

## National Legislative Division Weekly

### CONGRESS

The Senate returned from August recess this week and the House is scheduled to return next week. On Thursday the Senate passes HR 5754, requiring the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to create a system for veterans to electronically submit complaints about health care they received from the Department. This legislation passed the House on May 17<sup>th</sup> with 411 votes in favor and only one against (Rep. Casten (D-IL)). The President is expected to sign it into law.

Congress is unlikely to pass the appropriations bills required to keep the government operating past the October 1 start of the 2023 fiscal year. Lawmakers are in the midst of negotiating a continuing resolution (CR) that is expected to be passed later this month. The CR will likely go until mid-December, when the lame duck Congress will need to either pass a full budget or yet another CR that lasts into the next session.

### NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT (NDAA)

In July, the House of Representatives passed the Fiscal Year 2023 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which essentially authorizes all Pentagon and National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) weapons, salaries and support, and outlines the U.S. national security strategy for the year ahead. This year's House-passed version of the bill was more than 1,300 pages long and authorizes more than \$850 billion for spending on defense programs at the Department of Defense, Department of Energy, and other defense-related programs, including about \$50 billion for nuclear weapons. A total of 1,220 amendments were offered to the bill. In the end, the House Rules Committee permitted votes on 650 amendments, mostly of them in en bloc groups of amendments adopted by voice votes. Among the Legion-supported amendments adopted were ones that:

- Expands eligibility for Department of Veterans Affairs hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care to include veterans of World War II who are not already covered.
- Require the Department of Defense to annually report to the House Armed Services Committee the numbers of noncitizen servicemembers, their immigration status, and the annual naturalization numbers of those serving.
- Authorize the President to award the Medal of Honor to E. Royce Williams for acts of valor beyond the call of duty during the Korean War on November 18, 1952, while a member of the US Navy.
- Repeals the 2002 Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq.
- Repeals the 1991 Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution.
- Repeals the 1957 Authorization for Use of Military Force in the Middle East.
- Expresses the Sense of Congress that Authorizations for the Use of Military Force (AUMFs) should include a sunset provision.
- Requires the State Department to surge capacity to process Afghan special immigrant visas and P1, P2 visa applications. "Surge capacity" can include sending additional consular personnel to embassies and consulates in the region processing Afghan visas.

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The full Senate has not yet considered its version of the FY23 NDAA bill. On Wednesday, Senate Armed Services Committee Chair Sen. Reed (D-RI) told reporters he wants to get the FY23 NDAA to the floor this month. He acknowledged this may be difficult given other priorities such as the CR. The National Legislative Division is working with Senate offices to offer the above Legion-supported amendments as part of the Senate version with the aim of keeping as many of them as possible in the final version of the bill that passes Congress and reaches the president's desk.

### UPCOMING HEARINGS

- On Wednesday, September 14, the House Ways and Means Committee will hold a hearing titled "The Future of U.S.-Taiwan Trade."
- On Wednesday September 14, the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee will hold a hearing to consider the Coast Guard Authorization Act.
- On Wednesday September 14, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will hold a hearing to consider the Taiwan Policy Act of 2022.
- On Thursday, September 15, the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity will hold a hearing titled "Veteran Readiness and Employment: Is VA Succeeding?"
- On Thursday, September 15, the House Veterans' Affairs Committee (HVAC) will hold a hearing titled "Examining women veterans' access to the full spectrum of medical care, including reproductive healthcare, through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Veterans Health Administration (VHA)."