



National Service & Legislative Headquarters
807 Maine Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20024-2410
Phone (202) 554-3501
Fax (202) 554-3581
www.dav.org

LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

April 2014

Update on Budget and Military Cost-of-Living Adjustment and Fiscal Year 2014 Appropriations

On February 11, 2014, the House passed S. 25, including an amendment that would repeal the COLA reduction for certain military retirees, by a vote of 326 to 90. On February 12, 2014, by a wide margin, the Senate passed the amended bill that contained repeal of the objectionable COLA cut, but that continued the COLA reduction for future enlistees who subsequently retire from military service. The President approved this legislation as Public Law 113-82.

Fiscal Year 2015 *Independent Budget* and Administration Budget

DAV and our *Independent Budget* (IB) co-authors (AMVETS, Paralyzed Veterans of America, and Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States) recommend a total discretionary funding level of \$72.9 billion in FY 2015. The Administration is recommending \$68.4 billion. DAV and its IB co-authors are calling for \$61.1 billion in VA Medical Care funding. The Administration is recommending \$56 billion. For Medical and Prosthetic Research, the IB recommends funding of \$611 million. The Administration is recommending \$589 million. The IB recommends approximately \$2.9 billion for VA's General Operating Expenses. The Administration is recommending \$2.9 billion. For total capital infrastructure programs and grants, the IB recommends \$3.9 billion, \$2.8 billion for major medical facility construction, \$831 million for minor construction, and \$298 million for VA grants to state veterans homes and cemeteries. The Administration is recommending \$1.2 billion, \$562 million for major medical facility projects, \$495 million in minor construction, and \$125 million for VA grants to state homes and cemeteries.

More detail on our recommendations for both policy and budget matters can be found at www.independentbudget.org.

Senate Omnibus Veterans Bill

As reported in the February Legislative Bulletin, Senator Bernie Sanders, Chairman of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, introduced S. 1982, the Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefits and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act of 2014.

If enacted, this bill would accomplish many of DAV's most important priorities and legislative goals based on national resolutions approved by our members. This massive omnibus bill, unprecedented in our modern experience, would create, expand, advance, and extend a number of VA benefits, services and programs.

On February 25, 2014, a Senate procedural vote to end debate on this bill and proceed to a final vote failed to gain a necessary majority. Chairman Sanders is reportedly seeking additional supporters of the bill to yield a clear majority for its passage.

Hearings

On February 25, 2014, DAV testified before a joint session of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees concerning DAV's legislative agenda for the year.

On February 27, 2014, DAV testified before the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity concerning maximizing the effectiveness of Veterans Rehabilitation and Employment Services.

On March 12, 2014, DAV submitted testimony for the record to the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee concerning the fiscal year 2015 budget.

On March 13, 2014, DAV submitted testimony for the record to the House Veterans' Affairs Committee concerning the fiscal year 2015 budget.

On March 25, 2014, DAV submitted testimony for the record to the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity on nine pending bills.

On March 26, 2014, DAV submitted testimony for the record to the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs on 10 pending bills.

On March 27, 2014, DAV testified before the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health on 10 pending bills.

All DAV testimony can be read in full on our [website](#).

DAV 2014 Mid-Winter Conference

Our 2014 DAV Mid-Winter Conference, February 23-26, in Washington, DC was a tremendous success. A variety of discussions and meetings were held during the Conference to arm our attendees about our vital mission, and to help DAV members educate Congress on why our priorities should be important legislative goals.

DAV National Commander Joseph W. Johnston delivered our 2014 legislative program to a joint hearing of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees, on Tuesday, February 25, 2013 to a packed house of DAV members and other DAV supporters.

DAV urges all DAV members and DAV officials to make appointments to meet with elected federal officials in their state and district offices. Talking points on legislative and policy issues important to DAV, our members, and all veterans, are available on the DAV website at <http://www.dav.org/learn-more/news/2012/dav-releases-mid-winter-talking-points/>.

Operation: Keep the Promise

On Tuesday, February 25, 2014, during our Mid-Winter Conference, DAV launched *Operation: Keep the Promise*, a comprehensive and coordinated rallying of veterans and supporters calling on Congress to fulfill our promises to the men and women who served. At noon, National Commander Joseph W. Johnston, DAV members, other veterans leaders and members of the House of Representatives and the Senate participated in a Capitol Hill press conference at the House Triangle across from the Cannon House Office Building. Commander Johnston and other speakers called on Congress to hold a vote on the Putting Veterans Funding First Act, legislation to provide advance appropriations for all VA programs, benefits and services.

Simultaneous with the rally, DAV activated our extensive social networks, including DAV's Facebook and Twitter followers, and DAV CAN members, to support our call to action using online tools made available on the DAV webpage. Millions of people saw these messages, and over 3,000 calls were placed to offices in Congress that day. Thank you for participating in *Operation: Keep the Promise*.

Conclusion

To ensure enactment of the legislation we support, our DAV and Auxiliary members must become active members of DAV's grassroots Commander's Action Network (DAV CAN). All of us must do our part to let our elected officials know about our support for legislation that helps empower wounded, ill and injured veterans to lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity. Early in 2013 DAV expanded the DAV CAN to include all of our members who have provided DAV their email addresses in the past. In stimulating this activity, we hope to dramatically increase participation in the DAV CAN by grassroots members to help support DAV's case to Congress on issues important to DAV and to you.

Please make a pledge to redouble your efforts to communicate our issues to your elected officials through the DAV CAN and in your own personal efforts at home, in your chapter or your unit, and in your community. Your efforts and actions, including

attendance at our Mid-Winter Conference and National Convention, are keys to our success as an organization of advocacy.

Thank you for again for your continuing support for DAV's programs of service to America's wounded, injured and ill heroes.



JOSEPH A. VIOLANTE
National Legislative Director