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Editorial Response to "Retired pay for admirals, generals skyrocketed with 2007 rule changes," by Tom Vanden Brook, February 27, 2012, *Navy Times*

February 23, 2012

Dear Navy Times,

The Fleet Reserve Association (FRA) appreciates you highlighting the law that allows retired senior military officers to receive higher government paychecks after their military service than during their active-duty careers ("Retired pay for admirals, generals skyrocketed with 2007 rule changes," by Tom Vanden Brook, February 27, 2012) – particularly following release of the FY 2013 budget request, which calls for a commission to recommend cost-saving changes to military retirement benefits and other initiatives to slash the defense budget.

With all due respect, FRA is unaware of a shortage of admirals or generals in 2007, which was the apparent justification for expanding the pay tables. In fact, a September 2011 hearing of the Senate Armed Services' Personnel Subcommittee revealed that the number of flag and general officers is disproportionately high when compared to current service end strengths. This so-called "brass creep" or "rank inflation" has made our services top-heavy and the resulting rates of retired pay for these senior officers seems out of line with today's deficit-reduction efforts.

As Congress seeks to revamp the military retirement system and potentially downgrade the retirement benefit for all, a logical place to enact change is revising the policy that allows senior service members to earn more in retirement than they did while actively serving. In addition, sustaining such a program is certainly incongruent with ongoing force management programs, such as the Navy's quota-based Enlisted Retention Boards that are identifying top-performing enlisted personnel in certain ratings for involuntary separation. (See *Navy Times* cover story by Mark Faram, February 13, 2012.)

Sincerely,
Joseph L. Barnes
FRA National Executive Director
Alexandria, Va.