



2021 FRA LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

FRA will fight to preserve and enhance benefits and quality-of-life programs for active, reserve, retired, and veterans of the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard plus their families and survivors. FRA's 2021 legislative agenda is as follows:

EXPAND HEALTH CARE OPTIONS

Oppose Excessive TRICARE Fee Increases – The Defense Department must sufficiently investigate and implement other options to make TRICARE more cost-efficient as alternatives to shifting costs to TRICARE beneficiaries, and the Association opposes any indexing of future TRICARE Fee increases beyond CPI indexed to COLA increases.

Repeal Scheduled Pharmacy and Therapy Co-pay Increases – The FY 2017 NDAA mandates pharmacy and therapy increase every year until 2027. FRA will work to repeal these future arbitrary increases.

Oppose TRICARE and VHA being made part of universal health care coverage plan -
Prevent TRICARE and VA healthcare programs from inclusion in any universal, single payer "Medicare-for-all" law.

Support Adequate Funding for Defense Health Agency – Ensure adequate funding and staffing for the Defense Health Agency (DHA) in order to meet readiness needs, fully fund TRICARE, and improve access and awareness of benefits for all beneficiaries regardless of age, status or location, including Reservists participating in TRICARE Reserve Select, TRICARE Retired Reserve, and Individual Ready Reserve personnel.

DOD/VA Health Care Resource Sharing – Ensure adequate funding for Department of Defense (DOD) and Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) health care resource sharing and interoperability of both departments electronic health records (EHR) in delivering seamless, cost effective, quality services to personnel wounded in combat and other veterans and their families.

Pharmaceutical Drug Benefit – Monitor the pharmacy benefit and ensure that pharmacies maintain a broad uniform formulary. FRA supports efforts to reduce prescription costs through "federal pricing" and other discount programs and will encourage increased utilization of home delivery prescriptions to limit co-pays for beneficiaries and reduce costs as alternatives to higher fees, and co-payments.

Allow Military Retirees to Pay for Healthcare with Pretax Dollars – Secure authorization for military retirees to pay health insurance premiums on a pretax basis and allow for a tax deduction for TRICARE supplemental insurance premiums.

PROTECT PERSONNEL PROGRAMS

Active Duty Pay – Secure annual active duty pay increases that are at least equal to the Employment Cost Index (ECI) to at least keep pace with the private sector pay.

Keep 12 Years of Service Bonus – Oppose efforts to eliminate a major provision of newly created “blended” retirement system that provides a mandatory 12 years of service bonus (minimum 3 months’ pay) if service member signs up for 4 more years of service.

Extend and Increase Government Match for TSP – Extend the government match for the Thrift Savings Plan beyond the current 26 years of service to until retirement and increase the maximum government matching contribution.

Ensure Early Retirement Benefits for Involuntarily Separated Personnel – Early retirement and other benefits must be authorized for service members involuntarily separated with less than 20 years of service – including the temporary early retirement authority (TERA) program to minimize the impact of end strength reductions on career personnel.

Military Resale System – Ensure adequate funding for the Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) and oppose privatization to preserve the value of the current benefit and access for all patrons and oppose consolidation or closure of military exchanges.

End Strengths – Track active duty and Reserve end strengths to ensure there are adequate personnel available to meet operational requirements, and work to minimize expanding deployment periods and reduced dwell times.

BAH – Oppose cuts to Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) payments and restore BAH to 100 percent of housing costs. Reform enlisted housing standards by allowing E-7s and above to reside in separate homes, track BAH to ensure it is commensurate with actual housing costs, ensure adequate housing inventory and that housing privatization programs are beneficial to service members and their families.

Support Active Duty Tenant Bill of Rights – Work to ensure service members and their families have safe, quality homes and communities. Increase the accountability of privatized housing companies by putting more oversight authority in the hands of local military leaders.

PCS Reform – Track the PCS process; ensure adequate funding of the Transition and Relocation Assistance Programs, and authorization of increased PCS mileage rates and higher household goods weight limits for senior enlisted personnel. Also advocate for shipment of a second POV for accompanied overseas assignments.

SCRA Enforcement / Predatory Lending Protections – Ensure that the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) is enforced by regulatory agencies, including the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), Office of Military Affairs and work to ensure that active duty personnel are protected from predatory lenders. Make mandatory arbitration agreements in financial contracts unenforceable.

USERRA Enforcement -Work to eliminate discrimination against uniformed service members in employment by ensuring enforcement of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).

Coast Guard Parity – Ensure funding parity with DoD on pay, benefits and housing for Coast Guard personnel plus adequate resources for same within the U.S. Coast Guard budget.

Impact Aid Program – Ensure that the Department of Education has adequate funding to reimburse local school districts for educating military children and that the DoD budget includes enough supplemental funds to provide support for highly impacted school districts.

School Choice for Military Families – Allow military families the option to use public funds to send their children to a private school or pay for other education services.

Reserve Component Readiness - Ensure Congress adequately funds and supports Reserve Component requirements for an operational reserve.

Reservists Out-of-Pocket Expenses – Allow full tax-deductibility of non-reimbursable expenses related to military training and weekend drill.

Sea Services Recruiters – Work to ensure that recruiters have unrestricted access to secondary schools, colleges and universities on the same basis as private sector employers.

VETERAN’S ISSUES

Monitor Implementation of VA MISSION Act Program- Monitor implementation of the VA MISSION Act (Formerly VA Choice) and support improvements to ensure veterans have timely access to medical care.

No VA Claim Pending over 125 days- Congress should to pass legislation that requires VA be held accountable for achieving the VA Secretary’s stated goal to achieve no claim is pending over 125 days and all claims have an accuracy rate of 98 percent or higher.

VA Dental Care - Support Department of Veterans Affairs efforts to pursue a pilot program to increase veteran access to dental care.

Improve Department of Veterans’ Affairs Funding – Support initiatives to help ensure adequate funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), with special attention for VA health care to ensure access and care for all beneficiaries.

Improve Department of Veterans’ Affairs Suicide Prevention Program – Support improvements and monitor implementation of VA and DOD suicide prevention programs to reduce the rate of suicide among veterans (on average 20 a day) and active duty service members.

Add Diseases to List of Presumptive Conditions for Agent Orange Disability Claims – Work to enact legislation that would increase the presumptive conditions linked to exposure of the

Agent Orange herbicide to include parkinsonism, bladder cancer, hypertension, and hyperthyroidism.

Oppose Access Fees – Oppose establishing a tiered enrollment fee structure for veterans in Priority Groups 7 and 8 within the VA Health Care System.

Education Enhancements – Monitor the Post 9/11 GI Bill program and work to improve other education benefit programs for veterans, and survivors of disabled or deceased veterans, and preserve the military Tuition Assistance (TA) program and oppose shifting significant part of the cost to active duty beneficiaries.

CHAMPVA – Extend coverage for eligible children of veteran’s families until age 26 under CHAMPVA.

Veterans Hiring Incentives- Re-enact employer tax incentives for hiring veterans and disabled veterans under the Vow to Hire Heroes Act.

Strengthen Veterans’ Hiring Preference - Oppose legislation restricting veterans’ preference hiring currently in law.

Women Veterans Health Care – Work to increase access to gender-specific medical and mental health care to meet unique needs of women service members and women veterans.

Veterans Homelessness- The VA and other government agencies should enhance and invest in efforts to ensure that veteran’s homelessness is rare, brief, and nonrecurring.

POW/MIA Accountability – Work to ensure that the DoD make every effort for a complete accounting of all Prisoners of War and Missing in Action service members for past and current conflicts.

SAFEGUARD RETIREE BENEFITS

Protect Military Retired or Retainer Pay – Fight efforts to reduce military retired pay and ensure equitable cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) for all military retirees commensurate with their service and sacrifices, and oppose efforts to civilianize the military retirement system. And advocate for rounding up to the next dollar for retired pay and other benefits.

Concurrent Receipt – Support legislation authorizing the immediate payment of concurrent receipt of full military retired pay and veterans’ disability compensation for all disabled retirees.

Oppose Delay in Matching TSP Contribution - Oppose delay of the employer matching contribution for the newly created “portable” Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) from after 3 years of service, to after 5 years of service.

Reserve Retirement Age – Support extension of authority for early retirement (90 days active duty = three months reduction) for all Reservists who have served since 9/11/01.

USFSPA – Encourage the introduction and enactment of legislation to eliminate inequities in the Uniformed Services Former Spouses Protection Act (USFSPA).

Retention of Final Month's Retired Pay – Support legislation authorizing the retention of the full final month's retired pay by the surviving spouse (or other designated survivor) for the month in which the member was alive for at least 24 hours.

Paid-up SBP at Age 67 – Work to change the minimum age for paid-up SBP from age 70 to age 67 which will allow those who joined the military at age 17, 18 or 19 and serve 20 years to only be required to pay SBP premiums for 30 years.

Base Closures – Closely monitor the impact of base closures and realignments and support retention of military treatment and other facilities at BRAC sites that are patronized by sizeable retiree and Reserve populations.

FRA Commemorative Coin – Work to get Congress to enact legislation authorizing an FRA Commemorative Coin in recognition of the 100-year anniversary of the Association.

###