



THE EAGLE



THE MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA PENNSYLVANIA COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS

www.pa-coc.org

STILL SERVING



NEWS AND VIEWS
January 2014



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Happy New Year to everyone! It is an honor to be able to serve as the Council President over the next two years. I thank Bill Harris for his organization of council files as only one large plastic storage container and a CD were transferred to me. Bill has done a tremendous job working with the chapters around the state and keeping them in the fold. More work remains in the northwest for revitalization in the coming year along with exploring a new chapter in State College. Bill will continue to work on that as it has become a duty of the Immediate Past President.

Speaking of Past Presidents, Bob Kutulis has performed in an exemplary manner in revitalizing not one but two chapters in 2013. The first was the Northeast PA/Pocono Mountain chapter and the second was the York chapter. It wore him out so he moved to Florida and we wish him the best of luck. We even sent him the Polar Vortex to make him feel at home.

Legislative involvement by the Council has increased in Harrisburg over the past year,

unfortunately because of Pay Day Lending bills introduced. The Council was fortunate to become involved with a newly formed state wide coalition formed to fight the legislation. The Council legislative team learned how to walk the halls of the capitol and work with other organizations to complete the mission. The team learned the importance of knowing the subject from two consumer law attorneys which has helped us tremendously. Now the team can work on more favorable state legislation in conjunction with the PA War Veterans Council legislative committee and the State Veterans Commission.

Regards,
Bob Gray

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NEW OFFICERS

I would like to welcome the two new members of the Council, Second Vice President Harold Cooney from Cumberland Valley Chapter and Treasurer John Whelan from Valley Forge Chapter. Our Council is comprised of all the

chapter presidents and they nominated and elected the Council officers. The continued support of all of our chapters has made us stronger as a Council.

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COUNCIL MEETING DATES

January 16, Tele Conference 1 PM
April 5, State College
July 19, State College
September 12, Pittsburgh Convention
November 8, State College (Officer Elections)

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PAY DAY LENDING UPDATE Bob Gray, Legislative Chairman

Pay Day Lending is still being held at bay in the Senate. The Coalition will be planning another push to keep it that way. Lobbyist were visiting some legislators before the end of the year so we can't ignore the fact it could raise its head again. It was voted out of committee and could be pick up again if enough votes can be found to move it to the next step.

You may go to our PA Council of Chapters web site, www.pa-coc.org, click on Legislation and click on Stop Predatory Pay Day Loans. There is a link to take action to contact your legislators by sending a prepared message to your senator. The web link will also give you your senator's office phone number so you can call to let them know you sent the email opposing Pay Day Lending. Tell them that you are a member of the PA MOAA.

Now is the time to contact our state senators to remind them that we do not want Pay Day Lending introduced in Pennsylvania. Click this link to take action now:
<https://secure3.convio.net/pn/site/Advocacy?cmd=display&page=UserAction&id=3782>

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MOAA MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Chapters can now use an online form to send MOAA national the info on new members. Just go to:
https://fs20.formsite.com/moaaweb/2013ChapterRecruiting/secure_index.html and fill in the data. Because monetary incentives for recruiting and retention are based on a Chapter's reporting strength, MOAA national suggests that Chapters refrain from signing up newly commissioned ROTC cadets and midshipmen for Chapter membership since they will most likely deploy away from the Chapter's location after graduation - so having these new officers on Chapter rolls will cause their retention numbers to fall, preventing them from competing for cash awards.

Chapters are reminded to send their membership rosters to national MOAA before February 01, 2014. The report date should be December 31, 2013. The February 01 submission date must be met to qualify for retention awards.

As a reminder, MOAA now has three levels of membership - basic (for ROTC/OCS and academy grads, who will only receive electronic communications, for four years), premium (those who pay dues annually) and life.

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Thanks to Bill Harris and the approval of the Council, efforts have been made to obtain advertisers for the Eagle newsletter. I would like to welcome our first advertiser, Indian River Colony Club.

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State Veterans Legislation

Bob Gray of the Keystone Capital Chapter was recently named the chairman of the Pennsylvania War Veteran's Legislative Committee. The legislative committee works with the legislative liaison from the PA Department of Military and Veterans Affairs on state military and veteran legislation.

House Bill 107/Heffley - Considering military education and training to satisfy licensing or certification requirements for veterans and their spouses.

STATUS: In Senate Finance Committee

Senate Bill 923/ Baker – Extending and expanding the Military Family Relief Assistance program beyond January 2014. The program gives grants up to \$3,500 to needy PA active duty service members and their families.

STATUS: House Finance Committee

Senate Bill 1004 / Baker - Developing Opportunities in Veterans Education. Requires institutions of higher education to designate a single point of contact for Veterans where they can receive academic and financial assistance.

STATUS: Senate Education Committee

House Bill 472/ Barrar – Military Residency for Colleges provides an exception to residency requirements for in-state tuition to the Commonwealth's colleges and universities. It will also require that the sponsor rate for each community college be extended to the non-resident Veterans, their spouse and dependent children.

STATUS: Senate Education Committee

House Bill 43/ Harper – “Give an Hour” to our Veterans – legislation would change current language to allow psychiatrists, psychologists and counselors the ability to obtain a volunteer license so that they may provide free mental health services via “Give an Hour”.

STATUS: in Senate Consumer Protections and Professional Licensure Committee

HB 1205/Barrar - Veterans Scratch Off Lottery Ticket. Some opposition that it will take funds from the existing programs.

Status: Out of House Veterans Affairs Committee



1% Reduction in COLA for Retirees under age 62



(From left to right) Sens. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., Roger Wicker, R-Miss., and Kelly Ayotte, R-N.H., and VADM. Norb Ryan Jr. MOAA president, speak out in a Capitol Hill press conference against plans to trim military retirement increases as part of a comprehensive budget deal.

LEO SHANE III/STARS AND STRIPES

By [Leo Shane III](#) - Stars and Stripes

Published: December 17, 2013

WASHINGTON — On the morning of December 28th, veterans advocates and their Senate Republican backers vowed to fight until the end to stop a budget deal that includes cuts to military retirement increases.

The end came about 30 minutes later.

A 67-33 procedural vote in the Senate shortly after that press conference put the budget deal on a likely path to becoming law this week. Now, those opponents will have to gear up for a fight next year to repeal or replace the cuts.

The budget plan — a compromise between Democrat and Republican leaders — would avert another government shutdown next month by capping federal spending for fiscal 2014 and 2015 at about \$1 trillion. The House approved the plan last week. After the procedural vote, the Senate was expected to give final approval late Tuesday or Wednesday.

The compromise replaces the mandated sequestration cuts created during a summer 2011 fiscal fight with alternate budget trims and several new fees and revenues.

Among those savings is an annual 1 percent reduction in cost-of-living increases for military retirees under 62. The move would save the government about \$6 billion over the next decade, but enraged veterans groups say it breaks financial promises made to servicemembers.

“This is not just about money,” said Norb Ryan, president of the Military Officers Association of America. “This is about keeping our word (as a nation). Instead, they’ve rushed and made a very bad decision.”

Supporters of the plan have argued that the veterans affected are all working age, so the retirement payouts would be extra income. But Sen. Kelly Ayotte, R-N.H., noted that no exemptions were made for disabled veterans, many of whom rely on military retirement as a primary source of income.

Several veterans groups were appalled that military retirement pay was even in the discussion for budget relief, noting an independent panel is conducting a comprehensive review of the system for Congress. A result on their work is expected next year.

“It’s unbelievable we have to continue to have this conversation,” said Tom Tarantino, chief policy officer for Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America. “When this budget deal was announced, they talked about all of the things that weren’t on the table. I was shocked that veterans and military families are on that table.”

Senate Democrats have publicly acknowledged the veterans groups’ concerns, but insist that providing some “sanity” to the congressional budget process is their top priority.

Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Carl Levin, D-Mich., has promised to hold hearings on the retirement issue in coming months, well before the changes go into effect in 2015.

He blasted the rushed budget process and unpalatable result, calling it another symbol of dysfunctional Washington -- the opposite of how Senate leaders framed the measure. He said veterans should feel insulted and vowed to make sure the issue got broad attention in Congress and in the public in the weeks to come.

“The plan,” he said, “is to unleash the forces of hell.”

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GLORIOUS INSULTS

Andrew Lang

“He uses statistics as a drunken man uses lamp-posts... for support, rather than illumination.”

