

DEPARTMENT OF KANSAS  
SONS OF UNION VETERANS OF THE CIVIL WAR  
4926 Woodstock St., Shawnee, Kansas 66218-9141  
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DEPARTMENT ORDER 5  
SERIES 2026-2027

April 2, 2026

**LOBBYING WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF KANSAS**

1. REFERENCE:

a. General Order No. 13 (Series 2023-2024), Subject: Lobbying for the Department of New York; as issued by then Commander-in-Chief Peter J. Hristko, Jr. on April 22, 2024.

b. Department Order No. 10 (Series 2021-2022), Subject: Lobbying Within the Department of Kansas; as issued by then Department Commander K. Kirk Nystrom on March 3, 2022.

c. Department Order No. 7 (Series 2022-2023), Subject: Lobbying Within the Department of Kansas, as issued by then Department Commander Robert D. Boyd II on December 17, 2022.

2. The following department orders are hereby rescinded:

a. Department Order No. 10, Series 2021-2022), dated March 3, 2022.

b. Department Order No. 7 (Series 2022-2023), dated December 17, 2022.

3. The above references give specific rules concerning the lobbying (attempting to influence legislation) by the brothers of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War. As stated in reference 1a, a 501(c)3 organization can do a limited amount of lobbying, but too much could jeopardize its tax-exempt status. Per General Order No. 13:

a. Legislation includes action by Congress, any state legislature, any local council, or similar governing body, with respect to acts, bills, resolutions, public referendum, ballot initiative, constitutional amendment, or similar procedure.

b. Legislation does not include actions by executive, judicial, or administrative bodies.

c. An organization will be regarded as attempting to influence legislation if it contacts, or urges the public to contact, members or employees of a legislative body for the purpose of proposing, supporting, or opposing legislation, or if the organization advocates the adoption or rejection of legislation.

4. All camps and brothers who are considering lobbying on behalf of the Department of Kansas or its camps shall comply fully with General Order No. 13. This includes Scope, Restrictions and Prohibitions, and obtaining prior Permission to Lobby from the Commander-in-Chief of the SUVCW.

a. **Such request shall be sent to the Department Commander for his review.** No camp or brother shall send a request directly to the Commander-in-Chief.

b. If the Department Commander finds the request acceptable, the Department Commander will forward the request to the Commander-in-Chief.

c. Additionally, the keeping of records and all required reporting must strictly be maintained by the lobbying unit.

5. General Order No. 13 states the following regarding the **Rights of Brothers as Private Citizens**.

Brothers are free to communicate as private citizens with their local, state, or national representatives on any legislation; however, in this case, they must refrain from mentioning or otherwise implying they are representing the SUVCW, nor may they use letterhead of the SUVCW National Organization, Department, Camp, or SVR Military District or Unit.

6. As stated in General Order No. 13, penalties for noncompliance with the order, the “National Organization must practice prudence and take action for the good of the Order against any subordinate body which fails to follow [*General Order No. 13*], namely suspension as well as other actions necessary to ensure the Order retains its 501(c)3 tax exempt status.”

7. This Department Order, along with General Order No. 13 (Series 2023-2024), shall be an agenda item at the next meeting of all camps within the Department of Kansas.

IN FRATERNITY, CHARITY, AND LOYALTY,



James D. Thornton, PCC  
Department Commander

ATTEST:

Alan L. Russ, PDC  
Secretary

Attachment:  
General Order No. 13 (Series 2023-2024)

# ATTACHMENT



**Peter J. Hritsko Jr**  
**Commander in Chief**  
**Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War**

**12710 Darrow Rd**  
**Vermilion, Ohio 44089**

[CinC@SUVCW.org](mailto:CinC@SUVCW.org)



**General Order #13**  
**Lobbying for the Department of New York**  
**Series 2023-2024**

**22 April 2024**

The National Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War is granting permission for the Department of New York to lobby the legislature of that state in accordance with the SUVCW National Policy on Lobbying regarding C-in-C Pierson's General Order #14 dated 13 April 2020.

The for-said policy establishes the guideline under which the Department of New York must comply.

As stated below.

**Introduction.** GO #35, Series 2019-2020, dated 14 August 2020, was a prudent measure to keep the SUVCW from any inadvertent violations while the 501(c)3 status of subordinate organizations was still under review by the IRS. The IRS has since granted that status, and the Order has had sufficient time to investigate and understand the rules for lobbying to develop long term guidance for Departments, Camps and SVR Units.

**2. Revocation of GO #35.** Therefore, the aforesaid GO #35 is hereby revoked and replaced with the following guidance regarding lobbying.

**3. Status of the SUVCW.** The National Organization, subordinate Departments, Camps, and Sons of Veterans Reserve Military Districts and Units are now considered 501(c)(3) entities.

**4. General Rules on Lobbying and Definitions.** In general, a 501(c)(3) organization can do a limited amount of lobbying (attempting to influence legislation), but too much could jeopardize its tax-exempt status (i.e., it cannot be a substantial part of its activities).

a. Legislation includes action by Congress, any state legislature, any local council, or similar governing body, with respect to acts, bills, resolutions, public referendum, ballot initiative, constitutional amendment, or similar procedure.

b. Legislation does not include actions by executive, judicial, or administrative bodies.

c. An organization will be regarded as attempting to influence legislation if it contacts, or urges the public to contact, members or employees of a legislative body for the purpose of proposing,

supporting, or opposing legislation, or if the organization advocates the adoption or rejection of legislation.

**5. Scope of Permitted Lobbying.** The National Organization, subordinate Departments, Camps, and Sons of Veterans Reserve Military Districts and Units are permitted to undertake a limited amount of lobbying as long as the subject of the lobbying is directly related to one of the six purposes stated in the SUVCW's Congressional Charter (36 USC, Chapter 2003, §200302), and in particular to the following:

- To perpetuate the memory of the Grand Army of the Republic and the men who saved the Union in 1861 to 1865.
- To assist in every practical way in preserving and making available for research documents and records pertaining to the Grand Army of the Republic and its members.
- To cooperate in honoring all those who have served our country in any war.

a. The following limited lobbying activities are allowable activities for Departments, Camps, and SVR subordinate units once the CinC has granted his written permission (see paragraph 7, below):

- 1) The encouragement of members and non-members to write letters;
- 2) Conduct educational meetings to inform the public about planned projects and events. Education sessions for current legislative leaders and potential candidates for elected office may be conducted as long as the information is offered to all parties and candidates without partisanship;
- 3) prepare, and distribute educational materials or otherwise consider public policy issues in an educational manner that does not jeopardize our tax-exempt status;
- 4) Testify at public hearings;
- 5) Provide research, analysis, and commentary;
- 6) Join amicus curiae briefs (additional permission is required on a case-by-case basis).

**6. Restrictions and Prohibitions.** Lobbying shall remain nonpartisan. It is prohibited to conduct or engage in political campaign activities to intervene in elections to public office. The Johnson Amendment to the 1954 Tax Code applies to all 501(c)(3) organizations, not just religious 501(c)(3) organizations. This includes, but is not limited to the following restrictions:

- a. At no time will any Department, Camp, or SVR subordinate unit of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, contribute or otherwise donate funds to any political campaign;
- b. At no time will any Department, Camp, or SVR subordinate unit raise funds for candidates in any manner;
- c. At no time will any Department, Camp, or SVR subordinate unit publicly support or oppose any

candidates;

d. At no time will the National, Departments, Camps, or SVR subordinate units post partisan political messages on any social media platform (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Reddit, Imgur, Gab, etc.) or on organizational websites;

e. At no time will the National, Departments, Camps or SVR subordinate units engage in ad hominem criticism of public officials, or give the appearance thereof (including but not limited to attacks on one's personal characteristics or one's status or qualifications);

f. At no time will the National, Departments, Camps or SVR subordinate units connect, compare, or assess the organization's position on an issue(s) with voting recommendations for or against candidates for office in any election(s). This prohibition includes but is not limited to making and/or distributing voter guides for or against candidates;

g. At no time will the National, Departments, Camps, or SVR subordinate units, during an election, compare the organization's issue position with that of a candidate.

**7. Permission to Lobby.** Prior permission of the Commander-in- Chief of the Sons of Union Veterans must be obtained before any Department, Camp, or SVR subordinate unit conduct any lobbying efforts whatsoever.

a. Requests for permission must be made in writing to the Commander-in-Chief, a duplicate copy to be filed with the National Executive Director, National Treasurer, and National Counselor in writing or by electronic means. No lobbying activities will take place prior to receiving the Commander-in-Chief's written permission under penalty of suspension. Copies of the aforesaid written requests and permissions will be maintained on file by the Executive Director and National Treasurer.

b. Once the lobbying activity has been completed, the Department, Camp, or SVR subordinate unit which was engaged in a lobbying effort shall report to the Commander-in-Chief as follows:

1) Who was contacted and on what date(s);

2) What was discussed, and any other relevant information concerning the lobbying activities, including how many hours were spent;

3) The report shall include copies of any written communications to and from the party(s) which were lobbied;

4) For in-person (face to face) meetings, a synopsis of the conversation(s) shall be attached.

**8. Rights of Brothers as Private Citizens.** Brothers are free to communicate as private citizens with their local, state, or national representatives on any legislation; however, in this case, they must refrain from mentioning or otherwise implying they are representing the SUVCW, nor may they use letterhead of the SUVCW National Organization, Department, Camp, or SVR Military District or Unit.

**9. Penalties for Non-Compliance.** As the failure of a Department, Camp, or SVR subordinate unit to

comply with this order may jeopardize our 501(c)3 tax exempt status, the National Organization must practice prudence and take action for the good of the Order against any subordinate body which fails to follow this General Order, namely suspension as well as any other actions as necessary to ensure the Order retains its 501(c)3 tax exempt status.

Ordered this 22nd day of April 2024

Respectfully In Fraternity, Charity & Loyalty,

*Peter J. Hritsko Jr*

Peter J. Hritsko Jr

Commander-in-Chief

Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

Attest

Daniel Murray, PDC

National Secretary

Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War