



# Jayhawk Chapter MOAA Newsletter



This newsletter is published bimonthly by the Jayhawk Chapter of Kansas, Military Officers Association of America, as a service to all members. The Jayhawk emblem is used with the permission of the registered trademark owner, the University of Kansas.

## CHAPTER DUES (\$20.00) were due 01 January 2012

If you haven't already done so, please mail your dues to Jim Cooper ASAP

### March Program:

Our guest speaker will be Cathy Hamilton, the Director of Downtown Lawrence.

★★★★★ CHAPTER  
awarded for  
2002 / 2003 / 2005 /  
2008 / 2009 / 2010

★★★★★ CHAPTER  
awarded for  
2004 / 2006 / 2007

## Greetings from the President . . .

Dear Jayhawk Chapter Members and Friends,

I am looking forward to our upcoming year with the Jayhawk Chapter of MOAA. We all give Tom Arnold, our Past President, a "WELL DONE" for his service. Also, "THANK YOU" to our outgoing board members Dave Kent, Dwight Jackson and Tom Neal for their service to the chapter. The Jayhawk Chapter was recently presented with its third consecutive Five Star Award from MOAA. We have been awarded the Five Star Award for six out of the last eight years. Our goals for the coming year will be to have interesting and enlightening chapter programs, to continue our service projects (Comfort Award, Bell Ringers and Vets in the Classroom), and to support the local ROTC programs. A special effort will be made to sustain MOAA's efforts with National and State lawmakers. The erosion of our well-deserved benefits is a critical concern. John Halladay makes a tremendous effort to supply us with the latest information about current legislation so that we can make informed decisions. It is very important that your concerns are expressed to our elected officials (**forward those emails and magazine inserts**).

Our January program regarding the future of global threats, the changing military mission since 9/11 and the possible consequences of the drawdown (RIF) of our force structure after the Middle Eastern conflicts subside was presented by BG Vic Braden. It was very well received and on target. His comments on the proposed military budget and its effects on our national defensive capabilities were very timely. We greatly appreciate his helping us out on such a short notice. Scheduled speaker, Cathy Hamilton, was unable to speak in January and will be our guest speaker for our March Meeting. Cathy is the Director of Downtown Lawrence. She will inform us about the mission of her organization and her efforts to make this area of Lawrence a more vital and interesting part of our town. As you know, Cathy was the former hostess of the local TV program "Home and Away" and a regular writer for the Journal World. She is well known for her promotion of Lawrence as a great place to live. I encourage you all to attend our next meeting and enjoy her comments on the future of Downtown Lawrence. The AFROTC Color Guard will present the colors and will be our guests for dinner.

I would like to welcome newly elected 2nd Vice President Ed Phillips and Board Members Lt Col Storm Reynolds (ROTC) and John Connolly into leadership positions of the Jayhawk Chapter. The Board of Directors and Elected Officers all welcome any suggestions that will help and promote our Jayhawk Chapter.

*Bob*

## Volume XVII, Issue 2

1 March 2012

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\* Reservations should be sent  
to Jim Cooper by  
**15 March**



## JAYHAWK CHAPTER NEWS

### From Don Sheriff:

The Lawrence Breakfast Optimists honored the military retired members of the club with a donation in each name to the Optimist International Foundation. In addition their names were added to the Breakfast Optimist Awards and Honors Banner. The members were COL Dwight Jackson, LTC Jane Harris, LTC Gerald Rutledge, and LCDR Robert Burkhart. Maj Don Sheriff's name was already on the banner as a WWII veteran.

LTC Jane Harris is serving as the Governor Elect of the Kansas District, Optimist International for the year 2012-13. She will serve as Governor in the year 2013-14. Jane and her staff will serve as advisors to Optimist Clubs in Kansas in matters of youth programs, finance, membership, and new club building. She will represent the clubs at civic and government events.

### From Jim Cooper:

Around the Horn. Sandy and I took our first cruise with some friends, a 12-day jaunt around Cape Horn, at the end of January. We flew to Buenos Aires and spent three days shopping for leather, learning how to play polo, and paying homage at Eva Peron's tomb in the beautiful but haunting La Recoleta cemetery, and finally boarded our ship, Holland America's VEENDAM. We had port calls in Montevideo, Uruguay; Port Stanley, Falkland Islands; Ushuaia, Argentina; Punto Arenas and Puerto Montt, and finally terminating in Valparaiso, all in Chile. After a couple of days visiting friends in Santiago, we returned to Lawrence. Our weather was absolutely fabulous for the entire trip: our Cape Horn passage, though windy, was smooth and clear, quite the exception to the normal storms in that area.



Cape Horn in background

Shipboard life was grand, as many of you know – too much great food, superb service, and lots to keep us busy all day long – our group of six became a fixture at the daily 'trivia' and 'name that tune' competitions. On formal nights two of us guys wore our Navy mess dress uniforms – I was mistaken for the ships' captain several times and on one occasion had to reassure a female passenger who was concerned that we were sailing around at night without headlights – I think, as an aviator, that I explained the principles of ships' navigation pretty well!



Ordinance Point, Falklands  
VEENDAM in background

The Falklands was a highlight: even the Brits say "They're more British than we are!" Lots of reminders of the 1982 war with Argentina, and lots of penguins. And we really enjoyed Buenos Aires.

It was a great winter getaway for us, as it is the middle of summer in South America. And, I fear, we'll be looking at cruising again soon!



Gentoo Penguins, Falklands

### 2012 JAYHAWK CHAPTER DIRECTORY:

The 2012 Directory will be distributed to those in attendance at the May meeting of the Jayhawk Chapter and e-mailed to those not attending.

***If you have any changes or would like a new picture –  
or if you DO NOT have a picture in the current directory,  
please see John Halladay at the 20 March meeting  
or send us a new picture via e-mail no later than 10 May.***

**The newsletter is only as good as the material available,  
so each member is requested to forward news and other items of interest to the editors.**



## *Army News* *LTC Storm Reynolds, USA*

No report from the Army ROTC Unit this issue.



## *Navy News* *CAPT Thomas Neal, USN*



### **Greetings from the Jayhawk Navy!**

It was a great day in Kansas as the KU NROTC kicked off the spring in a high spirits and eager to start another successful semester. The MIDN returned to classes after a good break for the Holidays. During their time away many MIDN spent quality time with family and enjoyed some well deserved R&R.

MIDN eagerly anticipated the KU Basketball season as a chance to support their team and parade the colors. A staple of life as a Jayhawk, the home games provided an opportunity to bond with shipmates and enjoy the electric atmosphere of Allen Fieldhouse.

In addition to parading the colors, MIDN joined their classmates in the student section to cheer the Jayhawks to victory.

In other news, the Jayhawk MIDN held a hugely successful Chili Cook-Off February 6<sup>th</sup> to raise money for cancer research. The event raised nearly four hundred dollars and allowed several members of the



unit to display their culinary prowess. The winner was Officer Candidate McGaffin. He sold the most chili and was met with nothing but positive reviews.

On the weekend of 18 February the Jayhawk MIDN served as inspectors and drill meet observers for local area NJROTC units. The participants, all high school students with an interest in the Navy and Marine Corps, eagerly awaited their inspection by future officers. Major Seelmann, KU's Marine Officer Instructor, observed, "these NJROTC Cadets really feed off of the energy our MIDN bring. Knowing that they are being inspected by future officers really brings out the best in these high school students."

As graduation and commissioning approaches, you can be sure that the support that MOAA offers to our young men and women is integral to their success. With that the KU NROTC would like to thank you for your continued support.



*CAPT Tom Neal*

As a drunk man staggers out of the bar, a firetruck races past, siren wailing and lights flashing.

Immediately, he starts chasing the engine, running as fast as he can until he finally collapses.

"If that's the way you want it," he yells, "you can keep your stupid ice cream."



## *Air Force News*

### *LtCol Montague D. Samuel, USAF*

**No report from the Air Force ROTC Unit this issue.**

## **KANSAS COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS**

*Tony Pimentel, Council President, asked that we include Admiral Ryan's 15 February letter.*

Monday's release of the Administration's personnel and healthcare budget proposals confirmed MOAA's concerns that they would focus on shifting significant costs to those who served a career in uniform.

The proposals would increase health care fees by \$1,000 to \$2,000 per year for retired military families, and dramatically raise retail pharmacy copays for all retirees, drilling Guard and Reserve members, and currently serving family members.

They envision capping future military pay raises and propose retirement reforms that would have to be voted on by Congress without the normal discussion and amendment process.

MOAA believes these proposals constitute a major breach of faith with the military community that has borne the brunt of national sacrifice over the last decade of war and the generations of previous hot and cold wars.

Unless we can convince Congress otherwise, they will dramatically alter the career incentive package for our active and retired forces and future generations of servicemembers.

Your help is urgently needed to contact Congress -- and to urge your family and friends to get involved as well.

We must send Congress a barrage of messages protesting this "bait and switch" philosophy that would change the rules on generations of servicemembers who believed promises that completing an arduous service career would earn the current benefit package.

Use the link below to urge your legislators not to make military beneficiaries foot the bill for Pentagon leaders' failure to meet their own responsibilities for efficient program management.

<http://echo4.bluehornet.com/ct/14836642:17777759284:m:3:230981068:8D7C29DBE06B5C38577CB52706788C99:r>

Thank you in advance for your support, your assistance in spreading the word -- and your continued participation in MOAA alerts as we face dramatically higher legislative stakes in the months ahead.

Sincerely,  
VADM Norb Ryan, USN (Ret)  
President

### **SEEN ON BUMPER STICKERS**

- \* Anything not worth doing is not worth doing well.
- \* To err is human. To blame it on somebody else shows management potential.
- \* I don't have a beer gut. I have a protective covering for my rock-hard abs.
- \* Quiet, brain! Or I'll poke you with another Q-tip.
- \* I don't want buns of steel. I want buns of cinnamon.
- \* Yes, this is my truck. No, I won't help you move.
- \* When you do a good deed, get a receipt in case heaven is like the IRS.
- \* Therapy is expensive. Popping bubble wrap is cheap.

## MOAA LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

This is a summary of the many items MOAA produces each week on legislative activities. Those who have e-mail receive the full Legislative Updates each week.

### MOAA's LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for January 6, 2012:

#### Know a Medically Separated Vet?

If you know of any veterans who were medically separated from military service between September 11, 2001 and December 31, 2009, please let them know they have some recourse if they feel they unfairly received a too-low disability rating from the military.

If you know someone who was medically separated from service since 9-11, they can find out more information on how to apply at: [www.health.mil/pdbr](http://www.health.mil/pdbr).

### MOAA's LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for January 13, 2012:

#### White House Targets Brain Injuries

On Wednesday, the First Lady announced a new initiative that involves 130 medical schools across the country that are committed to helping train more civilian and military doctors to care for troops and veterans with psychological and traumatic brain injuries (TBI).

DoD and the VA estimate that one in six combat troops are impacted by PTSD, TBI, or both. The majority of these individuals are seeking help in the civilian community outside of the scope and expertise of military and VA mental health providers.

"Seek help, don't bury it," Mrs. Obama said. "Asking for help is a sign of strength."

#### Important Dates for 2012

Here is an estimated timeline of when important actions will occur in the second session of the 112th Congress:

- Late March: Six weeks after the President delivers his budget to Congress, congressional committees are required to submit their "views and estimates" of spending and revenues within their respective jurisdictions to the House and Senate Budget Committees.
- April: House and Senate Budget Committees draft and mark up concurrent resolution on the budget, which sets spending limits for the year. April 15 is the deadline for completion of action on the budget resolution (though partisan and fiscal differences have precluded approval of a formal budget resolution in recent years, and that may prove true again in 2012.)
- May: The House and Senate Armed Services Committees will likely begin work on the FY2013 Defense Authorization Bill, including any changes that may be imposed by budget resolution spending limits.

- May-July: Full House and Senate pass their respective versions of the defense bill.
- July-October: House and Senate negotiators resolve differences between their respective versions.
- October-December: Final Defense Authorization Bill passed by House and Senate and becomes law.
- November 6: Presidential and Congressional elections.
- December 31: Deadline to pass an alternative debt reduction plan in order to avoid the sequestration process that will cut another \$600 billion from defense spending over the next decade.

#### Fact or Fiction: Congressional Benefits

The following information isn't presented to defend Congressional perks, but only to dispel some myths that perpetually float around the internet. If we're to have credibility defending military programs, we need to have our facts right.

#### **Fact or Fiction:**

\* 1) *Members of Congress get full pensions for life after serving just one term.*

Mostly Fiction. The Congressional retirement system is very similar to that of federal civilians. It's true that a member of Congress can become eligible for retirement benefits after a minimum of 5 years of service if they're age 62 or older, but only for a partial pension.

To qualify for a pension a member of Congress must meet one of the following service and age requirements:

- 5 years of service and age 62
- 20 years of service and age 50
- 25 years of service at any age

Like the military retirement system, Congressional retirement pay is calculated on a combination of their average high-three years of salary and a multiplier based on their length of service.

It's also worth pointing out that members of Congress contribute to their own retirement and pay Social Security taxes. Once retired their Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA) are sometimes held artificially below the Consumer Price Index (CPI) which measures inflation.

Since the Congressional retirement system was overhauled in 1984 (to be less generous) the average annual pension is roughly \$40,000.

\* 2) *Members of Congress don't pay for their healthcare.*

Fiction. Members of Congress and their staffs are eligible for the same health insurance as federal civilians, and they pay the same premiums. They can enroll in any insurance program offered under the Federal Employee Health Benefits Program (FEHBP).

One of the most popular plans under FEHBP (the Blue Cross Blue Shield Standard plan) costs beneficiaries \$430 a month for a family, and \$185 a month for individual coverage.

Starting in 2014, members of Congress and their staffs will be required to participate in the health care exchanges created under national health care reform.

\* 3) *Legislators receive free health care at military facilities such as Walter Reed.*

Fiction. Members of Congress can receive care at the new Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, but the cost of such care is billed to their federal insurance.

\* 4) *Congress votes themselves pay increases every year.*

Mostly Fiction. The law authorizes Congress a raise every year unless legislators vote to stop it.

Congress voted to forgo a pay raise in 2010, 2011, and 2012. Congressional pay increases are capped lower than the military raise. While military raises are tied to the average American's (the Employment Cost Index), congressional raises are capped one-half percentage point below that.

In 2012 members of Congress will collect a salary of \$174,000 (Congressional leaders receive more).

## MOAA's LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for January 20, 2012:

### Grappling With DoD Healthcare Costs.

The Pentagon is putting the final touches on a soon to be released report providing a new perspective on the rising cost of military medical care - and most importantly options on how to save money without shifting costs to beneficiaries through fee increases.

### DFAS and Your Tax Documents.

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service has posted the electronic and postal delivery schedule of 2011 tax statements for military service members, military retirees and annuitants. Delivery began in mid-December and continues through January with all customers receiving their W-2s and 1099Rs by January 31.

## MOAA's LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for January 27, 2012:

### Two Nominees, Two Key DoD Billets.

On Monday, President Obama announced the nominations of Ms. Erin Conanton and MG Jessica L. Wright, ARNG (Ret.) as the undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness and the assistant secretary of defense for reserve affairs.

### Serve Longer - Pay More

On Thursday, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta confirmed our fears when he released details on just how significant the defense cuts will be regarding the soon to be released FY2013 President's budget.

<http://echo4.bluehornet.com/ct/14578324:17473847696:m:3:230981068:4366FB14CE28AB0099D6D52FF61681E6:r>

### "Doc Fix" Talks Begin - Slowly

In December, Congress agreed to a two month patch to avoid a 27% cut to Medicare/TRICARE physician reimbursement rate (doc fix), along with an extension of the payroll tax holiday and certain unemployment benefits through February.

<http://echo4.bluehornet.com/ct/14578325:17473847696:m:3:230981068:4366FB14CE28AB0099D6D52FF61681E6:r>

## MOAA's LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for February 3, 2012:

### "32 Stars+" Weigh In

Last week we reported on the Pentagon's initial roll-out of the FY2013 defense budget that would hike health fees for all retirees, impose means-testing of health care fees, chop force levels, curtail future pay raises, close bases, and seek a commission to reform retirement for new entrants.

On January 25, the Joint Chiefs and the Services' Senior Enlisted Advisors added their support for military compensation reforms included in the Pentagon's proposal by writing to House and Senate Armed Services Committee leadership.

In what's being dubbed the "32-star letter", the Services' officer and enlisted leadership called the proposed cutbacks as "sensible" and characterized TRICARE enrollment and deductible fee increases for retirees as "comparatively moderate and tiered based on retirement income."

This isn't the first time the Joint Chiefs have endorsed TRICARE fee increases for retirees. MOAA understands that the Joint Chiefs are in a precarious position and need to find ways to cut defense spending, but we don't believe it should be done on the backs of those that have served a career in the military.

MOAA strongly objects to means-testing health care fees based on retired pay. No other federal employee or retiree has their health benefits means-tested.

This proposal actually undermines the whole basis of a health care benefit, switching from one that is "earned by service" to one based on "level of need"...in other words, a social welfare mentality that undermines the whole principle that longer and more successful service shouldn't be rewarded by lower benefits.

MOAA plans to fight inappropriate fee hikes and more. Our concern is that the DoD proposal continues to push

for beneficiaries to pay more while failing to address inefficiencies within the delivery of military healthcare.

As for the other proposals on the table, MOAA plans to hold our fire to see if it results in a balanced approach. Our biggest concern is that leaders in the administration are starting to take the all volunteer force for granted.

### New Rules Help Caregivers

On Monday, First Lady Michelle Obama and Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis announced new rule changes to the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) that would allow more currently serving and veteran family members to take time off from work before, during or after deployments and leave to care for wounded, ill or injured veterans.

The FMLA allows eligible employees to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid (job-protected) leave in a 12-month period for specified family and medical reasons such as birth, adoption or placement of a child, care of a family member with a health condition, or the employee's own health condition.

In 2008, the FMLA was expanded to provide certain family members of the active duty, Guard and Reserve with up to 26-workweeks in a 12-month period to care for servicemembers with a serious injury or illness incurred in the line-of-duty.

The new rules would extend FMLA leave protections to military families as a whole. Key aspects of the new rules would:

Provide up to 26-weeks of caregiver leave to cover family members caring for recently separated veterans with serious line-of-duty injuries or illnesses, including conditions that may surface up to five years after the member leaves the service

Allow the spouse, child or parent of an active duty member to take leave to deal with deployment-related issues and events such as financial, legal, child care arrangement, and to attend military events before, during or after a deployment overseas

Allow families up to 15 days of leave to spend time with a servicemember during rest and recuperation leave.

### MOAA Hosts Spouse Career Fair

MOAA, in partnership with Blue Star Families, hosted its 6th annual Spouse Symposium in San Diego last week.

The symposium, titled "Keeping a Career on the Move", drew more than 300 military spouses to the morning session, which included a dynamic employer panel, "Five Things Employers Want You to Know". Representatives from the Society for Human Resource Management, Facebook, United Way, and CSC provided attendees an insider's look at how employers see military spouse job seekers.

Monique Rizer, MOAA Deputy Director, Spouse Programs, rounded out the morning with an interactive workshop on "Finding Your Dependable Strengths".

In the afternoon, over 500 military spouses and veterans attended a career fair featuring over 50 local employers who were actively recruiting and hiring.

During the career fair, MOAA Benefits Information Director Bud Schneeweis, (USCG-Ret) delivered his popular seminar, "The Dollars and 'Sense' of Working Outside the Home."

MOAA's Government Relations Department hosted a very successful "Capitol Hill Q and A" session. Set up as "coffee shop"-like interactive session, it offered spouses the opportunity to meet one on one with experts in the areas of health care, employment, education and legislation.

Karen Golden, MOAA Deputy Director of Government Relations (Military Family Issues) fielded questions regarding spouse licensure, the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, military spouse residency, GI Bill, pay and retirement. The event provided valuable feedback from the "grassroots level."

### **MOAA's LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for February 10, 2012:**

#### Where's the Faith?

Two weeks ago, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta provided a first glimpse of major defense budget cuts to weapons systems and personnel programs for FY2013.

Just how deep those cuts will go won't be known until the White House rolls out all the specifics of the defense budget next week.

But the initial indications are they will broadly whack the military community including the currently serving, retirees of all ages, and their families.

Throughout the rollout, one phrase keeps coming up over and over: "keeping faith."

When President Obama was on hand for the Pentagon's announcement of the new defense strategy that included the \$487 billion cut to the military budget, he said the budget "...maintains our military superiority and keeps faith with our troops, military families and veterans."

Secretary Panetta followed suit stating, "Given the significant fiscal constraints that have been imposed on this Department, our approach was to use this as an opportunity to maintain the strongest military in the world, to not hollow out the force, to take a balanced approach by putting everything on the table, and to not break faith with the troops or their families."

Shortly thereafter, the Joint Chiefs and Service Senior Enlisted Advisors sent their "32-star" letter to Congress stating that any changes to retirement, "...should grandfather benefits for those currently serving. We cannot break faith."

Although the CSIS study does not "advocate for any specific outcome," it lays out recommendation after recommendation on ways to cut military spending on the backs of currently serving and retired members, to include reducing military compensation costs, reducing non-cash compensation (primarily the commissary benefit), and

changing the retirement and military health care benefit. Here are a few of the CSIS initiatives:

25% reduction of overall force levels (FY2013 budget proposal includes a 100K reduction)

- Cap annual pay raises below civilian pay growth (included in budget proposal for FY15)
- Freeze annual pay raises for one year or more
- Eliminate the statutory requirement for pay raises
- Overhaul the pay table (pay banding, targeted pay cuts for those that exceed pay for comparable civilians)
- Cut housing allowances below average housing costs
- Eliminate the "family" premium for housing
- Change the military retirement benefit (FY2013 budget proposal urges a BRAC-like commission to overhaul military retired pay)
- Move to a defined contribution retirement plan or combination contribution/benefit plan
- Delay the age of eligibility for military retired pay
- Offer lump-sum retirement buy-outs
- Base retired pay on highest 5 years' average pay rather than highest 3
- Adopt a reduced COLA adjustment to retired pay
- Restore original cost share relationship between DoD and beneficiary (MOAA note: there was no such relationship ever established)
- Offer lump sum value at retirement in exchange for forfeiting retiree TRICARE benefits
- Require enrollment fees/premiums for TRICARE Standard and TRICARE For Life (FY2013 budget proposal)
- Cut list of TRICARE-covered procedures
- Increase medical/pharmacy co-pays (FY2013 budget proposal)
- Cut health care eligibility of beneficiaries (dependents, former spouses, Congress, etc.)

Incentivize the cheapest DoD delivery as cheapest for beneficiary (FY2013 budget proposal)

- Institute co-pays for "over-utilized" services
- Require retirees under age 65 with access to other health care to use that health care with DoD only as second-payer

As noted next to selected recommendations, it shouldn't come as a big surprise that several are included in the Pentagon's budget for FY2013.

Frankly, most of these ideas aren't new. We've faced similar proposals from a wide variety of budget-cutters for decades on end.

But what MOAA takes issue with is the repeated corruption of the words "keeping faith." The clear implication of that phrase is that the user's intent is to keep some prior commitment to those in uniform and their families.

### Restructuring Military Health Care

The Surgeons General of the Army, Air Force and Navy, and the Commander of the Joint Task Force National Capital Region testified before the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee on Wednesday.

They were there to discuss improving efficiency within the military health care system, but ultimately the discussion turned out to be long on questions and short on answers.

An appointed task force composed of senior military healthcare officials recently completed a report which provided recommended options for restructuring the military's healthcare system.

While the report has not yet been made public, all indications are its recommendations won't go far enough to stimulate meaningful change and savings.

Legislators who oversee funding for the Pentagon's annual medical budget, which now tops \$50 billion, wanted assurance that these appropriated funds would be spent in the most efficient and effective way in light of the current budget situation.

Instead, lawmakers came away with a view that became "muddier and muddier" as the service medical chiefs described the structural challenges of delivering a common product - healthcare - amongst the three services.

What was clear is that the services lack common accounting systems, and common business practices, while at the same time they sustain duplicative, expensive manpower and infrastructure.

Lawmakers heard few solutions or discussion of new models to increase effectiveness between the military-facility-based system and the TRICARE network of civilian care. Instead, they received vague answers to tough questions, leading one lawmaker to exclaim, "We've got a quagmire here."

MOAA believes the administration's priorities are gravely misplaced when its primary effort is to shift significantly more costs to beneficiaries rather than fulfilling its own responsibilities to address costly organizational and management inefficiencies.

### 40 States Help Military Kids

Last Friday, Pennsylvania became the 40th state to sign the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children.

Under the Compact, participating states follow common guidelines to resolve administrative and other hurdles that make it difficult for children of military families to transition between schools of different states. Issues include class placement, records transfer, immunization requirements, graduation requirements, exit testing, and extra-curricular opportunities, among others.

The DoD State Liaison Office considers school disruption for military children during transition and deployment to be one of the top ten quality of life issues for military families.



Robert L. Gordon III, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy recently stated, "With the addition of Pennsylvania, the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children now encompasses nearly 90 percent of school-age military children scattered across the nation."

But work still remains to be done. We would like to see all 50 states and the District of Columbia sign the Compact.

[http://www.moaa.org/uploadedFiles/MOAA\\_Main/Main\\_Menu/Take\\_Action/Top\\_Issues/Spouse\\_and\\_Family/interstate\\_compact\\_education\\_mil\\_children.doc](http://www.moaa.org/uploadedFiles/MOAA_Main/Main_Menu/Take_Action/Top_Issues/Spouse_and_Family/interstate_compact_education_mil_children.doc)

## MOAA's LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for February 17, 2012:

### White House Seeks Relief for Military Spouses.

The First Lady and Dr. Jill Biden unveiled a joint DoD and Department of Treasury report this week on needed improvements to the cross-state professional licensure program for military spouses experiencing military-ordered relocations.

### 27% Medicare/TRICARE Cut Deferred

One morsel of good news this week is that Congress appears to have reached an agreement to stave off a 27% cut in Medicare/TRICARE doctor payments scheduled to take effect March 1.

Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-MT) and House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Rep. Dave Camp (R-MI) announced a bipartisan deal to delay the cut for another 10 months, until January 1, 2013.

The legislation also would extend payroll tax cuts and unemployment benefits through the end of the year.

The deal would be paid for in part by requiring future federal employee hires to contribute more toward their retirement system. A previous initiative to impose the higher contribution requirement on current federal employees was dropped.

House and Senate expect to vote on the plan Friday, Feb 17, as Congress will be in recess next week.

A 10-month fix for this persistent problem is certainly welcome.

But failure to find a permanent fix only guarantees that seniors, military beneficiaries and doctors will face yet another healthcare crisis when the extension expires at the end of December.

### TRICARE Fee Proposal Q & A

We've received a barrage of excellent member questions in response to our special legislative alert on Monday that outlined initial details of the President's proposal to dramatically hike retiree TRICARE fees.

Here are the answers, as best we've been able to determine them from discussions with Pentagon sources.

Q: Are there any special rules for medical retirees?

A: Yes. Retirees who received disability (Chapter 61) retirements from their parent service will be exempt from

the proposed increases. But those who received service-based retirements from the military and then were awarded disability ratings by the VA would be subject to the new fee hikes.

Q: Do the changes apply to TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS) and TRICARE Retired Reserve (TRR)?

A: TRS and TRR premiums, deductibles and copays would not be affected. Premiums for those plans already are based on actual program costs and the new proposals wouldn't change that. Beneficiaries in TRS or TRR are subject to the new pharmacy copayments.

Q: Will the proposed enrollment fee and deductible increases apply to active duty family members who use TRICARE Standard?

A: No. Pentagon officials say the Standard changes will only apply to retired beneficiaries, survivors, and their families. However, active duty family members will be subject to the new pharmacy copayments for any medications obtained outside military pharmacies. The proposed TRICARE Standard fee will only apply to retired beneficiaries under 65 and their families.

Q: Your alert said that survivors of servicemembers who died on active duty would be exempt from the proposed fee increases, but what about survivors of other members? How would they be treated under TRICARE Prime and TRICARE For Life, for which the Pentagon proposes to base fees on military retired pay?

A: Pentagon leaders told us that survivors of servicemembers who died after leaving active duty would be subject to the new fee increases. We have asked how they would be treated under the income-tiering plans (e.g., whether they would be placed in the lowest income tier, or whether Survivor Benefit Plan annuities would be counted like retired pay), but have not yet received a final answer.

Q: Does the proposal envision any change to the \$3,000 annual catastrophic cap on out-of-pocket expenses?

A: The proposal would

Q: How would retirees who are dividing retired pay with a former spouse be treated under the retired-pay-based fee tiers? Would they only count the portion of retired pay the retiree actually receives?

A: We have asked that question, but haven't yet received an answer. MOAA opposes the whole concept of basing health care fees on retired pay or any other means-testing method. See this month's As I See It column.

<http://echo4.bluehornet.com/ct/14876248:17821863138:m:3:230981068:66EFF4CD7BDC746235106AECA9CDC93E:r>

Q: How can we stop these proposed fees?

A: Act now by sending your legislators a MOAA-suggested message asking them to oppose disproportionate TRICARE fee increases, and then ask your friends to do the same. We'll need the grassroots advocacy of all MOAA-members if we're going to successfully challenge these drastic proposals.

<http://echo4.bluehornet.com/ct/14876250:17821863138:m:3:230981068:66EFF4CD7BDC746235106AECA9CDC93E:r>

Q: What is MOAA doing to oppose these unfair fee hikes?

A: MOAA is mobilizing its membership and has already generated nearly 75,000 messages to Capitol Hill so far this week. MOAA leaders also have started rounds of visits to Hill leaders to highlight our opposition. This coming spring, MOAA and The Military Coalition have opportunities to present our views to the House and Armed Services Committees that have purview over TRICARE. In April, we'll bring our state Council and Chapter leaders to Washington to "Storm the Hill" on this issue.

#### VA Budget Spared

In a year when the defense budget is being tapped for severe cuts, the administration's budget request leaves VA health care and other discretionary programs unscathed.

The total VA budget would increase to \$140 billion, including \$64 billion for veterans' medical care and other discretionary spending, and \$76 billion for disability, survivors, educational benefits and other mandatory spending programs.

At a briefing for military and veterans groups Monday, VA Secretary Eric Shinseki and senior VA officials announced that their priorities include expanding access to VA health care and services, "eliminating" the disability claims backlog, and ending veteran homelessness.

The budget plan includes:

- An additional \$403 million (\$3.5 billion total) for women veterans' health care needs, a 17% increase over the current fiscal year;
- Activation of new VA hospitals in Las Vegas, Orlando, Denver and New Orleans and construction of new facilities in Seattle, Dallas, St. Louis and Palo Alto;
- \$583 million for medical research with emphasis on traumatic brain injury, suicide prevention, post-traumatic stress and genomic medicine;
- Creation of "VetSuccess" support services on 52 more campuses (a total of 80) reaching approximately 80,000 veterans; and
- A 14% increase in funds for vocational, rehabilitation and employment services to wounded warriors and other disabled veterans.

To address the claims backlog, the VA plans to invest \$128 million in technology, establish a case-management approach to claims, and re-engineer business processes.

The VA remains far short of its goal of deciding original claims within 125 days. 60% of claims exceed that mark currently. The VA projects that no more than 40% of new claims will exceed the 125 day threshold in 2013. The VA expects to launch an all-online disability claims application tool this Spring using 'turbo tax'-like

software. Service members and veterans will need to establish a VA "eBenefits" account with a special log-on.

The VA hopes to lower the number of homeless vets to 35,000 by the end of fiscal year 2013, down from 67,500 in 2011. However, the combination of rising veteran unemployment and tens of thousands of servicemembers being forced off active duty makes this goal a huge challenge.

#### **MOAA's LEGISLATIVE UPDATE for February 24, 2012:**

##### You Set a New Record

Last week, MOAA sent out alerts urging members to contact their legislators about the Administration's new proposal to impose very large healthcare fee hikes on the military community.

In response, MOAA members smashed a record by generating more than 110,000 messages to Capitol Hill in little more than a week.

We're grateful for your support, and we ask you continue sending MOAA-suggest messages and asking your friends to do the same.

##### Supreme Court Hears Stolen Valor Case

On Wednesday, the Supreme Court held oral arguments on the appeal of Xavier Alvarez, who was convicted of lying about being awarded the Medal of Honor at a public board meeting of a water district in Southern California in 2007 (United States v. Alvarez, No. 11-210).

Mr. Alvarez was prosecuted under the Stolen Valor Act of 2005, which makes it a crime to falsely claim that one has "been awarded any decoration or medal authorized by Congress for the armed forces of the United States". Alvarez pled guilty to the charges, but challenged the constitutionality of the Stolen Valor Act. He argued that his remarks were free speech protected by the First Amendment.

The Ninth Circuit of the U.S. Court of Appeals agreed with Mr. Alvarez in a 2-1 decision, ruling the Stolen Valor Act unconstitutional.

The Supreme Court decided to review the case and will make a final decision on whether Congress has the constitutional authority to prohibit people from lying about the military awards and decorations they have earned.

MOAA and two dozen other veteran organizations have filed a "friend of the court" brief in support of the Administration's argument that the Supreme Court should uphold the Stolen Valor Act. The Court will likely render a ruling sometime this spring.

Do you have an opinion on this issue? Take MOAA's one-question survey.

<http://echo4.bluehornet.com/ct/14972408:17924109674:m:3:230981068:A95EF518D22DCEC96DBB0B0FF6A8F834:r>



# JAYHAWK CHAPTER MOAA



A membership meeting will be held **Tuesday, 20 March 2012**, at the Lawrence Country Club.  
Dinner cost is \$22.00/meal.

**The Program:** Our guest speaker will be Cathy Hamilton, the Director of Downtown Lawrence

**Social Hour:** 1800 hours      **Dinner:** 1845 hours

**The Menu:** *Steak, potato, vegetable, rolls, salad, tea or coffee and ice cream*

Send your reservation and check payable to Jayhawk Chapter MOAA to arrive no later than **Thursday, 15 March 2012**, to:  
CAPT (Ret) Jim Cooper - 1115 Stone Meadows Drive, Lawrence, KS 66049-3961

**Dinner reservations are confirmed on Monday before the dinner.  
Cancellations, if necessary, should be made prior to Monday noon;  
otherwise, the Lawrence Country Club will charge us for those meals.**

If you have any questions, you may contact Jim Cooper at 842-7037 or John Halladay at 843-6184.

*cut here*

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Yes, please make \_\_\_\_\_ reservations for me and my guests. (Spouse and other guests are welcome.)

The cost is \$22.00 per meal. I am enclosing a check for \$\_\_\_\_\_ for meal(s).

2012 Jayhawk MOAA Chapter Dues (\$20.00) [Due 01/01/12] \$\_\_\_\_\_

Clayton L. Comfort Award program contribution \$\_\_\_\_\_  
**(Separate check made out to "KU Endowment")**

TOTAL: \$\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone

***IF YOU NEED A RIDE TO MEETINGS, PLEASE LET US KNOW HERE \_\_\_\_\_  
AND GIVE US YOUR TELEPHONE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_***

***TEAR OFF AND RETURN THIS FORM WITH A CHECK PAYABLE TO:  
JAYHAWK CHAPTER MOAA  
CAPT (Ret) Jim Cooper, 1115 Stone Meadows Drive, Lawrence, KS 66049-3961***

MOAA WEBSITE: [www.moaa.org](http://www.moaa.org)

KANSAS COUNCIL WEBSITE: [www.kansasmooa.org](http://www.kansasmooa.org)

JAYHAWK CHAPTER WEBSITE: [www.jayhawkmoaa.org](http://www.jayhawkmoaa.org)

*Can you receive the newsletter via e-mail ??  
If so, it saves the Chapter for both  
printing and postage.*

*Please let us know at  
[jwhalladay@sunflower.com](mailto:jwhalladay@sunflower.com)*

**2012 Jayhawk MOAA Calendar:**

|         |          |              |         |              |              |
|---------|----------|--------------|---------|--------------|--------------|
| Tuesday | 20 March | MOAA meeting | Tuesday | 17 July      | MOAA meeting |
| Tuesday | 15 May   | MOAA meeting | Tuesday | 18 September | MOAA meeting |
|         |          |              | Tuesday | 13 November  | MOAA meeting |



*One Association, One Voice. Yours.*

*Newsletter Editor  
Jayhawk Chapter, MOAA  
2403 Manchester Road  
Lawrence, KS 66049-1646*

**IN GOD WE TRUST**