

# LEGISLATIVE



# UPDATE



## Legislative Achievements of the Second Session of the 107<sup>th</sup> Congress

The FY 2003 National Defense Authorization Act authorized \$393 billion, the largest increase to national defense spending since the early 1980s. Highlights of the budget include an across-the-board pay raise for all military personnel, special pays for the combat-wounded, and funding for the initial production of the F/A-22 Raptor. As we enter the 108<sup>th</sup> Congress, the Association will continue to advocate for the resolution of issues of importance to our membership in our dealings with the United States Congress and the Department of Defense. The following provisions of the FY 03 defense authorization bill will have positive impacts on Air Force readiness and the quality of life of all our nation's airmen; those now serving and those who served in the past.

### Health Care

- Sharing requirements established for VA and DOD to facilitate improved, mutually beneficial health care: (1) Enter into agreements to exchange health care resources and develop guidelines for the implementation of sharing recommendations. (2) Establish and jointly fund a DOD-VA health executive committee and an incentive program to foster creative coordination and sharing initiatives. (3) Adopt an interoperable, real-time pharmacy data system that would enable DOD and VA to exchange outpatient medical information. (4) Conduct a health care resources sharing coordination project (at three sites or more) to test the health care sharing improvement programs.
- TRICARE Prime Remote benefits extended to dependents of remotely located reserve personnel when the member is ordered to active duty for more than 30 days.
- TRICARE claims requirements are to be substantially the same as Medicare claims requirements.
- Medicare-approved health care providers to be treated as approved TRICARE providers.

### Compensation and Other Personnel Benefits

- Across-the-board 4.1% pay increase for military personnel, and targeted pay increases of up to 6.5% for mid-grade & senior NCOs and mid-grade officers.
- Out-of-pocket housing costs paid by service members reduced from 11.3% to 7.5%. Out-of-pocket costs for housing are to be entirely eliminated by FY 2005.
- Incentive pay of up to \$1,500 per month for personnel serving in assignments involving difficult working conditions or undesirable overseas locations.
- Subsistence allowance for single enlisted personnel stationed in remote locations doubled, to \$16.42 per day.
- Per Diem allowance for a PCS made in a private vehicle increased to \$85 per 350 miles.
- Service secretaries authorized to grant a one-time leave of absence of up to 14 days to service members with qualifying emergencies.
- A new special pay program for military retirees who received the Purple Heart, were wounded in combat, or were severely disabled in combat-related incidents.

### Recruiting and Retention

- The National Service Plan offers incentives such as repayment of student loans up to \$18,000 or a \$5,000 payment after 15 months of service in order to increase enlistment in the armed forces. Volunteers serve 15 months of active duty followed by an additional service commitment determined by the Secretary of Defense or 24 months active status in the Selected Reserve.

- MGI B benefit period extended from 10 to 14 years for Reservists.
- Retention bonuses for active duty members with critical skills.
- Extension of certain special pays and bonuses for reserve personnel.
- Increase in the maximum rate for certain special pays and bonuses for health care professionals.

### **Military Construction**

- \$10.4 billion authorized for quality-of-life enhancements
  - \$1.2 billion for new barracks and dormitories
  - \$676.6 million for construction and improvement of military family housing (including the privatization of over 30,000 units)
  - \$83.8 million for the construction of 3 medical facilities
  - \$64 million for 8 new fitness centers
  - \$61 million for construction and improvement of education facilities
  - \$17.8 million for 3 new religious facilities
  - \$17.6 million for 3 new child development centers

### **Force Modernization**

- \$104.1 million for B-2 modifications and \$265.3 million for B-2 research and development.
- \$3.7 billion for the procurement of 12 C-17s, and \$11.3 million for C-17 engine maintenance training devices and software enhancements.
- \$169.5 million for C-130 modifications, \$334 million for four KC-130J (AF and USMC), and \$87 million for one EC-130J.
- \$272.5 million for F-15 modifications for active duty and ANG.
- \$284 million for F-16 modifications for active duty, ANG, and AFR.
- \$627.3 million for F-22 research and development, \$4.1 billion for 23 low-rate initial production (LRIP) F-22s, and \$530.6 million for advance procurement of 27 LRIP F-22s in FY 04.
- \$10.1 million for advance procurement of two Air Force V-22 Ospreys.
- \$664.9 million for Global Hawk UAV procurement and development.

### **Authorized End Strength Levels**

- Active Forces: 359,000
- Air Force Reserve: 75,600
- Air National Guard: 106,600