



Legislative Alert #113-19: UPDATE- URGE the House and Senate to Not Cut Military Pay Raise in Fiscal Year 2014 National Defense Authorization Act [Take Action!](#)
MILITARY

Issue Background: On 11 June 2013, the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC), Subcommittee on Personnel accepted the Administration’s proposal to cap military pay increases at 1% in 2014 during their markup of the Fiscal Year 2014 (FY14) National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The President’s Budget (PB) request for FY14 established this smaller pay raise, affecting 2.2 million Active Duty and Reserve Component members, in order to save the Department of Defense (DOD) \$536 million in its 2014 budget, a small cut in a \$526.6 billion budget. However, DOD claims it could save over \$3.5 billion if pay increases are reduced at this rate in future years. A 1% boost in military pay would be the lowest pay increase since 1963, when no pay raise was authorized. Under current law, a formula based on the Bureau of Labor Statistics Employment Cost Index (ECI) and growth in private-sector wages is used to determine annual pay increases for Armed Services personnel. This method mandates that servicemembers are entitled to an increase of 1.8% in 2014; a percentage that is “supported,” but not explicitly stated in the House’s FY14 NDAA, which passed on 14 June 2013. The Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) passed their version of the NDAA on 14 June as well, but it has not yet been taken to the floor of the Senate, which is expected to occur in October or November. The President has recently argued, in a 30 August 2013 press release addressed to Congress, that the cut is necessary for preserving the nation’s fiscal stability, and justifies his adjustment of the pay increase cut with section 1009(e) of Title 37 of the United States Code, circumventing Congress. However, this action can be countered if Members of the House and Senate, when the NDAA goes to conference, decide to set the pay increase at 1.8% as established by law that Congress approved back in 2004.

Action Required: Contact your Representatives and Senators and urge them to correct their version of the FY14 NDAA, during Senate Floor consideration this fall, and during Conference negotiations when the House and Senate reconcile their two versions of the NDAA, to ensure that military personnel receive the 1.8% pay increase, commensurate with the Bureau of Labor Statistics Employment Cost Index (ECI) growth in private sector wage rates and mandated under current law.

Details (To Be Put Into Letter):

Competitive pay rates are important to our over 2.2 million servicemembers who voluntarily defend the freedoms of our country. The proposed 1% pay increase in 2014, as supported by the Senate Armed Service Committee (SASC) and the Administration, would be the lowest pay boost that

military members have been granted since 1963, when an increase in pay was not authorized. Additionally, the House version of the NDAA does not include a specific 1.8% increase in the bill text, despite Members of the House explicitly supporting it in press releases and announcements by the House Armed Services Committee (HASC). This means that if it is not specified in the Senate version, to be considered on the floor this fall, or the final draft that will be sent to the President after a Conference on the NDAA is completed, the pay increase will be reduced to 1%, based on the President's authority he noted under section 1009(e) of Title 37 to implement pay changes unless Congress specifies otherwise. Under current law, a formula based on the Bureau of Labor Statistics Employment Cost Index (ECI) and growth in private-sector wages is used to determine annual pay increases for Armed Services personnel, which was determined to be 1.8% for Fiscal Year 2014 (FY14).

This cut in military pay raises would come at a time when servicemembers will still be carrying out missions in Afghanistan and are continuing to endure the hardships of multiple deployments and long periods of time away from their families. Although the current economic environment demands budget prioritization, there are several areas where defense costs can be reduced without denying military personnel and families pay increases, especially for such minimal savings to the Department of Defense (DOD); \$536 million in a \$526.6 billion budget. Pay comparability is a fundamental pillar of an all-volunteer force. In 2004, the Veteran Service Organization (VSO) and Military Service Organization (MSO) community worked hard to fight for a law change, tying military raises to private sector pay growth. Previous Administrations and Congresses tried to cap military raises below that standard, which effectively hurt military recruitment and retention efforts. It is important that we learn from such experiences and not repeat them. The men and women in uniform willfully put themselves in harm's way in order to protect our country. Their sacrifices should not be marginalized by minimal savings to DOD by almost a full percentage cut in their pay raise, and it is essential that their raise percentage continue to be set by law in the final version of the NDAA.

Take Action: Click the 'Take Action' link at the top of the Alert to immediately email and/or write to your Senators. 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.