



THE LEGISLATIVE BOZZ

As the end of 2011 fast approaches, I'd like to take this opportunity to reflect back over the year's legislative activities and try to sum up the results of this year's campaigns. In one word "**Bittersweet**"

The Sweet = the Commonwealth Scene:

We stormed the Virginia General Assembly on January 24th, Seven representatives from VIPMOAA journeyed to Virginia's Capitol city and joined with members from sixteen other Virginia MOAA Chapters to meet and call upon each Senator and Delegate in our Chapter's geographic area to thank them for their past support of military, veterans, and their families and ask them to again support specific bills meeting our 2011 Legislative Objectives. We did quite well - The General Assembly approved five of the six priority Legislative Objectives proposed by the Joint Leadership Council. Thanks to all who supported the JLC Legislative Objectives during throughout the 2011 General Assembly.

* JLC Objective: Improve services to Virginia veterans by restoring staffing for the Virginia Department of Veterans Affairs (DVS) Benefits Services Program by adding an additional \$402,400 (GF) per fiscal year. Status: **Approved and fully funded.**

* JLC Objective: Fund Virginia's Veteran's Cemeteries, in an amount of \$387,100 (GF) per fiscal year and fill vacated positions. Status: **Approved and fully funded**

* JLC Objective: Special Judicial Procedures for Veterans and Military Service Members. Status: **Approved**

* JLC Objective: Provide the Virginia War Memorial, with an additional \$255,000 (GF) per fiscal year. Status: **Approved and partially funded in the amount of \$100,000 (40%)**

* JLC Objective: In-State Tuition for Veterans. Status: **Approved** This JLC Objective requested increased educational opportunities for recently-discharged veterans by waiving the one-year residency requirement needed to qualify for in-state tuition rates, provided all other domicile requirements are met.

* JLC Objective: Acquire an Alternate Dedicated Revenue Sources for Virginia Veterans Programs. Status: **Failed - it was not to be this year.**

On June 24th, The Twenty-Sixth Annual Virginia Congressional Appreciation Luncheon honoring the **Thirteen-Member Virginia Congressional Delegation** for their efforts in support of our Armed Forces, Veterans, Retired Military and their Families took place at the Capitol Hill Club in Washington D.C. Ten of our thirteen Congressional Representatives attended the luncheon and Over 120 Virginia MOAA Chapter members were in attendance including seven of our own members. At the luncheon **Congressman Rob Wittman** received the Virginia Council of Chapters MOAA "Outstanding National Legislator Award". This "Award" is a plaque with stamps selected to represent the Congressman's service and interests.

The Bitter = the National Scene:

Measurement of success on achieving the 2011-2012 Virginia Council of Chapters (VCOC) National Legislative Objectives adopted in January remains uncertain. Principally, this is due to attempts to resolve the national deficit and debt which resulted in the passage of the Budget Control Act of 2011 and its directed cuts to national security funds beginning in FY 2012, - so what's left?

As of this writing, the "Super Committee" appears completely deadlocked on any agreed upon resolution to a national deficit and debt proposal to present to Congress by the December 23rd deadline. If the committee can't agree on a proposal, or if Congress rejects the proposal without approving some alternative to achieve equal savings, an automatic enforcement mechanism (sequestration) will cut \$1.2 trillion from the budget over the next 10 years, most of which will come out of our military defense budget.

So what can we do? We can continue communicating with our elected officials expressing our strong beliefs in national security. One easy way is to send MOAA-suggested messages to our elected officials when notified of specific "Calls to Action". To do this simply Go to www.MOAA.org . sign-up for MOAA Legislative news and follow their directions.

Until Next Year, may you and your family have the Best Holiday Season Ever

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