VFW and SVA Announce 2019 Student Veteran Fellowship Class

Legislative fellowship to bring 10 student veteran leaders to Washington

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WASHINGTON – Ten Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. members and Student Veterans of America leaders have been selected for the 2019 VFW-SVA Fellowship program. The announcement was made Saturday at SVA's 11th National Conference in Orlando, Fla. The 10 fellows will now join more than 500 VFW members of when they converge on Capitol Hill in early March to advocate on behalf of all veterans, service members and their families.

"The VFW is proud to provide 10 student veterans the opportunity to participate in the legislative process to help improve the care and benefits of their fellow veterans," said VFW National Commander B.J. Lawrence. "We look forward to working with this year's fellows to hone their skills as veterans' advocates on campus, in their communities, and on the national stage."

The VFW-SVA Legislative Fellowship is a semester-long academic experience that involves research, action, reporting and advocating on behalf of one of four veterans' policy areas: student veteran success on campus and beyond, improving veteran's health care and benefits, transitioning from military to civilian life, and challenges for service members and military families. Each selected fellow submitted a policy proposal to address one of these issues through federal legislative action.

"SVA has partnered with the VFW for now five years to host the annual VFW-SVA Legislative Fellow program. The opportunity provides exceptional student veterans the chance to make their voices heard on Capitol Hill and with other organizations in the veterans' advocacy space. We are fortunate to have a strong partner in the VFW to offer this program, and are grateful for their support empowering tomorrow's leaders," said SVA President and CEO Jared Lyon, a member of VFW Post 3308 in Tallahassee, Fla.

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During their visit to Washington, each fellow will be paired with a VFW mentor and accompany their VFW state delegation around Capitol Hill for in-person meetings with their members of Congress. The fellows will also receive briefings from federal officials on ongoing policy initiatives, as well as learn techniques to work with the media when advocating on veterans' issues. Upon returning home, each of the fellows will also be responsible for executing a community action plan, to include delivering their individual research papers directly to their respective congressional delegations.

The 10 selected fellows for 2019 are:

- Chad Baer, Army veteran, University of Pennsylvania
- Tammy Barlet, Coast Guard veteran, George Washington University
- Matthew Deller, Army veteran, The American University of Paris
- Christopher Lamy, Air Force veteran, Louisiana State University
- Alcides Lugo, Army veteran, Auburn University
- Angela Peacock, Army veteran, Washington University - St. Louis
- Chanel Powell, Army veteran, University at Buffalo
- Lobsang Salaka, Army veteran, Northeastern University
- Amy Sleath, Army veteran, Minnesota State University Moorhead
- Tom Wike, Marine veteran, Ohio State University

The VFW-SVA Legislative Fellowship program continues a legacy of collaboration between the two organizations that was formalized in 2013 with a memorandum of understanding. To interview any of the 10 selected fellows, contact Kristina Keenan from the VFW at kkeenan@vfw.org.