



## *American Legion Auxiliary*

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### **PARLIAMENTARIAN**

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The American Legion Auxiliary, founded in 1919, celebrates its 98th birthday on November 10th. This is a perfect opportunity to study the meaning of the Preamble to the Constitution of the American Legion Auxiliary. These one hundred and thirty-three words are familiar to every member of the American Legion Auxiliary. They have been repeated time and time again by millions of women since 1920. Each time they are voiced, the commitment to the Auxiliary is made anew. Each and every year, we should reflect on the full meaning of each familiar phrase.

**“For God and Country, we associate ourselves together for the following purposes:**

**To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America...”**

The first of the ten principles of The American Legion and Auxiliary is a sacred pledge of allegiance to the Constitution of the United States. It is most appropriate that the first thoughts of the Preamble be dedicated toward the continued defense of our nation by those very persons who have either served in wartime or had a close relative who served. The pledge to uphold and defend the democracy of America is the first obligation of every Legionnaire and Auxiliary member.

**“To maintain law and order...”**

Law and order must be maintained if freedom is to be maintained. Liberty is not license. Good government means that all citizens are secure in their lives and property. To this The American Legion and Auxiliary are pledged by the second principle of the Preamble.

**“To foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism...”**

The term “Americanism” covers all of the things, which have made the American nation great, and the American people free. It implies qualities of character as well as principles of government. Under this Constitution principle, The American Legion and Auxiliary have worked and are continuing to work to defeat the attempts of subversive organizations to undermine our system, to build loyalty to and confidence in American ideals and to develop an American citizenship capable of making America’s free form of government a constantly greater success.

**“To preserve the memories and incidents of our association during the great wars...”**

Every member of the American Legion Auxiliary has a close personal association with the sacrifice of war - be it World Wars I and II, Korea, Vietnam or the Gulf War. The association and incidents of these struggles are to be remembered not only for their heroes, their victories for freedom, but also to remind us of the awful implications and inevitable tragedies accompanying any war.

**“To inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation...”**

The individual is the basis of the American nation. Unlike other ideals of government, the American ideal places the individual first. The nation belongs to the individual, not the individual to the nation. The government exists for the purpose of serving the individual, not the individual for the purpose of serving the nation. If this ideal is to survive, there must be a voluntary sense of obligation of the individual to the nation and its component parts, the

community and state. The American Citizen serves his community, state and nation, not as a driven slave, but as a free man guided by his own sense of duty. To inculcate this feeling among all Americans is one of the great purposes of The American Legion and Auxiliary.

**“To combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses...”**

If America is to remain “the land of the free” the government must always be a government of all the people and for all the people. No classes are recognized in America. No masses of down trodden people exist. Neither must be permitted to develop, but America must be kept the country of opportunity for all, where every citizen’s first allegiance is to the nation, not to some social or economic class or mass. Dominance must not be gained by any such grouping of Americans. This is another basic pledge of The American Legion and Auxiliary.

**“To make right the master of might...”**

The American form of government guarantees equal rights to all citizens. The American Legion Auxiliary, born from a struggle against ruthless might, pledges all their strength to a continued struggle to prevent invasion of the rights of any citizen by any force, no matter of what character.

**“To promote peace and goodwill on earth...”**

The men and women of The American Legion and the women of the Auxiliary know well the ghastly futility of war. We know that war brings only misery to any nation, which engages in it, to the victor as well as the vanquished. With the lessons of war constantly in mind, we pledge ourselves to promote peace and goodwill among nations. We have worked steadily in the cause in the face of forces, which have sought to sow enmity and war throughout the world.

**“To safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy...”**

These were the principles, which inspired America’s Great War efforts over the decades, and the American Legion and Auxiliary stand determined that these principles shall not be lost to America in time of peace. Following this pledge, The American Legion and Auxiliary work to safeguard justice, freedom and democracy against the dangers of indifferent citizenship and undermining by their enemies. It strives to give understanding of and devotion to these principles to the younger generations of Americans so that they will endure for the future of the country.

**“To participate in and contribute to the accomplishment of the aims and purposes of The American Legion...”**

Thus, the American Legion Auxiliary pledges its full strength to the support of The American Legion and affirms its character as an auxiliary to the Legion. It has always been faithful to this pledge, never developing programs or policies of its own, but directing all of its activities toward the “accomplishment of the aims and purposes of The American Legion.”

**“To consecrate and sanctify our association by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.”**

In this final phrase of the Preamble is set forth the purpose which has guided the American Legion and Auxiliary in all their vast rehabilitation and youth work; in everything they have done to lighten the burden for those suffering from the results of wars; and to bring full justice to those paying the human price for America’s victory. In this work of mercy and relief, the American Legion Auxiliary has made great contributions toward the achievement of The American Legion’s purpose.

**Happy Birthday American Legion Auxiliary!**

Dee Dee Buckley  
Department Parliamentarian