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**Air Force Sergeants Association (AFSA)
Challenges Congress on NDAA**

SUITLAND, Md., Nov. 24, 2015 –Negotiations between the House and Senate on the FY 2015 National Defense Authorization Act came to a standstill shortly before the Thanksgiving Recess when disagreement arose whether to include a number of personnel-related benefits cuts in the compromise bill.

Options on the table would limit the military pay raise to 1 percent, reduce payments for Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) and increase copays for pharmaceuticals through various TRICARE programs. The Air Force Sergeants Association sent its members an action alert encouraging them to contact their Congressional representatives about the proposed cuts. AFSA is the largest enlisted association with 110,000 members; 83 percent of people currently in uniform are enlisted members and would be hard hit by the cuts, according to AFSA CEO Rob Frank.

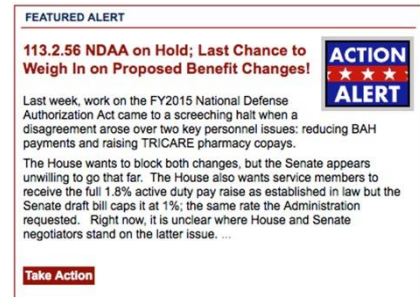
Frank said the following about the ongoing dispute and the impact such changes would have on our all-volunteer force:

“We are sending service members to carry the fight against ISIS, to deploy to locations around the world, to combat Ebola, consistently increasing their taskings, repeatedly separating families to protect our national interests, and yet our government will not provide a modest 1.8 percent pay raise that would simply allow military pay to keep pace with the economy in which our military members and their families live.

At the same time, our leaders want to reduce the amount the government pays for allowances for housing and raise the out-of-pocket costs of medications for military beneficiaries. With the extraordinary sacrifices and service made by military members, our national leaders should consider the well-being of service members and their families a national priority.

Military members represent less than one percent of U.S. citizens and they earn their benefits through blood, sacrifice, and their willingness to pay the ultimate sacrifice over decades of service. These great men and women have already paid for their benefits at a cost far greater than shouldered by any other citizen, federal or otherwise. It is extremely unfair to those currently serving (and their families) to continue asking them to give more and more while providing them with less and less to do the job. That is why AFSA is urging negotiators to adopt language that sustains the full 1.8 percent active duty pay raise as established in law, and to block proposed cuts to the Basic Allowance for Housing and TRICARE pharmacy copay increases.

While it is understandable that extraordinary measures must be taken during a time of national fiscal crisis, it should be noted that inadequate funding of our military has brought us to this point. Congress still needs to address sequestration, but military members should not be penalized by their inaction. We applaud the House and Senate members who have recognized the unfairness of the proposals now on the table and are



fighting against them; AFSA is ready to work with anyone in Congress who cares enough to ensure those who serve this country in uniform are being treated fairly.”

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AFSA (hqafsa.org) is a non-profit, federally chartered, military and veterans association of 110,000 dues-paying members which specifically focuses on the quality-of-life benefits of enlisted military members and their families, while supporting all military members and a strong national defense. Enlisted members currently comprise about 83 percent of those in uniform.