



125 N. West Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

1-800-FRA-1924
703-683-1400
703-549-6610 (fax)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 6, 2012

CONTACT: Lauren Armstrong
703-683-1400 ext. 126

FRA Advocates Sustained Commitment to Career Veterans

The Fleet Reserve Association (FRA) spoke before the Senate Appropriations' Defense Subcommittee today to share its members' concerns regarding the proposed FY 2013 Department of Defense (DoD) budget. John Davis, FRA's director of Legislative Programs, spoke on behalf of the non-partisan association, asking lawmakers to exclude DoD from sequestration and ensure commitments made to past and present service members are honored.

Provisions of the 2011 Budget Control Act require that half of the automatic budget cuts (sequestration) slated to take place beginning in January 2013 must come from the Defense budget. FRA agrees with Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta that such a drastic reduction in DoD spending will "do catastrophic damage to our military ... and [degrade our] ability to protect the country." Davis reminded panel members that DoD expenditures account for 17 percent of the overall federal budget, but will be asked to shoulder 50 percent of the sequestration cuts unless Congress agrees to exclude Defense from the reduction.

Adequate funding for military healthcare programs and maintaining the current military retirement system are FRA's top legislative priorities for the year, and both are potential targets as Congress considers budget cuts. The Administration's FY 2013 budget request seeks significant increases in TRICARE healthcare enrollment fees for military retirees, as well as increases in pharmacy copays. FRA supports legislation (S. 3203) that seeks to protect TRICARE beneficiaries from excessive increases in premiums and pharmacy copayments.

A recent FRA survey showed that all Reserve and 97 percent of all active duty respondents valued their potential military retirement benefit very highly. Many survey participants expressed concern about the value of their future retirement benefit. Davis cited the survey results and said, "FRA appreciates Panetta's [assurances] that those currently serving will not be impacted by changes [to the retirement system], but wonders why there is no similar commitment to those who have served [in the past]?"

The Association strongly supports proposals to increase active duty pay in FYs 2013 and 2014 by the Employment Cost Index (ECI) and believes the Defense budget should be at least five percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Davis expressed FRA's concern that proposed cuts would reduce Defense spending to 2.7 percent of GDP by 2021, which would put the U.S. at pre-WWII levels.

FRA's advocacy for military retirees is part of the Association's broader legislative agenda that also includes preserving and enhancing the quality of life for all current and former enlisted members of the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard. To read FRA's full statement, visit www.fra.org/testimony.

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.

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