



ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY

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General Gordon R. Sullivan
United States Army (Ret.)
President

7 December 2012

The Honorable Carl Levin
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John McCain
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Howard "Buck" McKeon
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Sirs:

On behalf of the members of the Association of the United States Army, I write to thank you and the committee for your efforts to protect the interests of service members in the FY 2013 National Defense Authorization Act (HR 4310 and S 3254). We are grateful to both chambers for their support of the 1.7 % military pay raise and other beneficial provisions of the bills. In conference we urge that:

Pharmacy Co-pays and Fees

Conferees **recede to the House** provisions (Section 717 and 718) pertaining to pharmacy co-pay increases in 2013 and the formula for future increases. The House provisions actually save more money than Department of Defense proposals and surveys of beneficiaries show 97% prefer them to the far higher copays proposed by DoD – in short, it saves more money and makes beneficiaries happier. In recent years, DoD has ended up reprogramming far more money from the health care account than would be required to address the accrual deposit associated with these extremely important provisions.

Retirement Commission

Conferees **not** include in the final bill, Senate Title XVI that would establish a DoD BRAC-style commission to recommend "modernizing" the military compensation and retirement systems. The provision would require an up-or-down vote by Congress, without any amendments. This process would significantly restrict oversight and debate by the Armed Services Committees and subcommittees who have extensive

knowledge and expertise on military compensation and retiree issues. AUSA adamantly opposes short-circuiting the normal legislative process on issues of such vital concern to long-term retention and readiness.

Combat-Related Special Compensation

Conferees retain **the Senate provision** that corrects an inadvertent anomaly in the statutory Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) language that has the effect of denying any CRSC payment to many combat-disabled retirees forced into medical retirement.

Mental Health Care

Conferees **retain the Senate provision** that would enhance DoD and Department of Veterans Affairs' mental health programs and services. With rising numbers of military suicides and veterans facing long wait times to receive needed PTSD treatment, it is vital that Senator Murray's amendment be included in the final bill.

Applied Behavioral Analysis Therapy as a TRICARE Benefit

Conferees include the Senate-passed language that would allow ABA therapy coverage for beneficiaries with non-autism spectrum disorder diagnoses. We urge that this benefit expansion be applied equally as are all other TRICARE benefits to active duty, reserve component, retiree, and surviving families of **all** seven uniformed services.

Stolen Valor

Conferees **include Senator Webb's amendment** that makes it a federal crime for someone to falsely claim to have served in the military or have received a military decoration if the object of the lie is for personal gain.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide AUSA's views on these important issues.

Sincerely,



GORDON R. SULLIVAN
General, USA Retired

GRS/wbl