



## **In This Week's Legislative Watch:**

[AUSN ANALYZES FISCAL YEAR 2014 OMNIBUS APPROPRIATIONS LAW](#)  
[HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE HEARING ON ASIA-PACIFIC REBALANCE](#)  
[HOUSE VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE HEARING ON FEDERAL VETERAN HIRING](#)  
[SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE HEARING ON MILITARY RETIREMENT SYSTEM](#)  
[AUSN ON THE HILL](#)  
[PRIORITY BILLS INTRODUCED THIS WEEK](#)  
[NEW LEGISLATIVE ALERTS](#)  
[NEXT WEEK OUTLOOK](#)

### **AUSN ANALYZES FISCAL YEAR 2014 OMNIBUS APPROPRIATIONS LAW**

*On 17 January 2014, the President signed H.R. 3547, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014 into law (Public Law 113-76). The bill, which rolled the various Appropriations measures into one Omnibus Appropriations bill, funds Federal agencies for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2014 (FY14), with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) at certain advanced funding levels for Fiscal Year 2015 (FY15). The bill passed the House on 15 January 2014 by a vote of 359-67 and passed the Senate on 16 January 2014 by a vote of 72-26. Department of Defense (DOD) allocations make up almost half of the proposed allocated funds in H.R. 3547.*

#### **FURTHER READING:**

With a total of over **\$565.1 billion** in DOD funding, the Omnibus Appropriations Bill's allocation is overall less than it was in FY13, the FY14 PB, the House's request and the Senate's request. Additionally, at a total of **\$159.2 billion** appropriated towards MILCON, this total is significantly above Fiscal Year 2013 (FY13). However, it is only slightly above the House's proposal, and slightly below the Senate and President's proposals. The overall spending limit for "regular appropriations," i.e. total cost of H.R. 3547, is **\$1.012 trillion**. In addition, with the FY13 sequester effects in mind, in the accompanying report to the bill H.R. 3547, while the agreement does not include provisions to prohibit the use of funds to furlough civilian employees, it is assumed that the passage of the Balanced Budget Act (BBA) of 2013, which replaced sequester levels in FY14 and FY15 with new spending limits, that this will eliminate entirely any need to furlough civilian employees in FY14. The agreement also includes **\$25 million** for DOD to make available to the services of the Armed Forces, including the Reserve Components, for the expansion of a Special Victims' Counsel Program in regards to sexual assault cases. Though there were some plus-ups in Navy procurement accounts as well, the Navy did see a few slight cuts including close to **\$45 million** from the Navy's new E-2D Advanced Hawkeye aircraft, whose contract has been delayed and **\$400 million** from Navy programs that also cannot get underway because of contract protests, including the Air and Missile Defense Radar (AMDR), the Next-Generation Enterprise Network and the Next-Generation Jammer. Title X. was also added to Division C. of the Defense Appropriations section to add a small 'fix' to the Cost-of-Living-Adjustment (COLA) reductions that was a part of the BBA for groups of disabled Veterans and their survivors under age 62.

In regards to military personnel and pay accounts, **\$128.8 billion** is appropriated to provide for 1,361,400 Active Duty troops and 833,700 Reserves. This funding level is **\$1.59 billion** below the President's FY14 Budget request. This also includes a 1 % pay raise for the military, which is in line with Defense authorization legislation, the President's FY14 Budget Request, but below the Employment Cost Index (ECI) of the Department of Labor (DOL) which, according to

the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2004 (FY04), is to be the basis of military pay raise calculations. As far as end strength levels for the Navy and Navy Reserve, Active Duty end strength for the Navy is authorized in the bill to be 323,600, an addition of 900 from FY13 levels, and Navy Reserve End-Strength is authorized in the bill to be 59,100, a reduction of 3,400 from FY13.

Other notable allocations include **\$32.7 billion** for Defense Health and Military Family Programs, which is **\$500 million** below, last year's level, and **\$355.4 million** below the President's FY14 Budget Request. In regards to notable procurement programs, **\$2.244 billion** is appropriated to man, operate, sustain, upgrade and modernize 7 guided missile Cruisers (CG's) and 2 amphibious dock landing ships (LSD's) the Navy had proposed for early retirement. (Found in Title VIII, Section 8107.). In addition, there is allocated **\$950 million** to fully fund second Virginia Class (SSN) submarine for FY14, **\$7.6 million** for Joint High Speed Vessel (JHSV) program shortfall in funding, **\$78 million** for advanced procurement of 22 F/A-18E/F Super Hornets and **\$1.0 billion** for the National Guard and Reserve Equipment Account (NGREA). Finally, the U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps, in the Navy Operation and Maintenance Accounts (O&M), sees an increase of **\$1.1 million** in funding.

Details can be found at [AUSN's Appropriations Analysis webpage](#).

### **HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE HEARING ON ASIA-PACIFIC REBALANCE**

*On 28 January 2014, the House Armed Services Committee (HASC) held a hearing on examining the implementation of the rebalancing to the Asia-Pacific region strategy. Notable witnesses present included the Honorable Frank Kendall, Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, the Honorable Michael D. Lumpkin, Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, and Vice Admiral (VADM) Frank Pandolfe, Director for Strategic Plans and Policy, Joint Staff, J-5. The hearing was presided by HASC Chairman, Representative Buck McKeon (R-CA-25), and HASC Ranking Member, Representative Adam Smith (D-WA-09). This is part of an oversight series launched by HASC last fall on the 2012 Strategic Guidance which stressed a 'pivot to the Pacific' strategy and is intended to see how our military is making strides in that direction.*

#### **FURTHER READING:**

The HASC hearing began with opening remarks made by the Chairman, Ranking Member, and all three witnesses. First, Chairman McKeon expressed his concern that the conditions for the rebalance towards Asia have not panned out as intended and that there is a risk in focusing on Asia while, "violence and instability rage in the Middle East and Africa," while also noting that budget cuts are forcing military leaders to cut "end-strength, readiness and capabilities." Ranking Member Smith maintained the importance of the Asia-Pacific region because of its economic impact on the United States and noted that the most important aspect of U.S. presence in the region is to help bring stability. Under Secretary Lumpkin opened his testimony by reaffirming Mr. Smith's statements regarding the global economic importance of the Asia-Pacific region, especially in regards to global trade and shipping. He then focused on the importance of the Department of Defense's (DOD) role in strengthening alliances with regional nations as well as improving, "cooperative capacity building," such as the Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) USS *Freedom* helping support the Philippines following Typhoon Haiyan. VADM Pandolfe discussed operations and force posture saying that our commitment to regional stability is, "most vividly demonstrated" by physical troop presence, noting that the level of rotational Marines in Australia will eventually grow to approximately 2,500 and there will be up to four LCS rotationally deployed to Singapore by 2017. Under Secretary Kendall discussed maintaining U.S. superiority in military technology such as missile defense against both China and North Korea. Under Secretary Kendall then noted that while China is "pursuing a comprehensive military modernization program" the United States is handicapped by sequestration and budget constraints as well as uncertainty about future budgets, allowing for a challenge to our technology superiority as we lose time to maintain superiority in the region.

Following these opening remarks, Chairman McKeon began the round of questioning by asking how the witnesses viewed the rebalance moving forward. VADM Pandolfe responded that the reallocation of forces from the Middle East to Asia-Pacific bases is an important aspect of moving forward and keeping such reallocation "apace" is important as well, which can be seen with the Navy's intention to rebalance their forces to roughly a 60-40 orientation. Next, Delegate Madeleine Bordallo (D-GU) asked Under Secretary Lumpkin what the tangible effects of the realignment of troops from Okinawa to Guam are on the overall rebalance strategy. The Under Secretary responded that the effect was two-fold in that it reaffirmed the commitment to Japan as well as firmly re-establishing Guam as a hub with the build up to 5,000 Marines in the area. Congresswoman Bordallo then asked VADM Pandolfe if the military services have

adequate capacities to meet the PACOM Combatant Commander's war plan requirements? VADM Pandolfe, in general unclassified terms, voiced his concern effects of sequestration and budget cuts on force readiness as it is the first aspect to suffer.

Representative Joe Courtney (D-CT-02) asked VADM Pandolfe about the impact that China has agreed to participate in the 2014 RIMPAC Exercise will have on the Anti-Area Access Denial issue, a challenging issue for the U.S. Navy. VADM Pandolfe noted that the invitation for Chinese participation in the 2014 RIMPAC was part of a government wide set of initiatives to engage China and encourage them to join the "family of nations." Representative Susan Davis (D-CA-53) asked Under Secretary Lumpkin about the increased military presence in the Pacific and how deployment lengths, troop morale, and military families would be affected. The Under Secretary first noted that in the Asia-Pacific region is a heavily maritime and aerospace theater so there is an emphasis on the Navy as both the Navy and Air Force look to move 60 percent of their force structure into the Asia-Pacific region by 2020. He then said that there has been a slowdown in personnel tempo from the withdrawals from Iraq and Afghanistan but that the services are simply not as large as they used to be. Representative Rob Wittman (R-VA-01) asked Under Secretary Kendall how the Navy could not continue production of the LPD-17, USS *San Antonio* class ship and for his perspective on how to optimize shipbuilding strategy in order to create a replacement class for LSD Amphibious Assault Ships. Under Secretary Kendall and VADM Pandolfe both responded that the Navy is looking at its options in terms of a replacement for the LSD class and also that the Navy is re-looking at its requirements in terms of amphibious shipping in order to determine the best way ahead in light of budget constraints.

#### **HOUSE VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE HEARING ON FEDERAL VETERAN HIRING**

*On 28 January 2014, the House Veterans' Affairs Committee (HVAC) held its hearing on what the Federal government can learn from the private sector's successful approach to hiring Veterans. The witnesses present at the hearing were BG Gary M. Profit, USA (Ret.) Senior Director of Military Programs at Walmart, Mr. Sean Kelley, Senior Staffing Director for Cloud + Enterprise & Military Recruiting at Microsoft Corporation, Ms. Maureen E. Casey, Director of Military and Veterans Affairs at JP Morgan Chase & Co., Mr. James Amos, Chairman of Tasti-D-Lite and Planet Smoothie, and Mr. Ross Cohen, Senior Director, Hiring our Heroes, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation. The hearing was presided by Representative Phil Roe (R-TN-01), filling in for HVAC Chairman, Representative Jeff Miller (R-FL-01) who was away, and HVAC Ranking Member, Representative Mike Michaud (D-ME-02). Representative Roe stressed throughout the hearing that there needs to be a better use of data to identify jobs for Veterans. Other ways to ease transition, for example, might be to re-design the input stages of the military, such as recruitment and enlistment, so that there may be counseling on what happens after their service ends.*

#### **FURTHER READING:**

The hearing began with opening remarks made by Representative Roe, Ranking Member Michaud, and the five witnesses. Representative Roe summarized the unemployment statistics for Veterans, noting how approximately 2.6 million Post-9/11 Veterans have left the service and in the next five years another million will leave as well. Of these numbers about half are between the ages of 18 and 34, and all are seeking to transition to civilian employment. There is a real fear of unemployment for Veterans as well as their spouses. HVAC sought the testimony of professionals who manage the re-integration of Veterans into the private sector in hopes of learning from their successes and challenges they have faced. Ranking Member Michaud remarked that, "Veterans represent an untapped resource of skills," and opened the floor to the five witnesses to explain their approaches to hiring Veterans.

BG Profit of Walmart began by explaining the programs which have been launched to ease the transition for Veterans such as the Veterans Welcome Home Commitment, which provides to Veterans who meet the job requirements and who have been honorably discharged a job at Walmart if they want it. Their goal, in the next five years, is to hire more than 100,000 Veterans and they are making headway to that number now (30,000 Veterans and counting). Walmart also provides the Veteran Champion Program which serves as a six-week on-boarding process to support the transition and integration of Veterans to their new work environments. Mr. Kelley of Microsoft followed and outlined main themes of their work for helping Veterans: expanding initiatives to help Veterans acquire the education and skills necessary to help them secure careers and eliminate the barriers companies face trying to help Veterans acquire skills they need to transition. To do so, Microsoft has joined with six non-profit organizations to provide skills training, job placement, and support services to Veterans and spouses through the Elevate America Veterans Grant Program. He noted that Microsoft committed a total of **\$12 million** to this program, but also pioneered its own through Microsoft's Software and Systems Academy (MSSA), which provides a 16-week technical training course that service members can enroll in before

leaving so that they may learn soft skills, interview practice, and resume preparation to transition into high-paying civilian jobs in the technology sector. However, the testimony from Mr. Amos, Chairman of Tasti-D-Lite and Planet Smoothie, points out other valid careers available to Veterans, besides the technology sector, through the Veteran's Franchising Initiative (VetFran). Mr. Amos commented that "many of the qualities that make successful franchise business owners are found in our nation's service men and woman" and that "Veterans possess the leadership skills necessary to run a successful business." VetFran partners with 618 franchises which set goals to hire Veterans as team members and to recruit them as franchise owners. This is an example of collaboration between private and public entities.

Ms. Casey described JPMorgan Chase's dedication to employing Veterans in five pillars: collaboration is crucial to success within the company and with external partners, it is critical to bridge the "knowledge gap" between civilian and military cultures, newly hired Veterans must develop a connection to the organization from the start, and education and training is necessary path to success in employment. Through each pillar JP Morgan and Chase either launched or collaborated to assist Veterans through the entire employment continuum – from recruiting and hiring, to mentoring and retention of employees. Mr. Cohen, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, was the last to give opening remarks and stated that local communities are the cornerstone of any national program to reduce Veterans' unemployment and that to bring the community together there must be a partnership between the private and public sector. Through the Hiring Our Heroes program, Veterans are assisted with transitioning, providing hiring fairs and networking activities, and developed an online suite of services to better identify career options.

Following these opening remarks Representative Roe deferred to Committee members for questioning. Ranking Member Michaud began by asking what happens to efforts when Veterans are no longer on the front page or considered current. Each witness answered similarly that there is still a responsibility to serve and assist Veterans or that is why there must be on focus on investing in education to encourage long term assistance. Mr. Kelley stressed that if we don't, we will miss out on the unique resource Veterans can offer. Ms. Casey suggested that Veteran unemployment should be integrated into communities so that their assistance doesn't disappear. The consensus of the witnesses supports embedding Veterans and their skills into private and public sectors. Ranking Member Michaud then asked BG Profit specifically for the generation breakdown for hiring Veterans in Walmart. BG Profit's answer shed light on which Veterans are focused on, the 18-34 year old Post-9/11 Veterans and older to integrate into the civilian workforce. The goal is not to be dismissive of any age.

However, when Mr. Kelley was asked how are the Veterans identified for technical positions he responded that they are targeted by the job they did in the military and are targeted by certain/selective skills. Microsoft would then provide technology and coding skills to the veterans who translate to the private sector jobs more appropriately. Mr. Kelley also provided his personal opinion, being retired himself, after being asked if service members are receiving enough counseling about transitioning. His response was, "Definitely not. They are unaware and there is no clear information on transitioning." Mr. Kelley proposed that it is a discussion that should even occur at the recruitment and enlistment stages. Representative Corrine Brown (D-FL-03) asked the witnesses what data is being collected to assist in transition, such as average salaries, and what equitable jobs between the military and civilian sectors are. There was little response from witnesses on what tangible data was actually collected, which exemplifies the disconnect between military and civilian culture. Representative Roe concluded that building private-public partnerships is critical for offering employment. Examples of such partnerships might include offering better incentives to small businesses, such as lifting regulatory burdens.

#### **SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE HEARING ON MILITARY RETIREMENT SYSTEM**

*On 28 January 2014, the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) held its hearing on the recent changes to the U.S. Military Retirement System. Notable witnesses present at the hearing were Ms. Christine H. Fox, Acting Deputy Secretary of Defense, and Admiral (ADM) James A. Winnefeld, Jr., USN, the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS). Presiding over the hearing was SASC Chairman, Senator Carl Levin (D-MI), SASC Ranking Member, Senator James Inhofe (R-OK). The changes in the Military Retirement System came as a result of the passage in December 2013 of the Bipartisan Budget Act (BBA), which produced the framework for the Omnibus Appropriations Bill for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2014 (FY14), which passed two weeks ago. However, the BBA cut the Cost-of-Living-Adjustment (COLA) for Veterans/retirees, disabled Veterans and Survivor Benefit Program (SBP) beneficiaries to less than 1% for all such individuals under the age of 62. The Omnibus Appropriations Bill which passed into law, P.L. 113-76, on 17 January 2014 made a minor correction whereby disabled Veterans and SBP beneficiaries would be exempt to*

*the COLA cut. However, the COLA cut remains in effect for everyone else and in order to replace it; an offset of approximately \$5.5 billion needs to be found, originally \$6 billion when disabled Veterans and SBP beneficiaries were initially impacted.*

#### FURTHER READING:

The SASC hearing began with opening remarks made by the Chairman, Ranking Member, and the witnesses. Chairman Levin explained that the Committee was meeting to review the Cost-of-Living-Adjustments (COLA) reductions for working age military retirees that was enacted by Congress in the Bipartisan Budget Act (BBA) of 2013. After explaining the process of how the COLA would work, using House Budget Committee Chairman, Representative Paul Ryan's (R-WI-01) description, the Chairman stated that he believed that the reductions in the COLA to be wrong and that many proposals had been sent to the Committee regarding ways in which to repeal and replace/offset the cut. Furthermore, Chairman Levin emphasized that while the military can't continue to sustain the current growth rate, a well thought out process and review was needed before any action should be taken.

Ranking Member Inhofe remarked that the Commission formed in the Fiscal Year 2013 (FY13) National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) back in 2012, to review the pay, compensation, and retirement system of the military, otherwise known as the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission (MCRMC), was due to report their findings by February 2015. He noted that they could only propose reforms that grandfathered in prior servicemembers before enacting any changes. Additionally, Senator Inhofe stated that he viewed the piecemeal type process of changing the COLA started by the BBA of 2013 was the wrong method for such reforms to be done in. The best way to properly reform the system was to do one reform bill with all variables and factors accounted for and reviewed, including the findings of the MCRMC, suggesting that making such changes right now without all the facts reported wouldn't be prudent.

Ms. Fox voiced, in her opening statement, that the Department of Defense (DOD) was extremely grateful for the stability achieved by the passage of the BBA and the Omnibus Appropriations Act of Fiscal Year 2014 (FY14), as it helps lift some of the budgetary pressure placed on DOD due to sequestration. She stressed that DOD cannot sustain the current growth rate of military compensation any more, and it is increasingly cutting into larger and larger portions of DOD's budget. While DOD is working to find savings and the Commission, which the DOD fully supports, investigates ways in which to reform the pay/compensation and retirement system, DOD does not support the COLA reductions made in the BBA of 2013. Furthermore, to her knowledge, Ms. Fox did not know of any DOD official that was consulted regarding the BBA COLA reduction. In closing, she stressed the need for any such reform policies to the retirement system to be grandfathered as well and that Congress take the time until the current law takes effect in December 2015 to thoroughly look over all possible options regarding reform.

Meanwhile ADM Winnefeld testified that while grateful for the increases in retirement and pay/compensation benefits that the military has received over the past decade that at this point, the current rate of growth remains the same and will continue to grow faster than the average American is able to keep up with. He said the current system is not sustainable under the current budget pressure. Furthermore, ADM Winnefeld articulated that as DOD reviews possible reforms to reduce the rate of growth with regards to the military's retirement and pay/compensation system that it was not currently or ever planning to consider any plans that affect the take home pay that members currently receive. In closing, ADM Winnefeld stressed that all reforms that would be made would be grandfathered, and that the commission with this in mind should look at all the possible variables in which to reduce the growth rate of pay/compensation and retirement payment increase; not excluding a reduction in COLA.

Following these opening remarks Chairman Levin opened rounds of questioning by asking in regards to what changes and reforms DOD was currently considering. Both Ms. Fox and ADM Winnefeld expressed that the changes being reviewed were variables that ensured that the best possible care was given to those that serve their country and that did not impact the force in the future. Next Senator Inhofe asked questions regarding the implementation of any proposed changes, to which both Ms. Fox and ADM Winnefeld both urged to be done after the Commission had finished with its report, not in piecemeal fashion, and only be done with current servicemembers being grandfathered out of any changes. Variations of these two types of questions were asked by almost all of the following SASC members that were present, with additional commentary on the impact that the COLA reduction in the BBA and how it was not something they supported, especially since no one in DOD, the Budget Committee, or SASC was consulted regarding the reduction.

Even so, Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV) did ask if there were other courses of action that DOD was looking at to reduce the budgetary pressure within DOD. Ms. Fox responded that the DOD has been, and is continuing to look at many different components and ways in which to conduct business more efficiently. Furthermore, she stressed that DOD was not cutting anyone's pay and did not have plans to do so. Finally, ADM Winnefeld reinforced Ms. Fox's statement by stating again that DOD is only investigating ways in which to reduce the annual increase rate of pay with regards to personnel pay/compensation and retirement systems.

After SASC finished questioning this first panel, a second panel was called forward to give suggestions on ways to possibly reform the retirement system on behalf of The Military Coalition (TMC). The witnesses of this second panel included General John H. Tilelli, Jr., USA (Ret.) who is Chairman of the Board for the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA); General Gordon R. Sullivan, USA (Ret.) who is President and Chief Executive Officer for the Association of the United States Army (AUSA); Master Sergeant Richard J. Delaney, USAF (Ret.), who is the National President of The Retired Enlisted Association (TREA); and Dr. David Chu, President and Chief Executive Officer for the Institute for Defense Analyses. The proposed suggestions covered the repeal of the COLA cuts and keeping COLA off the table when looking at compensation cuts, the implementation of any reforms be grandfathered with regards to those currently serving or having had served, and that Congress fully vet the recommendations proposed by the Commission with all interested parties and organizations.

### **AUSN ON THE HILL**

This week, in addition to monitoring Congressional hearings, AUSN was actively engaged in making preparations for its annual Capitol Hill Reception, which happened to be on the night of 28 January 2014, the State of the Union (SOTU) address by the President. The event was the largest it has ever been in the AUSN's history with over 200 registrants and attendees, including the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) Michael Stevens. To take a look at highlights of the event, please visit [AUSN's Photo Album of the 2014 Capitol Hill Reception](#). In addition, AUSN also met with our colleagues at the U.S. Navy Sea Cadet Corps (USNSCC) to talk about continuing to build partnerships and collaborate on future initiatives for our nation's military youth programs. On the Hill, AUSN met with staff of Representative Tammy Duckworth (D-IL-08) to discuss Navy equipment concerns, ongoing COLA reduction issue as a result of the Bipartisan Budget Act (BBA) which passed in December and mefloquine exposure and how it can be addressed. AUSN also received a brief on new services provided by TRIWEST regarding expanded mental healthcare coverage under a program administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

### **PRIORITY BILLS INTRODUCED THIS WEEK**

**H.R. 3974, TRICARE Family Improvement Act.** Introduced by Representative Sam Graves (R-MO-06), the bill would amend Title 10, United States Code, to improve the TRICARE Program for adult children of members and former members of the uniformed services.

**H.R. 3958, Healing our Heroes Act.** Introduced by Representative Paul C. Broun (R-GA-10), the bill would provide for a one-year extension of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) pilot program on assisted living services for Veterans with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI).

**S. 1950, the Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefits and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act of 2014.** Introduced by Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT), the bill contains numerous provisions which seek to improve the quality of healthcare, benefits and services to our Veterans as well as correct legislative provisions which cut military retirement calculations.

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 was one new Legislative Alert 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 #113-33: SUPPORT S. 1950, Comprehensive Veterans Health, Benefits & Military Retirement Pay Act**

**NEXT WEEK OUTLOOK**

Next week, both the House and Senate are in session. Having the House Republican Conference leave early this past week on its annual retreat resulted as well as the State of the Union address resulted in a relatively short legislative work week. On the agenda is possible consideration on the Senate floor of S. 1950, the Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefits and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act of 2014 which contains numerous bills of interest to AUSN. In addition, AUSN will be meeting with a few industry representatives on equipment concerns of the Navy as well as receiving a brief from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) on expanded dental care coverage being offered. There will also be a hearing by the House Veterans' Affairs, Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs (DAMA) on the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) claims processing technology that AUSN will cover.

**QUESTIONS/COMMENTS/CONCERNS**

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