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US Forum Connection

In this issue:

1. US Forum Info
2. NLS: What We Did
3. NLS: Who We Met
4. NLS: What We Discussed
5. DKG Honors Fallen Heroes
6. WANTED!!

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US Forum

Mission

The mission of the US Forum is to serve the interests and concerns of its members.

a. The emphasis is on sharing information and ideas and exploring solutions to identified issues.

b. Participating US Forum members can engage with the issues of concern of all members at the US Forum sessions during international conferences and the international convention.

(US Forum Guidelines, 2021)

Advocacy Statement

The US Forum is dedicated to being an advocate for women, children, and education by implementing actions which enable change and improvement in social institutions, systems, legislation, and practices that impose hardships or impact negatively on individuals, groups, or families.

JOIN THE MEMBERS OF THE US FORUM STEERING COMMITTEE FOR LEGISLATIVE UPDATES, A REVIEW OF THE 2024 NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE SEMINAR, AND THE ELECTION FOR THE 2024-2026 STEERING COMMITTEE.

DKG INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION
FRIDAY, JULY 12TH
NATIONAL HARBOR, MD

National Legislative Seminar, 2024: What We Saw, What We did!



The 2024 National Legislative Seminar in Washington, DC now belongs to US Forum history! This year's event was exhilarating, informative, and energizing for the 68 DKG members who convened at the Holiday Inn National Airport Hotel, Arlington Cemetery, and in the halls of Congress on March 10-13.

An array of experts from the fields of technology, visual arts, mental health, and legislative advocacy and policy shared their knowledge and experience with the seminar participants. Additionally, presentations from several DKG experts were also extremely helpful to the members as they prepared for meetings with their congressional representatives.

As the Seminar came to a close on Day 4, participants were reminded to share what they had learned during this experience with their state and chapter members, and to continue to influence key issues that impact women, children and education through informed advocacy and civic engagement. If you missed NLS 2024, plan to join us for the next seminar in 2026!

For more details about what we saw and did during the National Legislative Seminar, 2024, go to dkgusforum.org.

Who Did We Meet at NLS, 2024?



Becky Riebeling (VA), Dr. April Coleman (AZ), Katina Keener (VA), Liz Turner (VA), Joan Rog (IL), and Kristin Merkle (IA)

Debbie Pajula (MI)



Tondra Odom (DC), Patricia Neal-Ford (DC), and Sharon Welch (DC)

Attendees at the 2024 National Legislative Seminar represented 23 states and included 4 DKG state presidents and 2 DKG past state presidents. The majority of those attending, (40) were there as first time NLS participants, but 27 attendees were veterans of previous seminars. Here

are some additional facts about those who made the trip to Washington, DC to be part of NLS 2024.

- 6 Chapter Presidents
- 1 International President
- 2 International Vice-Presidents
- 2 co-founders of the National Legislative Seminar
- 5 state legislative chairs or US Forum Liaisons
- 1 member from Hawaii
- 2 members from Alaska
- 23 members from the NE Region, 20 members from the SE region, 10 members from the NW region, and 15 from the SW region
- States with the largest number of members attending were California and Florida

The National Legislative Seminar is an excellent opportunity for DKG members to network with one another from across the United States who share common concerns about education, women, and children, and who want to engage in meaningful action to address these issues.

If you want to know more about the interesting discussions that took place at NLS 2024, contact your US Forum Steering Committee Regional Representative! She would love to share more about this experience with you.

What Did We Discuss with Legislators at NLS 2024?

One of the most exciting, and potentially intimidating, experiences during the National Legislative Seminar, is the opportunity for participants to speak directly with members of Congress about issues they have identified as critical for the health and well-being of women, children, and education. After hearing from policy experts on the issues, however, and learning important tips about being effective advocates, the seminar participants were well-prepared to take on this important task with gusto!



Rep. Greg Steube (FL), Diana Brown, Maria Metge, Vivian Posey, Pat Scott, and Carrie Frye

- Number of US Senators We Met With: 20
- Number of Members of the US House of Representatives We Met With: 30
- Number of Other Contacts Made with Legislative Offices: 29
- Most Frequently Discussed Issues:
 - Mental Health Access for Educators and School Staff
 - Teacher Pay Act
 - WEP/GPO
 - Teacher Shortages and
 - Retirement/Social Security Protection

So how did we do with our advocacy efforts? See below for a brief summary of our work during the NLS Day on the Hill!



Tara Heikila and Darlene Cook (OR), and Pat Bennett-Forman and Nancy Sheng (WA), with Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (OR), sponsor of H.R. 744 Supporting the Mental Health of Educators and Staff Act

To learn more about the National Legislative Seminar and the Day on the Hill event, be sure to attend the **US Forum session at the International Convention in July 2024**. The convention will be held at the Gaylord National Resort & Conference Center in National Harbor, MD, and the US Forum session is scheduled to take place on **Friday, July 12th, 2024!** See you then!

DKG US Forum Honors Our Fallen Heroes: Arlington National Cemetery,

Monday March 11th , 2024



On a cool, breezy day in northern Virginia, many National Legislative Seminar participants made their way to Arlington National Cemetery, the final resting place for more than 400,000 active-duty service members, veterans, and their families. We were privileged to view the Changing of the Guard, as well as an Army Full Honors Wreath Ceremony including dignitaries from Australia and the United Kingdom.

The highlight of this visit, however, was the laying of a flower bedecked wreath, draped with a beautiful Delta Kappa Gamma US Forum ribbon, at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. In a solemn and inspiring service, led by DKG International President Debbie LeBlanc, this ceremony was a way for all who were there to reflect on the significance of this stunning memorial and to honor the contributions of all those who serve the nation as members of the military.



WANTED!

Interested and informed members to lead us forward

Please consider being a candidate for the 2024 - 2026 U.S. Forum Steering Committee. Each member of the U.S. Forum has an equal opportunity to be nominated and elected to a position on the Steering Committee. You will serve a two-year term as Regional Representative or Chair of the Steering Committee.

As a member of the Steering Committee, your role will be to help identify and address major issues of concern to DKG U.S. Forum members, and to provide current information regarding pending federal legislation affecting women, children, and education. In addition, you will collaboratively work with state U.S. Forum representatives, interested members, and state presidents. You will plan activities throughout the biennium that promote involvement in the U.S. Forum for all members, including sessions at the DKG International Conference and Convention. You may serve on subcommittees or task forces to inform members of key issues. The Steering Committee plans and organizes the National Legislative Seminar that offers attendees opportunities to do the following: learn about important issues and practice advocacy skills, network with DKG members, meet with congressional representatives, hear legislative briefings, and participate in historic tours.

Please follow this process:

1. Go to the U.S. Forum website at www.dkgusforum.org.
2. Click on <https://dkgusforum.org/operational-guidelines> and review closely the Duties of Elected Leadership Team Members and the election process before applying for a position.
3. Click on <https://forms.gle/NDQcPewugNY2Y6qN7> to complete a copy of the candidate application.
4. Submit the completed application through the Google link above no later than May 31, 2024 (digitally time stamped 11:59 pm CDT) or mail to DKG, Attn: Executive Assistant, 12710 Research Blvd., Suite 230, Austin TX 78759, postmarked no later than May 31, 2024.
5. If you are submitting an application by USPS, please send an email to societyexec@dkg.org to notify her that your application has been mailed to Society Headquarters.
6. All applicants must submit a photo for use in the DKG US Forum Newsletter and the DKG US Forum website. The photo should be a high-resolution photo and sent as a jpeg attachment. If done by a photographer, ask for print quality. If sending from a phone, send as "Actual Size." Send photos to societyexec@dkg.org.

The election for the 2024-2026 U.S. Forum Steering Committee will be held during the U.S. Forum session on Friday, July 12, at the 2024 International Convention. You do not need to be present at the U.S. Forum session to be on the ballot for a committee position.

Spread your enthusiasm! Take the next step and apply for a leadership position as the U.S. Forum Steering Committee Chair, or as a Regional Representative! Your opportunity to make a difference is here!