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## **FRA Presents Top Concerns to House Personnel Panel**

The Fleet Reserve Association (FRA) shared its top legislative priorities today with members of the House Armed Services' Military Personnel Subcommittee, citing its members' concerns about reductions in healthcare and other quality-of-life benefits earned through honorable military service. The subcommittee held a hearing today on personnel issues and programs addressed in the proposed FY 2013 budget.

FRA's National Executive Director Joe Barnes cited concerns about proposals to substantially cut the Department of Defense's (DoD) budget for FY 2013 and beyond, reductions that would significantly affect military pay and benefits – and be viewed as “devaluing” military service.

“DoD has already identified more than \$450 billion in budget cuts over the next 10 years and, unless Congress acts, provisions of the Budget Control Act mandate another \$500 billion to \$600 billion in sequestration cuts must also be found beginning in 2013,” said Barnes. “These additional and automatic reductions could endanger not only national security, but also essential military pay and benefit programs. FRA strongly supports legislative efforts that would exclude the DoD from the first year of sequestration.”

Among the budget-reduction tools on the table are significant increases to healthcare costs for beneficiaries of the military's TRICARE healthcare program. Plans to drastically increase existing enrollment fees, implement new ones and increase pharmacy co-pays are causing grave concern among FRA members. “These increases are in addition to the 13-percent increase in TRICARE Prime fees for military retirees imposed for this year and future increases that are tied to healthcare inflation,” said Barnes, who asked the panel to honor commitments made to those who served in the past, as well as those who are currently serving.

In its full statement to the subcommittee, FRA stressed that military service is unlike any other career or occupation, and emphasized that less than one percent of the population is shouldering 100 percent of the responsibility of defending our nation. The statement (available at [www.fra.org/testimony](http://www.fra.org/testimony)) addresses other priorities, including opposition to a BRAC-type commission to revamp military retirement, ensure all Reservists receive retirement credit for service after September 11, 2001; and that all disabled military retirees concurrently receive their earned retired pay and veterans' disability compensation without offset.

The Association is a leading organization within the 34-member Military Coalition and is also represented by the Coalition's testimony for this hearing.

### **About FRA**

FRA is a congressionally chartered, non-profit organization representing the interests of current and former enlisted members of the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard. In addition to its advocacy work on Capitol Hill, FRA also sponsors a national Americanism Essay Contest and assists its members with disaster relief grants. The Association also sponsors an Education Foundation that awards scholarships to deserving college students.

The Association recently celebrated its 87<sup>th</sup> anniversary and, as the collective voice for all Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard enlisted personnel, FRA speaks on behalf of its members on Capitol Hill. There is no law protecting military benefits, so FRA is here to stand guard.

To learn more about FRA, visit [www.fra.org](http://www.fra.org); follow us on Twitter at [@FRAHQ](https://twitter.com/FRAHQ); or Like us on Facebook at [www.fra.org/fb](http://www.fra.org/fb).