



**Legislative Alert #113-8: SUPPORT H.R. 1265 and S. 614, the Military Tuition Assistance Act**  
MILITARY

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**Issue Background:** On 1 March 2013, “sequestration” went into effect, and as a result all branches of the Armed Forces are now being required to cut funding-levels, at rates close to 13%, to every single department within their branch with the exception of their personnel accounts. One week later, the U.S. Army, U.S. Air Force and U.S. Marine Corps announced that they would suspend their Tuition Assistance (TA) programs at the conclusion of the spring 2013 collegiate semester, to help the branches meet the 13% cut in funding-levels to their Operations and Maintenance accounts (O&M).

In Fiscal Year 2012 (FY12), TA programs constituted only 0.1% of the Pentagon’s \$700 billion budget and allowed servicemembers to take 87,000 classes and earn over 50,000 degrees, diplomas and certificates. At a time when Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) Veterans are facing an unemployment rate almost triple the national average, this raises questions as to the reason TA programs are the first of such reported cuts to military spending.

**Action Required:** Contact your Representatives and Senators and urge them to support and cosponsor H.R. 1265, introduced by Representative Beto O’Rourke (D-TX-16) and S. 614, introduced by Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC), Ranking Member Senator James Inhofe (R-OK), the Military Tuition Assistance Act, which would require the continuation of tuition assistance (TA) programs for members of the Armed Forces for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2013 (FY13).

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

Serving in the all-volunteer Armed Forces is one of the highest honors a citizen can choose to do. It provides nearly limitless opportunities in leadership, technical, and work-place experience. Hundreds of thousands of servicemembers use the military as an opportunity to better their education and prepare for a career after they leave the service. Providing service members the assistance to receive an education is a high priority for our nation, but unfortunately, this pledge could become unfulfilled as a result of the recent budget debates in Washington. Today, almost 60% of servicemembers report entering the service with the goal of starting or continuing their education. TA provides these servicemembers the opportunity to further advance their education while still serving their country in an Active Duty status.

H.R. 1265 and S. 614 would restore the Military Tuition Assistance Program, an important recruitment and retention tool throughout all services, which provides funding to almost 300,000 service members acquiring degrees in higher education or certificates in a technical or trade craft. The budget battle is an important one, but we cannot place the burden of these cuts on the backs of our nation's warriors. These bills, which have gathered the support from major Military Service Organizations (MSO's) and Veteran Service Organizations (VSO's), protects the critical lifeline necessary for a successful civilian career after separation from the military. With the fragile economy slowly recovering, we cannot afford the possibility of losing hundreds of thousands of qualified and educated individuals who will prove vital to the future growth and success of our nation.

**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).