



**Legislative Alert #113-46: URGE the Senate to Reject and Amend Alarming Sections of the SASC Passed FY15 NDAA**

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DEFENSE

**Issue Background:** On 23 May 2014, the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) marked up and approved S. 2410, the Fiscal Year 2015 (FY15) National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which authorizes funding levels. Despite a few notable provisions of interest included in the SASC passed bill, such as rejecting the President's Budget (PB) request recommendations that included establishing enrollment fees for TRICARE for Life (TFL) beneficiaries or the reorganization of the TRICARE program into one Consolidated TRICARE plan, there were a few items of concerns. Within the SASC approved S. 2410, PB request recommendations regarding reduced pay raises, reduced basic allowance for housing (BAH), and increased pharmacy copays for prescriptions were included. In addition, SASC included an alarming change to the structure within the Department of Defense (DOD) by including a provision that changes the name of the office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs (currently ASD-RA), to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs. This is especially alarming in that the Military Service Organization (MSO) community fought hard for Congress to help establish this office within the NDAA of Fiscal Year 1984 (P.L. 98-94).

**Action Required:** Contact your Senators and urge them to reject and amend, when the bill comes to the Senate floor, certain sections of S. 2410, the FY15 NDAA, pertaining to military pay raises, reduced BAH, increased pharmacy copays, and changing the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs to include 'Manpower.'

**Details (To Be Put Into Letter):**

S. 2410, the Fiscal Year 2015 (FY15) National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) provides a defense budget and policy outline for the United States. It is crucial that Congress consider what is best for the defense of the country and for its servicemembers when adopting this bill. However, the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) marked up and passed S. 2410 that contained alarming provisions that severely impact military compensation, benefits and potentially the future of the Reserve Component. For instance, according to current law, from the Fiscal Year 2004 (FY04) NDAA, the Department of Labor issues a quarterly measurement for businesses in the U.S. economy displayed by an Employment Cost Index (ECI). The ECI is typically used to compare public and private sectors positions, and is an applicable standard when evaluating the costs of living. The SASC-passed FY15 NDAA, contrary to the House passed bill, includes a pay raise of

only one percent for all members of the uniformed services in pay grade O-6 and below. In order to meet the ECI measure that is required by law, however, the Senate should adopt a pay increase of 1.8%. This will be the second year in a row that our servicemembers pay raises have been reduced. If Congress cannot state firmly in the NDAA, through both House and Senate versions, the Administration will cite its authority to keep it at the one percent level.

Additionally, SASC also revised the method by which the monthly amount of BAH is determined and authorized the Secretary to reduce the monthly amount by up to 5 percent of the national average and accepted the Administration's proposal to increase pharmacy copays (for example, from \$5 to \$14 for Retail pharmacy copays). Finally, Section 902 of S. 2410, the SASC marked up FY15 NDAA, changes the title of the current Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs (RA) by adding "Manpower" to it and all its responsibilities. A change in this title is a step backward to the original purpose of the position fought for by the Military Service Organization (MSO) community in the early 1980's. Any delegation of additional tasks would decrease dedication to Reserve Affairs. It is of the utmost importance that RA receives its own specialized Assistant Secretary in order to successfully fulfill supervision of Reserve Components (RC), tasked with providing advice/information about the capabilities of the RC. Currently, the office sets conditions for a sustainable, seamlessly integrated and complementary total force, with over 800,000 Reservists activated since 9/11.

**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](mailto:Anthony.Wallis@ausn.org).