



AESA ON CALL



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LEGISLATIVE UPDATES AND NEWS

Senate Committee on Armed Services Completes Markup of FY 2012 NDAA The Senate Committee on Armed Services recently finished its markup of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for FY 2012. The committee approved the bill unanimously on Thursday, June 16, and it now awaits full Senate consideration. Like its House counterpart, the Senate bill provides a 1.6 percent across-the-board pay raise for all members of the uniformed services and reauthorizes over 30 types of bonuses and special pays aimed at encouraging enlistment, reenlistment, and continued service by active-duty and Reserve component personnel. It also permits increases in annual TRICARE Prime enrollment fee and pharmacy copayment changes in FY 2012, it then limits annual fee increases each year thereafter to the rate of the annual cost of living adjustment (COLA). Co-pays for medications obtained at retail pharmacies would also be allowed to rise under this legislation, and beneficiaries who enroll in the Uniformed Services Family Health Plan (USFHP) after Sept. 30, 2011, will be required to transition to TRICARE for Life once they become Medicare-eligible due to age. Does this affect you and are you happy with it?

Items unique to the Senate bill would require hostile fire and imminent danger pay be prorated according to the number of days spent in a qualifying area rather than be paid on a monthly basis; repeal the mandatory high-deployment allowance; allow the Secretary of Defense to authorize the issuance of a Cold War Service Medal by the service secretaries; and authorize the Secretary of the Air Force to allow seriously wounded, ill, or injured former or retired enlisted service members to continue their participation in associate degree programs of the Community College of the Air Force in order to complete a degree program interrupted by separation or retirement.

As stated above, this legislation still requires full Senate approval and our sources tell us that won't occur until mid July. Numerous amendments to the bill will be considered during this time which could alter items listed above. You can read a press release on the bill which lists other items in the bill by clicking [HERE](#)

<<http://armedservices.senate.gov/press/NDAA%20FY12%20Markup%20Press%20Release.pdf>> .

House - Senate Conference on the NDAA

Once the Senate completes its Defense Authorization Bill, a joint House - Senate Conference Committee will meet behind closed doors to reconcile differences between the two bills and compile a single piece of legislation to present to the President. As a general rule, only differences will be discussed during the conference meaning items like the 1.6 percent pay raise and higher TRICARE fees are fairly certain at this point. The conference report does require House and Senate approval prior to sending the bill to the president, and historically this occurs in the fall. AFSA will continue to offer inputs to the House and Senate Armed Services Committees and provide readers with updates related to the preparation of this bill as new information becomes available.

Budget Talks Address Changes in Military Retired Pay? Watch Out!

Most of you are aware of the ongoing talks led by Vice President Biden regarding the country's current fiscal situation. Negotiators are seeking to carve trillions of dollars from the federal deficit and according to Rick Maze of the Military Times a pair of changes involving military retired pay are among the items being considered by the panel.

"One possible change involves how cost-of-living adjustments are calculated. The change, which would save up to \$24 billion over 10 years, would apply to military and federal civilian retired pay, veterans' disability, and survivor benefits. Instead of linking annual COLAs for benefits and retired pay to the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners (CPI-W), the new plan would link increases to the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U). Estimates say this change would result in annual COLAs that average 0.25 percent less. If adopted, the change from CPI-W to CPI-U would apply to all future cost-of-living adjustments, including for current retirees.

"The second change involves a complete overhaul of military retired pay. In most discussions, the overhaul would not apply to any current retirees or anyone now in the military but would end the 20-year retirement system. Future service members would earn some retirement benefits after 10 years of service, but only people retired on disability would receive immediate retired pay. Those not retired on disability would wait until age 60 or older before retired pay begins." Maze's article includes comments made by Secretary Gates during a recent Senate Appropriations Committee hearing supporting changes with the military retired pay system. You can read his entire article here

<<http://www.navytimes.com/news/2011/06/budget-talks-address-military-retired-pay-cuts-biden-061711/>> .

AFSA Testifies Before Key Senate Appropriations Subcommittee AFSA's CEO "Doc" McCauslin offered the Association's views on a variety of issues at a Senate Appropriations Defense Subcommittee hearing on Wednesday. Among the topics he covered were the importance of robust military pay raises, lowering the Guard and Reserve retirement age, concerns with higher TRICARE fees, better treatment of Wounded Warriors, and the urgent need to repeal the SBP/DIC offset. You can watch his testimony here

<<http://appropriations.senate.gov/webcasts.cfm?method=webcasts.view&id=7e2cd>

ae7-ad5c-4edc-bc8b-729a13c24087> (presentation begins around 52:27).

SECDEF Confirmed

The Senate voted unanimously Tuesday evening to confirm Leon E. Panetta as the next Secretary of Defense. Mr. Panetta is replacing Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates who is stepping down from the position on June 30.

VETERANS NEWS

VA Pharmacy Wins Customer Service Award

The Department of Veterans Affairs' mail-order pharmacy program has been recognized as a J.D. Power 2011 Customer Service Champion - one of only 40 entities in the United States to earn the distinction this year. "We are honored to receive this distinction and be included in this elite group of companies that focus on customer service excellence," said Rita Brueckner, national quality management officer for VA's Consolidated Mail Outpatient Pharmacy program. "Customer satisfaction is our top priority, and we appreciate this external recognition of our efforts." VA's Consolidated Mail Outpatient Pharmacy (CMOP) mails prescription medications and supplies directly to Veteran patients. Local VA medical center pharmacies almost always process and dispense the initial prescription order; after that, the vast majority of refills are handled via mail-order. The goal is delivery of medication or supplies to the patient within 10 days of request. VA typically gets the prescription delivered in less than five days. CMOP processed nearly 107 million prescriptions in fiscal year 2010. Every workday, 300,000 Veterans receive medication or supplies from VA.

Veterans Crisis Line

The Veterans Crisis Line is a toll-free, confidential resource that connects Veterans in crisis and their families and friends with qualified, caring VA responders. Veterans and their loved ones can call 1-800-273-8255 and "Press 1" or chat online at www.VeteransCrisisLine.net* to receive free, confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, even if they are not registered with VA or enrolled in VA health care. The professionals at the Veterans Crisis Line are specially trained and experienced in helping Veterans of all ages and circumstances--from Veterans coping with mental health issues that were never addressed to recent Veterans struggling with relationships or the transition back to civilian life.

HEALTH CARE

Understanding TRICARE Prime and TRICARE Prime Remote Non-active duty TRICARE Prime and TRICARE Prime Remote (TPR) enrollees having to travel more than 100 miles (one way) to see a specialist may be eligible to receive reimbursement for reasonable travel expenses. If this applies to you, read the article "Understanding the TRICARE Prime Travel Benefit Program" located (here <http://www.tricare.mil/mediacenter/press_article.aspx?fid=545>)

Meeting the Needs of Families with Special Needs

If you have a family member with special needs or a serious illness or injury, you may not know where to turn for help. Many resources are

available and you can visit TRICAREs (Resources for Families with Special Need) page for a list of some of them. Click HERE
<<http://www.tricare.mil/mybenefit/ProfileFilter.do;jsessionid=TDdL3Y3QssLtBbD5f5mQX2v1KTQHySGGWkvBnTQTP7RLx42NM7L5!-2014368146?&puri=%2Fhome%2FLifeEvent%2FSpecialNeeds%2FResources>> .

AROUND OUR NATION

WANT INSTANT UPDATES? - AFSA IS NOW ON TWITTER

Be first in getting the latest updates and follow AFSA ON CALL. We are now posting daily and weekly updates on Twitter. As you may already know, Twitter allows for instant updates and happenings around the world, either on computers or your portable devices. Sign up for your AFSA Twitter updates at - <http://twitter.com/#!/afsahq>

AFSA MEMBER BENEFITS

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APPLE SYSTEMS

Thinking about buying a Mac, iPod, or iPhone? Shop through the AFSA partnered website HERE <<http://www.apple.com/eppstore/afsa>> or call (800) MY-APPLE (be sure to request your AFSA member discount when calling Apple).

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DID YOU KNOW?

Membership with the AFSA has never been more important and renewing your membership is even easier. AFSA International Headquarters is pleased to announce that the Auto Deduct/Auto Renewal Application is posted on the AFSA Website under Resource -- Membership Docs. All new and current members interested in enrolling in the Auto Deduct/Auto Renewal Program should print and complete the application, sign it and mail the completed/signed application to the AFSA International Headquarters at 5211 Auth Road, Suitland, Maryland 20746.

2011 PROFESSIONAL AIRMEN'S CONFERENCE

Don't forget to make your Grand Hyatt Hotel reservations URL for online reservation is available on the AFSA Web site: www.hqafsa.org
<<http://www.hqafsa.org/>>

To get started, please select "Attendee" from the drop down menu

AFSA has contracted overflow hotel accommodations with the Hyatt Regency San Antonio, 123 Losoya Street, and the San Antonio Marriott Riverwalk, 889 East Market Street.

Overflow hotel accommodations can be made with the Hyatt Regency by calling the central reservations at 1-888-421-1442

or

The San Antonio Marriott Riverwalk by calling Marriott reservations at 1-800-648-4462

RESUME OF CANDIDATE FOR ELECTED OFFICE

IAW AFSA Manual 100-2, Policies and Procedures, October 1, 2010, AFSA Headquarters must be in receipt of a properly prepared "Resume of Candidate for Elected Office," not less than fifteen (15) days before the International Convention's convening date. Additional lead-time would be most helpful to allow AFSA International Headquarters time to print the candidates' portfolio for the general membership attending the international convention. For printing purposes, HQ request all "Resume of Candidate for Elected Office" be submitted NLT 23 June 2011.

<http://www.hqafsa.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=About>

We want to hear your thoughts and opinions. Complete the sentence below! What's your top 10 list for AFSA? Go ahead. Don't be bashful. Send it.

"I THINK AFSA SHOULD _____."

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