

MOAA PUBLICATIONS: YOUR RESOURCE FOR EVERY STAGE OF LIFE

# Military Family Legislative Action Guide





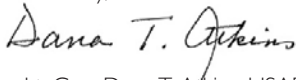
Dear Military Family Members:

We know your lives are busy, and that makes it hard to keep up-to-date on proposed law and policy changes that can greatly affect your lives.

But Congress acts several times a year on issues that can have major consequences — both positive and negative — for you and your family.

That's where MOAA comes in — we're here to ensure you have an opportunity to protect the interests of our servicemembers and their families so America will always have a strong all-volunteer force. As you've committed to serving us, we promise to never stop serving you.

Sincerely,



Lt. Gen. Dana T. Atkins, USAF (Ret)

President

Military Officers Association of America

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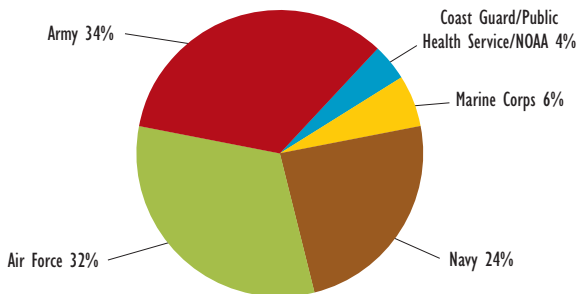
**MOAA helps you cut through the “red tape.”**

# ABOUT MOAA

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- **LARGEST MILITARY OFFICER ASSOCIATION** in the U.S.
- **FOURTH-LARGEST** veterans' organization
- **INDEPENDENT**, nonprofit, politically nonpartisan
- **380,000-PLUS** members
- **MORE THAN 400 CHAPTERS** nationwide
- **SERVANT LEADER** philosophy
- **NAMED "TOP LOBBYIST"** by *The Hill* newspaper nine years in a row — the only military/veterans' association recognized
- **LARGER ADVOCACY STAFF** than any other military, veterans', or military family organization
- **COCHAIR OF THE MILITARY COALITION**, a partnership of 32 military and veterans' organizations that work together on issues of mutual interest. This affiliation harnesses grassroots support of more than 5.5 million members and their families.

## MOAA Members by Service



## MOAA Advocacy

*MOAA's advocacy team includes experts in these areas:*

- Active duty and Guard and Reserve
- Veterans, retirees and survivors
- Military health care
- Military families
- DoD and VA compensation and benefits
- Female veterans

*Recent legislative accomplishments:*

- **WON PAY COMPARABILITY OVER PAST DECADE** for active duty/Guard/Reserve forces after a 13.4-percent pay gap in 1999.
- **WON REPEAL OF PAY REDUCTIONS ESTABLISHED BY THE BIPARTISAN BUDGET ACT OF 2013** for current and future retirees and survivors.
- **SECURED ADDITIONAL FUNDING** for child care, family support, and other quality-of-life programs.
- **SECURED AID** to school districts serving military children.

- **WON FREE EDUCATION** at any public college, plus housing and book allowances and the option to transfer benefits to family members under the Post-9/11 GI Bill.
- **WON TRICARE** coverage up to age 26 for unmarried dependents with no employer coverage.
- **WON EXTENDED HEALTH CARE**, dental, and housing coverage for survivors of servicemembers killed on active duty.
- **WON \$500,000** in lump-sum death benefits for survivors of servicemembers killed on active duty.
- **DEFEATED A PENTAGON PROPOSAL** to raise TRICARE fees up to \$2,000 a year for retired officers.
- **WON LIFETIME TRICARE** and pharmacy coverage for military retirees and family members age 65 and older.
- **WON PERMANENT TRICARE** eligibility for drilling Guard/Reserve members and their families.
- **REDUCED OR ELIMINATED DEDUCTION** of VA disability pay from military retired pay for retirees with severe or combat-related disabilities.
- **PASSED MILITARY CHILD EDUCATION COMPACT** in all 50 states through the efforts of MOAA chapters.



- **STOPPED A 27-PERCENT CUT IN TRICARE PAYMENTS** to doctors that would have caused many to stop seeing military patients.
- **DEFEATED INCOME-BASED FEES** for TRICARE Prime and TRICARE for Life.
- **RESTORED SURVIVOR BENEFITS ELIGIBILITY** for current spouse if eligible former spouse dies.
- **WON TRICARE COVERAGE** for urgent care visits without preauthorization.
- **EXPANDED MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT** for veterans via the Clay Hunt SAV Act.

### *How does MOAA advocacy benefit me?*

- **MILITARY PAY** and benefit inequities get resolved thanks to legislation MOAA proposes and works.
- **CONGRESS HEARS YOUR CONCERNS** as MOAA testifies on behalf of you and other military families.
- **MOAA ALERTS** make it easy for you to communicate with your legislators — especially when hot issues need quick action — with suggested messages, postcards, and letters.
- **MOAA HELPS YOU** cut through “the red tape” on pay, TRICARE, and benefit problems to ease hassles for your family.
- **MOAA WORKS TO FIND SOLUTIONS** to your problems with Congress, DoD, the VA, and other agencies.
- **GET THE INSIDE SCOOP** on legislative issues and policy changes each week.
- **DISCOVER HOW AND WHEN** to maximize your influence to protect and enhance your quality of life.
- **MOAA'S GOVERNMENT RELATIONS STAFF** can answer your questions. With a staff of nine, we're here for you.



## LEGISLATIVE GOALS

*Much still remains to be accomplished on the legislative front. Will you help MOAA protect military families to sustain a strong all-volunteer force?*

- **SUSTAIN FULL MILITARY PAY COMPARABILITY** and prevent pay caps.
- **SUSTAIN FORCE SIZES** to meet mission requirements and reduce family separation time.
- **PROTECT CURRENTLY SERVING AND RETIREE BENEFITS** from severe, arbitrary sequestration cuts.
- **OPPOSE MILITARY BENEFIT CHANGES** that are inconsistent with service career sacrifices.
- **OPPOSE MEANS TESTING** of TRICARE Prime and TRICARE for Life enrollment fees.
- **IMPROVE PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE** transferability for servicemembers and spouses.

*For a more comprehensive list of MOAA's advocacy initiatives and key issues, visit [www.moaa.org](http://www.moaa.org).*



# THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

## Introduction

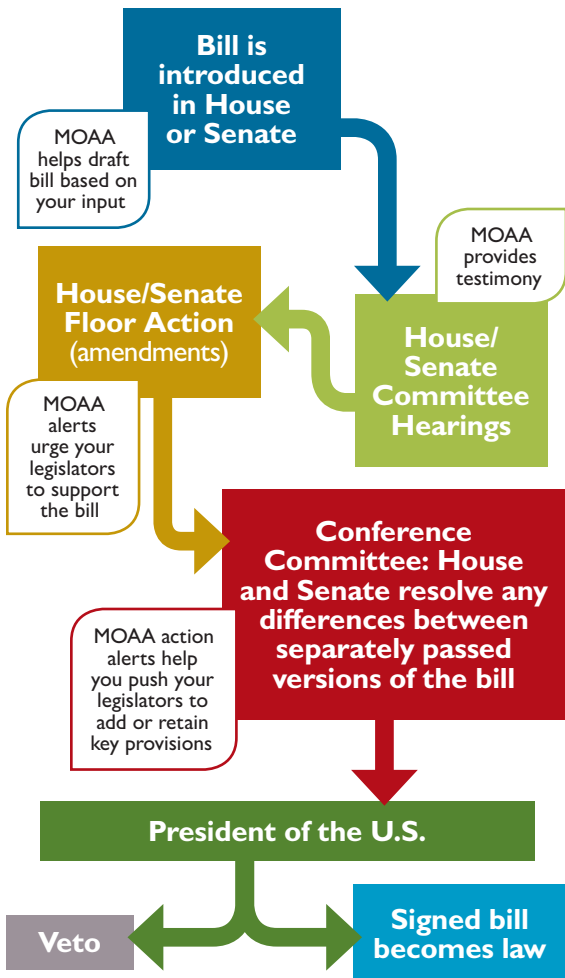
The legislative process can be confusing and sometimes daunting. The good news is, with some basic information, you can see where your voice makes an impact. MOAA has highlighted the main things you need to know.

## “The Big Bill”

Congress passes most changes to military pay and benefits as part of the annual National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which typically contains thousands of provisions on issues from force size and bonus improvements to weapon programs. MOAA's efforts are aimed toward including legislation in the NDAA that will improve your quality of life and protect you against ill-considered, budget-driven cutbacks.

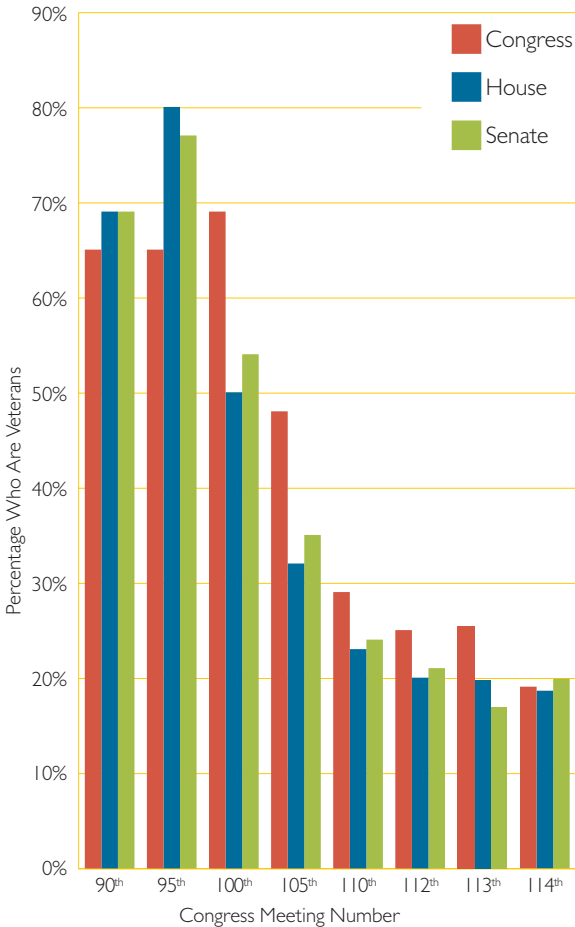


# HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW



# WHY YOUR VOICE MATTERS?

As shown in the chart below, there's been a steady decline in legislators with military experience. As a military family member, you have a responsibility to make sure legislators understand how proposals could affect you.





**With your help, MOAA  
can make a difference.**

## MYTHS



***Servicemembers (and their family members) aren't allowed to contact their legislators.***

**FACT:** Nonsense. Servicemembers and their families have the same right as every other citizen to contact their elected representatives, and your legislators need to hear your views on the issues as much as any other constituent's.

Writing to support increased force levels or improved compensation or benefits isn't the same as writing to complain about a supervisor or a military assignment (the latter are more appropriate for the chain of command). Servicemembers can't use their official positions to lobby Congress, but individual members and families shouldn't hesitate to express their personal views on what they want their legislators to support.

If you want guidance, call MOAA's Government Relations staff at (800) 234-MOAA (6622).



***I'm just one person. I can't make a difference.***

**FACT:** That's only true if you don't try. MOAA makes it easy for you to get involved with just one click. We alert and mobilize members to tweet, email, write, and call legislators when key issues are coming up for a vote. When you join in that effort, you can be part of generating thousands of messages, which gets Congress' attention.



**MYTH 3** *Military personnel issues don't really affect family members.*

**FACT:** If force levels are cut, more frequent deployments mean more family separations. If pay isn't adjusted properly or benefits are attacked, that means tighter family budgets. Every year, Congress acts on family-support programs, survivor benefits, and more. If you don't watch out for your family, who will? MOAA will help by alerting you when action is needed.



**MYTH 4** *Military leaders will take care of my benefits and pay issues.*

**FACT:** Unfortunately, military leaders usually are forced to live within a specific budget. They're often asked to choose between weapons and people programs. MOAA works hard to remind Congress that a strong defense requires funding both people and weapons, but it's an uphill battle. With



thousands of tweets, phone calls, emails, and letters from you and other military spouses and family members, we can ensure people are protected.



*My unique problem isn't a concern for MOAA or Congress.*

**FACT:** Many individual problems are signs of broader issues. On countless occasions, members have brought “unique problems” to MOAA only to find an issue is much more common than they thought. Working one problem in Congress can help others who wear the uniform and their families.

LAST YEAR, MOAA  
MEMBERS GENERATED NEARLY

**1,000,000**

MESSAGES TO CONGRESS



*MOAA only works to help officers.*

**FACT:** We believe officers have a leadership responsibility to represent the entire military community — officer, enlisted, active duty, Guard/Reserve, retired, and veterans and their families and survivors. Although only officers can join MOAA, our association cochairs The Military Coalition, in which 32 military and veterans' associations work for the common good of the entire military community.





***I'm interested, but the legislative process seems too complicated.***

**FACT:** That's why MOAA is here to help. In addition to this guide, MOAA's Web Base ([www.moaa.org](http://www.moaa.org)) provides a wealth of information and resources. You also can sign up for MOAA's free *Legislative Update* to receive a weekly email on key issues that affect your family, with special alerts when key congressional action is pending.

# LEGISLATIVE ACTION CHECKLIST

## How to get started:



***Become a member of MOAA and use our resources and tools to help you advocate.***

Visit [www.joinmoaa.org](http://www.joinmoaa.org).



***Get the facts on issues that affect you and your family.***

- Sign up for our free *Legislative Update* to stay current on what's happening in Congress.
- Sign up for MOAA's monthly *E-News* to keep tabs on issues that directly affect the currently serving family.
- Collect pertinent information, facts, and statistics on bills being worked in Congress.
- Research your legislators' positions on issues, legislation they have sponsored or cosponsored, and what committees they are on.



***Start or join a grassroots network and share information.***

- Join a local MOAA chapter. To find a chapter near you, visit [www.moaa.org/chapters/locator](http://www.moaa.org/chapters/locator).
- Get family members, friends, and others involved by passing them MOAA alerts and urging them to take action.
- Apply to serve on MOAA's Currently Serving Spouse Advisory Council at [www.moaa.org/spousecouncil](http://www.moaa.org/spousecouncil).



## **Contact your legislators.**

- Call, visit, or write to your legislators.
- Join your legislators' Facebook page, and follow their Twitter handle.
- Thank your legislators for past and present support on your issue(s).
- Tell them which bills or amendments you want them to cosponsor or issues you want them to support, why they are important to you, and what action you want them to take.
- Provide your contact information for future communication.
- Provide a MOAA-supplied one-page fact sheet on the issue and your contact information for future communications.
- Follow up to make sure your legislators sponsored, cosponsored, or voted for your bill — don't be afraid to contact your legislators multiple times to get their attention.
- Be sure to thank them for their support when they have taken the action they promised.

### **Find Your Legislators**

<http://capwiz.com/moaa/dbq/officials>

## RESOURCES

### MOAA Legislative Resources

- **LEGISLATIVE UPDATE** — To subscribe to MOAA's free weekly *Legislative Update*, visit [www.moaa.org/email](http://www.moaa.org/email) or call MOAA's Member Service Center at (800) 234-MOAA (6622).
- **FIND YOUR LEGISLATORS** — Not sure who your legislators are? That's OK. All you need is your ZIP code. (<http://capwiz.com/moaa/dbq/officials>)
- **MOAA ALERT CENTER** — Look for key alerts and bills to email your legislators MOAA-suggested messages. (<http://capwiz.com/moaa/home>)
- **MOAA'S LEGISLATIVE ACTION CENTER** — You'll find articles, fact sheets, and other resources concerning legislative issues that affect you and your family. ([www.moaa.org/action](http://www.moaa.org/action))



- **MOAA E-NEWSLETTERS** — Call (800) 234-MOAA (6622) to sign up or visit [www.moaa.org/email](http://www.moaa.org/email).
- Monthly on-line update on current legislative and policy issues affecting military members, spouses and families.

## Government Resources

- **ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEES** —  
[www.armedservices.house.gov](http://www.armedservices.house.gov)  
[www.armed-services.senate.gov](http://www.armed-services.senate.gov)
- **VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEES** —  
[www.veterans.house.gov](http://www.veterans.house.gov)  
[www.veterans.senate.gov](http://www.veterans.senate.gov)
- **DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE** — [www.defense.gov](http://www.defense.gov)
- **LIBRARY OF CONGRESS** legislative resource site —  
<http://thomas.loc.gov>
- **U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES** —  
[www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov)
- **U.S. SENATE** — [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov)
- **TRICARE MILITARY HEALTH CARE SYSTEM** —  
[www.tricare.mil](http://www.tricare.mil)

## Additional MOAA Services

- **MOAA WEB BASE** — [www.moaa.org](http://www.moaa.org)

- **LEGISLATIVE INQUIRIES** — email [legis@moaa.org](mailto:legis@moaa.org)
- **CHAPTERS AND COUNCILS** — [www.moaa.org/chapters](http://www.moaa.org/chapters)
- **MILITARY PROFESSIONALISM** — [www.moaa.org/professionalism](http://www.moaa.org/professionalism)
- **CAREER-TRANSITION SERVICES** — [www.moaa.org/career](http://www.moaa.org/career)
- **PAY AND BENEFITS INFORMATION** — [www.moaa.org/benefitsinfo](http://www.moaa.org/benefitsinfo)
- **EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE (LOANS, SCHOLARSHIPS, GRANTS)** — [www.moaa.org/education](http://www.moaa.org/education)
- **MEMBER DISCOUNTS AND SERVICES** — [www.moaa.org/discounts](http://www.moaa.org/discounts)
- **MILITARY SPOUSE PROGRAMS** — [www.moaa.org/spouse](http://www.moaa.org/spouse)
- **MEMBER SERVICE CENTER** — email [msc@moaa.org](mailto:msc@moaa.org)

## MOAA PUBLICATIONS

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For more than 85 years, MOAA has been fighting for the interests of military members and their families. We understand the challenges you face because we're just like you, and we're ready to share our expertise and experience. The MOAA library of guides and reference tools is available to help you navigate the challenges that arise at every stage of life.

*Financial Planning Guide*

*Marketing Yourself for a Second Career*

*Benefits Planning Guide*

*The MOAA Investors' Manual*

*Keeping a Career on the Move<sup>®</sup>*

**FOR MORE INFORMATION  
ABOUT MOAA PUBLICATIONS,  
CALL (800) 234-MOAA (6622)  
OR VISIT US ONLINE AT  
[WWW.MOAA.ORG](http://WWW.MOAA.ORG).**