



NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS.

WASHINGTON WEEKLY

May 25, 2012

SASC Kills Big TRICARE Increase Proposals

The Senate Armed Services Committee voted this week to reject Defense Department recommendations that, in five years, would have quadrupled annual TRICARE enrollment fees on some military retirees. Also rejected were proposals to create enrollment fees for those retirees enrolled in TRICARE Extra, Standard and for Life programs. The Senate committee vote comes one week after the House also rejected DOD's proposals in their version of the FY 2013 defense bill. This does not yet mean that military retirees will not see some enrollment fee increase. Last year, Congress tied TRICARE Prime increases to annual cost-of-living adjustments, which in January were 3.6 percent for retirees. The 2013 COLA is anticipated to be 1.7 percent. Slight increases in pharmaceutical copays are still being worked out. The House and now the Senate Armed Services Committee listened to the VFW and rejected drastic TRICARE fee increases, which is why we continue to urge you to contact your senators today and tell them the VFW expects their support of the committee-passed bill as it now moves to the floor for debate. [Contact](#) your members.

Senate Bill Expands SCRA Protections

On Thursday, the VFW joined Sen. Jack Reed (D-R.I.) and leading veterans' advocates at the U.S. Capitol, where Reed formally introduced S. 3179, the Servicemember Housing Protection Act. The bill would strengthen protections under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA), affording members of the military and their family members flexibility as a result of the turbulent nature of military service. [Read more](#) about the press conference and the bill's provisions.

VFW Commander Joins National Memorial Day Observance

Every year, VFW leaders converge on the Nation's Capitol for a series of events across the region to honor the brave American men and women who gave their lives on the battlefield to defend our great nation. This year, DeNoyer, VFW National Chief of Staff Walter Gansenberg and VFW Washington staff are scheduled to participate in nearly a dozen events around Washington to honor America's fallen heroes. [Learn more](#) about how the national commander will be observing Memorial Day.

Seamless Transition Update

The Senate Veterans Affairs Committee held a hearing this week to discuss the Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) and ongoing efforts between VA and DOD to provide a truly seamless transition for service members. VA, DOD and the GAO were all on hand to testify on the joint program, which began as a pilot program at several locations across the country. IDES was developed to combine both VA and DOD systems to improve the disability evaluation process for wounded, ill and injured service members. Committee Chairman Patty Murray (D-WA) said that what was supposed to be a faster and more fair process has been wrought with inconsistencies. For more on the hearing or to view the recorded webcast, [click here](#).

Women Veterans Task Force Report

Last July, the VA created the Women Veterans' Task Force to develop a comprehensive action plan designed to focus on resolving critical issues facing women veterans. The 2012 draft report, entitled "Strategies for Serving Our Women Veterans," is now complete. VA is inviting public comments on the draft. All comments must be received by VA on or before June 14, 2012. The draft publication and how to prepare a public comment can be found here.

http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/Draft_2012_Women-Veterans_StrategicPlan.pdf

Free Museum Program Starts Monday

More than 1,600 museums across the country will offer free admission to active-duty military personnel and their families this summer in a program that runs from Memorial Day through Labor Day nationwide. [Read more](#).

Tell Us Your Story

VFW advocacy efforts have helped stop harmful legislation from moving forward and have advanced many bills improving benefits for service members, veterans and their loved ones for more than a century. However, our sustained voice in Washington is only as strong as the voice of VFW members and all of our veterans' advocates around the country. Without your help and your grassroots action in communities from coast to coast, accomplishments like the Post-9/11 GI Bill, Agent Orange presumption, veterans' hiring preference, advance healthcare appropriations and Family Caregiver benefits would not have been possible. With this in mind, we want to hear your stories of advocacy and highlight your news on our [Capitol Hill blog](#). The VFW Capitol Hill blog brings together the efforts of the VFW Action Corps and the VFW National Legislative Service to provide updates in real time on veterans and military issues as they develop in Washington and around the nation. We hope that you will send us your stories and help us inspire members to reach out to their representatives and take action! To send us your news, use the [Blog Submission Form](#) or simply email photos and stories directly to vfwac@vfw.org.

Was this *Washington Weekly* forwarded to you by a friend? [Sign up](#) to get your own free issue each week.

—



[Find a Post](#) | [Contribute](#) | [About Us](#) | [Contact Us](#)



[Unsubscribe](#) | [Tell A Friend](#)
© 2001 - 2012. All rights reserved.

