

## **2015 - 2016 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. Each area designates Association-approved initiatives but this list is not all inclusive. Understanding the Nation’s fiscal situation, success in each of these areas will not be defined by what is gained, rather the level of benefit preserved.

### **MILITARY HEALTHCARE**

- Improve access to health care, resist TRICARE fee increases and protect military healthcare benefits earned through a career of military service
- Extend TRICARE Reserve Select eligibility to Dual Status Technicians
- Enhance the TRICARE Active Duty Dental and Retiree Dental Plans
- Exempt military retirees who entered service prior to December 7, 1956, from the obligation of Medicare Part B payments
- Authorize pre-tax payment of health, dental and long-term care premiums

### **VETERANS/RETIREE BENEFITS**

- Protect annual Cost-of-Living Adjustments
- Ensure adequate VA healthcare funding and access to quality care
- Extend the VA Caregivers Act to full-time caregivers for catastrophically disabled Veterans of other eras
- Oppose user fees at VA medical facilities
- Expand concurrent receipt legislation to include ALL military retirees
- Support efforts to reduce the VA claims and appeals backlog
- Promote and enhance transition programs and employment opportunities for Veterans
- Pursue changes in Status of Forces Agreements (SOFAs) to provide overseas military retirees with full exchange/commissary benefits and postal services
- Repeal/Modify the Former Spouse Protection Act

### **CARING FOR SURVIVORS**

- 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
- Improve education programs for surviving spouses and children

### **MILITARY BENEFITS & PROGRAMS**

- Sustain military pay comparability with the private sector and protect related benefits like Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) against significant degradation
- Preserve and/or enhance bonuses and special pays
- Protect funding for commissaries, base exchanges, dependent schools and family support programs
- 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

## **AIR NATIONAL GUARD AND AIR FORCE RESERVE**

- Streamline the complex reserve duty status system without reducing compensation value
- Award Veterans' status to all Guard & Reserve members
- Reduce the earliest Guard & Reserve retirement compensation age from 60 to 55
- Credit all post-9/11 active duty service toward Guard/Reserve early retirement
- Remove the annual cap of 130 points on inactive duty points that can be applied towards retirement
- Acquire Tuition Assistance (TA) program benefits for Air National Guardsmen and Dual Status Technicians
- Support greater transparency in reporting and resolving Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) violations
- Authorize reimbursement for military duty-related travel of at least 50 miles (instead of current 100 miles)
- Enhance Selected Reserve Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB-SR) benefits

## **EDUCATION**

- Support legislation that promotes Veterans success through their use of their hard-earned MGIB or P 9/11 education benefits and ensure these programs remain relevant and are fully funded for them and dependents they may have transferred benefits to
- Protect the current military Tuition Assistance (TA) program
- Eliminate the per-hour cap of \$250 altogether and allow TA to be used for classes not tied to a degree or certification (e.g., foreign language classes).
- Seek transparency of the education programs provided by universities and colleges to military members and their families using military and VA education assistance programs
- Ensure full funding of the Impact Aid Program

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

- Provide a full accounting of POW/MIAs from all past and future military actions, and promote international compliance in recovery efforts
- Protect the American flag from purposeful acts of physical desecration
- Work to have the military vote count in Federal elections, especially for those service members voting by absentee ballot