

Association of the United States Army



Voice for the Army—Support for the Soldier
America's Army: The Strength of the Nation



AUSA + 2nd Session, 112th Congress = Some Very Good News

American Soldiers continue their service to the nation and remain its strength for the future. As the United States fights against extremist movements and readies for contingencies, landpower (in particular, the Army) will remain the critical, strategic element of national defense strategy for the foreseeable future—America's force of decisive action, ready to execute unified land operations alongside joint, multinational and interagency partners.

Separate from the "fiscal cliff" legislation and the sequestration battles, the Second Session of the 112th Congress tailored defense authorizations for Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 to address budgetary necessities. Congress provided sufficient personnel for the Army to respond to the demands of the nation's security and authorized a military pay raise that keeps pace with inflation. Fee increases for TRICARE Prime access and pharmacy copays in future years will be modest and tied to military retirees' cost-of-living increases. For now, Congress has preserved the current military retirement system—vital for sustainable force retention and recruitment—while ordering a study to determine if there are viable alternatives. It also voted to continue Impact Aid funding for schools with military populations, albeit in a smaller amount.

However, some important proposals were not included in the FY 2013 Defense Authorization Act. Neither the phaseout of the disability offset to retired pay for medically retired servicemembers nor a proposed repeal of the deduction of VA survivor benefits from military Survivor Benefit Plan annuities was included. Although Congress authorized critical funding for such modernization initiatives as the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle and the Ground Combat Vehicle, significant work remains to be done. Progress has been made in the availability of quality housing for military families, but single-Soldier housing continues to be an issue. In separate deliberation, Congress postponed the scheduled 27 percent Medicare-reimbursement rate reduction for doctors—but only through December 2013. This continues to be a serious access issue for military retirees and their families and adds to existing uncertainty in the military health care system.

Congress must support the Army's effort to balance endstrength, modernization and readiness. Each member of AUSA is a Torchbearer, carrying the message to our elected representatives and to the American public. Some of the major objectives achieved during the last legislative session are listed below. Sustaining and improving upon these accomplishments will require continued diligent effort from all of us.

Here are some of the major objectives for the last legislative session:

AUSA and others spoke out for:

- Maintaining an operational Army endstrength of 650,000
- Maintaining pay parity between Soldiers and the private sector
- Limiting increases in TRICARE fees/ deductibles/pharmacy copays

Congress responded by:

- Authorizing active component endstrength of 552,100
- Approving a January 2013 pay raise of 1.7 percent for military personnel
- Limiting annual increases to no more than the percentage increase in retired pay

People

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increasing emphasis on suicide prevention for military personnel | Requiring Department of Defense (DoD) to develop a comprehensive suicide prevention policy and establish a DoD office to coordinate implementation | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Achieving affordable, adequate housing for all servicemembers and their families | Authorizing \$1.65 billion from support and expansion of high-quality housing for Soldiers with families | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Funding the Federal Impact Aid Program to preclude children of military families from being disadvantaged in public schools | Authorizing funding for Impact Aid of \$25 million for schools with 20 percent or more military dependents and \$5 million for schools that serve military students with severe disabilities | <input type="checkbox"/> |

AUSA and others spoke out for:

- Funding reserve component endstrength at 360,000 for the Army National Guard and 215,000 for the Army Reserve
- Funding Army procurement items deemed essential for continuing operations in Afghanistan
- Ensuring adequate stocks of munitions to support training and warfighting stockpiles
- Maintaining the Army's strategic advantage
- Developing the Future Force

Congress responded by:

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| Authorizing Army National Guard endstrength at 358,200 and Army Reserve endstrength at 205,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Authorizing \$927 million above budget request for Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle modification and \$1.8 billion for equipment and research to defeat improvised explosive devices | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Authorizing \$1.57 billion for Army ammunition programs | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Authorizing \$348 million for Stryker vehicle procurement and modernization, providing \$200 million for the Rapid Innovation Program and fully funding Army aircraft procurement | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Authorizing full funding of the Army's request for further development of the Ground Combat Vehicle and the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle; providing \$1.15 billion of the Army's \$1.17 billion request for Warfighter Tactical Network integration, including \$278 million for Army Network Integration Evaluations | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

Take up the torch and join our crusade!



BECOME a member STAY a member RECRUIT a member

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