

Defense Authorization Act Signed Into Law

The bill contains several provisions supported by the VFW

Dec 13, 2017

WASHINGTON — Following several weeks of negotiations between the U.S. House and Senate, President Trump signed the fiscal year 2018 National Defense Authorization Act (FY18 NDAA) into law yesterday. The final bill authorizes just over \$692 billion for ongoing and planned defense programs, including \$65.7 billion for overseas operations in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria, and for the Global War on Terror. Additionally, the FY18 NDAA authorizes \$241.2 billion for operations and maintenance; \$146.2 billion for military personnel; \$33.9 billion for defense health care programs, including \$396 million from the overseas operations account; \$15 billion for ballistic-missile defense and \$10.7 billion for military construction and family housing.

Despite the authorization bill's passage, funding it will be an appropriation's challenge since the total amount is well above the \$551 billion spending cap enacted by the Budget Control Act of 2011.

In the recent months, the VFW has placed significant pressure on Congress to take care of members of the military, retirees, veterans and their families. As a result, the final version of the FY18 NDAA contained the following provisions supported by the VFW:

- A 2.4 percent increase to base pay, and restricts the President's ability to reduce it through Executive Order.
- The preservation of dual-military with dependent rate Basic Allowance for Housing.
- The preservation of the grandfather clause that ensures that TRICARE fee increases would not apply to current service members and retirees.
- The permanent extension of the Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance.
- The review and declassification of documents concerning toxic exposure if more than 100 service members were intentionally exposed to a substance that has caused at least one of them to become ill.

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- Expanded reporting requirements for the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office, to include military family members who report sexual assault or harassment in annual SAPRO reports; the establishment of legal protections for victims of revenge pornography and/or victims who were subject to non-consensual broadcasting of intimate photography or recordings; and new protections for individuals enrolled in the delayed entry program who are sexually harassed or assaulted.
- Pre-mobilization and transitional TRICARE benefits to Reserve Component members activated under 12304a or 12304b orders.