



*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts*  
*House of Representatives*  
*State House, Boston 02133-1054*

**TODD M. SMOLA**  
**REPRESENTATIVE**  
1ST HAMPDEN DISTRICT

STATE HOUSE, ROOM 124  
TEL. (617) 722-2100  
FAX: (617) 722-2390

[www.reptoddsmla.org](http://www.reptoddsmla.org)  
[Todd.Smola@mahouse.gov](mailto:Todd.Smola@mahouse.gov)  
[Conor.Welch@mahouse.gov](mailto:Conor.Welch@mahouse.gov)

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Contact: Conor Welch**  
**617-722-2100**

## **Representative Smola Recognized at VFW Awards Ceremony**

**LUDLOW** – **Representative Todd M. Smola (R-Warren)** joined veterans and community members at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Hampden District 7 annual awards ceremony in Ludlow. This year’s theme was “My Vision for America.” Awards were presented to a host of local VFW members, school officials and elected office holders. Representative Smola was awarded the VFW “Legislator Award” and shared the stage with Ware resident and veteran Phil Hamel, who received the “District Distinguished Service Award.”

“I am incredibly humbled to be acknowledged for this honor by the VFW,” said Representative Smola. “The recognition really goes out to the men and women who serve this country every day. We owe our unwavering gratitude to them. It means even more to me to get this award and share the stage with my close friend Phil Hamel, who has given so much of himself to veterans and veteran organizations in Ware and the region. He is one of the finest individuals I have ever known.”

The VFW is a service organization that works to provide assistance to veterans through community, state and federal programs. They have been an instrumental voice in establishing the Veterans Administration, creating a GI bill for the 20th century, and the development of the national cemetery system.

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