

PAC

After many years of working to influence federal legislation on behalf of the veterans it represented, in 1979 the VFW established a political action committee (VFW-PAC). A political action committee is the only legal way that the VFW, as a group, can take an active role in federal elections. Through the PAC, **members** can express support for, **contribute to**, or spend money on behalf of candidates for election to the offices of President of the United States, United States Senator, and United States Representative. **Funding is entirely by voluntary personal contributions sent directly to the PAC or through VFW posts and auxiliaries.** At present, there are over a million active VFW-PAC donors.

Through its role in federal elections, the VFW-PAC strives to accomplish two goals: 1) the defense and promotion of veterans' entitlements; and 2) support of national defense issues. Because of its special concerns about these issues, the PAC has been labeled a "special interest" group. Many consider special interest groups to be unethical or even illegal. The VFW-PAC is neither. All PACs are under constant scrutiny by the Federal Election Commission, and their activities and contributions are closely monitored. Violations of election laws are quickly and severely acted upon.

Some prospective PAC members worry that the PAC engages in "vote buying." But contributions go only to legislators who have already proven that they support the PAC's positions. When a candidate has no voting record to indicate his position on the issues, the PAC asks for a written position statement from the candidate. Financial support and endorsement is then based upon his or her response.

PACs in general, and the VFW-PAC in particular, often reveal a legislator's true stand on an issue by monitoring every vote taken in Congress. Based on roll call, or recorded votes (some are taken by voice only), the VFW-PAC rates every senator or representative on his or her record pertaining to veterans' benefits and national defense issues. Releases containing the information about each legislator's vote are then distributed throughout the entire VFW network.

Donations to the **State VFW Political Action Committee** should be sent to **Department Headquarters along with a completed PAC contribution Form 21. This form is required by law, and no credit will be provided until a completed Form 21 is received. Note: Make all checks payable to VFWCAPAC. Also Report online on Form 12.**

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