



2017 - 2018 AFSA LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

This platform of legislative targets will be used as a “blueprint” for testimony and lobbying efforts, in addition to responses dictated by day-to-day events. We have seven major focus groups listed below. Within those generalized focus groups which are the Association-approved initiatives we will list a few main targets; as we win approval for one of those targeted areas we will remove that ticket item and add another from our on-going support list. This list is not all inclusive and will be modified as dictated by the situation and events. Understanding our Nation’s fiscal situation, success in each of these areas will not always be defined by what is gained, rather the level of benefit preserved or gaining a portion of our objective.

AFSA’s SEVEN MAJOR FOCUS GROUPS

MILITARY HEALTHCARE -- VETERANS/RETIREE BENEFITS -- CARING FOR SURVIVORS MILITARY BENEFITS & PROGRAMS -- AIR NATIONAL GUARD & AIR FORCE RESERVE -- EDUCATION -- SPECIAL INTEREST ITEMS

- Improve access to earned military health care benefits; enhance existing coverage/services and resist future fee increases.
- Improve access to VA healthcare thereby ensuring the nation fulfills its obligation to care for those “who shall have borne the battle.” Enhance the disability claims and appeals process; ensure ancillary programs, services, etc., remain fully funded
- Fight to eliminate the VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC)/ Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) offset of annuities for survivors of service members who died of service-connected causes
- Sustain military pay comparability with the private sector via full military pay raises IAW current law and protect or enhance related benefits like leave, Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH), bonuses and special pays while protecting funding for commissaries, base exchanges, dependent schools and family support programs
- Fix the complex reserve duty status system (e.g., 12304b situation) without reducing compensation value as well as reducing the Guard & Reserve retirement compensation age from 60 to 55
- Support legislation that promotes future success through the use of hard-earned education benefits, like Tuition Assistance, MyCAA, Montgomery or Post 9/11 GI Bill and ensure that these programs remain relevant and fully funded for them or any dependents whom their benefits may have been transferred
- Continue to seek increasing eligibility of concurrent receipt for military retirees; protect the voting rights of military service members and their eligible family members; and repeal or further modify the Former Spouse Protection Act

ON-GOING SUPPORT ITEMS

- Resist TRICARE fee increases, pharmacy co-pays and authorize pre-tax payment of health, dental and long-term care premiums
- Require TRICARE to provide Chiropractic benefit for all beneficiaries, regardless of location
- Support efforts to reduce the VA claims and appeals backlog
- Ensure adequate VA healthcare funding and improve access to quality care
- Support expansion of specialized VA clinics targeting female veteran's healthcare needs
- Extend the VA Caregivers Act to full-time caregivers for Veterans of other eras
- Expand concurrent receipt legislation to include ALL military retirees
- Promote and enhance transition programs and employment opportunities for Veterans
- Improve access to affordable child care and encourage payment policies that accommodate military lifestyles (i.e., accommodate periods of leave, offer tax breaks)
- Seek adjustments to allowances to better reimburse members for expenses they incur for housing and government-directed PCS moves
- Establish a catastrophic leave program; allow military members to transfer their annual leave to other military members
- Support educational and employment opportunities for military spouses
- Provide a full accounting of POW/MIAs from all past and future military actions
- Guard the American flag from purposeful acts of physical desecration
- Pursue changes in Status of Forces Agreements (SOFAs) to provide overseas military retirees with full exchange/commissary benefits and postal services
- Credit all post-9/11 active duty service toward Guard/Reserve early retirement
- Remove the annual cap on inactive duty points that can be applied towards retirement
- Acquire Tuition Assistance (TA) program benefits for Air National Guardsmen and Dual Status Technicians & enhance Selected Reserve Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB-SR) benefits
- Authorize reimbursement for military duty-related travel of at least 50 miles
- Permit the full receipt of DIC and Survivor Benefit Plan without an offset
- Allow SBP recipients to remarry after age 55 without losing their entitlement
- Allow survivors of military retirees to draw the full, final month's retired pay
- Protect the current military Tuition Assistance (TA) program and enhance its use
- Resist reductions in Post 9/11GI Bill benefits
- Allow use of the Post-9/11 GI bill for previously taken courses when periodic repeat is required for professional purposes
- Ensure full funding of the Impact Aid Program