



2020- 2021 AFSA LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

This platform of legislative objectives serves as a “blueprint” for testimony and advocacy efforts; in conjunction with adjustments dictated by day-to-day events. Listed below are AFSA’s seven major legislative focus groups. Within each focus group are the most important issues to AFSA’s 100,000 members – consisting of military members from all services, of all ranks, and their families. However, in understanding our Nation’s current fiscal situation, success in each of these areas will not always be defined by what is gained. Rather, success will be determined at the level of which a benefit is preserved or from gaining a portion of our objective. At its core, our mission is, and will always be, to defend the quality of life for service members and their families.

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 thus 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; to include expanding and enhancing access for women Veteran health care
- Ensure the delivery of full and timely benefits for Veterans exposed to toxic substances; including but not limited to Agent Orange, burn pits, and K2 Uzbekistan
- 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

Military Healthcare

- 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

Veteran/Retiree 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

Caring For Survivors

- Advocate for DIC recipients to be able to remarry at age 55 and maintain their benefits
- Provide a full accounting of POW/MIAs from all past and future military actions

Military Benefits & Programs

- Seek adjustments to allowances to better reimburse members for expenses they incur for housing and government-directed PCS moves

Air National Guard & Air Force Reserve

- 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

Education

- Advocate for standardized prior learning evaluation, clear and maximized transfer credit between accredited colleges and universities

Military Families

- 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
- Guard the American flag from purposeful acts of physical desecration

ON-GOING POLICY ITEMS

- Extend time on station between Permanent Change of Station (PCS) moves
- Monitor the implementation of the 3-year phased repeal of 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
- 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