



Legislative Update

IN THIS WEEK'S LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:

[HOUSE ENERGY AND COMMERCE, SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH HEARING ON VETERAN MEDICAL TECH BILL](#)
[HOUSE AND SENATE PASS H.R. 4155, THE VETERAN SKILLS TO JOBS ACT](#)
[AUSN, AND VSO'S, CONCERNED WITH QUADRENNIAL REVIEW OF MILITARY COMPENSATION RECOMMENDATIONS](#)
[AUSN ON THE HILL](#)
[PRIORITY BILLS INTRODUCED THIS WEEK](#)
[NEW LEGISLATIVE ALERTS](#)
[NEXT WEEK OUTLOOK](#)

HOUSE ENERGY AND COMMERCE, SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH HEARING ON VETERAN MEDICAL TECH BILL

On 11 July 2012, the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Health, held a hearing on [H.R. 4124, the Veteran Emergency Medical Technician Support Act](#). The bi-partisan bill, authored and introduced by Representative Adam Kinzinger (R-IL-11) and Representative Louis Gohmert (D-TX-11), is an attempt to curb the alarming and continuing rise of unemployment for post 9/11 veterans. It specifically aims to help transitioning Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen, who specialize in emergency medical operations (battlefield or flight-line related injuries) where a first-responder in the civilian field would attend to such emergencies. The aim is to make it so that any medical training undertaken while on Active Duty would translate to the civilian sector.

As it currently stands, an overwhelming majority of veterans with such experiences still must go through extensive re-training so that their military training can be certified. In some cases this re-training can take up to two years and cost as much as two years' tuition at a state accredited institution. During the hearing, Representative Kinzinger stated that, "Unemployment rates remain stubbornly high for all Americans, but particularly too high among our men and women who are returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. This should not be the case. Common sense legislation like this is an important step to quickly and effectively help our veterans as they transition from the battlefield back to civilian life."

Among the common sense practices the bill is intended to convey is the fact that not only are military medics trained for first-responder types of emergencies, but they have critical battlefield emergency experience that most civilian medical trainees and staff members do not have. Another point brought up throughout the Subcommittee hearing was trying to identify a way to have the separate military branches become accredited institutions of medical training, which would help our transitioning servicemembers, by shortening the time of unemployment during military-civilian transition.

HOUSE AND SENATE PASS H.R. 4155, THE VETERAN SKILLS TO JOBS ACT

On 11 July 2012, the Senate passed by unanimous consent [H.R. 4155, the Veteran Skills to Jobs Act](#), following the House's passage of the bill by a vote of 369-0 on Monday evening. H.R. 4155 was introduced by Representative Jeff Denham (R-CA-19), along with Representative Tim Walz (D-MN-01), which aims to lower the high Post 9/11 veteran unemployment rates, by directing the head of each Federal department and agency to treat relevant military training as sufficient to satisfy training or certification requirements for Federal licenses. Companion legislation was subsequently introduced by Sen. Bill Nelson (D-FL) in the Senate as S. 2239, The Veterans Skills to Jobs Act of 2012, which passed the Senate on 29 June 2012. AUSN wrote a letter of support on both bills a few months back (see [H.R. 4155 Letter of Support](#) and [S. 2239 Letter of Support](#)), an AUSN Legislative Alert ([Legislative Alert # 112-7](#)). Recently, President Obama issued a [press release](#) stating, "No veteran who fought for our nation overseas should have to fight for a job when they return home. That's why I'm pleased that Democrats and Republicans in Congress have come together to pass legislation that will make it easier for veterans to put their skills to work," as it now goes to the President's desk for signature.

Details can be found by going to [AUSN's Capitol Hill Blog entry on H.R. 4155's passage in the House and Senate](#).

AUSN, AND VSO'S, CONCERNED WITH QUADRENNIAL REVIEW OF MILITARY COMPENSATION RECOMMENDATIONS

First and foremost, these are RECOMMENDATIONS, not to start making everyone nervous or to cause immediate alarm and action.

Congress will more than likely not take these up this year with the Appropriations and Authorization process nearing conclusion as well as focus by Members of Congress on the upcoming elections. However this may be an issue that comes up next year and possibly in the Fiscal Year 2014 (FY14) Budget Request and thus, AUSN will carefully monitor. Given that, AUSN initially wrote a [Capitol Hill Blog entry, providing a brief overview of the Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation \(QRMC\)](#) report after its release, noting that there were four areas of focus which were: 1) Special and incentive pays for critical career fields; 2) Combat Compensation; 3) Wounded Warriors, Caregivers, and survivor compensation; and 4) Reserve and National Guard compensation and benefits. The report also addressed the relative standing of military compensation with civilian wages when fine tuning the military compensation system. On 2 July 2012, [Navy Times Newspaper](#) did a story on some of the recommendations of the QRMC as well.

Members of the Military Coalition (TMC) Committee on Guard and Reserve matters held an impromptu meeting this week to discuss a few of the recommendations in the report. While AUSN agreed with some aspects of this report, including the proposal to narrow the authorities capable of calling members of the Reserve to Active Duty from thirty to six, AUSN is very concerned with the QRMC's recommendation to cut "drill pay" by half, in order to liken one drill day to one day of Active military service. Reducing the compensation incentives to join, remain, and retire from the Reserves would be a detriment to our total force.

Details of these concerns can be found by going to [AUSN's Capitol Hill Blog entry on QRMC Reserve concerns](#).

AUSN ON THE HILL

Along with monitoring the Hill for hearings and monitoring passage of H.R. 4155, AUSN met with many Senate offices in preparation for future consideration of the Fiscal Year 2013 (FY13) National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) and Defense Appropriations measures. Including last week, during the 4th of July Recess period, AUSN met with staff from the offices of Senator Daniel Akaka (D-HI), Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV), Senator Joe Lieberman (I-CT), Senator Roy Blunt (R-MO), Senator James Inhofe (R-OK), Senator Daniel Inouye (D-HI) and Senate Veterans Affairs Committee staff. In these meetings, Navy equipment needs (such as procurement of C-40A's for the Navy Reserve and additional F/A-18 Super Hornets to relieve the shortfall of F-35's) and pending veteran issues such as veteran status and transition legislation were discussed. And, as always, so were the concerns about sequestration and its effect upon DOD.

PRIORITY BILLS INTRODUCED THIS WEEK

H.R. 6107, The E-Health & Telemedicine Support Act of 2012. Introduced by Representative Charlie Rangel (D-NY-15), the bill would amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the ability of health care professionals to treat veterans via telemedicine. **H.R. 6101, The Student Veteran Academic Counseling Enhancement (ACE) Act.** Introduced by Representative Judy Chu (D-CA-32), the bill would amend title 38, United States Code, to improve educational counseling opportunities for veterans.

In the advocacy section of the website, you can click on [Bills of Interest](#) to get daily revisions on Congressional action for priority bills. I 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 re-designed [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 were 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 #112-17: SUPPORT Homeless Veteran Definition Bills

NEXT WEEK OUTLOOK

Next week, the House and Senate will return to tackle a quite an ambitious agenda. On the top order of business in the House is a possible floor debate and vote on the [FY13 Defense Appropriation Bill, H.R. 5856](#), which was approved by the House Appropriations Committee back in May. Likewise, in the Senate, we could see the markup of the Senate's FY13 Defense Appropriations Bill, beginning the Appropriations process for the Senate and have a companion bill for the House's. Although House passage of H.R. 5856 is likely, as well as a markup of the Senate Defense Appropriations bill either next week or the following, this may be it as far as the Defense Appropriations process is concerned. The likely outcome of the Appropriation bills, given the upcoming General Election, is a Continuing Resolution which would fund the Federal Government at the same levels as

last year, but this outcome won't be determined until this fall.

In addition with the House's passage of the FY13 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), H.R. 4310, Senate floor consideration of the Senate FY13 NDAA, S. 3254, is on the agenda, however Senate leadership has stated it likely won't come up until after the August recess. AUSN has meetings next week with many Senate offices as well as the National Military Veterans Alliance (NMVA) and The Military Coalition (TMC) to discuss Defense Appropriations items of interest. A hearing is also scheduled next week by the House Armed Services Committee (HASC) to discuss Sequestration concerns and its effects upon industry as well as a HASC- Oversight Subcommittee Hearing to discuss the Navy's shipbuilding and ship procurement progress.

The Association of the United States Navy is continuously on and/or monitoring 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. This is an ALL HANDS ON DECK effort and your grassroots advocacy will help make the changes that need to happen!

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS/CONCERNS

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