

Legislative Accomplishments for 2014

In the constrained budget environment in which we find ourselves, legislative gains don't come easy; in reality they never do. Even though the budget pressures are real, we were still able to secure many key victories in 2014 on behalf of the enlisted force. They are as follows:

Active / Reserve Force Issues

- Repealed the annual COLA reductions established by 2013 Bipartisan Budget Act for retirees and survivors
- Blocked a proposed \$1 billion reduction in federal appropriations for the Defense Commissary Agency
- Blunted a proposed reduction of Basic Allowance for Housing for service members
- Extended COLAs protection to service members entering service through January 1, 2016
- Eliminated the Guard and Reserve retirement credit "fiscal year glitch"

Health Care Issues

- Blocked a proposed consolidation of TRICARE health programs into a single plan that would cost beneficiaries more while providing them less choice
- Prevented a 24% reduction in Medicare and TRICARE payments to doctors ("Doc Fix")
- Blunted disproportionate pharmacy copay increase
- Blocked the adoption of means testing for TRICARE Prime and TRICARE for Life fees
- Blocked implementation of strict caps on Medicare payments for physical and speech therapy
- Secured passage of the Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act to reduce vet waiting times
- Established commission to look at veteran health care delivery for the 21st century
- Convinced the VA to expand primary care services through its nationwide Community Care contracts
- Expanded counseling services for victims of military sexual trauma
- Protected the US Family Health Plan (USFHP) from elimination or consolidation

Military Family / Veterans / Other Issues

- Acquired all 50 states' ratification of the Interstate Compact on Education for Military Children easing the burden of school-age children moving from state to state
- Secured in-state tuition rates (effective July 1, 2015) for vets and authorized Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits to surviving spouses
- Prevented a 1 percent reduction in the annual COLA for the Post 9/11 GI Bill's monthly housing allowance
- Secured \$30B in supplemental aid to school districts serving large military communities
- Authorized SBP annuities to be paid to Special Needs Trusts for permanently disabled children
- Secured VA advanced appropriations to protect disability, pension, survivor, and GI Bill programs
- Authorization of \$1.12 million for installing FuelCall assistance systems at military service stations