



# Jayhawk Chapter MOAA Newsletter



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## July Program:

Our speaker will be MG Vic Braden.  
His topic will be: "The Santa Fe Division - Blazing New Trails."

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## President's Comments. . .

Greetings fellow MOAA members and welcome to another great summer in Kansas. It took some time to get here but it is now definitely here.

Fourth of July, our Nation's birthday, is right around the corner. In fact with the actual 4<sup>th</sup> being in the middle of the week there are many celebrations beginning this weekend and it seems carrying on throughout the entire week. Of course this time of the year fireworks are very popular in some areas and are the causes for considerable trepidation for some. Whatever and however each of you choose to celebrate the holiday, please remember to be safe and to be considerate of others.

The 35<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division of the Kansas and Missouri National Guard, having spent the past 12 months deployed to the Middle East, has returned home after a job well done. The division commander and member of the Jayhawk Chapter, MG Braden, will be speaking to us during our July meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup>. He will be recounting both his and the Divisions experiences during the deployment. It should be a very interesting talk and will be a great opportunity to welcome him back.

Some other interesting events have occurred nationally and internationally since our last meeting. Most notably is the meeting between our President and the leader of the North Korean people. I am looking forward to hearing the opinion of some of our members concerning this event as literally some of us have been learning about the war and the conditions existing in Korean our entire lives. The possibility of a peaceful change yet within our lifetime is significant.

I am looking forward to seeing all of you at the Lawrence County Club on the 17<sup>th</sup> of July and wish to all a patriotic and happy 4<sup>th</sup> of July.



*George*

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1 July 2018

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**\* Reservations should be sent  
to Jim Cooper by  
11 July**



# JAYHAWK CHAPTER NEWS



## PERSONAL NEWS

**From Ray Finch:** Our son, LTC John Finch, took command of the 304th MI Battalion, Fort Huachuca, AZ on 15 June 2018. As expected, we are very proud.

**From Dean Bevan:** My "Grim Reaper" is running in Plano, Texas for eight performances, June 21-30, part of Rover Dramawerks' 10-Minute Play Festival. Here's their featured photo from opening night:



**From Mike Kelly:** My wife, Georgiana Beverly, and I traveled with several extended family members for a week on the Big Island of Hawaii.

I am chairing the organizational committee for the Lawrence Veterans Day Parade. If you wish to sign up to march or ride or volunteer on the parade planning committee, contact me at [job4mike6@aol.com](mailto:job4mike6@aol.com).

The Lawrence Veterans Day Parade is open to any veteran in surrounding Douglas County communities and will be held in 2018 on Sunday November 11<sup>th</sup> at 11 am in downtown Lawrence. Please let me know if there are any questions or if you need additional information. We are honored to once again help facilitate the Lawrence Veterans Day Parade for the Veterans of the Douglas County communities.

**From Bob Johnson:** Shari's and my travels since the first of May: Dance recital in Carlsbad, New Mexico (four grandchildren; oldest grand daughter's first recital) in early May. High school graduation in Winnie, Texas (four grandchildren, four great grandchildren, youngest granddaughter's graduation) in early June. Dance recital in Midland, Michigan (four grandchildren, three of them in the performance and youngest grandson was on a church mission) in mid June. Total miles driven: over 5,000. Lots of fun and good times!!

**From Mike Devlin:** The Jayhawk Chapter of MOAA provided an "unofficial" foursome that played the Annual Shriner's Golf Tournament on 18 June at the Fields of Green Golf Course, Ozawkie, Kansas. The foursome consisted of John Halladay, John Mosher, Mike Devlin and Mike Miller. No matter how hard the Shriners plan this annual event, it is always happens to occur on the hottest day and this year was no exception. Nonetheless, the "MOAA four" played on and had a great time on a very beautiful course.

**From Mike Miller:** In late May I went on my annual trip to Greenfield, Iowa (Southwestern Iowa) to visit and play golf with two of my brother's-in-law (the oldest one is the same age as me but I'm older by a couple of hours, and the younger one is a kid in his 40's). Our 4<sup>th</sup> was a long-time friend of ours who completes our foursome. We have been doing this for well over a decade. The first day we played at Honey Creek Golf Club in Boone, Iowa (nice rolling hills type of course), but we were under constant attack by gnats. The next day we played just minutes east of Council Bluffs at Bent Tree Golf Course (by far one of the most beautiful courses I have ever seen). It was a short trip, but fun as always

**From Your Editors:** We traveled to Iowa over the Memorial Day weekend. John was even able to play golf with one of his old High School buddies! We also attended the TAPS ceremonies at two cemeteries. This was the first year in over forty years that John couldn't participate on the firing squad!!

### FROM KAW VALLEY CHAPTER

On 12 August, MOAA Kaw Valley Chapter social is hosting MG Lee Tapanelli, Adjutant General of Kansas, who will give a state of the National Guard presentation. We may not have the chance to visit him in person like this very often, so MOAA should make an effort (ALL CHAPTERS) to be present and ask any questions of him that we would like.

Please invite ALL MOAA MEMBERS to the social 12 August, 2018, at noon, champagne and lunch (\$25 pp) at Manor Conference Center (adjacent to Capitol Plaza Hotel), 1700 SW Topeka, Blvd., Pioneer Room.

Contact Sheli Sweeney at [shelisweeney@hotmail.com](mailto:shelisweeney@hotmail.com) or 785-213-9053 or Delbert Hill at [djhill3895@sbcglobal.net](mailto:djhill3895@sbcglobal.net) or 785-224-2401 to make reservations. You can pay at the door!

**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.**



***Since it is summer, the Cadets/Midshipmen are off to various locations for training. For that reason, there are no ROTC reports this issue.***

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### **Jayhawk Chapter of MOAA Legislative Corner**

by Mike Miller, LCDR, USN, (Ret); Legislative Chairman

This report summarizes the legislative results achieved for the FY 2018 Budget by the efforts of Kansas Chapter and Council Legislative Chairs, Chapter and Council Presidents, and the Chief, Legislative Affairs of the Kansas National Guard, MAJ Dana W. Graf, Jr.

House Bill 2541 was sponsored by Representative Diana Dierks of Salina who promoted the bill all through the process including the signing into law. We had been seeking an additional \$2.1 Million for National Guard Tuition Assistance Program, but we actually achieved \$1.81 M in the final appropriation bills. This was supplemented with ~\$870K appropriated in last year's bill that is tied to the veteran's scratchers,

putting us at ~\$2.68M total for next year. This is projected to result in 100% of tuition and fees paid funding for FY19 for Kansas National Guardsmen.

Governor Colyer also signed a Proclamation for June 27, 2018 as POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS INJURY AWARENESS DAY and the Month of June as POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS INJURY AWARENESS MONTH

Going forward we will be working toward inviting military organization representatives to meet and develop an agenda for presentation to Kansas Legislators. Any ideas you have for this will be appreciated.

### ***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, 17 May 2018: House Passes Major Overhaul of Veterans Choice Program**

The House Wednesday passed by a vote of 372-70 major veterans legislation to extend and reform the Veterans Choice Program to allow more private care options.

The "VA Mission Act," would also lift the restrictions on family caregiver benefits, which are now limited to post-9/11 veterans, and extend them to the caregivers of veterans of all eras.

The bill will now go to the Senate, where Sen. Johnny Isakson, R-Georgia, chairman of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, and Sen. Jon Tester, the ranking member of the Committee, have already expressed their support.

President Donald Trump has said he will sign the bill quickly when it reaches his desk.

The bill would authorize \$5.2 billion to extend the current Veterans Choice Program, whose funding was set to expire on May 31, for one year while the VA enacts reforms to expand private care options.

#### **House Committee's Defense Bill Markup Prioritizes Pay, Readiness**

HASC FY 2019 Defense Bill Markup Supports Many of MOAA's Key Priorities

The House Armed Services Committee (HASC) took the first major step toward solidifying the FY 2019 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), releasing H.R. 5515 after a marathon markup session that started the morning of May 9 and lasted into the early morning hours of the next day.

#### ***Focus on readiness***

In a press release made before the start of the full committee's formal markup session, HASC Chair Rep.

Mac Thornberry (R-Texas), said: "Restoring readiness while also increasing the capability and capacity of our Armed forces is a key focus of this year's defense policy bill. Continuing to reform the Pentagon to help speed decision-making and get the right tools in the hands of our warfighters faster is also a major priority. Together, these improvements support and strengthen our most valuable asset, which is America's troops."

The HASC legislation supports a base budget of \$639.1 billion and \$69 billion in overseas contingency (war) funding. With an additional \$8.9 billion in mandatory spending, the final fiscal topline in the legislation comes to \$717 billion.

#### *BRAC light?*

Another item of interest from the recent markup: The HASC did not authorize another base realignment and closure (BRAC) round in its markup and DoD did not ask for one. Instead, in recognizing DoD has more infrastructure than it needs, the HASC authorized language that would allow DoD to close smaller installations without going through a formal BRAC process. Highlighted in this change is the involvement of state governors in this more truncated process.

#### **MOAA Newsletter Advocacy, 24 May 2018:** Senate Approves Big Changes to VA Health Care

With overwhelming support, the U.S. Senate passed a bill to streamline the VA health care system, which could reduce veterans' wait times and allow more of them to seek out their own physicians.

The VA Mission Act was easily approved by the Senate with a vote of 92-5 on Wednesday. The bill, which previously passed the House by a vote of 347-70, will next go to President Donald Trump to become law just ahead of Memorial Day.

Senate Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Johnny Isakson, R-Ga., lauded the bipartisan effort to get the legislation approved. He worked with Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont., the committee's ranking member, to push the bill through the Senate.

Representatives from MOAA, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and American Legion backed the bill.

René Campos, MOAA's senior director of Government Relations for veterans-wounded warrior care, lauded lawmakers, the administration, and VA leadership for moving the legislation through Congress.

"Our country and Congress have remained committed to caring for those who serve their country through the decades," Campos said. "Not only is it the right thing to do, but MOAA believes the institution must remain strong and committed because at the end of the day, Americans will judge the value of service to the country by how well the government supports and cares for those willing to put their lives on the line for their country."

#### Voting absentee: Study targets challenges troops face

An inside-look at challenges military voters face will be released this summer, according to a discussion Monday during the New Voter Forum hosted by the National Association of Secretaries of State.

A survey, funded by the Democracy Fund and conducted by the Military Officers Association of America and the Institute for Veterans and Military Families at Syracuse University, will detail challenges service members said they have while casting votes.

To participate in the study, [click here](#).

#### Veterans Affected by Burn Pits Applaud New Bill to Track Exposure

Nearly every day during her 2003 deployment to Iraq, Christina Thundathil was tasked with cleaning burn pits - a duty that required her to light a fire in a large metal drum and stir waste for disposal.

She has no doubts the job made her ill, including her recent lung disease diagnosis.

As more veterans have come forward, two Army combat veterans serving in Congress - bolstered by support from MOAA and other members of the Military Coalition - are pushing a bill that would track servicemembers' exposure to burn pits or toxic airborne chemicals and share that information with Veterans Affairs facilities.

"I'm excited something can be done," Thundathil said. "I want to leave the military in a better place than how I found it."

Requiring a mandatory tracking system will allow the VA to take better care of veterans, Gabbard said.

"This legislation is important, it's urgent and it affects almost every single post-9/11 veteran," Gabbard said. "I can't think of a single one of my fellow veterans who I deployed with that they didn't have some exposure to burn pits.

"They're everywhere - Kuwait, Iraq, Afghanistan. Burn pits were a part of every life."

#### **MOAA Newsletter Advocacy, 31 May 2018:** MOAA Goals Included in Senate's NDAA Markup

*Senate Committee's Defense Bill Markup Supports Readiness and the AVF*

#### *Focus on readiness and capabilities restoration*

The SASC, like its House counterpart, focused on military readiness. But the Senate pushed even further, looking at restoration of important warfighting capabilities and strategic concept development.

The SASC defense bill ties closely to the 2018 *National Defense Strategy* (NDS), focusing on four major themes:

- \* adjusting the budget request in the NDAA to align resources in a manner consistent with the priorities and principles of the NDS;
- \* requiring the secretary of defense to provide one overarching reporting requirement that



includes a list of detailed and specific questions regarding the roles, missions, and requirements of the military services that the committee believes are raised by the NDS;

- \* reforming the Office of the Secretary of Defense to support effective implementation of the NDS; and
- \* modernizing officer personnel management to bolster the effectiveness, recruitment, and retention of the all-volunteer force.

#### *MOAA priorities advanced*

The SASC legislation addresses several of MOAA's key priorities - focused on support for the all-volunteer force. These include:

- \* full funding for a military basic pay raise at ECI (Employment Cost Index) of 2.6 percent;
- \* authorization for active duty end-strength increases over FY 2018 levels for each service to put them better in line to meet the requirements of the NDS (485,741 in the Army, 331,900 in the Navy, 186,100 in the Marine Corps, and 325,720 in the Air Force);
- \* no increases to TRICARE fees;
- \* no reduction to the basic allowance for housing;
- \* progress on modernizing the 38-year-old Defense Officer Personnel Management Act to provide more flexible options to the services;
- \* authorization for \$40 million in DoD supplemental impact aid and \$10 million in impact aid for severely disabled military children;
- \* eligibility expansion for Special Victims' Counsel services to victims of domestic violence and other aggravated violent offenses;
- \* establishment of a new punitive article on domestic violence in the Uniform Code of Military Justice; and
- \* authorization for military judges and magistrates to issue military protective orders.

#### Wins for Active-Duty and Reserve Troops in the House Defense Spending Bill

From credit for retirement pay for Reserve troops' maternity leave to tracking burn-pit exposure, the 2019 National Defense Authorization Act could bring comprehensive changes to the military.

The \$717 billion defense spending bill was [passed by the U.S. House of Representatives on Thursday](#) by a vote of 351 to 66. It now moves onto the Senate.

The bill authorizes DoD spending and sets personnel strength.

#### Here's What's In the House Defense Spending Bill for Military Veterans, Retirees

Here are three ways the next defense spending bill could affect military retirees and veterans:

#### *1. Exemption from repayment of voluntary-separation pay*

**What it does:** Exempts servicemembers who chose to leave active duty and later incurred a 100-percent service-connected disability after they were involuntarily recalled to service from having to repay voluntary-separation pay.

**Why it matters:** Disabled veterans who were involuntarily recalled to service would not have to repay these earned benefits.

**Sponsor:** Rep. Kurt Schrader, D-Ore.

#### *2. Atomic veterans service medal*

**What it does:** Designs and produces a military service medal to honor retired and former servicemembers who were exposed to radiation.

**Why it matters:** About 225,000 troops participated in hundreds of nuclear weapons tests between 1945 and 1962. This would formally recognize these veterans - or their next-of-kin - with a service medal.

**Sponsor:** Rep. Jim McGovern, D-Mass.

#### *3. Access to base facilities for more veterans*

**What it does:** Grants Purple Heart recipients, disabled veterans, Medal of Honor recipients, and caregivers access to commissaries and Morale, Welfare, and Recreation centers on military installations.

**Why it matters:** Currently, only active-duty, retirees, and veterans with 100 percent disabilities are allowed to use commissaries, exchanges and MWR facilities. This amendment would extend those benefits to more veterans, which could help save them money.

**Sponsors:** Rep. Dan Lipinski, D-Ill., Rep. Walter Jones, R-N.C., and Rep. Kevin Cramer, R-N.D.

#### **MOAA Newsletter Advocacy, 07 June 2018:** President Trump Signs MISSION Act Reforming VA Health Care

After more than two years of continuous negotiation and the unrelenting pursuit to fix VA's Choice program and reform the veterans' health system, veterans scored a victory when the long-awaited VA MISSION Act finally was signed by President Donald Trump on Wednesday. And, it's all thanks to MOAA members and veterans who never gave up until the mission was accomplished.

It was such a thrilling and humbling experience to sit on behalf of veterans around the world in the gallery, high atop the prestigious Senate floor, witnessing the historic vote, especially after working closely with MOAA members and a large group of organizations representing millions of veterans over the years.

The legislation is historic for a number of reasons, the least of which is because it became a law in just a few short weeks. It also represents a major shift in

how the VA will deliver care - a system virtually untouched by major transformation in more than 25 years. In the end, the reform is expected to cost in excess of \$50 billion dollars over the next five years. That estimate well could skyrocket if system improvements aren't carefully managed, and there is ongoing oversight during implementation.

The House passed the MISSION Act May 17. A week later, the Senate passed it. In his weekly newsletter May 26, following the Senate vote, Rep. Phil Roe (R-Tenn.), chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, said, "President Trump called on Congress to pass this bill before Memorial Day, and we answered that call. The president promised to 'not rest until all America's great veterans can receive the care they so richly deserve,' and I'm honored we were able to help fulfill this promise."

Some of the major provisions in the act include:

- \* expanding the VA's comprehensive caregiver support program to pre-9/11 veterans, providing eligible caregivers additional support services and a monthly stipend;
- \* eliminating the broken Choice program and establishes one community care program called the Veterans Community Care Program;
- \* allowing veterans and their doctors to choose the best option on where to get health care whether in the VA or from one of the providers in the VA's community care network;
- \* establishing a walk-in care benefit in the community for veterans in need of non-emergency care;
- \* establishing a commission to review and recommend realigning of resources to strengthen and modernize the VA medical infrastructure to address the needs of the changing veteran population.

Congress, the administration and the VA deserve a lot of credit as well in keeping the VA health care reform a priority. Sometimes change takes longer than anticipated as was the case with this massive bill. There were even times lawmakers, federal officials, and veteran groups didn't always agree on what reform should look like. That created many starts and stops in the negotiations, and at times, talks teetered on the brink of total collapse. But, thanks to the commitment and shared desire to make veterans' health care better, congressional leaders, administration officials, and veteran groups remained intent on keeping the dialog open and inclusive throughout the process, which is ultimately what was needed to clinch the victory.

The MISSION Act, the short title for the *John S. McCain III, Daniel K. Akaka, and Samuel R. Johnson VA Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening Integrated Networks (MISSION) Act of 2018*, is named in honor of two Vietnam prisoners of war, Sen. McCain (R-Ariz.) and Rep. Johnson (R-Texas), and

former Sen. Akaka (R-Hawaii), a World War II veteran who passed away earlier this year.

### Help MOAA Support Full Retired Pay for Disabled Military Veterans

MOAA needs your help now to end the unfair financial offset affecting medical retirees. Take action now and complete the form below to send a letter to your lawmakers.

Chapter 61 retirees, servicemembers who medically retire with a 30-percent or greater disability rating, lose a portion of their retirement pay when their VA disability compensation is deducted from it. After well over a hundred of MOAA members took to Capitol Hill in April for our Storming the Hill event to advocate for the 200,000 veterans affected by this issue, Sen. Dean Heller, R-Nev., is ready to help end these unfair reductions in pay.

Heller — the sponsor of S. 66, which supports full concurrent receipt for all eligible servicemembers.

### President Trump's Executive Order on Preventing Military Suicide Advances With New Joint Plan

Six months after President Donald Trump signed an executive order aimed at improving mental health care for troops leaving the military, the VA, Defense Department and Homeland Security have begun their work.

"This collaborative effort represents a critical first step for ensuring that service members transitioning from active duty to veteran status understand that VA, DoD, and DHS are committed to easing the stress of transition by providing the best mental health care possible," Acting VA Secretary Peter O'Rourke said in a Friday statement. "Transitioning to civilian life is difficult and, ultimately, this effort will make it easier for our veterans."

When servicemembers leave the military, they're at higher risk of suffering mental health problems or considering suicide, [according to the Department of Veterans Affairs](#).

The joint plan includes 16 services that will be offered to veterans, including expanding peer-community outreach and group sessions to all VA facilities. That includes services from the VA's Whole Health Initiative, which creates personalized health plans for veterans that focus not only on physical and mental needs, but emotional and spiritual as well.

It also expands DoD's [Be There Peer-Support Call and Outreach Center](#) to veterans for one year post-separation. That program assists troops facing issues in any area of their lives, including relationship issues, family counseling, or substance abuse.

Veterans will also have access to the Defense Department's [Military One Source](#) to servicemembers up to a year after separation.

The White House will closely monitor the outcomes of the joint action plan, according to the VA release.

## **MOAA Newsletter Advocacy, 14 June 2018:** **More TRICARE Fee Increases Could Be in Store** **Ouch.**

The Senate Armed Services Committee's (SASC's) initial release of the summary of its FY 2019 National Defense Authorization Act markup did not indicate or make any reference to military health care or the TRICARE fees.

The legislation repeals the 2017 NDAA's law, which grandfathered those beneficiaries who entered into the service prior to Jan. 1, 2018, with the existing TRICARE fee structure (now named Group A). Those new entrants after that date were put into a new fee structure (named Group B).

We all know how that worked out: TRICARE fees, including pharmacy fees, increased for active duty families and retirees. The Senate's new plan seeks to end grandfathering by essentially moving all of Group A into the Group B TRICARE fee structure. The result? Higher TRICARE fees.

For retirees, the annual deductible for TRICARE Select (\$150 for an individual/\$300 for a family) would double for out-of-network care. Most other cost shares would remain largely the same.

MOAA has always believed the quality and value of the military health care benefit should reflect the extraordinary sacrifices of military service as the prepaid premium for these earned benefits.

MOAA believes the previous year's TRICARE fee increases were disproportionately high and broke faith with currently serving families and those who have served full careers. The addition of these new Senate-proposed fee increases do nothing but place a more disproportionate burden on military beneficiaries.

### **Take Our Survey: Share Your Opinion on TRICARE and Military Health Care**

- \* *Retiree TRICARE Prime copayments:* Copayments range from 67 percent to 173 percent higher than 2017 Prime retiree copayments in select categories.
- \* *Mental health visits considered specialty care:* This change generates significantly higher out-of-pocket costs than under the previous TRICARE Extra - higher than many civilian plans. These TRICARE Select costs create barriers to mental health care access.
- \* *TRICARE pharmacy copayments:* The copayments have doubled and tripled. For some, a \$7 increase from \$0 for a generic prescription can be tolerated; however, for those on a fixed income and receiving several generics and other specialty medications, it is costly - and costs will increase at rates beyond the COLA in the future as the attached chart shows.
- \* *The effects of cost-share increases:* Many beneficiaries have become overburdened quickly under these new copayments. While

an occasional copayment of \$30 or \$40 for a specialty visit is not a financial strain for many, an active duty family with one or more special needs children or adults with multiple medical issues requiring many more appointments per week will see an overwhelming increase in costs. Hitting catastrophic caps will become more of a norm than an exception.

BLUF: [Take the survey](#) today and pass it to others!

### **MOAA Leadership Supports Bill To Benefit Disabled Veterans**

MOAA President and CEO Lt. Gen. Dana T. Atkins, USAF (Ret), and I recently met with Rep. Sanford Bishop (D-Ga.) to discuss concurrent receipt and the Chapter 61 issue and the potential way ahead in Congress.

Bishop is the sponsor of the most comprehensive concurrent receipt legislation currently introduced in Congress - H.R. 333, the Disabled Veterans Tax Act. The legislation seeks to change current law and would allow all eligible servicemembers to receive both retirement and disability compensation - a longstanding MOAA goal.

The legislation also would seek to remedy the Chapter 61 inequity as a must solve subset of this wider goal. Currently, Chapter 61 retirees cannot have their retirement and disability pays computed equal to those who retire with 20 or more years of service, regardless of the disability rating.

MOAA highlighted H.R. 333 during [Storming the Hill in April](#), which helped to raise the profile of the legislation in Congress and what it's trying to accomplish for military retirees, leading to an increase in co-signers for support.

In MOAA's efforts to gain congressional support for the wider concurrent receipt issue, we have worked with other legislators in both the House and Senate, and two other bills - not as comprehensive as H.R. 333 - have been introduced to try and remedy the concurrent receipt issue. Those bills are H.R. 303, the Retired Pay Restoration Act, introduced by Rep. Gus Bilirakis (R-Fla.), and S. 66, Retired Pay Restoration Act, introduced by Sen. Dean Heller (R-Nev.)

### **MOAA Newsletter Advocacy, 21 June 2018:** **Senate Passes Defense Bill: Here Are The Key Takeaways**

*Issues to Watch* (\* indicates MOAA's support)

#### *TRICARE fees*

*House position: No new fees \**

*Senate position: Repeal grandfathering*

*MOAA Position:* The most controversial provision in the Senate bill unwinds an important TRICARE

grandfathering provision from last year's defense bill. The move repeals protections for health care beneficiaries who entered into the service prior to Jan. 1 from a new cost share structure, one with higher fees and pharmacy copays.

MOAA strongly opposes the Senate provision. According to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, higher out-of-pocket costs will push 20,000 beneficiaries out of TRICARE.

#### *Survivor Benefits*

*House position: "Sense of Congress" to end the widows tax ASAP \**

*Senate position: Nothing*

*MOAA position:* While the Senate remained silent on survivors benefits, the House included a language providing a "sense of Congress" that they "must work together to find a way to eliminate the widows' tax entirely." It may seem like a small gesture, but the language provides a line in the sand for us to return to lawmakers and say "You've admitted this is wrong. Now let's work towards a solution."

Senators offered hundreds of amendments to the bill, including several MOAA-supported proposals to eliminate the widows tax, expand concurrent receipt, and to provide transition assistance to military spouses, but only a handful of amendments were voted on.

Last week, the administration issued a tepid statement on the bill saying, given the short time between the bill's release and when it was voted on, it was not providing feedback at this time. The statement said the White House would continue to work with Congress as the defense bill goes through the legislative process.

The bill now moves to conference committee for House and Senate lawmakers to iron out differences between the two bills. Lawmakers say they expect to complete their work on the bill by the end of July.

#### MOAA Joins Veterans Groups In Calling for MISSION Act Funding

More than 30 national military and veterans service organizations joined forces June 19 to send a letter to Senate leaders, urging them to support a bipartisan amendment to exempt funding for the VA MISSION Act from sequestration.

The "Complete the Mission" amendment was introduced by Senate Appropriations Committee Chair Richard Shelby (R-Ala.) and Vice Chair Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.).

Many of our members are aware the VA MISSION Act was signed into law by the President earlier this month. Barely had the ink dried on the bill before headlines starting hitting the airwaves reporting problems with paying for the massive reform bill.

While Congress agreed on funding until October, lawmakers were unable to agree how to fund the bill for FY 2019 and beyond.

In a last attempt to secure long-term funding for the VA MISSION Act, Shelby and Leahy's amendment would allow Congress to provide sufficient funds without triggering sequestration or requiring cuts to other VA health care programs.

The amendment allows funding currently appropriated through the VA's Veterans Choice Program to be move from a mandatory account - one usually designated for entitlement programs to pay for VA benefits - to a discretionary one where the VA funds its medical programs and services.

However, moving the money to a discretionary account means funding must fall below the budget caps Congress established earlier this year for a two-year funding deal.

Lawmakers did not consider the increased costs associated with the VA MISSION Act when setting the discretionary funding levels for FY 2019, nor the anticipated caps for FYs 2020 and 2021.

Send this MOAA-suggested message to your senators.

#### MOAA Shares Concerns About Commissary-Exchange Merger Plans With DoD

DoD will require congressional approval and authority in order to move forward to consolidate the operations of the Defense Commissary Agency and the Exchange Services (Army and Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps) - collectively known as the defense resale enterprise, into one business enterprise. Regardless, it appears, DoD is pushing ahead with a special task force to provide recommendations that would support this objective.

In a meeting this past week with DoD Chief Management Officer (CMO) John Gibson, the case for why DoD put together a cross functional task force in order to complete the first phase of the community services reform effort was presented to the MSO/VSO community.

The Community Services Task Force is set to begin its work in July and will remain in operation for another four to seven months.

Stay engaged with MOAA's updates on this topic for the latest information regarding one of your most important earned benefits.

*Ideas are funny little things . . . they won't work unless you do.*





# JAYHAWK CHAPTER MOAA



A membership meeting will be held **Tuesday, 17 July 2018**  
at Lawrence Country Club

**Dinner cost** is \$24.00/meal.

**The Program:** Our program will be

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

**The Menu:** Rustic rolls with olive oil & Parmesan, baby arugula salad,  
grilled Angus sirloin-au proive, potatoes au gratin, seasonal vegetables.  
Butternut squash if any vegetarians  
Dessert - Chef's choice

Send your reservation and check payable to Jayhawk Chapter MOAA  
to arrive no later than Wednesday, **11 July** 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.*

*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).

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 2018 Meeting Schedule:**

Tuesday	17 July	Tuesday	18 September
		Tuesday	13 November

**2018 Kansas Council of Chapters Dates/Locations:**

11 August	Kaw Valley - Topeka
3 November	Sunflower - Overland Park

***HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY!!***



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

***IN GOD WE TRUST***