice Chair- Levy Shultz, shultzlevyd@gmail.com

Secretary- Peggy Bohn, pbohn@unr.edu

Board Member- Fred Wagar, fwagar@gmail.com

Board Member-David Sousa, vfw Sousa@gmail.com