



For God and Country

The American Legion

Department of California

Office of the Department Commander

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March 23, 2015

Dear Legion Riders.

Many years of hard work by an adhoc committee concluded in the creation and adoption of a Constitution and Bylaws, election of officers and approval of an initial budget for The American Legion Riders at their first annual Convention held in Fresno, California, on March 31-April 1, 2007. All of this preceded The American Legion Riders becoming a Department Level Program of the Department of California American Legion.

The American Legion Riders Department of California came into existence as a Department Level Program when the American Legion Department of California amended their bylaws to create the American Legion Riders Commission at their convention in Palm Springs, California on June 22-24, 2007.

In California, The American Legion Riders is a department level program as is The Sons of The American legion. Both programs are subject to the oversight and control of the Department of California Executive Committee. The continued existence of both “programs” depends on their adherence to the conditions and edicts placed on the programs by the Department of California.

Department level programs of the American Legion are subject to the conditions and oversight of the Department in which they operate. Decisions made by the leadership are sometimes made to eliminate or lessen potential liability to the American Legion. In these cases lengthy discussion and debate are of little value. Just as the leadership has a duty to protect the American Legion and its reputation, the membership has a duty to cooperate and adhere to the occasional mandates and conditions placed on the programs by the Department.

Since the beginning of the American Legion Riders Program, the vest and configuration of the American Legion Riders Emblem on the back of the vest have been a source of controversy and disagreement. From time to time programs of the Department require direction and oversight to protect the program and the department. After thoughtful deliberation and discussions with several levels of leadership within the American Legion, it became apparent the Department of California must exercise oversight and control of the vest and American Legion Riders Emblem within the State of California.

Because the American Legion emblem and the American Legion Riders emblem are trademarked and copyrighted, their use and display are subject to the conditions established by the American Legion.

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It is regrettable that a few members of the ALR have chosen to respond to the exercise of Department oversight with rebellion, inciting discontent, personal attacks and threats. Not only is this inappropriate conduct, it also demonstrates a deep disrespect and ignorance of the tenants of the American Legion.

Nevertheless, the resolution passed by the Department Executive Committee is binding and will be enforced. Those people who find it objectionable to comply with the policies, procedures and directions of the American Legion are free to join other organizations which better suite their tastes and agenda. The American Legion will wish them well as we have others in the past that have chosen another path.

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Janet Wilson, Department Commander
The American Legion Department of California