



# Jayhawk Chapter MOAA Newsletter



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## September Program:

Our speaker will be Col (Ret) Mickey Freeland, director of on-site inspection for the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, Ft. Belvoir, Virginia. He will speak on current DoD activities in arms control monitoring.

☆☆☆☆☆ CHAPTER  
awarded for

2002 / 2003 / 2005 / 2008 / 2009  
2010 / 2011 / 2012 / 2013 / 2014  
2016 / 2017 / 2018

☆☆☆☆ CHAPTER  
awarded for

2004 / 2006 / 2007 / 2015

## President's Comments. . .

August has been uncharacteristically wet and cooler than the norm. Hopefully all your sump pumps have been holding up. We have another great speaker this month – we will have a speaker from the Defense Threat Reduction Agency's On-Site Inspection Directorate, Ft. Belvoir VA, who will speak about current DoD activities in arms control monitoring.



Hopefully you received our emails regarding the proposed cuts in active duty military medicine personnel. Here is a reminder to contact our senators and representatives and convey the following message:

"The readiness and effectiveness of America's armed forces demand a full complement of well-trained medical professionals. But the Defense Department's fiscal 2020 budget would eliminate roughly 20 percent of military medical positions, along with other reorganization measures. This shortsighted "reform" effort could have drastic, even deadly, consequences – on the battlefield and throughout American health care. I am asking you to act to halt this misguided dismantling of the military health system." You can send this via email, postcard or letter to our senators and representative., or use the MOAA links for electronic messages.

The other key issue is still the fix to the "Widow's Tax", or the DIC/SBP offset for surviving spouses, which has been a **key issue for MOAA** for several years. Sens. Doug Jones (D-AL) and Susan Collins (R-ME) are cosponsoring Senate Amendment 269 to end the offset, but the bill needs the support of Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Jim Inhofe (R-OK) or Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY). Use MOAA's toll-free number (866-272-6622) to call your senators and say: "My name is \_\_\_\_ and I live in Lawrence, Kansas. I ask you to please support Senate amendment 269 to the defense bill, ending the military widows tax. As my elected official, please don't break faith with military families. Thank you for your time."

**Very much looking forward to seeing you at our September meeting.**

*Coop*

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1 September 2019

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**\* Reservations should be sent to Jim Cooper by 11 September 2019**



# JAYHAWK CHAPTER NEWS



## PERSONAL NEWS

**New Member:** Ingram, Walter, Lt Col USAF RET  
321 Wagon Wheel Road  
Lawrence, KS 66049  
301-875-8812 [wingmd70@gmail.com](mailto:wingmd70@gmail.com)  
Spouse: Tanya

**From Dean Bevan:** My play, "Oh Hell," will be performed at the Midwest Dramatists Conference in Kansas City, September 26-27-28.

**From Charles Heller:** Just wanted to let you know that we have "down sized" and moved. Our new home is at 14716 Eby Street, Overland Park, KS 66221.

**From Lyn Walther:** Eric is still in Brandon Woods recuperating from his appendix being removed on July 2!

**From Ray Finch:** Jean and I headed West over the summer visiting our daughter and her family in Colorado (photo 1) and our eldest son and his family in Arizona (photo 2). Looking forward to pursuing these activities on a full-time basis upon retirement!



**From Mike Kelly:** Georgiana and I took a short trip to Branson recently and met with several high school friends. While there, we enjoyed the showboat cruise on Table Rock Lake. Branson has a Veterans Memorial Garden that is beautifully kept! I went to lunch at the College of the Ozarks and they recognized my veteran status with a free lunch! This was a completely unexpected surprise. Earlier this summer I traveled with my parents to Pueblo, Colorado to celebrate my sister's birthday and attend a railway historical society convention. Pueblo's convention center honors four Medal of Honor winners that resided there with statues and has a granite marker with the names of all Medal of Honor winners.

**From Andy Bauch:** I've taken a leave of absence from the Douglas County District Attorney's Office for the next six to twelve months for military duty. The Missouri Air National Guard in St. Joseph, MO has placed me on active orders during this time. The initial set of orders are six months, which they will likely extend to a full year at some point. We are staying in Lawrence, so I'll be commuting to St. Joe to perform my duties as the Staff Judge Advocate (SJA). It is a new and interesting challenge, and should prove to be very beneficial to my military career as I take on new roles and responsibilities.

**From David Kent:** Orean and I flew to Dulles airport in early July to visit retired friends and our family. Flights both ways were cancelled, so we left a day later and came home a day later! Familiar story. Stayed with friends in one of the Erickson communities (CCRC) and found that type of retirement living very attractive (sister property is Tallgrass Creek in Overland Park). Saw new Ft. Belvoir Hospital - amazing, all the latest technology, attractive facility. Our tax dollars do good sometimes! Our family came from Germany to visit college campuses in PA and VA for grandkids. DC area is so congested - happy to return to Kansas!



**From Mike Miller:** I spent just short of a full week in Harper's Ferry, Iowa (NE corner) with my sister Cyndi, and her husband Dave Brickman. Played golf in Prairie Du Chien, Wisconsin, and Waukon (Iowa) Country Club. Enjoyed a river trip on the Mississippi, stopping for lunch and luckily made it back to Harpers Ferry just as a storm was forming. I traveled from Harper's Ferry to Greenfield, Iowa (SE area of the state). Got in two rounds of golf with two of my Brothers-in Law and one of their good friends. The older of the two Brothers-in Law and I were born on the same date (Aug 23) with me being approximately 1-1/2 hours older. It was a busy and enjoyable vacation.

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



## *Army News* *LTC Tracey Olson, USA*

### **Rock Chalk Jayhawk! ALL IN!**

The Jayhawk Battalion had a successful summer training cycle and is looking forward to our fall events as we welcome new Cadre and Cadets.

This summer, the battalion graduated 18 cadets from Cadet Summer Training Advanced Camp at Fort Knox, Kentucky. The caliber of training included three weeks in the field, buddy team live fire and hand grenade range. This year we had one Cadet graduate at the top of his cycle earning the distinguished RECONDO Badge, less than 3% of trainees earned the badge. One cadet participated in Basic Camp, which focuses on developing sophomores basic soldiering in preparation for their junior year and evaluation the following summer at Advanced Camp.

Training brought cadets to all corners of the world. Cadets traveled to Peru, Rwanda, Nepal and Morocco and participated in Cadet Troop Leader Training (CTLT) in South Korea and all major Army bases in the continental US. CTLT gives cadets the

opportunity to shadow active duty platoon leaders for three weeks as they do day-to-day operations.

Fall semester will be an exciting time for the Jayhawk Battalion. We are currently planning for our semester field training exercise in late September, which will focus on basic rifle marksmanship, tactical exercises and Cadets will have the opportunity to earn the German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge (GAFPB). Our Ranger Challenge team looks forward to competing against other programs during the Third Brigade competition. We will be sending a team of cadets to participate in the Army Ten Miler in Washington, D.C.

To stay informed about activities of the Jayhawk Battalion, like us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter.

*LTC Tracey Olson*  
*Professor of Military Science*



## *Navy News* *CAPT Trenton Lennard, USN*



### **Greeting From the Jayhawk Battalion,**

The Jayhawk Battalion has been actively engaged this summer. As spring classes and finals finished, the midshipmen headed off to a variety of summer training. Jayhawks were represented from San Diego and Japan to Norfolk and Latvia and everywhere in-between. MIDN 1/C Sharp was selected for a Foreign Exchange Cruise with the Japanese Navy aboard the JS Shimakaze. The Jayhawk Battalion also saw three midshipmen successfully complete Marine Corps Officers Candidate School, continuing our excellent record of OCS completion. MIDN 3/C Hussong was selected for the competitive ProjectGO scholarship to further his Russian language

studies in Latvia this summer. We are immensely proud of all the Jayhawk Battalion members and are excited about the knowledge they are bringing back to Lawrence.

August 2<sup>nd</sup> we commissioned SSgt Chris Lawless as an officer into the Marine Corps. 2ndLt Lawless is temporarily assigned to the Unit until November, when he reports for The Basic School in Quantico, Virginia. Bravo Zulu!

Finishing up this summer, the Jayhawk Battalion lead 11 midshipmen candidates through our New Student Orientation. KU NROTC prides itself on our NSO program where we encourage the candidates to accept and



MIDN Willis posing in front of the N.Y. coastline



MIDN Cooper & Heyroth at OCS

overcome the challenges that come with being a midshipmen, as well as provide valuable training as to what life is like in the military. Filled with training briefs, physical assessments, and basic Close Order Drill, the candidates have received a crash course of life in the Naval ROTC Unit at the University of Kansas, and as of Saturday the 24th of August, have officially been inducted as midshipmen of the Jayhawk Battalion. We cannot be more proud



MIDN Bowers inspects the midshipmen candidates.

of their perseverance and dedication to uphold the Naval Core values of Honor, Courage and Commitment.

On September 21, we are hosting an Alumni Tailgate in the MSB parking lot. We would love to see you all come out for breakfast and help us cheer on the Jayhawk football team! Please contact [nrotc@ku.edu](mailto:nrotc@ku.edu) once the kickoff time is announced for more information.

**Rock Chalk!**

***CAPT Trenton Lennard***



***Air Force News***  
***LtCol Nichole Phelan, USAF***

*The Air Force Detachment did not provide a report for this issue.*

**NEXT GENERATION' ID CARDS FOR RETIREES COMING SOON**  
 Reprinted from USAF Retiree Newsletter, *Afterburner*, courtesy of Mike Kelly

WASHINGTON -- The Department of Defense is updating its current paper-based uniformed services identification card issued to retired service members, family members and other eligible populations.

The "Next Generation" USID card will incorporate an updated design and security features to deter counterfeiting and fraud, and will be printed on a plastic cardstock.

DOD is transforming the way service members and their families are supported through modernized ID cards and improved mechanisms to protect cardholder privacy and personal information. The Next Generation USID card will

incorporate a modified barcode which supports the last phase of the department's elimination of the Social Security number from all DOD identification cards.

Additional information and updates regarding the Next Generation USID card will be available in the coming months on DOD's website.

Frequently asked questions:

1. What is changing on the USID card, and why? The Next Generation ID card transitions the current USID card to plastic cardstock with enhanced security features and update topology. These enhanced features enable DOD to reduce the number of card types issued to eligible individuals from 10 to three. The Next Generation USID card does not change the populations who are eligible to receive the current card.
2. When can I get the Next Generation USID card? Beginning early fall 2019, individuals with expiring ID cards will begin to receive the Next Generation USID card at card issuing facilities as they are equipped with the equipment and supplies necessary to issue the Next Generation USID card. In an effort to conserve resources and limit the impact on ID card issuance facilities, cards will not be reissued solely for the purpose of obtaining the Next Generation USID card. (Courtesy of the Army)

#####

*CONFIDENCE COMES FROM  
 NOT FEARING TO BE WRONG.*

## MOAA NEWSLETTER ADVOCACY

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

### MOAA Newsletter Advocacy, 04 July 2019:

#### Ask Your Lawmaker to Protect Military Medicine

MOAA supports the language in the House NDAA version that will require a delay for these moves until DoD analyzes their effects on combat casualty care, recruiting and retention, and potential disruptions in civilian-sector care. It's a good start, but more is needed from Congress, such as requiring DoD to:

Address each military treatment facility and the medical billets to be reduced.

Offer specific plans to mitigate potential gaps in care.

Include measures for local civilian networks to determine their capacity to provide care in affected areas.

Share your concerns about these issues on a personal level, if possible. If you are a surviving spouse or know of one, please share your story. If you are a retiree who relies on a military treatment facility, ask your member of Congress if your community can accommodate a sudden influx of hundreds, or possibly thousands, of DoD beneficiaries.

Finally, let your lawmaker know you intend to follow up. And let us know about your engagement at [legis@moaa.org](mailto:legis@moaa.org).

### MOAA Newsletter Advocacy, 25 July 2019:

#### Retired Military Surgeons General to Congress: Intervene on Medical Billets

"Every time I have been referred out, there's very few providers out there that provide care for military families," Bowman warned.

Beasley also questioned whether these cuts will affect prescription access for beneficiaries.

MOAA has sought intervention from Congress to pause these proposed billet cuts until a thorough review of military medical manpower requirements could be conducted. The House version of the National Defense Authorization Act would provide such a provision, and we are seeking support in the Senate, as well. You can help. [Click here and send a letter to Congress](#). Tell them not to dismantle military medicine.

To learn more about the effect these cuts could have to military families, watch the full panel discussion below.

#### Budget Deal Would Mean the End of Sequestration ... for Now

With only weeks to go before a potential default on the nation's financial obligations, senior congressional leaders and administration officials reached an agreement over the budget and the debt ceiling.

Negotiators agreed to raise federal spending levels for defense and nondefense programs by \$320

billion. They also agreed to suspend the debt ceiling until July 31, 2021, setting the stage for a dramatic showdown in the first year of the next administration, regardless of which party sits in the White House. The two-year deal ends the threat of sequestration through fiscal year 2021.

The deal still needs to pass in Congress. House lawmakers planned to return to their home districts for the August recess beginning July 26. But in a [July 12 letter to House and Senate leaders](#), Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin warned "there is a scenario in which we run out of cash in early September, before Congress reconvenes. As such, I request that Congress increase the debt ceiling before Congress leaves for summer recess."

For now, it appears the deal will pass.

Thornberry went on to say, "This deal remains consistent with last year's budget resolution, allows us to give our troops all of the pay and benefits they deserve and have earned, [...] and continues to restore readiness."

### The End of Sequestration... For Now

The agreement continues to highlight the failed attempt to rein in federal spending, the 2011 Budget Control Act. The Budget Control Act was designed to bring both parties together to come up with combinations of spending cuts and tax increases to reduce the debt and end trillion-dollar annual deficits. It contained a mechanism known as sequestration that would trigger automatic, across the board cuts to spending if Congress spent money above the law's arbitrary budget caps.

### MOAA Newsletter Advocacy, 01 August 2019:

#### MOAA's 2019 Summer Storm: Local Action for National Change

Members of the House of Representatives left Washington at the end of last week for what is termed a "district work period," a summer break to focus on their constituents back home.; Senators will follow suit this Friday for their state work period. The full Congress will be back in session Sept. 9.

This is the ideal time to coordinate our efforts toward a critical objective key to our nation's defense and supportive of two of our most pressing issues: repealing the "widows tax" and addressing the [18,000 medical billet reductions](#). As such, we invite you to participate in our 2019 Summer Storm, a campaign for the FY 2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

What is a Summer Storm? It is helpful to start with a recap of our April Storming the Hill event where we coordinated topics, brought MOAA chapter members to Washington, prepared them with training, and then stormed the Hill with nearly 170 people April 10. This summer, we have coordinated two topics, and with

these supporting materials, we are entreating our 350,000 members to engage the 535 members of Congress during the work periods.

**[TAKE ACTION: [End the Widows Tax](#) and [Read the Issue Paper](#)]**

**[TAKE ACTION: [Protect Military Medicine](#) and [Read the Issue Paper](#)]**

This Summer Storm can consist of personal visits, letters, emails, and/or phone calls. Additionally, we encourage you to seek media attention highlighting those members of Congress who are taking the visits or meeting in public. Wherever possible, you are encouraged to include family and friends.

Here is an overview of the two most pressing topics, which are the subjects of the storm:

**Widows tax:** Repealing the widows tax has been a goal of MOAA for decades. The growing number of cosponsors for H.R. 553 (372 cosponsors) and S. 622 (75 cosponsors) indicates momentum from Congress stemming from active advocacy by MOAA, The Military Coalition, and other associations, as well as an army of surviving spouses through various platforms and personal visits.

While the bills have significant support, the pay-for requirement has repeatedly derailed progress on the Hill.

This year, Rep. Adam Smith (D-Wash.), chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, included the provision to repeal the widows tax in the House's version of the FY 2020 NDAA; the Senate remains silent, although Sen. Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.), Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, proclaimed his support.

**Billet reductions:** DoD, due to a requirement in the 2017 NDAA, has initiated a cut of 18,000 medical billets without acknowledging the impact this would have on overall readiness, recruiting and retention, graduate medical education, and support to beneficiaries.

MOAA applied a full-court press on the Hill with appropriators and authorizers, which has [led to the House including language in the FY 2020 NDAA](#) to stand down those cuts until proper analysis and assessments are completed.

The Senate has not included such language in their draft of the defense bill, and the staffers indicate a degree of support for the cuts relative to the authorities granted to DoD in the FY 2017 NDAA for the Defense Health Agency to reorganize.

**[RELATED: [The Sights and Sounds of Storming 2019](#)]**

MOAA's and many other associations' interests in the **widows tax** and the **billet reductions** are represented in the House draft of the NDAA. As such, we need to increase focus on the NDAA, on which both of these issues are currently dependent.

There are two ways to support the Summer Storm:

You can access our supporting materials [here](#) (share the link -- [MOAA.org/SummerStorm](#) -- with your network) starting July 29 and work this individually, or

You can contact your [local MOAA chapter](#) to join their efforts and help grow a louder voice within the community or district. This is especially effective if you visit legislators in their office.

Whichever method you choose, be sure to share your successes on social media, using the hashtag #MOAASummerStorm.

By working together, we can make a measurable impact this summer to ensure the NDAA maintains the language supporting repeal of the **widows tax** as well as a halt to the medical **billet reductions** until the impacts are properly analyzed and shared with Congress.

Making Sense of Federal Spending: Don't Fall for Slanted Budget Arguments

Our national debt is a problem. Misinformation as to the cause and effects of that debt is also a problem.

[In his July 28 column in The Washington Post](#), Robert Samuelson writes a compelling piece on this debt narrative, which is becoming increasingly more difficult to control. His point is quite well summarized by the piece's simple headline: "No, Military Spending Is Not Bankrupting Us."

Samuel discusses budget arguments made by others who suggest the nation's defense needs are shorting other federal programs. He also addresses a familiar topic: Often-reported cases of federal waste.

We have waste in government – I have seen my fair share in 30-plus years of military service. However, while there's no justification for continued waste, there's no reason to shape evidence of misused money to fit only one side of the argument. As Samuel puts it, "... [T]here is waste in many federal programs – Medicare, student loans and Amtrak, as examples – and they shouldn't be used as a pretext for stalling needed defense spending."

Congress and the President have repeatedly tried to control runaway budgets that fuel our nation's debt.

Suffice it to say, managing debt is increasingly difficult when the wants and needs clash in the political sphere – where interest groups create the demand while politicians work diligently to provide the supply.

While MOAA advocates for programs that may add to the government's bottom line, our legislative team does so not out of ignorance of the nation's financial issues, but out of a need to compel prioritization of funds to pay for benefits servicemembers have earned through hard work and sacrifice that ranges up to the ultimate.

### Parole in Place Keeps Military Families Together

This week, MOAA signed on to a letter with the American Immigration Lawyers Association opposing the end of Parole in Place for military families. The letter, sent to Secretary of Defense Mark Esper, Acting Secretary of Homeland Security Kevin McAleenan, and Acting Director of Citizenship and Immigration Services Ken Cuccinelli, was prompted by recent news indicating the policy for military families is in jeopardy. Read the full letter [here](#).

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) officials told reporters the policy is being reviewed, and a decision regarding termination of the protection will be released at the end of the month.

Parole in Place for military families allows undocumented parents, spouses, and children of servicemembers the right to reside in the U.S. and qualify for other benefits, such as eligibility for employment authorization and adjustment of status. Typically, undocumented individuals cannot adjust their status without having been "admitted or paroled" legally into the U.S. If an individual entered through a different means, they must leave the U.S. and travel to a U.S. embassy or consulate abroad.

The process is long and can take up to a year, with no guarantee they will be allowed to return after leaving.

A recent [poll](#) indicates 87% of servicemembers and veterans agree dependents of servicemembers should not be subject to deportation.

### **MOAA Newsletter Advocacy, 08 August 2019:**

#### TRICARE Rates Increasing in 2020 for Reservists, Young Adults, Others

This article by Amy Bushatz and Jim Absher first appeared on *Military.com*, the premier resource for the military and veteran community. TRICARE users of all kinds can take [MOAA's TRICARE Survey](#); learn more [here](#).

If you are a reservist, young adult or transitioning service member enrolled in [Tricare](#) or a transition health insurance plan, you will probably soon be paying more for your health insurance. And an enrollment change could impact how much some users must pay up front.

#### **[TAKE ACTION: [Ask Your Lawmaker to Protect Military Medicine](#)]**

**Reservists** enrolled in the [Tricare Reserve Select](#) program will see their monthly payments increase from \$42.83 to \$44.17 for single coverage and from \$218.01 to \$228.27 for family coverage.

**Retired reservists** who haven't turned 60 and are covered under the [Tricare Retired Reserve](#) program will benefit from a rate decrease in 2020. The monthly premium for a single retiree will decrease from \$451.51 to \$444.37, and those with family coverage will see a decrease from \$1,083.40 to \$1,066.26.

**College-age dependents** enrolled in the [Tricare Young Adult](#) program will see an increase in their

monthly premiums; however, the amounts vary depending on which option they are covered under. For those using Tricare Young Adult Select, the monthly payment will go from \$214 to \$228, and those using Tricare Young Adult Prime will see the monthly payment increase from \$358 to \$376.

**Recently discharged members** with temporary health insurance under the [Continued Health Care Benefit Program \(CHCBP\)](#) will see their premiums increase by the largest amount. Those who have single coverage will be hit with a premium increase from \$363.25 to \$388.25 each month, and those electing family coverage will pay an additional \$56.75 each month, increasing their premiums from \$818.25 to \$875.

#### **[RELATED: [Key DoD Family Advisory Council Flags Military Medical Cuts as Top Priority](#)]**

While these rates may seem high, they pale in comparison to what civilians pay for health insurance. According to the [National Conference of State Legislatures](#), the average monthly health insurance premium for single coverage in 2018 was \$575; for family coverage, it was \$1,634.

### **Tricare Enrollment Payment Changes**

Meanwhile, Tricare officials recently changed the amount those newly enrolling in Tricare Reserve Select or Retired Reserve are required to pay. In the past, those enrolling in the programs were required to pay two months of premiums in advance, regardless of when in the month they enrolled. For retiree families, that meant dishing out about \$2,200 at once, while others owed \$440.

Now, Tricare has removed that requirement. Instead, it has allowed its regional contractors to determine whether they want to collect premiums up front.

"Depending on the beneficiary's method of payment, and the day of the month the request is made, the regional contractor will determine how long it will take to set up and process automated monthly payments and how much advance payment is required," Tricare officials said in a statement. "We believe this will improve TRS customer satisfaction and ease their transition from active-duty status."

### Nearly 70 Senators Call For Full Repeal of Widows Tax in New Letter

Nearly 70 senators have made a passionate plea to repeal the "widows tax," the unfair law that forces surviving military spouses to forfeit part or all of their Survivor Benefit Plan when they begin to receive the VA's Dependency and Indemnity Compensation.

Sens. Doug Jones, D-Ala., and Susan Collins, R-Maine, have led efforts to pass the Military Surviving Spouses Equity Act of 2019. Now they are joined by senators from both parties, asking that the final National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal 2020

includes a provision for full repeal of the widows tax, also known as the SBP-DIC offset.

“We have an obligation to make sure that we are taking care of our military families who have sacrificed so much,” the letter reads. “This problem goes back decades, but this year we can finally solve it once and for all. It is our time to do our duty not only to support the brave men and women of our military, but also to support their families.”

**[READ THE LETTER: [Senators call for full repeal. AND TAKE ACTION: \[Send a letter to Congress.\]\(#\)\]](#)**

**[Senate Approves Budget Deal Before Leaving Town](#)**

The Senate voted this month to send a two-year budget deal to President Donald Trump’s desk for signature. The agreement sets new spending levels for FY 2020 and FY 2021 and suspends the debt limit until July 2021. The House has also approved the agreement.

**[Click here to learn more about MOAA's Summer Storm.](#)**

The deal sets a broad framework of top-level spending numbers for federal agencies, making it easier for lawmakers to write individual appropriations bills.

When Congress returns in early September, they’ll begin a mad dash to pass spending bills before the start of the new fiscal year Oct. 1.

House lawmakers already passed 10 of the 12 annual appropriations bills before heading home for the August recess. But with new topline spending numbers in the budget deal, lawmakers will have to go back and find ways to trim about \$15 billion in non-defense spending and add about \$5 billion to defense accounts.

To expedite the budget process, leaders on the Senate Appropriations Committee want to combine DoD spending with other federal agencies, like the departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education.

**[MOAA Newsletter Advocacy, 15 August 2019: Changes to Military Health Care Coming Sooner Than You Think](#)**

In baseball, it’s good practice to never take your eye off the ball. The same could be said regarding DoD with its efforts to reform military medical care.

MOAA has been the leader focused on holding DoD and the Defense Health Agency (DHA) accountable to provide transparency with its plans to reduce military treatment facility (MTF) capabilities and personnel. Last year’s NDAA required the DoD to provide any plans to do so to Congress ahead of time. And we are sorry to report not much has been revealed to date.

However, MOAA has other ways to gather information.

First, from members who live, work, and get care on military installations. Reports of reduced health care services at MTFs and unofficial referrals to civilian providers are trickling in already. Last week,

MOAA received an email from an active duty Navy spouse who reported that enrolled beneficiaries — including military families with children — are being told to seek civilian providers outside the MTF and few in her area accept TRICARE, the email says. Beneficiaries with special needs who use the system most have been targeted first. This has resulted in military families being placed on long wait lists.

**[TAKE ACTION: [Ask Your Lawmaker to Protect Military Medicine](#)]**

This is happening at the peak of school physicals and immunization season. This is the first glimpse into the new world of military medicine, and we want to know if it is happening elsewhere.

MOAA continues to tell Congress — office by office — that DHA has failed to address how these medical reductions will be carried out in a way that ensures services are not disrupted, wait times are not exacerbated, and access to subspecialty care is not crippled.

**[TELL MOAA YOUR HEALTH CARE STORY: Email [msc@moaa.org](mailto:msc@moaa.org)]**

Second, the study cited in [this article by Military Times](#) echoes much of what we’ve been hearing: While medical needs are greater in the military community than other demographics, access to high-quality care doesn’t match up. The short version: Experts and advocates agree that the Military Health System (MHS) already has room for improvement when it comes to dealing with anything beyond routine care for military dependents, and MHS reforms designed to streamline the system could come at the expense of some of the most vulnerable members of the military community.

Let Congress hear your voice! Write a letter to your lawmakers [here](#), and learn more about this and other MOAA advocacy priorities during the Summer Storm [here](#).

**[Dozens of Military Spouses Benefitting From New, MOAA-Backed Relicensure Programs](#)**

A 2-month-old policy that will reimburse military spouses up to \$500 for relicensing costs connected to a permanent change-of-station move (PCS) already has benefitted dozens of military families.

All services have a slightly different policy (see MOAA’s [chart](#)) for the reimbursements, which apply retroactively to relicensing costs incurred in connection with PCS orders dated on or after Dec. 12, 2017.

The pilot program is set to expire Dec. 31, 2022, but there is pending legislation that would extend it until 2024 and increase the maximum reimbursement amount to \$1,000. Tracey Hernandez, Family Member Employment Assistance Program Manager for the Marine Corps, said that of the 30 reimbursements paid out thus far, four of the reimbursements were for the maximum amount of \$500.



The House version of the FY 2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) recognizes the importance of increasing the maximum reimbursement amount to ensure the burden of paying relicensure fees beyond \$500 does not fall on the shoulders of military families.

**[[DOWNLOAD THE CHART: MOAA's Comparison of Spouse Licensure Reimbursement Programs](#)]**

The number of reimbursements by service:

**Army:** Paid out zero reimbursements as of Aug. 2.

**Marine Corps:** Paid out 30 reimbursement claims totaling \$10,323.74, as of July 25.

**Navy:** Paid out first three claims July 10, averaging \$271 per claim.

**Air Force:** Paid out 26 reimbursement claims totaling \$8,928.27, as of July 26.

**[Report Outlines Steps to Help National Guard and Reserve Families](#)**

A new report based on a recent forum hosted by MOAA and the Reserve Officers Association (ROA) details solutions to key problems facing National Guard and Reserve Families, as well as what you can do to help.

The June 26 [National Guard and Reserve Family Forum](#) was designed to identify the unique challenges of National Guard and Reserve families. Panels of experts spoke on issues related to children's education and well-being, pay and benefits, and community programs.

An After Action Report of the meeting, which can be downloaded [here](#), offers several key takeaways, including plans for:

- Improving pay systems and educating employers to accommodate servicemembers and reduce disruptions as they transition through all duty statuses.

- Ensuring continuity of health care during times of duty status transition.

- Expanding resources and programming to support National Guard and Reserve-connected children through key points of contact such as schools, parents, and medical providers.

- Implementing and leveraging new and existing military and nonmilitary community resources to bolster support for National Guard and Reserve families living in nonmilitary communities.

- Keeping servicemembers and their families informed on the appropriate benefits or entitlements for each duty status.

- Reducing the high suicide rate in the National Guard and Reserve population, which is amplified by geographic separation from military community support and mental health resources.

The report details solutions to these needs and highlights calls to action for everyone from community leaders to military-friendly organizations. [Share this](#)

[report](#), online at [www.moaa.org/ngr-forum-report](http://www.moaa.org/ngr-forum-report), with your members of Congress, local community leaders, and other key stakeholders.

**MOAA Newsletter Advocacy, 22 August 2019: [Military Pharmacies May Change List of Free Over-the-Counter Drugs Offered](#)**

This article by Amy Bushatz originally appeared on *Military.com*, the premier resource for the military and veteran community.

On-base military pharmacies worldwide may soon change or reduce their offerings of free over-the-counter (OTC) medications as [Tricare](#) administrators standardize the list of what's available.

Currently, military retirees and other beneficiaries can receive certain medications for free and without a prescription through a long-standing OTC medication program. How the program is administered and how many medications each user can get per month varies by location. Typically, users must fill out a request form, and medications are often capped at four or five per beneficiary.

Now, as the military medical system undergoes a shift in [administration of the military hospitals](#) from the services to the Defense Health Agency (DHA), many of the systems' processes and offerings are being standardized, including the OTC program.

**Military.com Related Content:**

[Questions Remain as DoD Gets Ready to Cut 18,000 Medical Personnel](#)

[Services Turn Focus to Warfighters as DHA Takes Over Military Hospitals](#)

[More Than 17,000 Uniformed Medical Jobs Eyed for Elimination](#)

The Pentagon does not plan to order facilities to discontinue the program outright, said Kevin Dwyer, a DHA spokesman. Instead, officials on the agency's Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee are working to create a standardized list of what's offered and will leave the decision of which medications, if any, to stock from that refitted catalog to pharmacy administrators.

**[Servicemembers Turn to MOAA to Address Hazards in Barracks](#)**

While MOAA was on the front lines early on addressing health and safety hazards in privatized military family housing, we continuously highlighted similar health and safety issues in government-owned servicemember housing. Many servicemembers have turned to MOAA to share their stories, including members of one of the military's most prestigious units, who continue to live in mold- and rodent-infested conditions.

The assessment also details mold issues stemming from failing HVAC systems, exhaust fans, and drain piping. The cost estimate for recommended long-term remediation for this one building is around \$9 million. Despite the [Army's plans](#) to eliminate its

poorest rated housing by 2021, little improvement has been seen at the tenant level.

Additionally, multiple accounts suggest there is no online work order process which has led to unit leaders creating their own tracking systems, via Google Docs or Microsoft Excel spreadsheets, to document work order requests and complaints.

[DOWNLOAD: [Read the Old Guard Barracks Health Assessment](#)]

[DOWNLOAD: [MOAA's Statement to the Senate Armed Services Joint Subcommittee \(PDF\)](#)]

Other senior defense officials cited they will be taking lessons learned from privatized housing issues and applying them to government-owned housing, although emerging problems would indicate a lagging learning curve.

[Join MOAA's Summer Storm to Support Widows and Prevent Cuts – Before It's Too Late](#)

Time is running out for MOAA's Summer Storm, an opportunity for you to join our advocacy efforts and meet with your members of Congress while they are on recess. The full Congress will return to Washington on Sept. 9.

During this year's Summer Storm, we are focusing our legislative efforts to ensure the NDAA maintains language supporting [repeal of the widows tax](#). We are also seeking to halt to massive Defense Department [medical billet cuts](#) until the impacts are properly analyzed and shared with Congress.

[SUMMER STORM RESOURCES: [Learn More About the Widows Tax and Medical Billet Issues](#)]

MOAA members have been sharing their experiences in the field during their lawmakers' summer recess.

MOAA Board Member Col. Jeri Graham, USA (Ret), participated in the 2019 Summer Storm by meeting with Sen. Thom Tillis of her home state of North Carolina. As president of the [MOAA Uniformed Services Nurse Advocates Virtual Chapter](#) (MUSNAVC), she believes it is absolutely necessary to meet and discuss the widows tax and medical billets issues with our lawmakers.

[RELATED: [MOAA's 2019 Summer Storm: Local Action for National Change](#)]

Graham said her favorite thing about the MOAA Summer Storm has been getting to know the office staff for her lawmakers. "Whatever state you're in, it's very important to have a relationship with not only the legislator but also the staff," she said.

"Congresswoman Escobar addressed several priority MOAA issues and expressed support for the retention of the widows tax relief clause in the final version of the NDAA when the House and Senate meet in September to finalize the NDAA," reported El Paso Chapter President Col. Forrest Smith, USA (Ret). "I was impressed by her candor and willingness to entertain different perspectives on issues pertaining to Veteran's and active duty military."

[RELATED: [Nearly 70 Senators Call For Full Repeal of Widows Tax in New Letter](#)]

Another way to get involved in this year's Summer Storm is to [send MOAA-suggested letters](#) to your legislators.

Capt. Kathleen Smith, USN (Ret), a MUSNAVC member, sent letters to Florida Sens. Marco Rubio and Rick Scott, describing how the widows tax has personally affected her.

"[My] husband, CWO4 David L. Smith, USN, Ret, died after 30 years of Naval Service. He received a 100% disability rating from the Navy and was receiving the VA disability payment," Smith wrote. "At his death, my Survivor's Disability Payment was reduced by \$12,000 per year from the VA disability payment. That means I have lost approximately \$383,000 over the last 32 years."

### Tips for Summer Storm

As a MOAA life member and long-time advocate, Graham shared some of her tips for MOAA members joining the Summer Storm:

**Be Flexible.** It is important to understand that legislators' work continues when they are in their home state. When scheduling appointments, Graham recommends giving the staff different options for times when you can meet your lawmaker.

**Be Focused.** Graham suggests using MOAA's issue papers, found on the Summer Storm [resources page](#), to ensure you are familiar with the widows tax and medical billets topics before you meet with your legislators. It will help enforce the importance of both issues, and lawmakers will appreciate getting right to the point.

**Don't Be Afraid to Make Friends.** Chances are there will be other VSOs scheduling meetings with legislators around the same time as you. Graham recommends using this as an opportunity to establish a relationship with them. Introduce yourself and share MOAA's issue papers – we are all in this fight together!

***NEVER STOP SERVING***



## JAYHAWK CHAPTER MOAA



A membership meeting will be held **Tuesday, 17 September 2019**  
at Lawrence Country Club

Dinner cost is \$24.00/meal.

**The Program:** Our speaker will be Col (Ret) Mickey Freeland,  
director of on-site inspection for the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, Ft. Belvoir, Virginia.  
He will speak on current DoD activities in arms control monitoring.

**Social Hour:** 1800 hours      **Dinner:** 1840 hours

**The Menu:** Salad, rustic rolls, chicken entree, vegetable medley, Chef's choice dessert

Send your reservation and check payable to Jayhawk Chapter MOAA  
to arrive no later than Wednesday, **11 September 2019**, to:  
*CAPT Jim Cooper, 5216 Brown Lane, Lawrence, KS 66049-5112*

**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.**

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

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

The cost is \$24.00 per meal. I am enclosing a check for \$\_\_\_\_\_ for meal(s).

Annual Chapter Dues (\$20.00) \$\_\_\_\_\_

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 Jim Cooper, 5216 Brown Lane, Lawrence, KS 66049-5112*

MOAA WEBSITE: [www.moaa.org](http://www.moaa.org)  
KANSAS COUNCIL WEBSITE: [www.kansasmooa.net](http://www.kansasmooa.net)  
JAYHAWK CHAPTER WEBSITE:  
[www.jayhawkmoaa.org](http://www.jayhawkmoaa.org)

*If you can receive this by  
e-mail, please let us know.  
Printing and postage costs  
the Chapter close to \$3 for  
each copy we have to mail.*

**Tentative 2019 Meeting Schedule:**  
17 September

Tuesday

Tuesday 19 November

**2019 Kansas Council of Chapters Dates/Locations:**

26 October

Santa Fe Trail Chapter



*Newsletter Editor  
Jayhawk Chapter, MOAA  
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***NEVER STOP SERVING!***

***IN GOD WE TRUST***