



# Legislative Update

Greetings! First, let me introduce myself. My name is Anthony Wallis, your new Legislative Director for the Association of the United States Navy. After a year of lobbying for the National Guard Association and six years of work as a professional staffer for the House and Senate, I am excited and happy to be onboard! With my hill background, my family history in the Navy and my Master's studies at the U.S. Naval War College, I am confident I can be your voice and advocate on Capitol Hill and look forward to serving you and all of your needs.

The last few weeks have been quite busy on Capitol Hill. On 13 February 2012, the President released his Fiscal Year 2013 (FY13) Budget Request to Congress, amongst a flurry of backlash at the proposals that lay within it. Having attended House and Senate Armed Services, Appropriations and Veterans' Affairs Committee hearings, I can conclude that the budget contains a good news/bad news outlook when it comes to the proposals for our nation's Sailors and veterans. I'll start with the bad news first (DOD Budget) then move to the good news (VA Budget):

## DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE (DOD) FY13 BUDGET OUTLOOK

The FY13 DOD contains \$525.4 billion in Base funding (\$5 billion less than FY12) and \$88.4 billion for Overseas Contingency Operations (\$27 billion less than FY12). In particular, for the Navy, a total of \$155.9 billion was requested (\$5.5 billion less than FY12). A five year plan is also in place for all Military personnel which will see drastic reductions in end strength between FY13 and FY17. Today (FY12 numbers), Active-Duty Navy end strength is at 328,700, but the FY13 Budget request reduces end strength to 322,700 and by FY17, the Administration has end strength down to 319,000. The Navy Reserve will see end strength reductions from 66,200 (FY12 numbers) to 62,500 for FY13 and 57,100 by FY17.

## DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA) FY13 BUDGET OUTLOOK

The Department of Veterans' Affairs looks a bit better with the FY13 Budget Request including \$140.3 billion. This is comprised of \$64 billion in discretionary funds (an increase of \$2.7 billion or 4.5% from FY12 enacted levels) and \$76.3 billion in mandatory funds. \$6.2 billion is requested to expand inpatient, residential and outpatient mental health programs (up \$312 million from FY12) and \$7.2 billion to expand institutional and non-institutional long term care services (up \$550 million from FY12).

With these debates on Capitol Hill are specifics questions about the reasoning for decommissioning seven Navy cruisers, citing modernization costs, proposals for two more rounds of Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) and even increases in TRICARE Enrollment fees (between 30 and 78%) in order to save \$1.8 billion for the FY13 budget! Lawmakers on Capitol Hill have already voiced their opposition to many of these proposals, wondering if all of these decisions are coming from the current fiscal environment, rather than a strategic overview of our military operations. Department of Defense officials testified and admitted these cuts came under pressure by the Budget Control Act of 2011 which Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta testified at a House Armed Services Committee hearing on February 15, "imposed by law on us... a reduction in the defense budget of \$487 billion over the next decade.

The debate is ongoing, and as always, it will come down to Congress to decide whether or not these cuts and the 'requests' of the Administration are upheld. There are rough seas ahead this fiscal year, but you can rest assured knowing you're Association of the United States Navy is on Capitol Hill advocating for your concerns and utilizing our strong relationships with Members of Congress, Staff and cooperating with other military associations to tell the Navy and our veterans' story.

## QUESTIONS/COMMENTS/CONCERNS

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