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AUSN LOOKS AT GAO REVIEW OF LITTORAL COMBAT SHIP

AUSN recently looked at a Government Accountability Office (GAO) review of the Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) that was sent to Congress. This review portrays concerns relating to the ship's ability to transmit data about operational needs and the status of key systems, a necessary component of the ship's highly automated nature and small crew. These concerns are part of an amendment proposed by Senator John McCain (R-AZ), Senate Amendment (S.Amdt.) 2257 to the Fiscal Year 2014 (FY14) National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). AUSN continues to monitor these developments and concerns, recognizing the importance the platform will have with the Navy's future shipbuilding plans.

FURTHER READING:

Recent news reports have cited a Government Accountability Office (GAO) Review, summary attached as a PDF, which contains many criticisms of multiple aspects of the Navy's new Littoral Combat Ship (LCS). These criticisms include failure to fully address the ship's ability to transmit data about operational needs and the status of key systems, a necessary component of the ship's highly automated nature and small crew. The GAO identifies problems in the LCS's ability to provide constant data flow between the ship and its shore support personnel.

The Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), Admiral Jonathan Greenert, has initiated four independent reviews of the LCS, identifying issues in training, maintenance, and logistics support and made approximately 170 recommendations, which will be, or has been, addressed by the LCS Council that was formed August of 2013. However, these do not include the data transmission concerns addressed by the GAO. Among these concerns are speed, bandwidth and system reliability, which are important to the LCS because of its reliance on shore-based operators and a constant data flow. Inability to transmit information back to operators in San Diego could reduce operational capacity. LCS shore support personnel have been increased from a planned 271 to 862 and a 2011 estimate said that the Navy would spend approximately **\$50 billion** to operate and support the vessels over the life of the LCS.

Details can be found at [AUSN's Capitol Hill Blog on GAO Review of LCS](#).

SENATE VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MARKUP OF PENDING LEGISLATION

On 19 November 2013, the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee (SVAC) held a markup meeting to consider three Executive Branch appointments at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs for Policy and Planning and the Chairman of the Board of Veterans' Appeals. In addition, the Committee considered and marked up six Veteran bills of interest; S. 1581, the Veterans Programs Improvements Act; S. 932, the Putting Veterans Funding First Act; S. 1556 which amends Title 38, U.S. Code, to modify collective bargaining rights of employees in the Veterans Health Administration (VHA); S. 1604, the Veterans Health Care Expansion Act; S. 1262, the Veterans Conservation Corps Act; and S. 1593, the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) Enhancement and Improvement Act. The hearing was presided by SVAC Chairman, Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT), and Ranking Member, Senator Richard Burr (R-NC), where Senators who were sponsors of the aforementioned bills testified.

FURTHER READING:

SVAC Chairman Sanders started the hearing and markup stating that everyone on the Committee is working their hardest to protect Veterans. He said that one of the big issues facing the Committee was that of advance appropriations, which he said has worked well for funding the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and helped ensure that Veterans benefits were not impacted more severely by the shutdown. He said that the meeting would see a discussion of advance appropriations for Veterans, as well as the extension of health care benefits for Veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan from 5 years to 10. SVAC Ranking Member Burr opened by saying that he had concerns with much of the legislation before the Committee. He said that he could not support bills that appropriated more money without an offset, and that new programs should not be instituted until they are paid for. He also said that the Improving Quality of Care Act presented him with some concerns, and that there has not been enough information gathered from either relevant agencies or oversight hearings to make the changes proposed in the bill.

First, voice votes were held on the nominations of Sloan Gibson as Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs and Linda Schwartz as Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs for Policy and Planning, and both were passed with ease by the committee. Afterwards, Ranking Member Burr raised concerns about undelivered documentation for the next nomination whereby a roll call vote was held on the nomination of Constance Tobias as Chairman of the Board of Veterans' Appeals, who was subsequently approved by an 8-6 vote of the Committee.

The markup of legislation portion of the SVAC hearing began with consideration of S. 1581, the Veterans Programs Improvements Act. Chairman Sanders encouraged the Committee to pass this collection of changes to existing Veterans programs, while Ranking Member Burr argued that work was still needed and that its costs are not yet paid for and relevant Committees and agencies had not yet weighed in. The bill then passed the Committee by voice vote. The next bill, S. 932, the Putting Veterans Funding First Act provides advance appropriations for VA. Ranking Member Burr argued that with a worsening claims backlog, advance appropriations will reduce the Committee's ability to conduct oversight of VA activities. Senator Mark Begich (D-AK) argued that advance appropriation will allow the VA to make progress without having to wait for the money to be appropriated, and that advanced appropriation is common among Federal funding. The bill subsequently passed after a roll call vote of 13-1. The third bill, S. 1556 amends Title 38, US Code, to modify collective bargaining rights of employees in the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH) said that these changes will allow healthcare professionals within VA to address pay and overtime issues the way their peers in the field can. Ranking Member Burr said that there are no cost estimates for the changes, and that the changes would allow for collective bargaining on all issues, not just pay. The bill passed 8-6 after a roll call vote.

Next, S. 1604, the Veterans Health Care Expansion Act, was considered where the bill would change the complex income-based healthcare eligibility system to a 1-level-per-state system, and also extend the free healthcare period for Veterans of combat from 5 years to 10 years. Ranking Member Burr criticized this bill, saying that a massive expansion of benefits could be detrimental to those already waiting for VA care, and that like several other bills, it has no offset to pay for its additions. The bill passed 9-6 after a roll call vote. After that vote, S. 1262, the Veterans Conservation Corps Act, was considered which provides additional tools for transitioning Veterans into civilian careers. Ranking Member Burr once again criticized the lack of offset, but the bill passed 10-4 after a roll call vote. Finally, S. 1593, the SCRA Enhancement and Improvement Act, expands protections under SCRA. Chairman Sanders expressed support for this bill, while Ranking Member Burr said that he was opposed to it due to the lack of information from relevant agencies at either hearings or other input to the Committee. The bill passed 11-3 after a roll call vote.

HOUSE VETERANS COMMITTEE HEARING ON VA CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS

On 20 November 2013, the House Veterans Affairs Committee (HVAC) held a hearing titled, "Building VA's Future: Confronting Persistent Challenges in VA Major Construction and Lease Programs." The witnesses present were Ms. Linda Halliday, Assistant Inspector General for Audits and Evaluations, Office of the Inspector General at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Ms. Maureen Regan, Counselor to the Inspector General at the Office of the Inspector General at the VA, Mr. Lloyd Caldwell P.E., Director of Military Programs at the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, Mr. Glenn D. Haggstrom, Principle Executive Director, Office of Acquisitions, Logistics, and Construction at the VA, and Ms. Stella Fiotes, Executive Director, Office of Construction and Facilities Management at the VA. The hearing was presided by HVAC Chairman, Representative Jeff Miller (R-FL-01), and HVAC Ranking Member, Representative Mike Michaud (D-ME-02).

FURTHER READING:

The HVAC began its hearing with opening remarks made by the Chairman, the Ranking Member, Ms. Halliday, Mr. Caldwell, and Mr. Haggstrom. Chairman Miller began by stating the Committee just passed a bill authorizing 27 major facility leases and that this hearing was to address serious deficiencies in the construction and lease process. He noted that he expects the VA to take serious issue with the delays and cost overruns seen in the past. Ranking Member Michaud submitted his written statement for the record. Ms. Halliday started by stating that she was there to testify on the results of the VA Office of the Inspector General (OIG) work. She informed the Committee that the OIG review disclosed patterns of poor oversight, ineffective planning, and mismanagement of capital assets. She also noted that some construction projects were executed over budget and post deadlines, while saying that central cost tracking was not in place to record spending. Mr. Caldwell stated that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is a designated construction agent within the Department of Defense (DOD) construction program and that they have a long standing relationship with the VA. He added that while budget risks are inherent in this process, the Corps of Engineers has four fundamental elements for project planning: Learning what is needed, planning the work, executing the procurement, and managing the execution. Mr. Haggstrom stated that the VA facilities program is an integral part of the VA which provides the tools for access to healthcare and benefits for our nation's Veterans. He added that the VA has taken on the challenge to meet infrastructure to meet growing demand, despite the fact that the VA's major leasing program was not authorized by Congress in 2013.

Following these opening remarks Chairman Miller deferred to the Committee members for questioning and comments. The Chairman inquired as to which of the 6 DOD medical facilities listed on his report were currently on budget and on time. He also asked why the VA is still in the process of implementing the Government Accountability Office (GAO) recommendations. Mr. Caldwell replied that due to the fact that there is an anticipated risk and cost growth of 5%, virtually all of the DOD medical facilities are currently on time and on budget. Mr. Haggstrom stated that the VA has implemented the GAO recommendations and Ms. Halliday added that the implementation has not been efficient. Ranking Member Michaud asked about the VA's thoughts on moving the construction from the VA to the Army Corps of Engineers. Ms. Halliday cited a lack of control on implementation, which she says may render VA workers nonproductive. Representative Corrine Brown (D-FL-05) inquired about the problems at the Orlando VA facility and why there has been no advance in the completion in the last three months. Mr. Haggstrom answered that inherent problems with scheduling, numbers of workers and quality of workmanship has been the problems and the current issue is with contractor performance. Representative Phil Roe (R-TN-01) asked why there is not a standard for VA hospital buildings like there is for DOD. Mr. Haggstrom answered that they do have some standardization, but not to the extent of DOD. Representative Beto O'Rourke (D-TX-16) asked how the VA can improve its score in underutilized and underserved areas. Ms. Halliday responded that there is a big difference in how rural Veterans are defined and coming to a consensus will help provide better access for these Veterans. Representative Julia Brownley (D-CA-26) asked if there are any metrics in place now to prevent the current delays from occurring again. Ms. Halliday says that there are, but since contractors must be used, there is always a chance for delay.

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES, MILITARY PERSONNEL SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING ON MILITARY RESALES

On 20 November 2013, the House Armed Service Committee (HASC), Subcommittee on Military Personnel, held a hearing titled, "Military Resale Programs Overview." The witnesses present were RDML Robert J. Bianchi, USN (Ret), Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for the Navy Exchange Service Command, Mr. William C. Dillon, Director of the Semper Fit and Exchange Services for the U.S. Marine Corps (USMC), Mr. Thomas T. Gordy, President of the Armed Forces

Marketing Council, Mr. Joseph H. Jeu, Director and CEO of the Defense Commissary Agency, Mr. Patrick B. Nixon, President of the American Logistics Association, Mr. Thomas Shull, Director and CEO of the Army and Air Force Exchange Service, and Ms. Rosemary Freitas Williams, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy at the Department of Defense (DOD). The hearing was presided by HASC- Military Personnel Subcommittee Chairman, Representative Joe Wilson (R-SC-02), and HASC- Military Personnel Subcommittee Ranking Member, Representative Susan A. Davis (D-CA-53). The military exchanges, the Commissary and the Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) programs have been acknowledged by the military and Veteran communities as highly valuable and appreciated benefits that support Active Duty retention, the wellbeing of the military community, and the readiness of the force. However, continued fiscal pressures on the Defense budget have caused the Department of Defense (DOD) and services to look at initiatives to reduce appropriated funding for these programs, which was the focus of the discussion during the hearing.

FURTHER READING:

The HASC, Subcommittee on Military Personnel, began its hearing with opening remarks made by the Chairman, the Ranking Member, and the witnesses. Chairman Wilson began by proposing the question of how the military resale community will continue to provide benefits in the current fiscally restrained environment. He added that he is a strong supporter of the Commissary, Base Exchange, and Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) programs because they provide a great savings to military families during these economically challenging times. Ranking Member Davis said that it is important to hold this hearing each year because the military resale programs are so valuable for the military community, placing particular note that the commissary is the most valued service amongst many military families. Ms. Williams opened by thanking the Subcommittee for its leadership which has helped military communities and stressed that these are trying times for the military community which will become even more difficult with a looming nine years of steeper budget cuts. RDML Bianchi reminded the Subcommittee that the Navy Exchange has helped Navy and Marine Corps families stay connected with internet calling at sea. He added that while they receive limited appropriated funds, there is a six-to-one payback on appropriated fund investment. Mr. Shull stated that the exchange draws from commercial best practices to improve efficiency. He noted that the exchanges are united to enhance the military community's quality of life and that these operations increase the probability of mission success. Mr. Jeu stressed that the commissary is seeking the most innovative methods of delivery to increase efficiency. Mr. Dillon agreed with those who spoke before him, adding that the Marine Corps works with the other branches to continue to keep cost down. Mr. Nixon said the way the Military Resale Program works is by bringing together the best practices of the public and the private sector. Mr. Gordy added that the commissaries and exchanges are not broken; in fact, they bring a world class non-compensation benefit to military families.

Following these opening remarks Chairman Wilson deferred to the Subcommittee members for questioning and comments. The Chairman first asked how they are keeping the cost down. Mr. Jeu replied that accounting practices and automation are helping, but they are constantly looking for ways to improve efficiency. Mr. Nixon added that the resale programs are continuing to identify the best business practices to incorporate. Ranking Member Davis asked why there are so many recommendations to improve efficiencies which have not been implemented. Ms. Williams replied that the services are currently gathering data to see which, if any, of these recommendations can work for military resale programs. Representative Joe Heck (R-NV-03) asked why there are three exchange representatives and if we could save money by consolidating these three organizations. RDML Bianchi stated that each exchange representative is needed to respond to the individual exchange needs of each service.

SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE HEARING ON CRPD

On 21 November 2013, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFAC) held a hearing on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which is up for ratification by the U.S. after having failed to pass in previous years. The ratification of the CRPD would afford our Veterans and other disabled Americans and their families the same protections and opportunities that they have here in the U.S. while traveling, studying, and working abroad. Supported by a wide array of individuals, including former Senator Bob Dole (R-KS), former Senator Bill Frist (R-TN) and former Representative Tony Cuehlo (D-CA-15), the CRPD would ensure that Veterans traveling or working abroad would have the same access and care that they enjoy in the United States under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The hearing was held by SFAC Chairman, Senator Robert Menendez (D-NJ), and SFAC Ranking Member, Senator Bob Corker (R-TN). The notable witness testifying before the panel was Secretary of State, and former Senator, John Kerry.

FURTHER READING:

SFAC Chairman Menendez began by saying that this treaty enjoys vocal support by thousands of individuals and organizations and that the Committee had received letters of support from a wide variety of organization, including a number of Veterans' associations, and that the treaty has overwhelming support by the military and Veterans. He argued that ratification of the Convention is, "the right thing to do." SFAC Ranking Member Corker said that he was concerned that the treaty could have an impact on existing laws and Federal authority, and that ratification would rest on the Administration's assurances that this will not happen. He said that he desires that there be no further implementing language associated with the treaty.

Secretary Kerry, in his opening statement, said that the Obama administration is 100% prepared to work through the reservations of Senators to advance the treaty, saying that he did not believe that the treaty would have any impact on the domestic laws of the United States. He said that the U.S. has already led the charge concerning the rights of the disabled, and that the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) represent the standard for signatories of the treaty, and therefore no changes would be required of the U.S., which has already established the standard. He argued that ratifying the treaty would allow the U.S. to, "give up nothing and gain everything," and that there are no additional costs of legal changes associated with the treaty. He said that the treaty represents an opportunity to show that Senator's on both sides of the aisle support the rights of the disabled, and that ratification is not an abstract gesture or simple, "nice thing to do," but that it represents meaningful leadership with an impact on over 100 countries worldwide. Additionally, the international state of the rights of the disabled has a major impact on American citizens. Secretary Kerry cited the example of disabled Americans who are unable to travel to some countries for business, study, or pleasure because of their low standard for handicap accessibility and accommodation. Particularly impacted by this situation are Veterans, whom Kerry said serve their country and sustain injuries, and Kerry argued that it is now time for their country to support their rights and ensure that disabled Veterans have the same protections abroad that they enjoy in the United States under ADA.

Following his opening statement, Secretary Kerry answered questions from the Committee about the Convention. First, Chairman Menendez said that some Committee members had said that treaties not pertaining to national security are unnecessary, to which Secretary Kerry responded that treaties that support American national interests are also valid, citing the examples of treaties pertaining to international adoption, religious freedom, and intellectual property. The Chairman then asked Secretary Kerry to address concerns that the treaty could make the U.S. subordinate to UN policy concerning rights of the disabled. Secretary Kerry explained that there would be no violation of American sovereignty, as the UN commission has no authority of enforcement, and can only make suggestions. Furthermore, Secretary Kerry explained, the US has already enacted the ADA, which is the standard for disabled rights under the Convention, and therefore no further implementing legislation would be required upon ratification.

Ranking Member Corker asked about the impact of Bond vs. U.S., where legal action was taken against a U.S. citizen based on provisions of a treaty, and whether such a situation could occur under this Convention. Secretary Kerry replied that this decision does not apply to the CRDP, since there is no implementing legislation, and all of the provisions already exist in the U.S. under ADA. Ranking Member Corker then asked if the Administration would be willing to work with the Senate to insert language to guarantee that there will be no impact on Federal power, whereby Secretary Kerry said that the Administration would be willing to agree to such language. Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD) asked if the past failure to ratify the Convention has affected Secretary Kerry and the United States' ability to advocate for the rights of the disabled abroad. Secretary Kerry replied that he has not had anyone question his authority on the issue because of failure to pass the CRPD, but that ratification underscores American resolve on the issue and sets an example for other countries. Finally, Senator Chris Coons (D-DE) asked about any other possible legal redress that could come with ratification, and Secretary Kerry explained that the Convention will not give anybody power to impact the U.S. beyond making suggestions and said that CRPD ratification will cause zero compromise of sovereignty.

AUSN MONITORS START OF AMENDMENT DEBATE IN SENATE OF FY14 NDAA

This week, the U.S. Senate began its debate of S. 1197, the Fiscal Year 2014 (FY14) National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), offered by Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) Chairman, Senator Carl Levin (D-MI) and SASC Ranking Member, Senator James Inhofe (R-OK). Amendments began to be filed as early as last week Thursday, 14 November 2013, and consideration began on Monday, 18 November 2013. AUSN has been tracking the amendments being introduced and compiled a listing of amendments of interest that are being supported and/or monitored. Of the

over 400 amendments being offered, AUSN has been keeping track of approximately 50 of them that are of interest and concern.

FURTHER READING:

Debate was sluggish from the start since many subject of concern, that was expected, prolonged debate and agreement on how they would be considered on the Senate floor was difficult to achieve between both Senate Democrats and Republicans. Subjects of contention included powers of the National Security Agency (NSA), questions and amendments pertaining to Guantanamo Bay and its detainees, Sanctions for Iran, as well as debate on differing amendments regarding Sexual Assault provisions in the NDAA.

Early Wednesday, 20 November 2013, over 6 hours of debate got under way on the controversial provisions addressing military sexual assaults, including a provision by Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) , who acknowledged that she was still a few votes shy of the 60 needed to attach her amendment to the FY14 NDAA. Debate on Senator Gillibrand's amendment to the FY14 NDAA, as well as a its competing proposal offered by Senator Claire McCaskill (D-MO), and supported by the SASC Chairman and Ranking Member, consumed much of the day. Senator Gillibrand's amendment, which is based on her bill S. 967 introduced earlier this year, would take the decision for prosecuting major crimes (aside from 37 uniquely military offenses) out of the hands of military Commanders and instead, put them in the hands of trained military lawyers who would decide whether to move forward with cases. While the bill has the support of much of the Senate, her proposal has been strongly opposed by key Senators as well as military brass.

Despite Democrats and Republicans late Wednesday night still trying to work out a deal to determine which amendments to S. 1197 would get votes, the wide range of controversial issues made an agreement elusive. Thus Senate Majority Leader Reid filed cloture Wednesday evening on the FY14 NDAA. Just before the cloture motion was filed, Ranking Member Inhofe had tried to get Republicans to reduce the amendments they'd offer down to 25. However, a Senate aide hinted that that negotiations could continue over the upcoming Thanksgiving break and a deal could still be struck, in which case the cloture vote could be dropped.

Details can be found at [AUSN's Capitol Hill Blog on Senate FY14 NDAA Amendment Debate](#).

AUSN ON THE HILL

This week, aside from monitoring Congressional hearings in the House and Senate as well as the debate of the Fiscal Year 2014 (FY14) National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), AUSN participated in numerous advocacy activities in and around Capitol Hill. AUSN attended its weekly monthly meetings of the National Military and Veterans Alliance (NMVA) as well as The Military Coalition (TMC) to discuss future goals and agenda items for 2014. In addition, AUSN participated in its Navy Now Forum at the Army Navy Country Club, where AUSN hosted the Vice Chief of Naval Operations (VCNO), Admiral Mark Ferguson. VCNO Ferguson discussed the impact that ongoing sequestration is having, and will have, in Fiscal Year 2014 (FY14) and how the Navy is preparing for its continuation and the impact it would have upon readiness of the fleet. Finally, AUSN hosted a drumbeat phone call with its Legislative Liaisons to discuss moving forward this year with amendment consideration of the NDAA and what to look forward to next year.

PRIORITY BILLS INTRODUCED THIS WEEK

S. 1751, (Official title yet to be released). Introduced by Senator Dean Heller (R-NV), the bill would improve authorities for performance of medical disabilities examinations by contract physicians for benefits under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

S. 1717, Servicemember Education Reform and Vocational Enhancement (SERVE) Act of 2013. Introduced by Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA), the bill would amend Title 38, United States Code, to improve oversight of educational assistance provided under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Defense.

S. 1707, Vulnerable Veterans Housing Reform Act of 2013. Introduced by Senator Dean Heller (R-NV), the bill would exclude consideration as income under the United States Housing Act of 1937 payments of pensions made under section 1521 of Title 38, United States Code, to Veterans who are in need of regular aid and attendance.

H.R. 3554, Veterans Access to Care Act. Introduced by Representative Bruce Braley (D-IA-01), the bill would amend the Public Health Service Act to designate certain medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs as health professional shortage areas.

H.R. 3516, Veterans and Armed Forces' Health Promotion Act of 2013. Introduced by Representative Tim Ryan (D-OH-13), the bill would improve health care furnished by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of

Defense by increasing access to complementary and alternative medicine and other approaches to wellness and preventive care.

H.R. 3515, Increased Age Limit for Post-9/11 Education Assistance Dependents Act. Introduced by Representative Jim McDermott (D-WA-07), the bill would amend Title 38, United States Code, to increase the age limit for children using transferred Post-9/11 Educational Assistance.

H.R. 3514, Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Enhancement Act. Introduced by Representative Jim McDermott (D-WA-07), the bill would amend title 38, United States Code, to expand the authority of Veterans to transfer entitlement to Post-9/11 Educational Assistance to dependents.

H.R. 3507, 21st Century Care for Military & Veterans Act. Introduced by Representative Scott Peters (D-CA-52), the bill would amend Titles 10 and 38, United States Code, to expand the use of telehealth under the TRICARE program and in the Department of Veterans Affairs.

H.R. 3493, Servicemembers Transition Improvement Act. Introduced by Representative Tim Walberg (R-MI-07), the bill would require a pilot program on the provision of certain information to State Veterans agencies to facilitate the transition of members of the Armed Forces from military service to civilian life.

In the advocacy section of the website, you can click on [Bills of Interest](#) to get daily revisions on Congressional action for all AUSN priority bills. We STRONGLY encourage you all to visit our [Advocacy](#) page, especially the [Capitol Hill Blog](#) which receives almost daily submissions when Congress is in session to see what AUSN is doing for you on Capitol Hill.

We also encourage you and your friends and family to visit the [AUSN FACEBOOK PAGE](#). If you have an account, please Login and “Like” us, which will allow you to see our [TWITTER](#) feeds and other updates from AUSN that shows us monitoring Capitol Hill on your behalf!

NEW LEGISLATIVE ALERTS

There were two new Legislative Alerts sent this week based on hearings and interaction with Congressional staff, as well as traction on the issue. When these alerts are sent to your email, please click on the **TAKE ACTION** link that is at the top of the alert email to send a letter response to your Members of Congress. If you have not seen them, please go to the [Legislative Alerts](#) section on the AUSN webpage and/or check your e-mail for the following alerts which were titled:

Legislative Alert #113-24: URGE Senate to Adopt Priority Amendments and House Military Pay Raise in FY14 NDAA

Legislative Alert #113-25: UPDATE- URGE the Senate to Adopt Additional Priority Amendments in their FY14 NDAA

NEXT WEEK OUTLOOK

Next week, the House and Senate will be in recess for the Thanksgiving holiday. However, AUSN will be still engaged with the Hill, meeting with staff of the new Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, Subcommittee on Defense (HAC-D), Representative Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-NJ-11), who was recently selected to fill the vacancy caused by the passing last month of Representative Bill Young (R-FL-13). In addition, AUSN will be meeting with staff of the Navy Sea Cadet Corps to discuss future collaborative efforts. The offices at AUSN will be closed next week Thursday and Friday, the 28th and 29th, for the Thanksgiving holiday. AUSN will be looking at continued Senate floor debate, after the Thanksgiving break, of the Senate’s Fiscal Year 2014 (FY14) National Defense Authorization Act, its passage, hopefully in December, and the ensuing Conference negotiations on the House and Senate FY14 NDAA, analyzing the Senate’s passed bill with amendments. AUSN also looks forward to developments in December with the House and Senate Budget Conference Committee, which will pave the road for either a second Continuing Resolution (CR) for FY14 in January when the current one expires, or the passage of a FY14 Defense and Military Construction (MILCON) and Veterans Affairs (VA) Appropriations bill.

AUSN SEEKS SPRING 2014 LEGISLATIVE INTERNS

AUSN’s Legislative Department is looking for a full or part time unpaid Legislative Interns for the spring 2014 semester. Candidates should be undergraduate students seeking a degree in Political Science, Government Affairs, Communication’s or Public Policy related degree with a passion or interest in advocacy work for the Navy, its Sailors and Veterans. Details about the internship can be found by visiting [AUSN’s Legislative Internship webpage](#).

Candidates can submit a cover letter, resume and 1-2 page writing sample to the Director of Legislation, Mr. Anthony A. Wallis at Anthony.Wallis@ausn.org or fax it to 703-683-3647. Schedules are flexible/negotiable for the spring and Metrorail travel reimbursement is available to interns as well as free parking at our headquarters off of King Street in Alexandria. CUTOFF DATE for applications is 10 December 2013.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS/CONCERNS

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