



## 2018 - 2019 AFSA LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

This platform of legislative objectives will be used as a “blueprint” for testimony and lobbying efforts, in conjunction with responses dictated by day to day events. There are seven major focus groups listed below. Within those generalized focus groups are the Association-approved initiatives which we will list a few main objectives; 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 – VETERAN/RETIREE BENEFITS – CARING FOR SURVIVORS – MILITARY BENEFITS & PROGRAMS – AIR NATIONAL GUARD & AIR FORCE RESERVE – EDUCATION – MILITARY FAMILIES***

- Improve access to earned military health care benefits; enhance existing coverage/services and resist future fee increases
- Improve funding and 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 and reduce backlog; ensure ancillary programs, services, etc., remain fully funded; extend concurrent receipt to all retirees with disability ratings; expand and enhance access for women Veteran health care
- Repeal 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 in accordance with current law and protect or enhance related benefits like leave, Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) to include dual BAH, bonuses and special pays while protecting funding for commissaries, base exchanges, and MWR facilities; review and enhance COLA for high cost areas
- Fix the complex reserve duty status system (e.g., 12304b situation) without reducing compensation value; reduce 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 “Forever” GI Bill and ensure that these programs remain relevant and fully funded for them or any dependents whom their benefits may have been transferred
- Extend and enhance educational and employment programs for military spouses; fully fund Impact Aid

### **ON-GOING LEGISLATIVE ITEMS**

- Provide option of TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS) to Air Reserve Technicians (ART)

- Resist TRICARE fee increases, pharmacy co-pays and authorize pre-tax payment of health, dental and long-term care premiums to include chiropractic care
- Extend the VA Caregivers Act to full-time caregivers for veterans of all eras
- Promote and enhance transition programs and employment opportunities for veterans and spouses
- Improve access to affordable child care, encourage payment policies that accommodate military lifestyles (i.e., accommodate periods of leave, offer tax breaks), and monitor extension of CDC hours to ensure they reflect operational pace of service members and families using those facilities
- Seek adjustments to allowances to better reimburse members for expenses they incur for housing and government-directed PCS moves
- 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
- Allow survivors of military retirees to draw the full, final month's retired pay
- Repeal or further modify the Uniformed Services Former Spouse Protection Act (USFSPA)
- Protect the voting rights of military service members
- Provide a full accounting of POW/MIAs from all past and future military actions
- Guard the American flag from purposeful acts of physical desecration
- Advocate for DIC recipients to be able to remarry at age 55 and maintain their benefits

#### ON-GOING POLICY ITEMS

- Extend time on station between Permanent Change of Station (PCS) moves
- Pursue changes in Status of Forces Agreements (SOFAs) to provide overseas military retirees with full exchange/commissary benefits and postal services
- Establish a catastrophic leave program; allow military members to transfer their annual leave to other military members
- Extend length of time allowed on final PCS move for household goods to two years