



# The ALLIANCE



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## Navy Will Hire Civilians as Chiefs and Captains Out of Boot Camp

The Navy wants to recruit mid-career specialists to fill technical jobs. They will become chiefs and captains after only completing boot camp.

The average time for an enlisted service member to become a Navy chief is 13 years. On the officer side, less than half of all commanders ever make it to captain, even after serving 21 or more years. But now, the Navy will begin filling these positions with civilians who possess specialized skills. The only requirement will be to make it through boot camp.

This decision stems from the military's plan to recruit mid-career specialists to manage areas like cyber warfare, where the best operators glean their formative experience from the private sector.

"Right now the one we're focused on is the cyber because that's the immediate need," Vice Adm. Robert Burke, Chief of Naval Personnel said. But we want this authority in place . . .



because we want to be responsive when the need comes -- we don't want to start writing policy the minute we discover we need it."

In an email,



Chief of Naval Personnel spokesman Lt. Cmdr. Nate Christensen said, "The Department of Defense, through its Force of the Future initiative, has requested that Congress expand lateral entry authority for officers."

As it stands, candidates can be brought in up to the O-3 or O-4 level on a need basis. And medical specialties can be brought in up to the O-5 if the Navy has a shortage in a certain occupational specialty -- assuming that officer candidate has experience and gets an approval waiver from the Secretary of the Navy.

Now, "we're seeking the authority to bring somebody in at the E-7 level or up to the O-6 level," Burke said. On the enlisted side, Navy policy already allows sailors to enter in up to the E-6

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## REPORT from the HILL

Each year, if they want to make changes within the Department of Defense, Congress must pass two pieces of legislation. One is the defense appropriations bill and the other is the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The appropriations bill funds DoD -- the NDAA sets policy for DoD. Any changes made to personnel policy, including health care and retirement policy, are made in the NDAA.

Last year, Congress made major changes to military retirement as part

of the NDAA. Although they did not tackle military health care, many members made it clear at that time that they intended to deal with health care this year. That's why we've paid extremely close attention to what Congress has been doing the past several months.

In the middle of May the House of Representatives passed its version of the FY2017 NDAA. A month later the Senate passed its version.

There are substantial differences between the two bills that need to be worked out so they can come up with one bill. In order to do that a "conference committee" that contains members from both the House and

Senate, and with members from both political parties, will meet to come up with a single bill. They have a lot of work to do.

The Senate bill is 1,600 pages long and the House bill is about the same length. There are hundreds of items covered regarding the Defense Department, but the ones we are most concerned with are those covering military benefits, including health care, commissaries, the pay raise for active duty, and cuts in the housing allowance for active duty personnel.

Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman John McCain (R-Ariz.) has stated that his goal is to reach final

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# Report from the Hill

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agreement on one bill by the time Congress goes into recess during the month of August. However, given the vast differences on key issues, most observers believe that is highly unlikely.

There are indications that McCain, who wants to boost military spending, but who failed to get what he wanted in the Senate bill, will go along with the House version of the NDAA when it comes to total funding for the Pentagon. That is a major hurdle in differences between the two versions of the bill that apparently has already been overcome. However, the President has stated that he will veto the final NDAA bill if it contains that funding provision because it would take money from current combat operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere.

Here are some of the other major differences in the bills that the two bodies must come to an agreement on.

## Health Care

### Senate

- Requires a new annual enrollment fee for TRICARE Standard that would start at \$150 single/\$300 family as of Jan. 1, 2018 and rise to \$450/\$900 over the next five years.
- Raises the TRICARE Prime annual enrollment fee to \$350 single/\$700 family.
- Raises the annual cap on out-of-pocket expenses to \$1,500 for currently serving families and \$4,000 for retired families.
- Gives DoD authority to implement a pilot program authorizing Guard and Reserve members to elect coverage through the federal employees health insurance plan.
- Allows enrollment fees to increase by the amount established by the government's Consumer Price Index for Health Care Services each year. In other words, enrollment

fees would increase every year by the amount of health care inflation as measured by the government.

- Adjusts co-pays, including those for doctor visits, the catastrophic cap, and other flat fees by the same percentage as the retired pay COLA.
- Roughly doubles pharmacy co-pays over a 9-year period, including raising the mail-order co-pay for generic drugs from the current zero to \$11, effective in 2020.
- Authorizes DoD to collect a fee for appointments missed at military medical facilities.
- Rejects TRICARE for Life enrollment fees.
- Creates three TRICARE plans called TRICARE Prime, TRICARE Choice, and TRICARE Supplemental. Eliminates existing co-pays under current TRICARE Standard and replaces them with fixed co-pays.
- Establishes TRICARE Prime only in areas with Military Treatment Facilities.

### House

- Rejects TRICARE for Life enrollment fees.
- Grandfathers current health care beneficiaries from proposed fee increases, but increases fees on new service entrants after Jan. 1, 2018.
- Requires all current TRICARE Standard users to enroll annually.
- Creates two TRICARE options: TRICARE Prime, a managed care option -- and TRICARE Preferred, a no-referral network option.

## Military Pay Raise

Senate – raises military pay 1.6%

House – raises military pay 2.1%

## Basic Allowance for Housing

Senate – reduces payments to

military members who share off-base housing whether they are married or not. Would pay only what individuals actually pay to rent or the local BAH maximum for their rank and family status.

House – does not address BAH.

## Female Draft Registration

Senate – requires all women who reach age 18 on or after Jan. 1, 2018, to register for the draft.

House – opposes.

## Commissaries

Both the House and Senate allow variable pricing strategies and “house brand” products at commissaries nationwide and specify that current patron savings and satisfaction must be maintained.

As you can see, there are great differences between the two bills and these are only a few of the issues involved. If Congress can come up with one bill that the President will sign before the end of the fiscal year on September 30 most people will be amazed. Considering this is a Presidential election year, and the fact that control of the Senate is up for grabs, it is much more likely that Congress will still be working on a final bill well after the November election.

Whatever happens, AMS remains on top of this and we'll update you in our next issue. 🇺🇸



# Married Soldiers Stand to Lose in NDAA

By Jessica D. Grassetti

I am an American Soldier. When I raised my right hand more than fifteen years ago, I swore an oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States. Almost six years ago, I swore a different kind of oath to my husband -- also an American Soldier -- when I became his wife. If Congress approves the proposed National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2017, this second oath will cause me to lose 20 percent of my regular military compensation package.

The proposed NDAA includes language that authorizes either an elimination or decrease in Basic Housing Allowance (BAH) for dual-military couples and service members that share dwellings. This is the second year that the Senate NDAA proposal includes this provision. Last year the White House and Military Chiefs disagreed with this legislation due to its sudden negative financial impact. Despite this, the Senate recommended it again this year.

There are two major contentious issues with the Senate proposal. The first deals with the definition of BAH and its categorization as a principle component of Regular Military Compensation (RMC) and the second is the regressive and discriminatory nature of the cut.

Arguments stating that BAH is not a part of compensation or income are incorrect and are not supported by law or status quo. A service member's BAH is a component of regular military compensation (RMC). United States Code defines "regular compensation" or "regular military compensation" as "the total of the following elements that a member of a uniformed service accrues or receives, directly, or indirectly, in case or in kind every payday: basic pay, basic allowance for housing, basic allowance for subsistence."

A service "member" is defined as "a person appointed, or enlisted in, or conscripted into, a uniform service." Therefore, the idea that you can and should combine a dual-military couple's RMC is both illegal and insulting. The insinuation that we are somehow a "two for one" deal for the Nation, and that this allows the U.S. government to discount our individually earned compensation packages, is ridiculous.

The proposed legislation's message is, in effect, that my service is worth less than my unmarried counterpart of the same rank, simply because I chose to marry another service member.

No other professional career field has this practice. This is where the argument for and against these proposed cuts begins and ends. All service members are provided BAH as a part of their RMC: Every. Single. Service. Member. It does not matter and you should not be penalized for your marriage choice or if you decide to share a dwelling.

Furthermore, the Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation applies RMC as the standard of compensation used to achieve civilian to military pay parity for the all-volunteer force. These reviews have never suggested that married service members should earn less. Enacting this policy, without accounting for it with an increase in basic pay, will incentivize people to resign.

There will be some that argue this does not matter. However, given the investment of time, training, and subject matter expertise that mid-level service members have, this could have a negative impact on the overall Military's readiness.

What is even more disturbing about these BAH cuts is that they would disproportionately affect junior enlisted and female service members. As such, the proposed policy is regressive in two ways and discriminatory by gender. Almost 40% affected by this policy are

midcareer enlisted members; 27% are junior enlisted. Since BAH comprises a larger portion of an enlisted member's RMC, this policy will have a greater negative effect on their total family income (TFI).

For example, a junior enlisted (E4) service member married to another service member and stationed at Fort Bragg, forgoing BAH under the new policy, stands to lose 28% of their RMC. A Colonel married to another service member and also stationed at Fort Bragg will only forfeit 14% of her RMC. Thus, the brunt of this regressive policy will be borne on the backs of junior enlisted service members and their families.

Furthermore, female service members comprise 46.2% of dual-military marriages, compared to 6.8% of male service members. If enacted this policy will disproportionately affect female service members. The resulting pay disparity would result in women doing the same work for less pay.

The military faces uncertain times and decreasing resources. Budget cuts are likely to occur. It is the manner of these proposed cuts that is so disconcerting. There are more efficient ways to reform BAH that do not disproportionately affect such a small segment of the military population. Alternative options are to change the calculation method for BAH or reduce the coverage rate slightly (say by 5%) and across the board for all service members.

If this NDAA is enacted, my husband and I will celebrate our anniversary with a marriage penalty that reduces our TFI by 20 per cent. Since I am the junior ranking service member in our marriage, the entire reduction will come from my RMC.

It is an understatement to say that this is stressful. If the Senate truly desires BAH reform, there are more

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## Army Birthday Highlights Long History of Excellence

America's Army was founded June 14, 1775, and under the new Constitution enacted in 1789, it became a military department of the federal government -- a hierarchical, bureaucratic institution. Many decades later, by the early 1900s, generations of Army leaders slowly transformed the Army into the modern professional entity of today.

For the 241st birthday of the U.S. Army, Secretary of the Army Eric K. Fanning stated that "Few understand the missions of the Army. In addition to winning wars, the Army deters enemies, assures allies, builds partner capacity, enables the joint fight through foundational capabilities and responds to national emergencies like we see today with floods and severe weather. I learned from an early age the importance of service and developed a deep respect and admiration for the sacrifices of those in uniform and their families."

In honor of the Army's birthday, this article highlights the importance the Army has played in the country's history to make the United States the great nation it is today.

The first group professionalized by today's standards was the officer corps. It developed a codified body of expert military knowledge in land warfare doctrine, instituted formal programs of career-long military education and cultivated a unique military culture grounded in the Army ethic of honorable service to the nation. Because of these and other such advancements, bonds of trust between the Army and the American people began to grow.

For many years, some believed that only officers were professionals. But in the aftermath of the Vietnam War, while rebuilding the hollow Army of the 1970s, such status was extended through professional development to warrant officers, non-commissioned officers and Army civilians as their vital contributions and value to the profession gained recognition.

The Army as an institution has a dual character -- it is both a governmental occupation within a military department organized as a hierarchical bureaucracy and, more recently, recognized collectively as a military profession. These two aspects of the institution -- bureaucracy and profession

-- have very different characteristics, ethics and ways of behaving. Both aspects are necessary within the variety of organizations and functions within the Army, but overall the challenge is to keep the predominant culture and climate of the Army as that of a military profession.

According to John R. Maass, a historian with the U.S. Army Center of Military History, when the American Revolution broke out, the rebellious colonies did not possess an army in the modern sense. Rather, the revolutionaries fielded an amateur force of colonial troops, cobbled together from various New England militia companies. They had no unified chain of command, and although Artemas Ward of Massachusetts exercised authority by informal agreement, officers from other colonies were not obligated to obey his orders. The American volunteers were led, equipped, armed, paid for and supported by the colonies from which they were raised.

In the spring of 1775, this "army" was about to confront British troops near Boston, Mass., Maass said. The revolutionaries had to re-organize their forces quickly if they were to stand a chance against Britain's seasoned professionals. Recognizing the need to enlist the support of all of the American seaboard colonies, the Massachusetts Provincial Congress appealed to the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia to assume authority for the New England army. Reportedly, at John Adams' request, Congress voted to "adopt" the Boston troops on June 14, although there is no written record of this decision. Also on this day, Congress resolved to form a committee "to bring in a draft of rules and regulations for the government of the Army" and voted \$2 million to support the forces around Boston and those at New York City. Moreover, Congress authorized the formation of 10 companies of expert riflemen from Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia, which were directed to march to Boston to support the New England militia.

George Washington received his appointment as commander-in-chief of the Continental Army the next day and formally took command at Boston on July 3, 1775. 🌟

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## Married Soldiers Stand to Lose in NDAA

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equitable options worthy of pursuit.

The military is designed to be a microcosm of society. This proposed policy is not in sync with societal norms. It penalizes a person's right to choose to marry whom they want, live with whom they want, and it disproportionately impacts junior

enlisted service members and women.

*Grassetti is an Army Strategist stationed in Fort Bragg, NC. She graduated from West Point in 2001 and The University of Chicago's Harris School of Public Policy in 2011. She has served as an assistant professor of Economics in the Department of Social Sciences at the United States Military Academy. She*

*was deployed to Iraq in 2003 to 2004 with the 101st Airborne Division and commanded a Military Police company in Mahmudiyah from 2008-2009. She has also deployed twice to Afghanistan in 2005 and 2007. The views in this piece are her own and not that of the U.S. Army or the Department of Defense.* 🌟

## Only a Fraction of Non-Deployable Soldiers are Capable of Regaining Deployable Status

Only 10 percent of non-deployable Army soldiers are able to regain their status as fit enough to serve their intended enlisted duty.

Last year, Sgt. Maj. of the Army Daniel Dailey said the biggest problem in the Army is soldiers who are non-deployable having a direct impact on military readiness.

Today, 100,000 soldiers are considered non-deployable. One in every 10 of those soldiers can be recuperated by the Army to be considered deployable, said Army Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Daniel Allyn.

Non-deployable soldiers “cannot fill their position and perform the task for which they were enlisted,” Allyn said. That presents a problem for the Army if it needs to call on its troops to rapidly deploy to a wartime situation.

The Army is already drawing down its total force to just under 1 million active, reserve and guard troops by 2018. With 100,000 unable to deploy, the number of soldiers available for use in a contingency operation lowers to about 880,000.

That’s a problem for the Army, especially when 64 percent of the troops used by the combatant commanders are Army.

Allyn said the Army can do a much better job in speeding up the recuperation of the troops that can become deployable again. About 80 percent of non-deployable troops reached that status due to medical issues, Allyn said.

“We know that we can gain efficiency in terms of speed with which we transition these folks, either back to full readiness or to another phase,” Allyn said. “We have to work

with the Department of Veterans Affairs on the vast majority of the rest of them to ensure we transition them to VA care as efficiently and effectively as possible.” Allyn said the process takes too long now and the Army is working with the VA to change that.

The issue of non-deployable soldiers ties in with the Army’s retention rate. While some areas of government and the military are having trouble retaining their employees, the Army is over-retaining.

“We’ve had to actually ask people to leave because as we’ve gotten small we’ve been over strength in certain ranks and grades for the force that we will be in the future and these people that we’re asking to leave are professionals. Most of them, over 50 percent, have two or more combat deployments,” Allyn said.

The Army is partly dealing with over retention by tightening its retention control points. Retention control points are the maximum amount of years an enlisted soldier can serve before he or she must be promoted or leave the Army.

On May 26 Army Secretary Eric Fanning signed a directive lowering the number of years noncommissioned officers can spend at certain ranks.

“As the Army force structure changes, it is critical that we retain the NCOs with the most potential while making our future leadership development model a priority. The Army NCO Corps is the backbone of our Army and we will continue to allow senior NCOs to serve a tenure that supports a balanced, healthy promotion system for all enlisted ranks,” an Army spokesman said. 🌟

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## Senators Pushing New Law For Firing VA Employees

Senators are working on new legislation allowing the Department of Veterans Affairs to quickly fire employees for bad conduct or poor performance after a current federal law was shot down.

Sen. Johnny Isakson, R-Ga., Chairman of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, said he was meeting with the highest ranking Democrat on the committee in an effort to jump-start a bill and move it to a Senate vote before the upcoming summer recess starts in July.

The committee warned that without a new law the VA will be adrift and unable to effectively root out bad managers after Attorney General

Loretta Lynch recently decided a law passed by Congress in 2014 amid a nationwide wait-time scandal is unconstitutional. The VA said last week it will no longer use the law



-- much to the frustration of senators.

“Nothing is going to stop us

as a committee from pursuing new legislation until it happens because until we do the VA is going to be in jeopardy,” Isakson said.

The VA has struggled to punish executives accused of wrongdoing since employees covered up long waits at veteran hospitals across the country and an investigation found a corrosive management culture. The decision by Lynch came amid a lawsuit by Sharon Helman, a former Phoenix VA hospital director who was at the center of the 2014 wait-time scandal and is now challenging her firing.

Isakson and the committee have crafted the Veterans First Act, which

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## Improve the Resale Value of Your Car

*A message from Liberty Mutual Insurance*

**W**e've all heard how a new car's value depreciates the moment you drive off the lot. So it may seem counterintuitive to think of your car as a financial investment. However, a little effort along the way can pay substantial dividends down the road. Here are simple things you can do to drive the value of your car up when it comes time to sell.

### Buy Smart

The time to start thinking about selling your car is before you even buy it. DMV.org suggests you do some online research to see which makes and models hold their value before you purchase a new car. You may even find that treating yourself to a nicer model is also a smarter move economically.

### Park Smart

If possible, park your car away from other cars to avoid door dings. If you must park near other cars, watch out for 2-door models with extra long doors. When possible, park in the shade to protect the material of your dashboard.

### Keep a Clean Machine

Dirt doesn't just look bad – it can actually deteriorate your car faster. Clean your car inside and out regularly to help protect paint and fabric. Plus, who doesn't love being behind the wheel of a just-washed car?

### Stay Under Cover

Seat covers are a relatively small investment that will keep your interior looking brand new – especially if you have pets or children. They'll not only protect your seats from everyday wear and tear, they'll shield them from sun damage. If your seats are already looking a bit worn, seat covers can help them look new again.

### Keep Records

Anyone can say they've taken good care of their car. Records provide proof, so be sure to save all receipts in a folder so you can present them to a prospective buyer. Carcare.org recommends that you maintain your car regularly, and take care of small problems before they become big problems. If you're placing an ad for your car, be sure to mention recent work that's been done.

### What NOT to Do

Avoid smoking in your car; the smell will likely be a deal breaker to a non-smoker. Eating in your car is not only unsafe, it causes stains and leaves crumbs in hard-to-reach places. Finally, if you need to get your car painted, don't get too creative. A color that's hard on the eyes will certainly be a hard sell.

Of course, a good auto insurance policy the most important protection of all. With Liberty Mutual Insurance, you can enjoy superior auto coverage and save money at the same time.

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### SOURCES:

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## Navy Will Hire Civilians as Chiefs and Captains Out of Boot Camp

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level, but it is limited to musicians.

However, there isn't just a question of whether the Navy needs to be able to recruit mid-career specialists, but how lateral entry will impact the overall force structure. The greatest challenge to altering the lateral entry rules may be persuading career Navy officers and enlistees to accept ranking members whose only military experience is boot camp.

It is yet to be seen how enlistees

and officers who have spent years serving in the military would respond to the authority of an E-7 or an O-6 that has no prior military background, and has been recruited for this job based on private sector experience instead of working to rise through the ranks as they have.

When asked about potential shortcomings regarding the integration of mid-level specialists, however, Christensen said, "not sure what you

mean about shortcomings."

As of now, the Navy does not have any detailed implementation plans, but could put this into effect as soon as October, pending Congressional approval.

"We are not assuming anything," Christensen added. "That said, we would like to have the authority in order to use it, if needed, to meet critical skills." 🌊

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## Senators Pushing New Law For Firing VA Employees

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gives VA Secretary Bob McDonald the authority to terminate employees in the federal government's second largest bureaucracy, rather than an appeals board or judge.

But the bill has been caught up in debate over a measure separate from employee firings and has not progressed over the past month. Now, lawmakers have just two work weeks to pass a new law before leaving for a recess that will stretch into the fall and the presidential election.


The Isakson bill changes tack from the firing measures passed in 2014 as part of the \$16 billion Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act. The earlier law shaved the appeals process for fired employees to just three weeks instead of many months and put a final decision in the hands of an administrative law judge.

For now, terminated VA employees are again treated the same as other federal workers and can appeal to the Merit Systems Protection Board.

The VA is again directing appeals back to the board because McDonald fears any future firings under the expedited law would likely be struck down in court following Lynch's opinion that it is unconstitutional, said Christopher O'Connor, who is nominated to be assistant VA secretary for congressional and legislative affairs.

Senators chafed at the move, saying McDonald should continue to enforce laws passed by Congress and come to lawmakers for any needed changes.

"To just say the attorney general thinks it's not going to hold water so we are never going to use the law. That is a very dangerous precedent," Sen. Dan Sullivan, R-Alaska, said. "That is not the discretion the secretary should have."

"If this were a corporation this would be like the sixth largest corporation in the country," Boozman said. "At the end of the day, there's people who don't work out and they need to be gotten rid of in a fairly easy way." 

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