



## **AFSA LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS 1992-2018**

This is a brief recap of what AFSA has done in the legislative arena for the enlisted members and their families over the last 25 years. You can see from the summary that we have cut across all spectrums of our association working hard to take of the needs and desires of our active duty, guard, reserve, retiree, veteran, and family members.

### **1992**

- Family Separation Allowance increased from \$60 to \$75
- SGLI maximum increased from \$50 K to \$100 K
- CONUS COLA
- TLE extended from 4 to 10 days for moves within CONUS
- Reimbursement of adoption expenses authorized
- Homeowners Assistance Program for impact of BRAC
- G/R FEHBP fees paid by government when activated > 30 days
- Unemployment compensation for GIs put on parity with civilians, changed from 13 weeks of compensation after 4 weeks of unemployment to 26 weeks after one week of unemployment.
- SBP improvements – payments lowered

### **1993**

- Obtained Longevity pay increase (fogey) for personnel at 24-year point
- SGLI maximum increased from \$100 K to \$200 K
- Retirement eligibility tenure guaranteed after 18 YOS
- National Mail Order Pharmacy directed
- CHAMPUS catastrophic cap reduced from \$10 K to \$7.5 K

- G/R commissary & BX privileges for 2 yrs after separation
- Improved transitional health benefit/counseling training & placement programs for separatees

## **1994**

- Extended TLE from 2 to 5 days for overseas moves
- Stopped DoD plan to close military commissaries in all CONUS areas that are “well-served” by private sector stores
- Provides retirement protection for enlisted G/R with 18 YOS
- Stopped effort to deny retiree COLAs until age 62

## **1995**

- Successfully reduced TRICARE co-payments/enrollment fees
- Permanent CONUS COLA in areas 109% of national mean
- Won Congressional approval to make dependent dental plan available overseas
- G/R enlisted members IDT points creditable toward retirement
- Survivor(s) time in housing/housing allowance doubled -- from 90 to 180 days after active duty deaths.

## **1996**

- 5.2 percent BAQ increase – over twice the pay raise %
- G/R mobilization/dental insurance programs
- Stopped DoD’s “High One” retirement plan; would have averaged final 12 months of service for entries before 9/8/80

## **1997**

- A Montgomery GI Bill enrollment opportunity for those enrolled in VEAP
- DLA during PCS moves increased from two to 2 ½ times BAQ
- Government storage of POVs when where overseas shipment is not provided
- PTDY authorized for POV drop off or pick up at port
- TDY use of dining facilities/TDY per diem increased
- 100 percent Tuition Assistance authorized
- G/R IDT points toward retirement increased from 60 to 75
- DoD directed to create a retiree dental insurance program

# **1998**

- O/S housing allowance rate protections enacted
- BAS linked to average moderate-cost food plan
- FSA increased from \$75 to \$100 per month
- Hardship Duty Pay (up to \$300 per month) established
- TRICARE Prime catchment expanded beyond 40-mile radius
- 5 percent commissary surcharge codified by Congress
- Cold War Victory Certificate established
- Establishes SBP "opt-out" provision in third enrollment year
- HDP levels for flight crews increased: E-4 +\$15 month; E-5 through E-9 + \$40 month
- Guard/Reserve commissary visits increased from 12 to 24 per year
- Allow dependents of certain retirees to enroll in the retiree dental plan without the enrollment of the sponsor

# **1999**

## **ACTIVE DUTY COMPENSATION**

- Won active/Guard/Reserve pay raises for 2000-2006 that will exceed private sector pay growth by one-half percentage point per year, vs. previous caps below that standard
- One-time "pay table realignment" raise of zero to 5.5% on July 1, 2000, depending on grade & longevity
- Authority (subject to budget action) for active/Reserve members to put 5% of basic pay & bonuses into tax-deferred savings (up to \$10,500 per year)
- Significant increases in enlistment/reenlistment bonuses & special pay authorities
- Enhanced housing allowance funding to raise allowances in high-cost areas
- Requires SECDEF to implement Supplemental Nutrition Program (WIC) overseas
- Increased Impact Aid funding for local school districts with large numbers of military dependents
- Defeated proposal to revamp ongoing (popular & successful) tests of improved household goods relocation

## **HEALTH CARE**

- Several statutory provisions requiring faster claims processing, reduced pre-authorization requirements, & prescription drug protections
- Retiree dental program upgrades to cover crowns, dentures & other services

- Waiver of TRICARE deductibles for Reservists called to active duty for less than a year
- Enhanced Reserve dental program, including (unsubsidized) dependent coverage

## **RETIRED PAY & SURVIVOR PROGRAMS**

- Full repeal of dual compensation (retired pay) penalties imposed on retired service members working as federal civilians
- Repeal of the REDUX retirement system that had cut expected lifetime retired pay by 20% for members entering service after July 31, 1986
- First step "concurrent receipt" legislation to ease the retired pay offset for certain severely disabled retirees receiving VA disability compensation
- Full-inflation COLA (2.4%) for retired pay on Jan. 1 2000
- A minimum Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) annuity for all "forgotten widows" (Regular & Reserve) whose spouses died before having a full chance to enroll in SBP
- Inclusion of SBP-precursor Retired Servicemen's Family Protection Plan under 30-year paid-up coverage, effective 10/1/2008
- Permanent authority for Reserve disability retirement for Reservists with at least 15 years of qualifying service & 8 years on active duty

## **VETERANS/OTHER ISSUES**

- Require at least two uniformed members for burial honors detail, with stipend to encourage Reserve participation
- Expanded space for Arlington National Cemetery

# **2000**

## **HEALTH CARE**

- Authorized TRICARE For Life (TFL) for Medicare-eligible uniformed services beneficiaries (regular & Reserve retirees, their family members & survivors), effective. Oct 1, 2001
- Authorized DoD Retail & mail-order Rx coverage for all Medicare-eligibles, effective. April 1, 2001, with NO enrollment fee or deductible.
- Authorized DOD Military Medicare-eligible Retiree Health Care Trust Fund (makes Tricare For Life a mandatory, must-pay entitlement program), effective. Oct 2002
- Reduced TRICARE Standard retiree catastrophic cap from \$7,500 to \$3,000 per year (applicable to all retirees regardless if under 65 or if Medicare-eligible & participating in TFL)

- Eliminated TRICARE Prime copays for active duty family members
- Expanded TRICARE Prime Remote, with PRIME-level benefits for active duty families assigned where Prime is not available
- Authorized long-term care coverage for active/Reserve/retired military/federal civilians (estimated implementation date Oct 2002).

## RETIREMENT & SURVIVOR PROGRAMS

- Expanded special compensation for severely disabled retirees to include Chapter 61 (military disability) retirees
- Provided full-inflation COLAs for all retirees/annuitants
- Increased maximum annual Reserve retirement points from 75 to 90
- Required universal state acceptance of military-prepared wills
- Required automatic immediate Reserve Component Survivor Benefit Plan coverage for Reserves attaining 20 years of service, unless declined by member & spouse
- Provided improvements in educational benefits for widows & children of service-connected deceased veterans to include a 21% increase in the educational stipend &, for the first time, COLA adjustments.
- Extended Dependency & Indemnity Compensation (DIC) to survivors of National Guard & Reserve members who suffer a stroke or heart attack during inactive duty training.

## ACTIVE & RESERVE FORCES

- Provided 3.7% Jan. 1, 2000, pay raise, *plus targeted July 1, 2000, raises for E-5, E-6, E-7*
- Authorized active/Reserve Thrift Savings Plan enrollment (NLT Oct 1, 2001)
- Reduced median out-of-pocket housing expense to 14.5% in 2001, & to zero by 2005
- Increased SGLI coverage to \$250,000
- Provided 21% increase in Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) benefits
- Repealed 1% cap on annual subsistence allowance increases, effective Jan 1, 2002
- Improved funeral honors duty benefits for Guard / Reserve: authorized choice of drill pay or \$50; approved incapacitation pay for injury/illness sustained on such duty; & clarified reemployment rights.
- Authorized Post-Vietnam-Era Veterans Educational Assistance Program (VEAP) conversion to MGIB
- Approved disability compensation for Guard / Reserve who suffer heart attack/stroke during inactive duty training (IDT)
- Authorized children of National Guard & Reserve members to seek Presidential appointment to a service academy

## OTHER GAINS

- Restored requirement for VA to assist veterans in preparing claims' applications for benefits
- Repealed Social Security earnings test for beneficiaries age 65 to 69

## **2001**

### **HEALTH CARE**

- Prohibited DoD from forcing military retirees to choose between DoD (TRICARE) & VA health care
- Ensured retiree health care trust fund covers retired Medicare-eligible', regardless of age, in private sector or military facilities.
- Authorized medically necessary care for custodial care patients (to maintain physical health).
- Authorized added benefits for disabled active duty dependents with severe physical or psychological conditions.
- Clarified travel eligibility for parent or guardian traveling with beneficiary unable to travel alone, for medical care beyond 100 miles.
- Authorized federal agencies to pay National Guard – Reserve employees' federal health insurance (FEHBP) premiums (when activated 30 or more days).
- Won permanent authority for extended health care benefits for certain active duty members & reservists separated after more than 30 days in support of a contingency.

### **RETIREMENT & SURVIVOR PROGRAMS**

- Authorized concurrent receipt of retired pay & veterans' disability compensation in the future-but only if President proposes funding
- Expanded special compensation for severely disabled retirees eligibility to cover certain members with 60% disability ratings & authorized modest compensation increases for other eligible in 2003/2004
- Provided full-inflation COLAs for all retirees/annuitants. \*Extended Survivor Benefit Plan coverage to survivors of service members who die on active duty prior to reaching retirement eligibility.
- Implemented Service members Group Life Insurance coverage for active duty dependents.
- Restored "CHAMPVA for Life" benefits for eligible survivors of veterans who died of service-connected causes (they previously lost CHAMPVA health coverage at 65)
- Raised educational benefits for survivors & dependents of veterans who died of service-connection.

## **ACTIVE & RESERVE FORCES**

- Provided minimum 5% Jan. 1, 2002 raise for officers; 6% for enlisted, with up to 10% for selected grade/longevity combinations.
- Raised 2002 housing allowances by an average of 10%.
- Authorized REDUX-eligible members to receive 15-year career status bonus in lump sum (\$30,000), or in annual installments.
- Improved PCS reimbursements—increased TLE to \$180/day (from \$110); upgraded household goods weight allowances for junior enlisted; & increased military PCS per diem rates to equal those for federal civilians by Jan. 2003.
- Extended disability retirement coverage to Guard – Reserve members injured overnight within normal commuting distance to their homes.
- Guaranteed absentee voting rights in any Federal, state or local election for members absent from a state on military orders

## **OTHER GAINS**

- Increased Montgomery GI Bill education benefits by 46% over three years.
- Raised the VA home loan guaranty from \$50,700 to \$60,000 & extended the VA home loan authority for Selected Reservists until 2011
- For Vietnam veterans, added Adult Onset (Type II) Diabetes to the list of diseases presumed caused by Agent Orange exposure.
- Expanded in-ground burial capacity of Arlington National Cemetery.

## **2002**

### **ACTIVE & RESERVE FORCES**

- Provided average of 11.7% two-year pay raise for active duty, Guard, & Reserve members (4% above private sector).
- Raised 2002 & 2003 housing allowances by a combined average of 15%.
- Expanded protections for National Guard service members activated under state orders in support of a federally-declared national emergency.
- Extended the Reserve Montgomery GI Bill usage period to 14 years after completion of initial training (vs. 10 years in previous law)
- Opened Commissary access to Guard personnel called to state duty in support of a federal emergency.
- Obtained TRICARE Prime access for G-R members activated for over 30 days (if not living near military medical facility).
- Reduced the number of years of continuous reserve component service needed immediately before qualifying for Reserve retirement

from 8 to 6 years.

- Won congressional requirement for a DoD study of needed personnel, compensation & retirement changes to better reflect operational demands on Guard & Reserve forces.

## RETIREMENT & SURVIVOR PROGRAMS

- Expanded special compensation (\$50-\$300 monthly) for certain severely disabled retirees with at least 20 years of active duty & awarded 60% or higher disability ratings within 4 years of leaving service; authorized modest compensation increases in 2003/4.
- Authorized a new "special compensation" that is tantamount to concurrent receipt of retired pay & veterans' disability compensation for certain retirees with combat- or operations-related disabilities.
- Provided full-inflation COLAs for all retirees/annuitants.
- Extended Survivor Benefit Plan coverage to survivors of service members who die on active duty prior to reaching retirement eligibility.
- Expanded Service members Group Life Insurance coverage to include active duty dependents.
- Restored "CHAMPVA for Life" benefits for eligible survivors of veterans who died of service-connected causes (previously lost CHAMPVA health coverage at age 65).
- Raised educational benefits for survivors & dependents of veterans who died of service-connected causes.
- Defeated proposal to deny lump sum retroactive benefits to "Forgotten SBP widows"
- Authorized payment options for retirees participating in military funeral details

## HEALTH CARE

- Prohibited DoD from forcing military retirees to choose between DoD (TRICARE) & VA health care.
- Ensured retiree health care trust fund covers all retired Medicare-eligibles, regardless of age, in private sector or military facilities.
- Authorized federal agencies to pay National Guard – Reserve employees' federal health insurance (FEHBP) premiums (when activated 30 or more days).
- Authorized medically necessary care for custodial care patients (to maintain physical health).
- Authorized added benefits for disabled active duty dependents with severe physical or psychological conditions.
- Clarified travel eligibility for parent or guardian traveling with beneficiary unable to travel alone, for medical care beyond 100 miles.
- Won permanent authority for extended health care benefits for certain active duty members & reservists separated after more than 30 days in support of a



- contingency.
- Eliminated preauthorization requirement for inpatient mental health care for TFL beneficiaries.
  - Authorized TRICARE Prime Remote eligibility for families of Guard/Reserve members activated for more than 30 days, if residing in Prime Remote area.
  - Extended Prime Remote to active duty family members when not permitted to accompany the member to the next permanent duty station & remain at the former duty site.
  - Authorized surviving dependents to enroll in the TRICARE Dental Program if enrolled on date of death or disenrolled because the member had transferred to a duty station where dental care was provided (OCONUS).
  - Eliminated requirement for Medicare provider to be credentialed separately by TRICARE, effective with new TRICARE contracts.
  - Won Comptroller General evaluation of how to fix claims processing & evaluate problems impeding doctors' participation in TRICARE.
  - Extended transitional health care benefits to family members when a member is separated, whether or not the member enrolls in transition health coverage.

## VETERANS/OTHER PROGRAMS

- Increased education benefits under the MGIB for full-time study by 46% over three years (2001 - 2004)
- Added 15 acres to Arlington National Cemetery to increase in-ground burial capacity.
- Increased Medal of Honor stipend to \$1000/month & authorized retroactive payment to the date of the valorous act

## **2003**

### HEALTH CARE

- Won 1.5% Medicare/TRICARE rate increases instead of projected 4.5% cuts
- Won legislation requiring Pentagon to improve TRICARE Standard by:
  - Surveying provider availability by location
  - Taking measures to attract enough providers to meet needs
  - Ensuring every beneficiary has info on benefits & how to find providers
  - Assisting beneficiaries who need help finding participating providers
  - Requiring ongoing GAO review of adequacy of DoD efforts
- Won legislation waiving Part B late enrollment penalty for TFL-eligibles
- Ended \$1500 annual cap on Medicare payments for physical therapy

## **ACTIVE DUTY ISSUES**

- Won 4.15% average 2004 pay raise (vs. 3.2% for average American)
- Won standard stating that future pay raises should match average American's
- Double death gratuity, tax-free (From \$6 to \$12K)
- Restored military homeowner capital gains tax equity
- Exempted BRAC-related Homeowner Assistance Plan payments from taxation
- Increased Family Separation Allowance & Imminent Danger Pay
- Won authority for full replacement cost of goods damaged in PCS moves
- Won Soldiers & Sailors Civil Relief Act upgrades

## **GUARD/RESERVE ISSUES**

- Won same pay raise provisions as active duty
- Authorized year-round, premium-based TRICARE coverage for unemployed Selected Reservists & those without employer health coverage
- Won tax-exemption for drill-related travel expenses if drill is 100 miles. away
- Extended full commissary privileges to drilling & gray area Reserves
- Extended government long-term care coverage to gray area Reserves
- Defeated effort to reduce training limit to 38 days

## **RETIREE/SURVIVOR ISSUES**

- Expanded Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) eligibility to cover all ops-related disability ratings for members with 20 or more years of service
- Authorized Concurrent Receipt for members with 50% or higher disability ratings who otherwise had sufficient service for non-disability retirement
- Expanded eligibility for CRSC & concurrent receipt to Guard/Reserve retirees with 20 qualifying years of service (regardless of point total)
- Won Survivor Benefit Plan coverage for members who die on inactive duty training
- Won additional election options for survivors of member who die on active duty
- Restored Dependency & Indemnity Compensation to eligible survivors who remarry at age 57 or older

## **VETERANS ISSUES**

- Won extra \$1.3 billion for veterans health care
- Increased education benefits for survivors & dependents of members who die of service-connected causes

## **2004**

## HEALTH CARE ISSUES

- Prohibited imposing higher pharmacy cost shares on TFL beneficiaries vs. under- 65s
- Won permanent ID cards for spouse/survivors of military retirees at 75 years of age
- Won premium-based single or family TRICARE coverage for Selected Reserve members mobilized at least 90 days since Sept. 11, 2001 who continue in Selected Reserve
- Permanently authorized 180 days of TRICARE upon separation from active duty
- Permanently authorized Pre- & Post-callup TRICARE coverage Period For Guard/Reserve
- Waived recoupment of previous TRICARE payments for under-65 Medicare eligible who were not informed of Medicare Part B enrollment requirement
- Authorized health care for academy/ROTC cadets for service-incurred conditions
- Consolidated all TRICARE For Life trust fund deposit obligations within Treasury Dept (eliminated any possible budget impact on other DoD programs)

## RETIREMENT/SURVIVOR ISSUES

- Won legislation phasing out SBP age-62 'Widows' Tax' in 3 ½ years (by April 1, 2008)
- Ended requirement to pay supplemental premiums for retirees who had already been paying extra for supplemental SBP coverage (which maintains higher annuity after age 62)
- Authorized SBP open-enrollment period starting Oct. 1, 2005--lump-sum payment required
- Won full concurrent receipt for 20+-year retirees with 100% disability ratings (Jan 2005)
- Indexed military death gratuity to rise annually by same percentage as basic pay raise

## ACTIVE/RESERVE/FORCE ISSUES

- 3.5% active duty, Guard / Reserve pay raise for 2005 (.5% above average American's)
- Raised BAH to cover 100% of the median cost of housing for each grade & location
- Removed the funding cap on military housing privatization/construction programs
- Established DoD obligation to provide commissary benefit in law; strengthened protections
- Repealed requirement that service members pay subsistence charges while hospitalized

- Permanently increased Family Separation Allowance & Imminent Danger/Hostile Fire Pay to \$250 & \$225/month, respectively

## **VETERANS & OTHER ISSUES**

- Doubled survivor education benefit eligibility period to 20 years after death on active duty
- Authorized Selected Reserve members activated for two years to enroll in the Montgomery GI bill & have a year to pay the \$1,200 premium after demobilization
- Provided additional \$250 per month DIC for two years after service-connected death to any surviving spouse who has at least one child under age 18
- Increased from 18 to 24 months the maximum period of employer-sponsored health coverage that mobilized Guard/Reserve members may elect to continue
- Protected spouses as well as service members under Service members' Civil Relief Act for residential & motor vehicle lease termination provisions on joint leases
- Increased the maximum VA home loan guaranty amount to \$333,700

## **2005**

### **HEALTH CARE ISSUES**

- Repealed 4.4% reduction in 2006 Medicare/TRICARE provider payments
- Defeated proposal to charge enrollment fee/raise prescription co-pays for VA care
- Added \$1.5 billion to FY2005 veterans' health care budget
- Extended fee-based TRICARE eligibility to all drilling Guard-Reserve members
- Added \$35 million to military health programs to meet war requirements
- Expanded TRICARE Standard provider participation survey requirement

### **ACTIVE/RESERVE FORCE ISSUES**

- 3.1% 2006 pay raise for Active Duty/Guard/Reserve (.5% above private sector)
- A/D maximum reenlistment bonus up fm \$60 K to \$90 K
- Enlistment bonus max. increased from \$20 K to \$40 K
- Hardship Pay increased from \$300 to \$750 per month
- 21 days adoption leave authorized
- Increase Army strength by 10,000 & USMC by 1,000.
- Won full housing allowance for Guard-Reserve members activated 30+ days
- Won continuation of combat-zone pays during hospitalization for wounded troops
- Authorized payment for room & board under ROTC Scholarship program

- Improved Impact Aid for school districts with military children affected by BRAC
- Barred any further studies on commissary privatization through 2008
- Authorized limited income replacement plan for mobilized Guard/Reserve members
- Raised maximum hardship duty pay from \$300 to \$750 per month
- Authorized licensing & certification tests under MGIB for mobilized members
- Won traumatic injury disability insurance rider to SGLI
- Increased PCS weight allowances for senior NCOs/POs

## **RETIREMENT/SURVIVOR ISSUES**

- 4.1% COLA for retired pay/SBP/disability compensation
- Minimum SBP annuity raised to 40% of covered retired pay (as of 1 Oct 05)
- Began one-year open enrollment window for SBP (started 1 Oct 05)
- Reduced 10-year phase-in schedule to 6 years for restoring full retired pay for members designated as “unemployable” by the VA
- Increased death gratuity to \$100,000 for all active duty deaths
- Increased maximum SGLI coverage to \$400,000
- Expanded eligibility for retroactive SGLI & death gratuity to all deaths since 10/7/01 (previously limited to combat- or operations-related deaths)
- Won statutory requirement to upgrade military casualty assistance program

## **2006**

### **HEALTH CARE ISSUES**

- Won ban on TRICARE fee increases for FY2007
- Defeated 5.1% Cut in 2007 Medicare & TRICARE payments to doctors
- Established single-fee access to TRICARE for all drilling Guard-Reserve
- Barred pharmacy copay increases for FY2007
- Won waiver of \$1,740 limit on Medicare payments for therapy services
- Defeated enrollment fee requirement for TRICARE Standard
- Mandated use of Medicare filing procedures for TRICARE claims
- Prescribed access standards for injured & wounded service members
- Required Task Force to study sustainment of TRICARE benefits for long term
- Pilot projects directed on early diagnosis / treatment of PTSD

### **ACTIVE/RESERVE FORCE ISSUES**

- 2.7% 2007 pay raise (including targeted raises for certain grades)
- Won major restrictions on predatory “payday lenders”
- Won \$400K free SGLI coverage for members deployed to Afghanistan or Iraq
- Provided retirement credit for certain state duty performed by Guard after 9/11

- Required more consistent Physical Evaluation Board (PEB) rules / explanations
- Authorized housing allowance fix for mobilized reserves or retirees

## **RETIREMENT/SURVIVOR ISSUES**

- 3.3% retired pay/SBP COLA for 2007
- Minimum SBP annuity raised to 45% of covered retired pay (as of 1 Apr 06)
- Expanded SBP coverage options for active duty deaths since 7 Oct 01
- Won Permanent ID cards for retirees' totally disabled dependents
- Upgraded escort / honors for combat deaths
- Mandated review of removing SSAN from military ID cards
- Authorized one year housing allowance for active duty death survivors

## **MILITARY FAMILY/ VETERANS/ OTHER ISSUES**

- Provided \$50M in aid to school districts serving military children
- Required full replacement value for damaged household goods on PCS moves
- Joint Family Support Assistance Program to augment family center services.
- Required DoD-VA study of traumatic brain injury, incl. family member impact

# **2007**

## **HEALTH CARE ISSUES**

- Won ban on TRICARE fee increases for FY2008
- Defeated 9.9% Cut in 2008 Medicare & TRICARE payments to doctors
- Barred pharmacy copay increases for FY2008
- Required DoD & VA to establish plans for PTSD & TBI treatment & prevention
- Established joint electronic health records, seamless transition plan, & single separation physical for disabled service members transitioning between DoD & VA
- Establish joint office to implement DoD/VA electronic health record
- Review all post 9/11 disability separations for retirement reconsideration
- Allow family members of mobilized personnel to use family medical leave

## **ACTIVE/RESERVE FORCE ISSUES**

- 3.5% 2008 pay raise
- Reimburse up to \$300 in drill-travel expenses for short specialties/units or relocated units
- Authorize Selected Reserve members 10 years after separation to use MGIB benefits earned from active duty service
- Allow carryover of 75 (vs. 60) days accumulated leave (expires Dec. 31, 2010)

- Reduce reserve retirement age 3 months for each 90 days on active duty (prospective)
- Authorize Selected Reserve members 10 years after separation to use MGIB benefits earned from active duty service

## RETIREMENT/SURVIVOR ISSUES

- 2.3% retired pay/SBP COLA for 2007
- Minimum SBP annuity raised to 55% of covered retired pay (As of 1 Apr 07)
- Establish \$50 per month allowance to survivors of service connected deaths for FY09 (to increase by \$10 each year until \$100 in FY14)
- Require single notice of SBP recoupment amount for DIC widows
- Exp& CRSC eligibility to disability retirees with less than 20 years of service
- Full concurrent receipt for those rated "unemployable" effective Jan 05 (payable Oct 08)
- Allow family members of mobilized personnel to use family medical leave
- Authorize Military Family Readiness Council, with member, spouse, association participation
- Bar courts from vacating child custody agreements based on member's deployment
- Authorize veterans the option of saluting the US Flag (vs. h& over heart)

## 2008

### HEALTH CARE ISSUES

- Bar increases in TRICARE pharmacy copays or retiree fees for FY2009
- Replaced 10.6% scheduled cut in Medicare/TRICARE payments to doctors with 1.1%
- Waive TRICARE copays/deductibles for certain preventive services
- Raise TRICARE payment cap for active duty children with special needs to \$36,000/year
- New disabilities deemed service-caused unless "clear & unmistakable" evidence otherwise
- Require DoD to recalculate (& presumably reduce) TRICARE Reserve Select premiums
- Authorize transitional TRICARE coverage for separatees who enter selected reserve
- Enhance bonuses/special pays to attract/retain more health care professionals
- Require TRICARE to cover smoking cessation programs for members under 65
- Authorize DoD to waive reserve dental copays if needed to ensure readiness
- Defeated proposal to charge VA enrollment fee/increase Rx copay for certain veterans

- VA counseling services extended to family members of wounded warriors

## **ACTIVE/RESERVE FORCE ISSUES**

- New Post 9/11 GI Bill: full state college tuition for post 9/11 service, plus housing/book stipends
- Allow transfer of GI Bill to spouses/child(ren) if served 6 years & commit to 4 more
- 3.9% basic pay raise, effective Jan. 1, 2009 (.5% above budget proposal)
- Increase Army & Marine Corps end strength by 7,000 & 5,000, respectively
- Authorize limited sabbatical program for members to pursue personal/professional goals
- Permanently ban charging hospitalized troops for meals
- Raise maximum daily temporary lodging expense allowance to \$290 (from \$180)
- Pay two family separation allowances if both member spouses with dependents deployed Bar bonus recoupment/pay full bonus if member dies/separated/retired for combat injuries
- Extend income replacement for reservists with extended & frequent mobilizations
- Tax credit for small businesses paying salary differential for activated reservists
- Increased household goods weight allowances for senior NCOs
- Increased housing allowances for grade E-8 to cover expense of single family home

## **RETIREMENT/SURVIVOR ISSUES**

- Expand new special survivor indemnity allowance to include survivors of active duty
- Authorize disabled retirees 5 years (vs. 3) to file amended tax return based on a VA claim
- Ended premium payments for retirees at least 70 & paid into SBP for 30 years
- Allow survivors to contribute military death gratuity to tax favored accounts
- Add funds to hire 2,000 new claims adjudicators to reduce VA disability claims backlog
- Extend DoD/VA Wounded Warrior Senior Oversight Committee through end of 2009

## **MILITARY FAMILY/ VETERANS/ OTHER ISSUES**

- Authorize 500 lbs PCS weight allowance for military spouse's professional items
- Authorize career assistance programs for spouses (i.e. licensing, credentialing, education)
- Authorize \$55M in impact aid for schools with military children or affected by BRAC
- Authorize 10 days of paternity leave for new military fathers, in addition to normal leave



- Require Defense & Education Depts to ease school transitions for military children
- Reimburse families for movement of two household pets as a result of evacuation

## **2009**

### **HEALTH CARE ISSUES**

- Defeated \$110/day increase in TRICARE Standard inpatient copay
- Authorized special compensation for wounded warrior caregivers
- Won TRICARE coverage for gray area Reserve retirees
- Required retention of wounded on active duty until completion of disability evaluation process unless they request to separate from active duty
- Required medical exam before admin separation of members diagnosed with PTSD/TBI
- Prohibited conversion of military medical positions to civilians
- Expanded window of active duty TRICARE coverage for mobilizing reservists
- Required measures to expand access to mental health providers
- Required person-to-person mental health assessments for deployed members
- Required DoD report on impact of law barring employer TRICARE incentives
- Required DoD chiropractic clinical trial program for active duty members
- Won protections for military/VA beneficiaries in national health reform bills

### **ACTIVE/RESERVE FORCE ISSUES**

- Won 3.4% basic pay raise, effective Jan. 1, 2010 (.5% above budget proposal)
- Increased end strength – Army 30K, Marine Corps 8K, Navy 2.5K & Air Force 15K
- Authorized Army additional 30K end strength for FY11-FY12 if Army budgets
- Won absentee voter protections
- Reduced % of pay subject to recoupment from 20% to 15% for overpayments
- Expanded Homeowner Assistance Program for PCSing service members, wounded warriors, & survivors affected by an upside-down mortgage
- Authorized stop-loss pay through June 2011
- Won ROTH Thrift Savings Plan option for currently serving & federal employees
- Required DoD to report on child custody disputes of deployed parents

### **RETIREMENT/SURVIVOR/VETERAN ISSUES**

- Authorized recalculation of retired pay for guard/reserve retirees recalled for 2+ years
- Increased future payments of Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance

- Required DoD to establish website to explain all retirement & survivor benefits

## **MILITARY FAMILY/VETERANS/OTHER ISSUES**

- Expanded family medical leave to include families of deploying active duty members
- Won authority for military spouses to choose same domicile state as AD member
- Authorized \$49M in impact aid for schools with military children or affected by BRAC
- Authorized internship pilot program in federal agencies for active duty spouses
- Encouraged 26 states to sign onto Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children
- Required DoD report on impact of deployments on dependent children
- Increased DoD's cost share for National Guard Youth Challenge Program from 60%-75%
- Won VA advance appropriations authority to prevent end-of-year funding disruption
- Won VA funding increase of \$25 billion over the next five years

## **2010**

### **ACTIVE/RESERVE FORCE ISSUES**

- Won VA stipend, health/respice care, & support services for wounded warriors' caregivers
- Won upgrades to laws protecting troops' & families' financial, legal rights
- Won additional reemployment rights protections for activated reservists
- Won 35 states' participation in Military Children's Educational Compact
- Barred Services from administratively separating service members for medical conditions for which they have been found fit for duty
- Won up to 15 days non-chargeable rest & recuperation for service members serving over 270 days in a combat zone
- Won DoD reimbursement of full household goods replacement value if carrier doesn't cover
- Won authority to commission W-1s (only warrant officers previously not commissioned)
- 1.4% military pay raise
- Won authority to open Yellow Ribbon reintegration programs to all components & families

### **HEALTH CARE ISSUES**

- Blocked 25% cut in Medicare & TRICARE payments, & substituted a 2.2%

increase

- Blocked proposed \$110 per day TRICARE Standard copay increase for retirees
- Won implementation of TRICARE coverage for Gray Area Reserve retirees
- Authorized TRICARE coverage until age 26 for unmarried children with no employer coverage
- Required comprehensive DoD policy on pre- & post-deployment cognitive assessment

## **RETIREMENT/SURVIVOR ISSUES**

- Eliminated 75% cap on retired pay for military disability retirees with over 30 years of service
- Enhanced travel benefits for survivors to attend memorial services
- Required approval of next-of-kin for media access at return-of-remains ceremonies
- Won requirements for clearer, fairer decisions by military records correction boards
- Won dental coverage for unenrolled survivors of members who died while serving

## **MILITARY FAMILY / VETERANS / OTHER ISSUES**

- Expanded VA health care services for women veterans
- Re-started limited career advancement program (MyCAA) for military spouses
- Obtained \$50 million for Impact Aid for dependent education
- Established an advisory panel of affected military family members for the Office of Community Support for Military Families with Special Needs
- Won statutory requirement for DoD/VA review of effectiveness of spouse education programs
- Established job training/services grants for female vets & homeless vets with children
- Improved & increased services to homeless veterans
- Increased & improved VA insurance for service members, wounded, & veterans
- Won upgrades to Post-9/11 GI Bill fixes to allow job training, Guard AGR (Title 32) access, active duty book allowance, transferability to family members of USPHS/NOAA Corps

# **2011**

## **HEALTH CARE ISSUES**

- Limited the percentage increase in TRICARE Prime enrollment fees in future

- years to no more than the percentage growth in military retired pay
- Extended the time limit for TRICARE claims outside the United States (up to three years after the services have been provided)
- Enhanced mental health services/programs for military members

## **ACTIVE/RESERVE FORCE ISSUES**

- Authorize a 1.6% military pay raise
- Require a DoD report on the cost of expiring the Homeowner Assistance Program to help more service members who are “upside-down” on their mortgages
- Enhance authority to call up the Reserves for certain missions
- Authorize early retirement & voluntary separation incentives to reduce the need for involuntary separations during the coming force reductions
- Bar denial of reenlistment based on a medical condition that a medical board has evaluated & deemed as not disqualifying for continued duty
- Establish the Chief of the National Guard Bureau as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
- Provide \$45M in assistance for civilian schools in which military dependents are enrolled
- Enhance the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program for wounded warriors & their families
- Safeguard reemployment rights for Guard members ordered to full-time duty under state orders
- Authorize a death gratuity & related benefits for Reserves who die during an authorized stay at their residence during or between successive days of inactive duty training
- Require GAO to review effectiveness of programs aimed at promoting military spouse employment
- Require GAO to review effects of extending space-available travel eligibility to certain survivors & gray area reserve retirees

## **VETERANS ISSUES**

- Vow to Hire Heroes Act of 2011 which directs VA, DoD & The Department of Labor to jointly improve transition & training programs for separating members & veterans.

# **2012**

## **ACTIVE / RESERVE FORCE ISSUES**

- Delayed implementation of sequestration-driven cuts to defense budget for two months

- Secured a 1.7% military pay raise & extension special pays & bonuses
- Blocked proposal to short-circuit legislative process to make military retirement cuts
- Won limitations on force reductions to preserve dwell time between deployments
- Defeated proposal for two additional rounds of Base Realignment & Closure (BRAC)
- Won extension of voluntary separation/early retirement authorities to ease force cuts
- Won enhancements of consumer credit protections for service & family members
- Enhanced transition services for separating service members
- Broadened reemployment rights protection for Guard – Reserve members

## **HEALTH CARE ISSUES**

- Won statutory acknowledgment that military healthcare is an earned benefit in recognition of retired members' & families' service & sacrifice
- Blocked disproportionate TRICARE Prime fee increase
- Blocked new enrollment fees for TRICARE For Life (TFL) & TRICARE Standard
- Blocked proposal to means-test TRICARE Prime & TFL fees
- Prevented proposed tripling of TRICARE pharmacy co-pays in return for requiring one- year trial of mail-order/MTF maintenance drug refills for TFL-eligibles
- Capped future annual Rx copay hikes at the percentage increase in military retired pay
- Won a one-year TRICARE pilot program authorizing applied behavior analysis (ABA) therapy services for all active & retired family members diagnosed with autism
- Prevented 27% cut in Medicare & TRICARE payments to doctors ("Doc Fix")
- Blocked implementation of strict cap on Medicare payments for physical/speech therapy
- Enhanced suicide prevention programs for service members
- Upgraded mental health access for Guard/Reserve members, families, & caregivers

## **RETIREE / SURVIVOR ISSUES**

- Combat Related Special Compensation calculation correction
- Obtained DoD discretionary authority to exp& Space-A travel to gray-area Reserve retirees & other groups (e.g., survivors)

## **MILITARY FAMILY / VETERANS / OTHER ISSUES**

- Added four states (MA, GA, PA & WY) to the list of those participating in the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children

- Won provision authorizing states to issue commercial driver's licenses for military drivers
- Won counseling, reporting & oversight improvements to GI Bill programs
- Won tax credits for employers who hire recent vets, unemployed vets & disabled vets
- Secured legislation that directs the American Battle Monuments Commission to restore & maintain the Veterans Cemetery at the former Clark Air Base in the Philippines

## **2013**

### **ACTIVE DUTY**

- Enactment of the Pay Our Military Act, a measure promising full pay & allowances to service members during a government shutdown
- Extension of 30+ bonuses/special pays & temporary early retirement authority
- Blocked "BRAC"-style commission to propose military retirement changes
- Further extensions of authority to provide temporary increases in BAH for areas impacted by natural disasters or experiencing a sudden influx of personnel
- Statutory protection of individual expressions of religious or moral beliefs

### **HEALTH CARE**

- Blocked enrollment fee proposals on TRICARE for Life & TRICARE Standard
- Prevented means-testing proposal for TRICARE Prime & TRICARE for Life
- Prevented additional TRICARE pharmacy co-pay increases
- Secured a one-time election to reenroll in TRICARE Prime for certain beneficiaries who were no longer eligible as of Oct 1, 2013
- Prevented 24% cut in Medicare & TRICARE reimbursement payments to doctors

### **VETERANS**

- Blocked use of the "Chained-CPI" to determine COLA's; ensuring "full CPI" increase of 1.5 percent for affected groups
- DoD payments of death gratuity & burial benefits to the families of people who died on active duty despite the government shutdown; retroactive to Oct 1, 2013.
- Transitional Assistance Management Program (TAMP) eligibility enhancements for behavioral health support for wounded warriors via telemental health

- Established authority for health registries for service members, families & veterans exposed to toxic substances on military camps, posts & stations
- Created financial penalties for fraudulent use of unauthorized military awards &/or decorations for personal gain (Stolen Valor Act)
- Extended tax credits to December 31, 2013 for employers who hire recent vets, incl. unemployed / disabled & Guard-Reserve veterans
- Restoration approval of former Clark Air Force Base, Philippines, by the American Battle Monuments Commission & bi-national MOU to move forward
- Statutory authority for members of the Armed Forces not in uniform & Veterans to render the military salute during recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance
- \$67.8 million for the Armed Forces Retirement Home

### **MILITARY FAMILY / SURVIVOR / OTHER ISSUES**

- Reduced the list of states not participating in the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children down to four
- \$30 million in Impact Aid to school districts with high numbers of military children
- Improved assistance for Gold Star spouses & other dependents

## **2014**

### **ACTIVE / RESERVE FORCE ISSUES**

- Repealed the annual COLA reductions established by 2013 Bipartisan Budget Act for retirees & 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 Jan 1, 2016
- Eliminated the Guard & 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 & TRICARE payments to doctors (“Doc Fix”)
- Blunted disproportionate pharmacy copay increase

- Blocked the adoption of means testing for TRICARE Prime & TRICARE for Life fees
- Blocked implementation of strict caps on Medicare payments for physical & speech therapy
- Secured passage of the Veterans Access, Choice & 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 & 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, & GI Bill programs
- Authorization of \$1.12 million for installing Fuel Call assistance systems at military service stations

## **2015**

### **ACTIVE / RESERVE FORCE ISSUES**

- Preserved commissary benefit and restored over \$300 million in funding
- Repealed CPI-1% COLA cut for future military retirees entering service after Jan. 1, 2016
- Retained dual military couple housing allowance eligibility
- Won requirement to strengthen service members' financial literacy & preparedness
- Eliminated redundant (lower-benefit) Reserve GI Bill for active duty call-ups



under 'REAP'

- Established G-R reemployment rights for major disaster and pre-planned mission call-ups
- Expanded 'Yellow Ribbon' reintegration program to cover all deployed G-R vets

## **HEALTH CARE ISSUES**

- Fixed statutory formula to end annual 20+% Medicare/TRICARE payment cut threats
- Blocked means-testing for TRICARE Prime and TRICARE for Life fees
- Blocked consolidation of TRICARE health plans into single plan with less choice
- Blocked proposal for disproportional annual Rx copayment hikes for next 10 years
- Expanded locality-related eligibility for enrollment in TRICARE Prime
- Won requirement for portability of Prime coverage between TRICARE regions
- Required DoD to publish TRICARE Prime access standards and ensure standards are met

## **MILITARY FAMILY / VETERANS / OTHER ISSUES**

- Expanded mental health support for veterans via passage of the Clay Hunt SAV Act
- Restored SBP eligibility for current spouse if SBP-eligible former spouse dies
- Opened Agent Orange disability benefits to Vietnam war USAF C-123 veteran crewmembers
- Consolidated multiple VA community care programs into single framework
- Cut VA disability claims backlog 88% for veterans awaiting decision more than 125 days
- Won establishment of VA Commission on Care

# **2016**

## **ACTIVE / RESERVE FORCE ISSUES**

- Won a 2.1 percent pay raise versus the 1.6 percent requested by DoD
- Defeated a proposal to test privatization of commissaries
- Won law stating any commissary changes must sustain current patron savings/satisfaction
- Blocked a Senate proposal to cut BAH for housing sharers, including dual military couples
- Won \$30 million in impact aid for school districts serving large numbers of military children

- Won a provision basing former spouse retired pay division on grade/years of service upon divorce (future divorces only)
- Won increased travel reimbursement for Guard/Reserve training beyond commuting distance
- Won provision aimed at ensuring fair treatment for California Guardsmen who have been targeted for recoupment of incentive bonuses paid to them 10 years ago

## **HEALTH CARE ISSUES**

- Blocked a proposal to impose annual TFL enrollment fee of up to 2 percent of military retired pay
- Blocked a DoD proposal to roughly double TRICARE pharmacy copays over 10 years
- Won elimination of preauthorization requirement for urgent care, and expanded hours of primary and urgent care at MTFs
- Won requirement for standardized appointment system for all military medical facilities
- Won requirement for adoption of core access and quality performance metrics in military health care system
- Won restoration of increased autism care reimbursement rates
- Won pilot program to display of wait times at military emergency rooms, urgent care clinics and pharmacies
- Won requirements to improve access via telehealth and other means
- Defeated proposal for higher TRICARE Standard deductible for non-network providers
- Defeated proposed TRICARE enrollment fee on active duty family members
- Won authorization for a pilot program of offering commercial health insurance coverage to reserve component members and families on the same basis as federal civilians
- Won provision requiring DoD to provide hearing aids at cost for retired family members
- Authorized retired beneficiary enrollment in FEHBP dental and vision plans, effective 1/1/18

## **MILITARY FAMILY / VETERANS / OTHER ISSUES**

- Won recognition of all retired members of the reserve components as Veterans
- Won full-year FY17 funding and 2018 advance funding for VA health/benefits programs
- Won elimination of 2-year eligibility limitation (after PCS) for noncompetitive appointment of military spouses to federal civilian positions.
- Won authorization of up to 12 weeks of paid leave (including 6 weeks medical recuperation leave) for primary caregiver after childbirth; 21 days authorized for

service member who is the secondary caregiver.

- Won extension of Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance through May 2018 at the current \$310 monthly rate
- Won upgraded Survivor Benefit Plan formula for Reserve Component members who die while on inactive duty for training to equal SBP benefits for those who die on active duty.
- Won passage of reproductive services/adoption reimbursement for seriously injured or ill veterans
- Won enhanced suicide prevention and mental health services for female veterans
- Won reauthorization of dental insurance for veterans, survivors and dependents enrolled in VA care
- Defeated proposal to limit applicability of veterans' preference to first federal job

## **2017**

### **Active / Reserve Force Issues**

- Won a 2.4 percent pay raise versus the 2.1 percent requested by DoD and the Administration
- Blocked a Senate proposal to eliminate the “with dependent” rate for dual military families
- Won a provision for equal treatment of 12304a and 12304b orders for reserve components to receive pre-mobilization and transitional health care
- Won increased travel reimbursement for guard/reserve training beyond commuting distance

### **Health Care Issues**

- Resisted TRICARE for Life enrollment fee
- Won provision for individuals under 21 to receive hospice care services through TRICARE
- Won provision for pre-separation mental health assessments of service members
- Streamlined TRICARE Extra and Standard plans into TRICARE Select
- Defeated proposal to eliminate grandfathering clause that would have increased cost-sharing payments for TRICARE Prime and Select beneficiaries
- Resisted TRICARE enrollment fee on active duty family members

### **Military Family / Veterans / Other Issues**

- Won a provision for pre-separation counseling for service members and their appointed caregivers regarding services and support available through the VA
- Won “Forever” GI Bill which provides:

- Lifetime benefit
- Expansion of the Yellow Ribbon Program
- Extension of benefits to Purple Heart recipients
- Expansion of transferability to dependents
- Additional assistance for STEM programs
- Expansion of benefits to reserve component members including those on 12304a and 12304b orders
- Won provision for reimbursement up to \$500 per PCS/PCA for state-to-state licensure and certification costs of spouse due to relocation
- Won \$40 million in impact aid for school districts serving large numbers of military children
- Won provision to authorize a telework pilot program of public-private partnerships with US companies for the purposes of dependent spouses stationed OCONUS maintaining employment
- Won provision for military families in certain circumstances to relocate due to CONUS PCS up to 180 days prior to or 180 days after RNLTD
- Won provision to ensure more flexibility at CDCs to meet the demands of service members and their families - taking into account elements such as mission requirements, unpredictability of work schedules, frequent and prolonged absences due to training, operations and deployments
- Won permanent extension of Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance (SSIA) at current rate through 2018 with COLA increases starting in 2019

## **2018**

### **Active / Reserve Force Issues**

- Approval of the National Defense Authorization Act
- A full, 2.6 percent active duty pay raise
- Blocked additional Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) reductions
- Restored long-term per diem rates for travel
- Garnered additional improvements to 12304b orders, allowing activated members of the Guard and Reserve to have access to TRICARE coverage/earn GI Bill and early retirement credit
- Extended TRICARE Dental and Vision Insurance program for active duty family members

### **Health Care Issues**

- Expanded eligibility of Tricare dental program beneficiaries for the federal dental and vision insurance program
- Pilot program for opioid management

- Pilot program to treat post-traumatic stress disorder related to military sexual trauma

### **Military Family / Survivors / Veterans / Other Issues**

- No new TRICARE fees or additional copay hikes
- Streamlined TRICARE Prime beneficiary referral process
- No new COLA calculations to reduce retirement pay
- Expansion of [Military OneSource Program](#) for transitioning service members
- Sustained [Impact Aid](#) funds for school districts with large #s of military children
- Increased access to community care/modernization of VA health system
- Expansion of VA comprehensive caregiver support to eligible veterans of all eras
- Increased [financial protections](#) for Veterans from fraudulent educational programs/predatory scams
- Expanded state [adult-day](#) care for qualifying veterans
- Extend commissary/exchange access to Purple Heart, POWs, disabled veterans-caregivers