



# Legislative Update

**Capitol Hill Advocacy - 28OCT2011**

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## Hearing on Proposed Changes to Military Retirement

On Tuesday, AUSN attended a hearing by the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Personnel. Chairman Joe Wilson (R-SC) scheduled the hearing to question the wisdom of proposals that would change the military retirement system to a civilian-style 401(k)-type program. In opening remarks, Chairman Wilson said that discussions on military retirement reform, recently unveiled by the Defense Business Board (DBB) and raised in the hallways of the Pentagon, had “injected considerable uncertainty into the force.” These proposals undermined morale Wilson said, “to include troops fighting in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.”

In response to concerns, Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta issued a public announcement of his support for grandfathering the benefits to be provided to currently serving service members. Unfortunately, Panetta and other Pentagon leadership have not disavowed entirely the Defense Business Board and related proposal.

## At this hearing, DoD Testimony Asserts Current Retirement Program Entirely Affordable

Dr. Jo Ann Rooney, the principal deputy undersecretary for personnel, told the – Personnel Committee that the current military retirement system “is neither unaffordable nor spiraling out of control.” Dr. Rooney also told Chairman Wilson and his subcommittee that private-sector models “may not necessarily be the proper approach for the military.” Dr. Rooney said, “It is valid, ... for us to ask ourselves whether the current (60-year old) program still meets the requirements it was set up to achieve.”

DoD officials tried to minimize the DBB proposal saying it was “only a data point” in the Pentagon’s review of military retirement. Rep. Allen West (R-FL) countered proposals to make military retirement more like civilian systems that follow “a defined contribution and a defined benefit” system. “When I look at people serving in our military, that service,” West said, “is already a defined contribution. And I think we should be giving them a defined benefit for that contribution because of what they do.”

## Clifford L. Stanley Resigns as Pentagon Under Secretary for Personnel

Clifford L. Stanley, the Pentagon’s under secretary for personnel and readiness, has resigned, the Defense Department on 28 OCT 2011. Dr. Stanley was confirmed to the post in early 2010.

In this surprise announcement Stanley will leave the Pentagon within the next two weeks. Jo Ann Rooney, principal deputy under secretary for personnel and readiness, will take over for him in an acting capacity.

## Committees Hearing

The Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction held a public hearing Wednesday on Capitol Hill in Washington. The 12-member, bipartisan, bicameral panel was established under the Budget Control Act (P.L.112-25) to agree on a debt reduction plan for the federal budget.

Under current law, the Joint Select Committee is to craft a plan amounting to a spending reduction of at least \$1.5 Trillion that the White House and Congress would approve without amendment or change. If the Super Committee's plan fails, across-the-board reductions would be triggered (a sequester) in January 2013 with half the cut coming from defense spending.

The Super Committee heard from the head of the Congressional Budget Office. CBO told the panel that Pentagon spending would fall \$110 billion below its inflation adjusted level by 2021 in the event of triggering the across-the-board reductions.

Defense spending for 2012 and each year of the next decade has already been reduced under the first-step of the debt reduction law by approximately \$50 billion a year.

Under the Budget Control Act, the Super Committee's debt reduction plan is scheduled for release on November 23. Once issued and submitted to Congress by the President, Congress votes up or down (without amendment) by December 23. House Speaker John A. Boehner has stated that the military accounts "have taken more than their fair share of the hits" this year.

AUSN has written a letter to the Joint Committee, stating that further cuts will create a 'hollow Force. Ike Puzon testified to the SASC in May 2011 that extreme benefits changes and cuts would create a hollow force. The first and primary responsibility of government is defense and national security.

#### Veterans Day

11-11-11 is a special day for all those that have served and for all those that have paid the ultimate price. This year, AUSN is a member of the Veterans Day Planning Committee, which gives us a word in the overall planning of event. There will be a special Veterans Day Concert to celebrate the events, along with the laying of the Wreath at the Tomb of Unkown. If you are in the DC area – think about joining the concert on 10 November at 3pm to 5pm at 810 Vermont Ave, NW. Washington DC. <http://www.va.gov/opa/vetsday/>

#### Director of Government Affairs –AUSN

I consider it to have been one of my highest honors to represent AUSN/NRA members and veterans on Capitol Hill, throughout Washington; and to defend your earned benefits over the last 9 years. I believe in you. You must believe in yourself and your peer service members, and veterans. In a surprise, I was informed this week that my contract will not be renewed effective 31 December 2011 to be your primary advocate on Capitol Hill. I will as always keep you informed on current news from Capitol Hill – through 31 December.

- Leaders inspire people; managers, well, they "manage" people and assets.
- Leaders think about protecting and promoting their people; managers think about protecting their own careers.
- Leaders take charge and accept responsibility; managers often pass the buck for fear of making a wrong decision.
- Leaders take risks when necessary; managers are taught to avoid risks whenever possible.

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