

## "Defense Authorization Bill Advancing Forward"

**T**he House has passed its version of the FY 2011 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), and the Senate Armed Services Committee presented theirs to the full chamber for approval. The most positive development here is full funding for TRICARE in both bills along with language barring any fee increases in FY 2011. Keeping these provisions in the final bill would mark the fifth year in a row we have protected this earned benefit and blocked plans to shift costs of military healthcare to retirees and their families.

The House and Senate must still work out their differences in a joint-conference before a final bill can be presented to the President for signature into law. And there are many hurdles to overcome before this can happen. One of those challenges, for example, is the military pay raise. The House bill calls for a 1.9 percent pay raise, but it appears the Senate bill will follow the Administration's plan of providing just the minimum amount required by law, 1.4 percent.

With Members of Congress expecting to be in recess for much of August and the first part of September, the pace of legislative activity on the Hill will have to pick up dramatically if they expect to get the job done. As of press time, lawmakers still had a full slate of unaddressed issues, including the wartime supplemental funding bill and the very important issue of addressing the defense authorization and appropriation measures. Several other pieces of veterans-related legislation, including the VA funding bill, await congressional action as well.

During the August recess, your elected officials will be working out of their State and district offices. As we are in the crucial run-up period to the November elections, **I encourage you to take the opportunity to meet with your current representatives and prospective candidates and make your wishes and concerns known.** Be engaged, communicate with elected officials now, consider a contribution to the NAUS Political Action Committee (NAUS PAC), and most important, get on board with others to vote for the candidate that best serves your needs in November.

Please take time to thoroughly read Rick Jones' Legislative Update. It's full of good information and will bring you up-to-date on things.

Members of the NAUS team spent a considerable amount of time on the road this spring attending more than a dozen events including Retiree Appreciation Days (RAD), field assessments, and symposiums. These important face-to-face exchanges help NAUS keep a pulse on military- and veterans-

related matters in the field. They also let us recruit new members and spread the NAUS message.

Two of these events were particularly noteworthy. In May, I had the pleasure of attending the American Merchant Marine Veterans annual convention in Las Vegas, Nevada. It is always an honor to speak to this deserving group of World War II veterans, and the convention banquet was well attended. In June, I traveled to England to participate in the annual Retiree Appreciation Day at RAF Mildenhall- Lakenheath. It has been several years since NAUS has made an appearance at an overseas European event, and it was terrific to visit such a patriotic military-civilian community like the Mildenhall-Lakenheath community... **and we were very pleased with the many new members who joined NAUS during the event.**

*Finally, as we celebrate our nation's 234th year of independence this July 4th, please remember the men and women serving in the Uniformed Services risking their lives on a daily basis in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere around the world.*



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