



# AFSA NEWSLETTER

Protecting and Defending the Quality-of-Life Benefits for the  
**TOTAL AIR FORCE**  
Enlisted Corps and their Families Since 1961

June 27, 2008

Volume 3, Edition 26

On the final day in session before their Fourth of July break, Congress addressed 155 pieces of legislation, including the H.R. 2642, the supplemental war funding bill. This included the reformed veterans' education benefit, long sought by AFSA. It passed the Senate without amendment 92-6 and should be on its way to the President. AFSA will provide an in-depth *Total Air Force* focused analysis of this next week.

**House Passes Medicare Reimbursement Legislation by Large Margin.** On June 24, the House passed a Medicare bill (H.R. 6331) by a vote of 355-59, a veto-proof majority. Despite open opposition from the White House and the House Republican leadership, 129 Republicans joined Democrats in passing the bill. The House bill would stop a July 1, 10.6 percent cut in Medicare payments to physicians, freeze payments at their current levels, and set a 1.1 percent pay hike for doctors in 2009. As reported in the newsletter last week, Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus, D-MT, and ranking member Chuck Grassley, R-IA, continue to negotiate toward a compromise bill.

**Gulf War Vets Given Added Voice.** The VA Advisory Committee on the Gulf War held its first meeting last week. This forum provides veterans of the 1990-1991 Gulf War with additional access to the VA leadership. The 14-member, independent panel will advise the Secretary and the department on the full range of health care and benefits needs of those who served in the conflict. To read more about this panel, click [HERE](#).

**HEART Act.** President Bush has signed the "Heroes Earning Assistance and Relief Tax Act" into law as Public Law 110-245. The bill will provide more than \$1.2 billion in tax relief to benefit America's veterans and soldiers. This bill, sponsored jointly by Senators Max Baucus, D-MT, and Chuck Grassley, R-IA, includes tax cuts for members of the military who are receiving combat pay, saving for retirement, or purchasing their own homes. It also helps civilian employers of military men and women keep jobs available for soldiers who are called to active duty. To read the entire text of the bill, click [HERE](#).

## LEGISLATION RECENTLY INTRODUCED & UPDATED

**H.R.4044, "The National Guard and Reservists Debt Relief Act of 2008,"** by Rep. Janice D. Schakosky, D-IL. Amends federal bankruptcy law to prohibit the bankruptcy court from dismissing or converting a case based on means testing while the debtor: (1) is either on active duty in the military service of the United States or performing a homeland defense activity for at least 90 days, and during the 540 days following the end of such period; and (3) was called to such active duty or performed such homeland defense activity after September 11, 2001, as a member of a reserve component of the Armed Forces or the National Guard. Passed House by voice vote 23 Jun 08.

**H.R. 6277, titled "Veterans and Survivors Dental Insurance Act of 2008"** by Rep. Steve Buyer, R-IN would amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide a dental insurance plan for certain veterans and their survivors and dependents.

**H.R. 6283, titled “Reimbursing Our American Drivers (ROAD) Act of 2008,”** by Rep John Lewis, D-GA. It would increase the standard mileage rate for use of an automobile for business, medical, and moving deduction purposes for 2008 and permanently increase such rate for charitable deduction purposes under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and to temporarily increase the reimbursement rate for use of an automobile by Federal employees.

**H.R.6287, “The Veterans Travel Equity Act of 2008,”** by Rep Mark E. Souder, R-IN, Would amend title 38, United States Code, to change the method of determining the mileage reimbursement rate under the beneficiary travel program administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

**H.R. 6326, the “Military Family Support Act of 2008,”** by Rep. Lynn C. Woolsey, D-CA, would provide for a Federal employees program to authorize the use of leave by caregivers for family members of certain individuals performing military service.

**H.R.6397, titled “To amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain improvements in the basic educational assistance program administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes,”** by Rep Jeb Hensarling, R-TX. Introduced on 26 Jun 08.

**H.R.6414,** not yet titled, by Rep Frank Pallone Jr., D-NJ, would establish a pilot program on the provision of legal services to assist veterans and members of the Armed Forces receive health care, benefits and services, and for other purposes,” Introduced 26 Jun08 and referred to committee.

**H.R.6423,** not yet titled, by Rep Bart Stupak, D-MI, would provide for the transportation of the remains of members of the Armed Forces who died in a theater of combat operations when those remains are subsequently recovered. Introduced and referred to the House Committee on Armed Services 26 Jun 08.

**H.R.6426,** not yet titled, by Rep Todd Tiahrt, R-KS, to prohibit the use of funds by the Department of Defense on the KC-X tanker contract, and for other purposes related to that contract. Introduced and referred to the House Committee on Armed Services 26 Jun 08.

**H. Con. Res. 373,** by Rep. Shelley Moore Capito, R-WV, is a concurrent resolution authorizing Frank Woodruff Buckles (the last American WW I veteran) to lie in honor in the rotunda of the Capitol upon his death.

**H. Con. Res. 377,** by Rep. Ike Skelton, D-MO, is a concurrent resolution authorizing the use of the rotunda of the Capitol for a ceremony commemorating the 60th Anniversary of the beginning of the integration of the United States Armed Forces.

**H. Res. 1295,** by Rep. Janice D. Schakowsky, D-IL, would recognize and commemorate the efforts and contributions of outstanding female veterans of the Armed Forces, and the vital roles women play today as servicemembers in this nation’s defense.

**S.2617,** titled, “Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2008,” by Sen Daniel K. Akaka, D-HI, would increase, effective as of December 1, 2008, the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans. This cleared the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs 26 Jun08 without amendment.

**S. 3163,** the “Military Family Support Act,” by Sen. Russell D. Feingold, D-WI, would provide for a Federal employees program to authorize the use of leave by caregivers for family members of certain individuals performing military services. This is the companion bill for H.R. 6326.

**S. 3167**, the “Veterans Second Amendment Protection Act,” by Sen. Richard Burr, R-NC, would clarify the conditions under which veterans, their surviving spouses, and their children may be treated as adjudicated mentally incompetent for certain purposes.

**S.3178**, titled “A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize dental insurance for veterans and survivors and dependents of veterans, and for other purposes,” by Sen. Richard Burr, R-NC. Introduced 23 Jun 08.

**S.3203**, not yet titled, by Sen Pat Roberts, R-KS, to prohibit the use of funds by the Department of Defense on the KC-X tanker contract, and for other purposes related to that contract. Introduced 26 Jun 08 and referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

---

## GENERAL NEWS

**Roll Call – Leave Management.** Many Airmen look forward to vacation during the summer months and whether that time away from the duty section is one day or a more extended period, close to home or far away, managing this earned benefit is essential. For the entire roll call click [HERE](#).

---

**Acting SECAF.** Michael B. Donely has succeeded Michael W. Wynne and will serve as Acting Air Force Secretary until a permanent replacement is named. To read more about Acting Secretary Donely, click [HERE](#).

---

**New Commander for Air Force Reserve.** Lieutenant General Charles Stenner, Jr., has assumed command of the Air Force Reserve and its 68,000 members. To read more about this leader, click [HERE](#).

---

**JCS Vice Chair Calls for Joint Operations.** General James E. Cartwright, U.S. Army, the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, recently addressed an Air Force Cyberspace Symposium, emphasizing the need for the services to break down barriers that might work against synergistic operations. To read more, click [HERE](#).

---

**Enlisted Heritage Hall Honored.** The Air Force Enlisted Heritage Hall at Maxwell-Gunter AFB, AL, was recently honored with the 2008 Air Force Heritage Award for the creation of the museum’s Convoy Gun Truck display. To read more about the Heritage Hall and this achievement, click [HERE](#).

---

**Largest Virtual Promotion Release.** On June 26, the Air Force released the names of over 12,000 Airmen to be promoted to the grades of technical and master sergeant. To read more about this on-line promotion notification, click [HERE](#). Click [HERE](#) for lists.

---

**America Supports You: Group Helps Family Members With Education.** Military family members looking to further their education have a friend in a support organization called Thanks USA. Click [HERE](#) to read the entire DefenseLink article.

**Death Gratuity Options Expanded.** Effective July 1, Airmen will now be able to designate more than one recipient for the death gratuity should they die on active duty. To read more about this important change, click [HERE](#).

---

**Chronic Critical Skill Promotion Opportunities.** Certain AFSCs provide increased promotion opportunities. To read more about these skills and the Air Force management of these critical career fields, click [HERE](#).

---

**AFSOC PJ to Receive Pitsenbarger Award at AFSA PAC.** In a recent article, the Air Force Special Operations Command proudly detailed the heroic actions of TSgt Davide Keaton who will receive the prestigious Pitsenbarger Heroism Award on Wednesday, August 27, 2008, during the AFSA Air Force Honors Banquet in San Antonio, Texas. To read more about Sergeant Keaton's extraordinary accomplishments, click [HERE](#).

---

### **GROWING AFSA: Are you missing this opportunity?**

AFSA offers Junior ROTC and Civil Air Patrol Awards certificates (\$3.60 for 6) and medals (\$10.00 ea) on the AFSA website. These two programs provide recognition to the deserving youth as well as an opportunity for AFSA to earn some tremendous publicity for less than \$14.00 - a small price to pay for the opportunity to bring AFSA to the spotlight. Attendees at these ceremonies are often prominent members of the local community. The parents of the recipients may be current or former Air Force. We encourage you to support these programs as part of your required Americanism efforts and as recruiting tools as well. This is a small investment in money and time with a huge return. Click [HERE](#) to see SMSgt Wesley D. Mathias, President of Chapter 1462 at Fairchild AFB, making a presentation at John R. Rogers HS AFJROTC Military Ball.

---

### **AFSA Member Services/Benefits.**

Your Air Force Sergeants Association has partnered with a wide range of service providers, retailers, and suppliers to create exclusive members-only specials and extended services. Take advantage of the benefits of your AFSA membership today! Log onto [www.hqafsa.org](http://www.hqafsa.org) for a complete list of "Exclusive Member Services."

**Employment/Career Opportunities: Landmark Infinity Co-brand Career Center Program.** Landmark provides AFSA members with access to some of the best jobs, companies, transition advice, and content available. There are more than 141,000 jobs and access to more than 6,000 "Military Friendly" employers and 160+ franchisors available through our Career Center and web site. Visit [www.destinygrp.com](http://www.destinygrp.com) or [www.hqafsa.org](http://www.hqafsa.org) for additional details.

**The Gateway to the Air Force... Join your AFSA in San Antonio, Texas.** The Air Force Sergeants Association Professional Airmen's Conference and 45th Annual Convention will take place at the Grand Hyatt San Antonio -- Saturday, August 23 through Wednesday, August 27, 2008. Visit the AFSA website for reservation information. [www.hqafsa.org](http://www.hqafsa.org) For Info Expo exhibitor and event sponsorship opportunities, please email to [marketing@hqafsa.org](mailto:marketing@hqafsa.org).

*For access to the "click HERE" links, please visit [www.hqafsa.org](http://www.hqafsa.org)*