



TIME FOR OUR GRASS ROOTS SUPPORT - It's time to push back!

There's a lot of talk these days about changing our hard earned benefits - and not for the better. Providing grassroots support for MOAA's legislative goals is an important goal for us as VIPMOAA chapter members. Our support along with other Virginia and State Chapters has played a major part in many of MOAA's legislative wins during the last 10 years. Legislators listen to chapter members who are their constituents. Some of us have personal relationships with legislators that national MOAA could not duplicate. This gives chapter members a great opportunity to let legislators know how they feel. Contact your legislators in their district offices, and find out where they stand on the proposed changes to our military retirement and our earned benefits.

Stay informed! Read and keep up with MOAA's weekly Legislative Update. Many of you do, and, if you don't, sign up NOW – go online and sign up at www.moaa.org. Likewise, read the "Washington Scene" in MOAA's **Military Officer Magazine**. Mail in the tear-out letters and legislative postcards, respond to legislative alerts, and get your other chapter friends to do the same. Energetically taking these actions will help MOAA protect the **earned** benefits for **all** service members.

Recently, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta testified before the House Armed Services Committee stating his opposition to cuts to the FY 2012 Defense Department budget that go beyond the nearly \$450 billion (over 10 years) already approved in both the pending House Bill (H.R. 1540) and Senate Bill (S. 1253) Defense Authorization bills. Members of the House Armed Services Committee (HASC) also dispatched a letter to the Joint Deficit Reduction Committee (a.k.a. Super Committee) that warned that significant cuts to military retirement, TRICARE, and other benefits could have a "devastating Impact" on our national defense.

The "Super Committee" is charged with the task of reducing the deficit by at least \$1.2 trillion in the next 10 years, and if this committee can't agree on a plan of action, automatic cuts will be triggered (known as sequestration), **half of which must come from the Defense budget! (That's lots of \$\$billions)**

National Legislative Issues – as of 13 October 2011:

1. Support Strong Base Defense Budget; At about 3.6% of GDP, the base defense budget for 2011 is a historic low share of the national economy, and projected to decline further - vs. - the peacetime-year average 5.7% since WWII. The \$553 billion (3.4% of GDP) submitted for FY 2012 in February is out the window with the cuts directed in the Budget Control Act. Current projection is \$549 billion.

2. National solution to our petroleum energy for national security

Nothing found supporting this initiative to assure stable access within budgeted cost for petroleum base fuels.

Increase size of Ground Forces

The FY2012 budget request and the authorizations included in HR1540 & S1253 for FY2012 authorizes a total of 592,000 for Active Army and NG/Reserve on active duty. This is less than the 700,000 in VCOC objective. USMC is expected to be reduced from current 202,000 to 173,000. Final numbers remain to be determined.

3. Preserve benefits as key to sustain All Volunteer Force. These benefits include:

- Enlistment incentive bonuses – *Status unknown*
- Pay consistent with or above the non-military sector – *HR 2219 has 1.6% pay increase.*
- Health care under TRICARE and TRICARE for Life at reasonable cost – *Fee increase expected**
- Retirement eligibility and pay that recognizes service and sacrifice – *Change under review**
- Wounded Warrior program - *Funding being provided.- Is it Adequate?*
- Provider reimbursement rate for Medicare/Tricare – *To be determined**
- Long term viability of Social Security and Medicare and COLA discipline – *To be determined**

* Outcome dependent on pending actions per Budget Control Act of 2011.

4. End inequity of the SBP/DIC offset: Senate Bill 260 - Both Sen. Warner and Sen. Webb are co-sponsors. Bill has been in SASC since 02/02/11. House Bill 178 – Every Congressman with the exception of Rep. Cantor and Rep Griffith are co-sponsors. Bill has been in HASC since 01/05/2011 and in HASC Subcommittee on Military Personnel since 02/04/2011. Again, the outcome will be dependent on pending actions per Budget Control Act of 2011.