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OCC Legislative Liaison Update

With the departure/transfer of CDR Bryan Bowman, USPHS, the OCC Legislative Liaison it became necessary to take over the position on a temporary basis. That now has become permanent job.

Being the Legislative Liaison is challenging to say the least. The environment is constantly changing. Great amounts of material are produced by MOAA that requires at least a weekly vigil. They in-turn are under constant pressure to stay abreast of all that the Congress is doing which is a daunting. Bryan was a pro at monitoring what goes on.

During the year there have been changes in the 'Take Action' arena. On 4 January, MOAA posted a new Legislative Action Center weblink. Once in it, and once members register, it is extremely easy to review all the pending legislative actions, select the ones that are of concern to the reader and then with the movement of the cursor, they can send a message directly to their local representatives.

Our chapter representatives have tried to keep chapter members up to date on issues by telling them in newsletters and messages to go on-line and register their feelings. How successful we have been can only be gauged by whether the Congressional Representative or Senator supports the legislation.

MOAA has gone to great lengths to get members mobilized on particular legislative issues. They have placed tear-out cards and letters in at least two MOAA Officer magazines. In one issue, requests to contact congressional representatives were included in various articles.

In April, MOAA launched its second virtual Advocacy in Action (AiA) program. The program concluded on Friday April 29. It was stress in webinars and messages that Members of Congress would be in their home states/districts for a two-week work period during the month of April and that AIA teams were encouraged to encouraged to schedule in person meetings in their home states if they are able and it is safe to do so. Otherwise, team members were to schedule visits with the representatives in their offices in Washington.

This year, three important issues were chosen to be pushed. They were The Military Pay Raise at 4.6% per the Employment Cost Index (ECI), the Richard Star Act, and the Stop Copay Overpay Act. In Ohio, seven teams were established seventeen team members worked the issues during the AIA period. Those members were:

Team 1: MG Dan Hahn, USA (Ret),
CAPT Mike Mentas, USN (Ret)
Col Dick Calta, USAF (Ret)

Team 2: COL Bart Stovicek, USA (Ret)
COL Cary Weatherhead, USA (Ret)

Team 3 LTC Rod Hosler, USA (Ret)

Team 4 LTC Andrew Emanuele, USA (Ret)

LTC John Anderson, USA (Ret)

Team 5 CAPT Michael Mentas, USN (Ret)

Team 6 LTC Thomas Robisch, USA (Ret)

CAPT Terry Cooney, USN (Ret)

Team 7 BG Thomas O'Brien, Jr., USA (Ret)

CAPT Michael Glaser, USN (Ret)

CAPT Steve Drefahl, USN (Ret)

LTC Paul Fellingner, USA (Ret)

We are hoping that our efforts help in some small way in getting these bills passed.

In addition to the above, the Legislative Liaison has been monitoring the MOAA web pages for issues that are of particular importance to our members. In addition, the website Military.com is regularly monitored for important issues. Below I have listed one of the important issues MOAA has pushed to educate members. We realize in doing such work it may appear redundant to those that monitor the MOAA website on a regular basis, but we also know that many of our members do not use computer links much as they age. We can only hope they occasionally check their computers for local information.

Upcoming Legislative Update Program June 29: This webinar covered 'Where our federal dollars are spent', 'Military experience of our legislators', 'Recent legislative wins and losses', 'MOAA's 2022/2023 legislative priorities, including key NDAA issues', 'SBP-DIC offset elimination phase-in' and 'MOAA's COLA Watch'. Members received several emails reminding them of the event.

In addition to MOAA, the Military.com website is monitored for items of interest that may not be seen or known by our members. The following is an example: Military Retirees and Dependents with ID Cards That Don't Expire Need to Get Replacements Within 4 Years. The link provided factual information about the cutoff date for replacing retiree and dependent identification cards with the new "Next Generation Uniform Services Identification Card" (USID).

The above is only a fraction of the information being made available to us. It is important that our Legislative Liaison representatives in the chapters try to stay abreast of what may be of high importance to their members. It is a time-consuming task and those individuals filling the positions are to be congratulated on their efforts.

John W. Anderson, LTC (Retired)

MOAA OCC Legislative Liaison