



Coalition and Valued Associates Advocacy and Actions...

As we mentioned in last week's update, Coalition valued associate members have worked tirelessly alongside the ALA to defeat the Pentagon's proposed 2015 budget cuts to military compensation and benefits. These military and veterans organizations are continuing to pay close attention to the budget process and are working to keep their members informed and engaged. Below are a few examples:

NAUS Weekly Update: Senate Appropriations Committee National Association for Uniformed Services

The Senate Appropriations Committee has approved a fiscal 2015 defense money bill that fully supports the Senate Armed Services Committee's earlier embrace of key military compensation curbs sought by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The Senate Committee bill rejects administration proposals that would restructure and dramatically consolidate TRICARE plans and steeply raise fees. The Senate measure also rejects the Pentagon's proposal to cut \$200 million from the annual subsidy for commissaries. Committee action averts proposals that would have forced some commissaries to cut hours of operation and a few even to close...

Show Me the Money: Defense Appropriators Have Their Say National Military Family Association

Over the past few months, we have been watching carefully as Congress goes through the long [process of crafting the National Defense Authorization Act](#) (NDAA), the massive piece of legislation that will set budget levels for the Department of Defense (DoD) for the fiscal year starting October 1. It all started in March, when the Administration submitted its budget plan to Congress. Since then, the Armed Services committees of both the House and the Senate have [passed their own versions of the bill](#), which differ significantly from the President's budget – and from each other.

While the House has passed its version of the NDAA, we are still waiting for the full Senate to vote on the legislation. Once the Senate has passed the bill, a conference committee will meet to resolve any differences in the House and Senate versions of the bill. Once that happens, the revised bill will be voted on again by the House and Senate, and the final bill will go to the President for his signature.

Complicated, right? Yes – and that's not the whole picture. The Armed Services Committees role is to **authorize** DoD to spend funds on programs and services up to a certain level. For example, the committees can authorize (or not authorize) DoD to spend funds on the commissary, military housing allowances, and personnel compensation up to a given level. However, the Armed Services committee doesn't actually control any money. That's the job of the House and Senate Appropriations committees. The Appropriations committees look at the amount of money that has been budgeted for the federal government and allocate it to the various government agencies. They set the level of funding available for each agency and for programs within each agency. Each Appropriations Committee has a Defense subcommittee charged with **appropriating** funds to DoD and its many programs and line items.

So what does this mean for military families? There are four main areas of concern to families that we have been following: pay increases, housing allowances, commissary funding, and TRICARE costs. The bills that have been passed by the Armed Services and Appropriations committees show agreement in some respects, but there are still **differences that need to be resolved**.

Based on what has already been passed by Congress, it seems certain that there will be no major cuts or changes to the commissary or to TRICARE in the coming fiscal year. However, legislators still need to come to agreement on whether military pay will increase by 1% or 1.8%, whether BAH will continue to cover 100% of rental costs or if it will decrease, and whether beneficiaries will be charged higher pharmacy co-pays.

We will continue to update military families as the legislation moves through Congress. Remember, it's not too late to make your voice heard! Contact your [Representatives](#) or [Senators](#) and let them know how you feel about proposed cuts to compensation.