

LEGISLATIVE DIVISION UPDATE

This week both chambers continued consideration of fiscal year (FY) 2017 appropriations legislation. The House began debate on a plethora of amendment to **H.R. 4909**, the FY 2017 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). On the evening of May 18, the House voted 277-147 to approve the NDAA, sending it to the Senate for further action.

LEGISLATIVE DIVISION UPDATES

On May 9, Assistant Director Matthew Shuman conducted a conference call with staff from DOL VETS about legislation that was introduced in the Senate that deals with JVSG grants and funding.

On May 9, Assistant Director Matthew Shuman conducted a conference call with the U.S. Chamber HOH about upcoming hiring events.

On May 10, Assistant Director Matthew Shuman and Deputy Director Dean Stoline conducted a meeting with the Legislative Director for Rep. Zinke in regards to adding HR 303 as an amendment to the 2016 NDAA. They agree and the Rules Committee declined to authorize the amendment.

On May 11, Assistant Director Matthew Shuman attended the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity Legislative Mark Up.

On May 11, Assistant Director Matthew Shuman conducted "drop-ins" with the following Capitol Hill offices: Reps. Steve King (IA), Ryan Zinke (MT), Jerry McNerney (CA), Raul Ruiz (CA), and the Budget Committee.

On May 11, Assistant Director Matthew Shuman along with other VSO's conducted a conference call with Rohit Chorpa at the Dept. of Education as a follow up conversation to an in-person meeting held with Secretary King in April.

On May 11, Assistant Director Matthew Shuman conducted a conference call with DAV about the *SOLVE Act*.

On May 12, Assistant Director Matthew Shuman took part in a conference call about the U.S. Chamber HOH event taking place in Boston on May 24th.

On May 17: Deputy Director Dean Stoline and Assistant Director Warren Goldstein conducted a meeting with Emily Farnell, Legislative Correspondent for Sen. Joe Manchin III (WV). The meeting served as a discussion to request the Senator to co-sponsor **S. 271**, the *Retired Pay Restoration Act of 2015*.

On May 17, Deputy Director Dean Stoline and Assistant Directors Warren Goldstein and Matt Shuman met with Elizabeth Hittos, Chief of Staff for Rep. Gus Bilirakis (FL), to discuss the progress of his bill, **H.R. 303**, which will complete the repeal of the **Disabled Veterans Tax**, or concurrent receipt as it is also called. His bill now has 113 cosponsors. The American Legion was commended for its efforts from our members requesting their

representatives to become cosponsors on this important legislation (legislative mandate from **Resolution No. 165**). Please continue contacting your Members of Congress. Urge your Representatives to cosponsor and support **H.R. 303**, and your Senators to support the companion bill, **S. 271**. If they are already cosponsors, thank them for their support and ask them to urge their fellow Members of Congress to pass this legislation.

On May 17, Assistant Director Matthew Shuman attended the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity hearing entitled, "Veterans in Tech: Innovative careers for all generations of veterans." This hearing focused on getting veterans and their families jobs in the tech field. Amazon, Microsoft, and Uber all testified.

On May 17, Deputy Director Dean Stoline, Assistant Directors Matthew Shuman & Warren Goldstein conducted a meeting with the Legislative Assistant and Chief of Staff for Rep. Gus Bilirakis of Florida about the strategy moving forward on **H.R. 303** and The American Legion's continued support of this crucial issue facing veterans.

On May 18, Assistant Director Warren Goldstein attended a House Committee on Veterans' Affairs markup of pending veterans legislation. The following bills were discussed:

H.R. 2460 — A bill to amend Title 38, United States Code, to improve the provision of adult day health care services for veterans.

H.R. 3286 — *Honoring Investments in Recruiting and Employing American Military Veterans (HIRE Vets) Act*

H.R. 3471 — *Veterans Mobility Safety Act*

H.R. 3715 — *Final Farewell Act*

H.R. 3956 — *VA Health Center Management Stability and Improvement Act*

H.R. 3974 — *Grow Our Own Directive: Physician Assistant Employment and Education Act*

H.R. 3989 — *Support Our Military Caregivers Act*

H.R. 4087 — *Fair Treatment for Families of Veterans Act*

H.R. 4138 — A bill to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to recoup relocation expenses paid to or on behalf of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

H.R. 4782 — *Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act*

H.R. 5178 — *Veterans Success on Campus Act*

H.R. 5229 — A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a study to evaluate the effectiveness of programs, especially in regards to women veterans and minority veterans, in transitioning to civilian life, and for other purposes.

On May 18, Assistant Director Matthew Shuman attended the House Agriculture Committee hearing focused on food insecurity and employing veterans within the agriculture community.

On May 18, Assistant Director Matthew Shuman assisted Cole Lyle and his PTSD Service Dog, Kaya Lyle, around Capitol Hill in an attempt to meet with several members of Congress to get them to co-sponsor the *PAWS Act*. This legislation would assist the VA in obtaining funds needed to provide certain veterans with PTSD Service animals. We met

with Speaker Paul D. Ryan (WI), Reps. Trey Gowdy (SC), Will Hurd (TX), Mark Walker (NC) and Peter King (NY).

On May 19, Assistant Director Matthew Shuman conducted several drop by's on Capitol Hill. During these meetings, the conversation focused on both **H.R. 303** and the *SOLVE Act*. The offices met with were: Reps. Ryan Costello (PA), Jerry McNerney(CA), Sam Graves (MO) and the House Veterans' Affairs Committee (HVAC).

On May 20, Assistant Director Matthew Shuman attended a meeting which was hosted by Department of Labor Veterans Employment and Training Service (DOL VETS) Asst. Secretary Michael Michaud about apprenticeship programs for veterans.

Letters of Support

The American Legion on May 18 sent a letter of support to Rep. Dan Donovan (NY),-giving our organization's support for draft legislation. This measure would assist servicemembers and veterans in obtaining Transportation Worker Identification Credentials (TWIC). This card is required by the Maritime Transportation Security Act for workers who need access to secure areas of the nation's maritime facilities and vessels. The bill would create an expedited procedure specifically for servicemembers and veterans, thereby decreasing the time period many of our nation's warfighters must wait to begin the next phase in their lives, civilian employment that would apply the training they received while in uniform.

Update on Flag Amendment Bill

On January 7, 2015, **House Joint Resolution (H.J. Res.) 9** was introduced by Rep. Steve Womack (AR). This legislation is a proposed constitutional amendment to protect the American flag from physical desecration. Its text states simply: "*The Congress shall have power to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States.*" In addition to Rep. Womack and the five original co-sponsors of the House joint resolution there are now a total of **38** cosponsors.

On July 30, 2015, Sen. David Vitter (LA) introduced **Senate Joint Resolution (S.J. Res.) 21**. The Senate measure now has **8** cosponsors.

Additional cosponsors continue to be sought for both measures. [A listing of all cosponsors for both flag amendment bills is attached to the end of this report.]

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For Week Ending 05-13-2016

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 9

Rep. Steve Womack (R-AR-3) [Sponsor]
Rep. Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE-1)
Rep. Kevin Cramer (R-ND-At Large)
Rep. Bill Johnson (R-OH-6)
Rep. David Roe (R-TN-1)
Rep. Marsha Blackburn (R-TN-7)
Rep. Walter Jones (R-NC-3)
Rep. Steve Palazzo (R-MS-4)
Rep. Scot DesJarlais (R-TN-4)
Rep. Bob Latta (R-OH-5)
Rep. Rob Bishop (R-UT-1)
Rep. Jeff Miller (R-FL-1)
Rep. Michael Simpson (R-ID-2)
Rep. Patrick Tiberi (R-OH-12)
Rep. Ralph Abraham (R-LA-5)
Rep. Tim Huelskamp (R-KS-1)
Rep. Frank LoBiondo (R-NJ-2)
Rep. Daniel Lipinski (D-IL-3)
Rep. Brad Ashford (D-NE-2)
Rep. Mark Amodei (R-NV-2)
Rep. John Kline (R-MN-2)
Rep. Jason Smith (R-MO-8)
Rep. David Young (R-IA-3)
Rep. Adrian Smith (R-NE-3)
Rep. Joe Wilson (R-SC-2)
Rep. Steve King (R-IA-4)
Rep. Charles Boustany (R-LA-3)
Rep. Brian Babin (R-TX-36)
Rep. Pete Olson (R-TX-22)
Rep. John Duncan (R-TN-2)
Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-NJ-11)
Rep. John Fleming (R-LA-4)
Rep. David Rouzer (R-NC-7)
Rep. Tom Cole (R-OK-4)
Rep. Vicky Hartzler (R-MO-4)
Rep. Bill Flores (R-TX-17)
Rep. Greg Walden (R-OR-2)
Rep. Pete Sessions (R-TX-32)
Rep. Dan Newhouse (R-WA-4)

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 21

Sen. David Vitter (R-LA) [Sponsor]
Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-UT)
Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC)
Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-AL)
Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-IA)
Sen. John Cornyn (R-TX)
Sen. Dean Heller (R-NV)
Sen. Deb Fischer (R-NE)
Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK)

Most recent addition to list of cosponsors in the Senate.