



125 N. West Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314

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

July 10, 2015

The Honorable John McCain  
Chairman  
Senate Armed Services Committee  
241 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed  
Ranking Member  
Senate Armed Services Committee  
728 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Fax: (202) 228-2862

Fax: (202) 224-4680

Dear Chairman McCain and Ranking Member Reed:

The Fleet Reserve Association (FRA) appreciates a number of personnel related provisions that are addressed in both the House (H.R. 1735) and Senate (S. 1376) versions of the FY 2016 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). Specifically, the Association appreciates that both Committees resisted calls for additional TRICARE annual enrollment fee increases. FRA fully supports the extensive Military Coalition (TMC) recommendations sent under separate cover and offers the following recommendations on key issues addressed in only one bill which are especially important to our membership.

FRA opposes section 702 of the Senate bill that increases pharmacy co-pays for retirees under age 65. The Association supports section 701 of the Senate NDAA that allows TRICARE beneficiaries up to four visits for urgent care without referral, and section 641 of the Senate bill that allows election of a new spouse SBP beneficiary after the death of a former spouse. FRA supports sections 705 and 711 of the House bill that allows for a one-time offer to certain military retirees to regain TRICARE Prime coverage, and creates a unified medical command, respectively. The Association supports section 601 of the House bill that provides a pay increase equal to pay increases in the private sector. FRA opposes sections 603 and 604 that reduces BAH benefits from 99 percent to 95 percent, and reduces BAH benefits for married couples living together respectively. Further, FRA opposes section 651 of the Senate bill that reduces funding for stateside commissaries. The Association also supports section 592 of the House NDAA that provides “veteran’s status” at no cost to certain reserve component members.

Our members are disappointed that Senator Steve Daines (MT) amendment to expand Agent Orange presumption for VA disability claims to include Vietnam veterans who served on ships in the territorial waters of the Republic of Vietnam. FRA members are disheartened that the Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid’s (NV) amendments addressing concurrent receipt were not considered.



McCain/Reed ltr  
July 10, 2015  
Page 2

Both the House and Senate passed bills include similar retirement provisions based on the recommendations of the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission (MCRMC) implementing a “blended” retirement system that will apply to future service members. FRA is deeply concerned that these changes will be inadequate to keep the 20-year career force and will create a culture of leaving, which will make long-term retention difficult. That said, the Association would suggest several improvements that include:

- Eliminating the one-percent COLA cut for future retirees;
- Continuing TSP matching contributions past 20 years of service;
- Matching TSP contribution up to 5 percent; and
- Providing for a 2.5 percent (vice 2.0 percent) disability multiplier.

Your consideration of these recommendations is appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John R Davis". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

JOHN R. DAVIS  
Director, Legislative Programs

JRD:tw

cc: Senator Lindsey Graham  
Senator Kirsten Gillibrand