



AFSA International Legislative Committee Bulletin 2011-018
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1. “Supercommittee” May Seek Commission on Pay and Benefits. According to several sources, the Supercommittee (a group of 12 legislators, 3 from each party from the House and Senate) may form a commission to examine federal/military pay, pensions, and health care benefits. A *Bloomberg* article wrote, “The U.S. congressional supercommittee charged with cutting the deficit may consider whether cuts in federal pensions, pay and health-care benefits should be drafted by an independent commission. The panel might operate similarly to the 2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission, which presented Congress with a plan it had to either accept or reject without changes, according to two congressional staff members who weren’t authorized to speak on the record. . .The Defense Department faces cuts of at least \$450 billion from its 10-year spending plans, even before the supercommittee makes its recommendations. If Congress fails to act on the recommendations by Dec. 23, the August budget bill signed by President Barack Obama calls for automatic cuts, including an additional \$500 billion from defense spending over a decade, not including interest.” To read more, go to: <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-10-05/supercommittee-may-seek-pay-commission.html>

2. Commissary Director Defends Commissaries. Quoted in a *Stars and Stripes* article, the director of the Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) defended DoD’s investment in the commissary system. He said, “In return for the \$1.3 billion that we get in appropriations support’ annually, we are providing nearly \$2.7 billion in savings to patrons.” That more-than “two-for-one return on investment” is “something people don’t think about. It’s really an excellent investment for taxpayers.” He made these comments in light of recent discussions of ways to balance the federal budget by possibly cutting defense programs such as commissaries and exchanges. You can read the entire article at: <http://www.stripes.com/commissary-director-says-critics-overlook-the-efficiencies-1.157108>

3. NDAA Delay Could Affect Important Programs. In the previous bulletin, we reported that Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., is refusing to bring the Senate Armed Services Committee’s (SASC) version of the FY 2012 NDAA, S. 1253, to the full Senate floor for debate because of a terrorist detainee provision. While there is little chance the January 1 military pay raise (1.6 percent) will be delayed, the provision that would limit annual TRICARE Prime fee increases, for military retirees, to no more than the same percentage as the annual military retiree cost-of-living adjustment cannot be enacted without

passage of the bill. Also, a major overhaul of the military transportation/travel regulation and stronger sexual assault prevention provisions are in the bill. SASC Ranking Member, Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., has said that while he considers the detainee provisions in S. 1253 fair and equitable, he is ready to work with SASC Chairman Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., to work out a compromise. Those wanting to view the text and status of S. 1253 can do so at: <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=s112-1253>

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