

THE AMERICAN LEGION  
DEPARTMENT OF



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Official Statement:

As you may have already heard Hudson American Legion Lee-Bishop Post 464 made national media attention the week of May 31, 2021, for an incident involving their Memorial Day keynote speaker, retired Army Lt. Col. Barnard Kemter. Post 464 is accused of turning off Mr. Kemter's microphone for roughly two minutes during his eleven-minute speech on Memorial Day and its history. It is believed that the event organizers informed Mr. Kemter before the event on Monday that they would like Mr. Kemter to adjust his speech. Mr. Kemter did not adjust his speech and showed the speech to a Hudson public official, who advised Mr. Kemter to leave the speech intact. These events culminated in Mr. Kemter's microphone being shut off by an unknown person during the portion of the speech event organizers requested be changed beforehand.

The American Legion Department of Ohio is investigating this incident thoroughly. The actions of the individuals in question do not represent the beliefs of the American Legion Department of Ohio and its members nor will they ever be tolerated. The American Legion Department of Ohio stands firm in a value it established in the form of a national resolution it adopted in 1923:

*WHEREAS, The fundamental law of our country guarantees to all peoples equal rights and equal opportunities and the right to worship their God as they see fit; and...*

*WHEREAS, Membership of The American Legion is made up of those who served our country in a time of great stress, without distinction as to race, color, creed, or class; and...*

***RESOLVED, ... That we consider any individual, group of individuals, or organizations, which create, or fosters racial, religious or class strife among our people, or which takes into their own hands the enforcement of law, determination of guilt, or infliction of punishment, to be un-American, a menace to our liberties, and destructive to our fundamental law; and be it finally***

***RESOLVED, That we consider such actions by any individual, groups, or organizations, to be inconsistent with the ideals and purposes of the American Legion.***

The American Legion has been focused on tackling issues of racism and promoting diversity and inclusion within The American Legion through education opportunities. One example of these education opportunities is the Department of Ohio Buckeye American Legion College.

The Department of Ohio Buckeye American Legion College is committed to the education of Ohio's Legionnaires and Sons of American Legion members. We offer classes throughout the year on Post and Squadron Operations, American Legion Programs, Diversity and Inclusion, and Leadership. Diversity and Inclusion is a very important topic that we have been teaching since the inception of the college.

**“Veterans Strengthening America”**

We encourage all members in good standing to enroll in Buckeye American Legion College. We market this program heavily and graduates are equipped to teach the concepts at a local level.

We will be offering the Diversity and Inclusion class live as part of the curriculum at Department Convention and it is also available to any post on the Department of Ohio American Legion youtube channel.

I hope this letter has helped you and your staff understand The American Legion Department of Ohio is handling this issue and is focused on eliminating any possibility of a similar incident occurring again within the great state of Ohio. If you have any specific questions, please reach out to our office at (740) 362-7478.

Sincerely,



Suzette Heller  
Department Adjutant



Roger Friend  
Department Commander