Government Relations

Lesson Objective: Provide an understanding of how CAP's relationship with federal and state legislative and executive branches impacts our operations

Desired Learning Outcome (DLO):

1. Learn the various types of funding CAP receives from federal and state governments
2. Understand the other types of legislation that can benefit CAP and its members
3. Learn the value of legislative squadrons
4. Learn the roles of the executive branch, President and Governor, and their departments which can benefit CAP
5. Logistic Support – what the state can provide for meeting space and training facilities
6. Learn the various state missions CAP performs
7. Understand that how we market ourselves impacts how we are perceived. Learn the value of federal and state Legislative Days

Schedules Lesson Time: 1 Hour

1. Funding CAP Receives from Federal and State Governments

CAP is a nonprofit corporation chartered by Congress. Regions, wings, and units are divisions of the national CAP corporation. They are not separate legal entities either for internal governance or for accounting and IRS purposes. CAP receives its Federal funding is from Congress as a line item in the U.S. Air Force budget. You can look at CAP's annual consolidated Financial Statement for income and restrictions on the money we receive from the Air Force.

In 2019, CAP received $51 million in the FY 2019 Federal budget. This money must be used for capital acquisitions such as aircraft, vehicles, radios; and for Operations and Maintenance (O & M). To receive government funds from Congress, CAP must keep its legal existence up to date and comply with strict accounting procedures for its operations and financial records.

CAP also receives corporate funds from dues, donations, and corporate or private charitable grants. This money can be used in any way unless earmarked by the donor for a specific purpose. Some Wings receive funding from their State. The source and procedure for receiving these funds vary greatly from Wing to Wing. Again, CAP must keep its legal existence up to date and comply with strict accounting procedures for its operations and financial records as required by the State.

To receive state funding, CAP Wings must establish and maintain standing with the state legislature or with an executive branch department, usually as the CAP Division of a Department such as Military Affairs, Aeronautics, Emergency Management, or Education. If the department doesn't feel that CAP is important, and just considered CAP as just another possible "Line Item" in the budget, your chances of receiving the funding are low. The State Government department must show the Appropriations Committees that CAP is valuable to them and the State.

If attempting to become a part of a State Government department's budget, it is extremely important to work with the Legislators and their staffers that are assigned to that department's Appropriation Committee so they understand CAP. You must also ask the department fight for CAP during budget hearings.

It may be possible for CAP to obtain funding by providing some service to a state entity or as a subordinate to some other funded charitable organization. Careful CAP legal advice and structuring is required.

The CAP National Foundation and a few state foundations are usually separate nonprofit entities from CAP. They have their own sources of funds and distribution objectives for the benefit of CAP members in compliance with IRS regulations.

2. Legislation Benefitting CAP

There is a variety of legislation a Wing can work to get passed that benefit CAP and its membership. By having a strong legislative squadron, you can have ready support to help you on this legislation. The key to having a successful Government Relations program, comes down to the amount of work the Wing Government Relations Advisor is able and willing to put into the position. Making regular contact with Legislators is key to everything. While a Government Relations Advisor does not have to be experts in every aspect of CAP, he or she does need to be somewhat knowledgeable and able to answer basic questions.

If your Wing is not already part of the State government, you can get your Wing established as a part of state government (dual status). As stated above, there are several departments CAP can fall under at the State level. Whichever is the best fit for your Wing, it gives you a larger department to work through to get money or other assistance from the State.

Your Wing can get legislation passed to provide CAP free access to state parks, forests, waterways. This is a great benefit for your members for the service they give to your State.

Many Wings have CAP license plates. This is great advertising for your Wing. Many states do not require a minimum number of plates requested to continue the plate. It is helpful if you can get the CAP plate classified as a military plate so the plate can continue forever without a minimum number of plates being requested.

Many Wings have their trained CAP members considered legal first responders. This provides the protection given to first responders to our members. This can include workers compensation type coverage or representation if sued while performing REDCAP duties.

Another benefit for our members is to give CAP members on missions the same status as national guard members on active duty with employers and employee benefits. This type of

legislation can help members who are participating in a REDCAP mission get time off from their employers (especially if they work for the State).

The key to success to getting any legislation passed is contact with your state legislators. If they understand everything CAP has to offer the State, they can help champion your budgetary or legislation request.

3. The Value of Legislative Squadrons

Based on the preceding discussion, you can see the benefits to CAP through legislation and being part of the State government. The best way to engage with your legislators is to have them join the legislative squadron, both at the State and Federal levels. (CAPR 39-2, Chapter 5) The Congressional Squadron is the federal level counterpart of the state Legislative Squadrons and every CAP Wing should recruit all its U.S. Senators and Representatives, and their key staff members, to join. The benefits for the Legislators are:

- Joining is free
- CAP member with rank of Major (Lt Col for the Squadron CC)
- Receive national and wing publications and notices
- Fly CAP aircraft
- More readily use CAP cadets for color guard and other ceremonies
- Better knowledge and understanding of CAP's service to local, state, and nation

Besides having ready access to legislators, other benefits to CAP by having legislators join are:

- Legislators see and respect CAP cadets as invaluable youth assets
- CAP members and cadets gain confidence and contacts with powerful people
- Legislators can speak Wing Conferences and other CAP events
- State legislators become Governors, Congresspersons, statewide elected officials, and cabinet members at the state and national level

At the National level, CAP meets will all Representative and Senators during the annual Legislative Day. At the Wing level, the Wing Government Relations Officer should meet with all legislators at the state level. To prepare for this meeting, put together packets of information for the legislator. Include a publication on your Wing (like a trifold handout) which is professionally printed. Other items available are:

a. Updated "Fact Sheet" from NHQ
b. Copy of the latest Wing statistics from the National Legislative Day activity
c. Copy of the CAPabilities brochure
d. CAP Aerospace Education (internal/external program) and STEM education information
e. Copy of annual activities held within the Wing
f. Copy of the annual NCSA activities
g. Copy of the CAP Cyber Security program
h. Information regarding the local CAP unit in/near their district, which includes meeting details and the contact information for the unit commander

i. Updated copy of the current State Legislative Squadron membership

You can schedule 15-30 minutes to meet with the Legislator (or staffer). Briefly cover all of the material in the packet and allow time for them to ask questions.

Keeping your legislators informed about CAP activities occurring in their district and in the Wing will help make your case on the value of CAP. You may actually get the legislators to participate in some of your activities.

4. Executive Branch Role and Benefits for CAP

The Executive Branch of Government also has a role with CAP. The President, as head of the Executive Branch of the Federal Government, and the Governor, as the head of the Executive Branch of the State Government, must be kept informed of CAP's presence and service. The Governor and elected or appointed heads of departments can join the Legislative Squadron. The benefits are the same as for the Legislators.

CAP Wings can have better standing and possible funding if within or affiliated with a executive department of state government. CAP already has standing under the federal Department of Defense by its position as the Air Force Auxiliary. In the Colorado, for example, the CAP Wing is a Division of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs with a funded Department employee and some funding for CAP operations in the state budget process within the Department budget. In many ways it is co-equal with the Air Guard, Army Guard, and Veterans Affairs. In addition, if CAP is within a department of the state, the Wing can better coordinate with other departments such as Education and Emergency Management.

A relationship with the Governor has benefits for your members, as well. The Governor (or Lieutenant Governor) should be called upon to preside or speak at CAP Day at the Capitol, Wreaths Across America, Military and Veterans Day, Wing Conference, and other similar ceremonies. During the Gubernatorial Inauguration, CAP can provide cadets to seat VIPs, direct attendees, and assist at the ceremony. Even if the Governor cannot attend, it is important to extend the invitation and treat him or her as your boss.

5. Logistic Support

If CAP is known by our legislators, executives, and government agencies, it will be easier for CAP to get logistical support from agencies around the state. This also applies to county and local governments and officials. Many units meet at airports, police departments, fire departments, etc, which is below the state legislative level. Creating relationships at all levels is the key.

The kinds of support include:

- Meeting space through connections with state agencies
- Training facilities for such armories, police or emergency response locations
- Equipment, surplus or new, if available, to nonprofits
- Vehicle support, temporary or continual, if appropriate with MOU

- Communications facilities such as repeaters, towers, and land lines or microwave connections

These are just a few examples of the types of support you may be able to get from your State. Having a good relationship is the key.

Another thing to remember is that Legislators in states that have term limits, will more than likely seek election to a county of local government seat, and so the connections/impression you make when they are members of the Senate or House, will increase your chances of them assisting you at the lower government level. Term limits also necessitate keeping staffers in the loop as they will most likely still be around after a legislator has termed out. When that staffer goes to work for a new legislator, he or she can bring the new legislator up to speed on CAP.

6. State CAP Missions

Many Wings have a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with their State, county or local agencies to perform various types of missions. These missions can be for a statewide agency or a subdivision of the state such as a county or municipality, through a sheriff or emergency response manager. Wings should be looking for missions with agencies around the State.

The types of missions CAP can perform include:

- Fire or flood watch
- Providing photo record of infrastructure condition such as dams or roads
- Blood and tissue transport
- Reconnaissance of illegal crop or other activity

7. CAP Marketing Impacts How We are Perceived

Day to day, week in and week out, marketing is the CAP presentation, uniform, appearance, conduct, vehicle, aircraft, radio discipline, and quality information materials, both printed and on-line that we present to the public, our members, and government officials. This is a critical Command and PAO and PIO concern.

All CAP meetings, events, appearances are integral to our “brand”. Every Wing, Unit, and member is part of the face of a Professional CAP. Positive CAP marketing in all media must be repeated and updated as our citizens, communities, and government officials change. It never stops.

National PAO has many resources that Wings and Squadrons can utilize. High quality, inspirational materials and presentations are available and must be pushed to the squadron level and CAP members so we will succeed in marketing a great organization at every opportunity. CAP plans must include annual CAP Day, Legislative Day, Report to Congress, and any other event where CAP can show government officials and the public the unique and positive service CAP brings to the state and nation. PAO academies are a “must attend” opportunities for Wing staff and unit leaders at every level. This will give you a basic understand of Public Affairs and its importance to CAP.

Lesson Summary and Closure

Civil Air Patrol receives support, both monetary and other support, from a variety of sources. Having a good relationship with our elected officials at all levels can help CAP obtain support. Meeting with your state and federal officials and encouraging them to join the legislative squadrons can improve the support CAP receives. Having an active and engaged Government Affairs Officer is the key to a good program.

Assignment:

1. Find out what support you're the wings in your region receive from the states.
2. Find out how many legislative members each wing has. Is there a relationship?
3. Ask each wing commander or GVR about the relationship and benefits for the wing from GVR work.
4. Ask about how the wings conduct legislative day. Do they have state days or just go in DC?
5. In looking at the funding and relationships of the wings to their states, write a paper telling the region commander what you would recommend to improve GVR across the region.