



Legislative Alert #113-37: URGE Congress to Reject Military Compensation & Benefits Changes and Navy Cuts in Fiscal Year 2015 Budget Request [Take Action!](#)
MILITARY & VETERANS

Issue Background: On 4 March 2014, the Administration sent to Congress the President's Budget (PB) request for Fiscal Year 2015 (FY15). The PB requests a total of **\$495.6 billion** for the Department of Defense (DOD) budget; about **\$31 billion** less than FY14 requested levels. Despite some programs seeing positive steps forward, there are significant 'cost saving' measures being proposed as well as significant cuts to Navy platforms, which could impact overall morale, recruitment, retention and readiness in the military. Of particular concern are proposals within DOD's budget to reduce military pay raises (1% rather than 1.8%), lowering Commissary subsidies (resulting in a roughly 20% price spike), reducing the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) (a 6% reduction) and merging three different TRICARE plans; Prime, Standard and Extra, into one Consolidated TRICARE Health plan while instituting TRICARE for Life (TFL) enrollment fees and increasing pharmacy copays. All of this is being proposed as the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission (MCRMC) is still doing its work and won't be done until 2015. The Navy also will see funding cuts for programs, particularly the Littoral Combat Ship (LCS), F-35 Joint Strike Fighter (JSF), MQ-8 Fire Scouts and P-8A Poseidon's. Finally, despite the decision to preserve the USS *George Washington* (CVN-73), and maintain an 11 carrier fleet, the FY15 PB does note that there is potential to look at reducing carrier presence to 10 in Fiscal Year 2016 (FY16).

Action Required: Contact your Representatives and Senators and urge them to REJECT radical DOD Military Compensation & Benefits changes being proposed, even before the MCRMC completes its work. In addition, vital Navy programs are being reduced which inhibits our Navy's ability to strengthen our presence in the Asia-Pacific Theater.

Details (To Be Put Into Letter):

The Fiscal Year 2015 (FY15) President's Budget (PB) that was recently released imposes significant changes to Military Compensation and Benefits and could harm our Navy's readiness. First, there are drastic proposals being offered to change the current TRICARE system, consolidating Prime, Standard and Extra into one plan, instituting TRICARE for Life (TFL) enrollment fees as well as increasing pharmacy copayments. A reduction in military pay, down .8%, is also being proposed along with a 6% reduction in Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) and 20% spike in prices at Commissary's. All told, these changes of DOD, which come before the

Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission (MCRMC) have devised their report, propose for in a two year time frame, an E-5 to lose **\$593** in pay, **\$1,224** in BAH, **\$2,400** in Commissary savings and **\$206** on average with TRICARE changes being imposed. This totals a loss of about **\$4,423** in purchasing power. For an O-3, the average loss of purchasing power with these changes would be **\$5,320**.

In addition, the Navy at 283 vessels today, seems poised to shrink even further as sea-power investments are regularly deferred in the name of savings in the FY15 PB. Despite the recent 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) and 2012 Strategic guidance emphasizing growing our naval presence, particularly in the Asia-Pacific, the DOD budget includes removing 11 of our 22 cruisers (CGs) from the fleet, canceling the planned procurement of 20 relatively inexpensive Littoral Combat Ships (LCS), and DOD appears ready to reduce our aircraft-carrier fleet by forgoing needed maintenance on the USS *George Washington* (CVN-73) in FY16, shortening her service life and stretching the demands of not only our carrier force, but putting excess burdens upon our Sailors being asked to do more with less, potentially resulting in longer deployments. Along with these ship cuts, which threatens plans for a 300 plus sized fleet, the FY15 PB proposes decreases in the 5 year Future Years Defense Program (FYDP) plan for Navy aviation platforms including cutting 8 P-8A 'Poseidon' aircraft, 4 Navy F-35C Joint Strike Fighters (JSF), 7 E-2D "Advanced Hawkeyes" and 17 MQ-8 "Fire Scouts."

Take Action: Click the "Take Action" link at the top of the Alert to immediately email and/or write to your Senators and Representatives. This is the quickest and most effective method of expressing your views to Congress. You can also write and/or e-mail the 'Details' section or edit as you desire for a more personalized communication . Also, contact friends and family and urge them to use the Contact Congress feature on AUSN's website as well. Please direct any questions concerning this issue to our Director of Legislation, Anthony Wallis, at 703-548-5800 or at Anthony.Wallis@ausn.org.