

Comrades-

My name is Joshua Schreck and I served in both Iraq and Afghanistan; giving me the honor of becoming eligible to join the VFW. As such, I am a Life Member of Post 1263 in Renton.

At this time, I would like to both announce my intention to run for the position of National Council Member for the next term and to also tell you a little about me, along with why I would be the best candidate.

Last year, for the first time in 27 years, the VFW attracted and retained over 100% of our membership. It shows that we, as an organization, are going in the right direction to meet the needs of our veterans. In order to continue recruiting new members, especially Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, we must actively listen to them. We need to ensure that their “voice” is heard at all levels of the VFW organization. As an Iraq and Afghanistan veteran, this is where I will make a positive difference. I understand the concerns, issues, and needs of the men and women who have served in Iraq and/or Afghanistan.

Of note, as of 2018, there were 744,000 living Vietnam veterans. Though our organization serves Vietnam veterans, along with Korea and the remaining few WW2 veterans, we as an organization cannot survive by only meeting the needs of these brothers and sisters. We MUST include the 2.77 million service members who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan. Just as we, as an organization, had to change our focus after WW2 to include and meet the needs of Korean and Vietnam veterans, we must now do the same for those who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan. In order to continue growing as an organization, both in numbers and representation on a national level, we must give these veterans a “voice” in all levels of the VFW.

The National Council currently seats 52 members, one representing each Department. I encourage you to take a moment and look at these elected members. Ask yourself a couple of questions: Do these elected members represent the current mix of the VFW? Do these elected members make up the future of where we want our organization to go? If you answered “no” then you are seeing what I am seeing; The National Council is not adequately representative of what each of our Posts look like. In my opinion, this is a disservice to all our members.

If elected to represent you on the National Council, I will go above and beyond for ALL veterans. As your representative, I will ensure that each veteran has that voice at the National level and that the state of Washington is well represented within the National Council of Administration.

Given the fact that many of you already know me and are aware of my background in the VFW, you may be asking: “Why should I vote for you, since you have no experience on the state level as say a ‘Department Commander’?” My answer is because we need a

change. We need to ensure that every member has a voice and it deserves to be heard. As an active member at the “ground level”, I am very aware of the “voice” and understand it; the feelings of frustration of not being heard or being an influence for change within the organization. Our organization needs to focus on our primary mission of serving our Veteran, which should not, I repeat should NOT, include petty politics, jealousies or trivial personalities. Again, I repeat, our focus and primary mission is to serve our brothers and sisters...our Veterans...not our individual agendas. To achieve this mission, we must put the needs of our veterans FIRST and forgo the individual pursuits of numbers, a cap, or positions of authority. As a reminder, VFW is an acronym of Veterans of Foreign Wars...veterans, not individuals.

As you can tell I am both passionate and interested in helping our organization and our veterans. There is no job too small, or too big, for me to take on.

In the “civilian” world, I am currently the Vice President of a multi-million dollar a month company, dealing with the day-to-day operations, finances, negotiations and so much more. I also have two graduate degrees, an MBA and an MPAS, which have provided me with the education and knowledge to better understand deeper thinking. Combining my graduate education, civilian career, and especially my military service I can “get in the weeds” and roll up my sleeves to get things done along with making decisions quickly and acting on them appropriately.

Again, I am running for National Council of Administration and I hope that I can count on you for your support. Please help me, help our organization move in to the future and have Washington State be one of the trendsetters by being proactive in the change that will take place soon enough!

Yours in Comradeship,

Joshua Schreck

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