

December 2020

Website: <http://lincolnlandmoaa.org>

Upcoming Events

- 12 February 2021—Spouse recognition-location TBD.
- 9 April 2021—Location TBD.
- 11 June 2021—Decatur-location TBD.
- 17 July 2021—Golf Outing, Shambollee Golf Course, Petersburg.
- 13 August 2021—Island Bay yacht Club.
- 8 October 2021—location TBD
- 10 December 2021—Annual Christmas Party—Springfield

Inside this issue:

Next Meeting Information	1
President's Corner	2
Chapter information	3
Legislation	4
Chapter Information	5
Legislation Information For all	6-11

THE SALUTE—Never Stop Serving...



Next Meeting Information

Our December meeting has been cancelled!

The EXCOMM met and decided to cancel the meeting due to the current COVID-19 situation.

Our 2021 meeting dates are outlined on the left side of this page.

This issue is packed with Legislative information.

Our 2021 golf outing is now scheduled for 17 July 2021.
Please make a note and plan on attending.

Holiday wishes to all from the Executive Committee.

Hoping 2021 is much more pleasant than 2020 has been!!

If you have any questions, please contact one of the two individuals listed below.

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President's Corner

SEASONS GREETINGS TO ALL!!

Our December meeting has been cancelled due to the ongoing COVID 19 Pandemic.

2020 has been a truly tough year for everyone, and I sincerely hope 2021 will be better.

We did accomplish one great event this year, our golf outing and Gold Star Family recognition day went very well. Thanks to all who helped or played a role in its success!

This issue of our newsletter is jam packed with important legislative information. Please take time to contact your elected officials and let them know how you feel about their support to MOAA.

A very special thank you to COL Tyler for all his hard work and efforts on our behalf.
Thank You Sir!!!!

Best wishes for a Great Holiday Season. See you in 2021!!!

Dave Miller

IL-03 Lincoln Land Chapter

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[http://
lincolnlandmoaa.org](http://lincolnlandmoaa.org)



Our Purpose—Serving the entire Military Community locally & nationally

Our Motivation—Supporting our most reliable asset—the US military member

Our Means—Informing legislators, supporting local events & organizations

Our Membership—Commissioned Officers of the Seven Uniformed Services (USA, USMC, USN, USAF, USCG, NOAA, USPHS) who strongly believe in supporting a volunteer force for the safety and security of our country

MISSION OF THE LINCOLN LAND CHAPTER

Military Officers Association of America

The Lincoln Land Chapter's mission is to foster fraternal relations among the retired, active and former uniformed services and their National Guard or reserve components;

to protect the rights and interest of same to include dependents and survivors;

to further promote useful services for members of the former and current members of the Armed Forces and their dependents and survivors;

and to serve the community to the fullest extent possible.

Legislative Liaison Update

Well the election is over. There are some new folks who might need to be informed of those things that are important to their veteran constituents. That is our job. As our new elected officials (and the old ones too) settle in to their next legislative session, it is a good time to reach out to them. MOAA's federal legislative goals continue to focus on controlling Tricare costs and maintaining the uniformed healthcare system. Both issues have language in the current Defense Authorization Bill (NDAA) which is slowly making its way through Congress. As always, you can find the latest advocacy issues on the MOAA web site at: www.MOAA.org.

The Illinois Veterans Advisory Council has prepared a voter legislative guide on veteran issues in Illinois. However, none of the 10 Bills were voted on in the Illinois House. Especially sad was the failure of SB 110, an amendment to the disabled veterans act to provide DIC for surviving spouses. The following selected Illinois bills ave direct impact on our veterans and military families.

Illinois - SB 110 Surviving Spouse.

Illinois - SB 1255 Transfer of Veterans Education Benefits Amends the Higher Education Student Assistance Act.

Illinois – SB 2293 Admission to the Veterans Homes for Retired Guard Reserve Amends the Department of Veterans' Affairs Act.

Illinois – HB 5422 - Tax Credit for Guard and Reserve Employers

Illinois – SB 3761 - Tax Credit for Guard and Reserve Employers

Since there will not be a veto session of the Illinois legislature, we can expect the bills will probably be addressed in next year's session. So now is the time to help our legislators see the importance of these initiatives for Illinois servicemembers and their families. Reach out to them and "educate" them!

Semper Fi – Bob



MOAA is the nation's largest and most influential association of military officers. It is an independent, nonprofit, politically nonpartisan organization.

While MOAA is permitted by law to lobby—and does so actively—its status as a tax-exempt veterans organization precludes it from participating in political activities, which are defined as intervening directly or indirectly in any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office.

Stated briefly: the association may advocate issues, but it may not advocate the election or defeat of particular candidates or political parties. This newsletter follows the policies of MOAA National.

**Now and Always
We'll be There.**



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2021 Military Retiree and VA Disability Pay Raise

This article by Jim Absher originally appeared on Military.com, a leading source of news for the military and veteran community.

Military retirees, those who receive disability or other benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs, federal retirees and Social Security recipients will see a 1.3% increase in their monthly checks for 2021. The annual Cost Of Living Allowance (COLA) is slightly less than the 1.6% increase from last year but in line with the historical increases seen over the last 10 years. Each year, military retirement pay, Survivor Benefit Plan Annuities, VA Compensation and Pensions, and Social Security benefits are adjusted for the rate of inflation. Military retirement pay is one of the top three benefits of military service, along with medical and other benefits. Understanding how to calculate military retirement pay involves understanding the final pay and high 36-month average methods.

Retirement Pay Increase: As a result of the increase, retired military members will see a \$13 increase for each \$1,000 in military retirement pension they receive each month. Retirees who entered military service on or after Aug. 1, 1986, and opted for the Career Status Bonus (CSB/Redux retirement plan) have any COLA increases reduced by 1%, so they will see a smaller increase in 2021. They should see a monthly increase of only \$3 per \$1,000. Survivors receiving Survivor Benefit Plan payments will see the same increase of \$13 per \$1,000 in their monthly payments.

VA Disability Increase: Disabled veterans will also get a bump. The average VA disability check will go up about \$1.85 per month for those with a 10% rating, and \$19.68 for those rated at 100%.

Federal Spending, Emergency Stimulus Aid on Collision Course in Congress

With campaign season behind us and fewer than three weeks before the stopgap measure to fund the government expires, lawmakers have little time not only to get a defense authorization bill across the finish line, but also to agree on an emergency COVID-19 package and the 12 spending bills required to fund federal agencies for the fiscal year that started Oct. 1.

Up to this point, congressional leaders have been working to keep the emergency aid and federal spending bills separate. However, negotiations have stalled over several contentious issues in the relief package, including the topline figure of over nearly \$2 trillion proposed by the administration. Leaders are struggling with several issues, such as national standards for coronavirus testing, contact tracing and research; paycheck and business protections; unemployment insurance; relief for low-income workers; and aid to states for fighting the pandemic.

The longer Congress puts off passing an emergency aid package, the more likely lawmakers will be forced to deal with both pandemic aid and federal spending in one large omnibus appropriations bill. Such a move makes it even harder for lawmakers to agree on what will be a multitrillion-dollar package, likely teeing up another continuing resolution to fill the gap, kicking the decision into the new year — or worse, triggering a partial government shutdown until Congress and the administration can reach an agreement.

TRICARE Prescription Drug Cost Won't Rise in 2021:

Editor's note: This article by Patricia Kime originally appeared on Military.com, a leading source of news for the military and veteran community.

Some good news for Tricare beneficiaries facing increasing costs in Tricare enrollment fees and premiums, next year: Your prescription drug costs will not change. Under the fiscal 2018 National Defense Authorization Act, copayments for medications available at retail pharmacies and through the Tricare mail-order system will not increase next year. Under the fee structure, 30-day prescriptions at Tricare network pharmacies for generic drugs will remain at \$13, and for brand names, \$33.

Copayments for prescriptions available through Tricare's home delivery program also will remain the same, a 90-day supply of a generic drug delivered by mail will be \$10, a brand-name medication, \$29 for a 90-day prescription, and \$60 for a medication not listed in the Tricare formulary. Prescriptions remain available to no cost for those who can use a pharmacy at a military treatment facility.

[TAKE ACTION: [Urge Your Lawmakers to Support NDAA Provisions to Stop Cuts to Military Medicine](#)]

The fiscal 2018 defense policy bill set the rates for Tricare pharmacy copayments through 2027. By law, they will increase next year by \$1 to \$8, depending on the type of prescription, unless Congress changes the fee schedule. The stabilization for 2021, also set by law, comes on the heels of a 2020 increase that took many military retirees by surprise. That spike raised each quantity and drug category by several dollars per refill. Earlier this year, Defense Department health officials announced that most retirees using Tricare Select will be required to pay enrollment fees for the health program beginning in January. Military retirees under age 65 who joined the military before 2018 will pay an annual enrollment fee of \$150 for an individual, or \$12.50 per month, or \$300 (\$25 per month) for a family.

Until now, they have been required to make copayments and cost shares as well as some hospitalization and other fees for health services, but no enrollment fees. The new fees were set into law by the fiscal 2017 National Defense Authorization Act but they were delayed until 2021.

Saying that the coronavirus has had "unprecedented impacts on the health and economy of our nation," Tester asked Esper to implement a 12-month grace period to ensure that military retirees and their families who use Select have time to meet the new payment requirements.

"No military retiree or their loved ones should be at risk of losing their health care coverage and not receiving the care they need in the midst of this pandemic," Tester wrote.

DoD is required by law to implement the new fees this year, but Tester said it is unlikely Congress could change the requirement before the end of the year. He noted that it is within Esper's authority to delay implementation.

The Defense Health Agency also announced that military dependents who use Tricare Young Adult for their health coverage will see their health care costs rise next year. Monthly premiums for those on TYA Prime will increase by \$83, to \$459, and for those on TYA Select, by \$29, to \$257.

Enrollment fees for retirees and their family members who use Tricare Prime, as well as premiums, catastrophic caps, deductibles and copays for other Tricare programs have yet to be announced for 2021. These fees are based on the annual retiree cost-of-living adjustment, or COLA, which was projected to be 1.3% as of late summer.

Tricare officials said any new out-of-pocket expenses determined by the COLA increase will be published before the start of open enrollment Nov. 9. The enrollment window closes Dec. 14.

Key Bills in the US Congress

The following key bills are important issues before the 116th Congress that MOAA recommends supporting. However, most of the bills will not come to fruition in the current Congress, but be re-initiated in the next congressional session. You may find more details about each bill, such as the sponsor, status, prognosis, what stakeholders are saying, and the history on the MOAA website or at <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/#find>.

Federal – HR 5995. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to expand eligibility to certain military retirees for concurrent receipt of veterans' disability compensation and retired pay or combat-related special compensation, and for other purposes.

Introduced February 27, 2020

Original sponsor: Rep. Gus Bilirakis (R-FL); 98 Co-Sponsors

Illinois Co-Sponsors:

Rep. Bobby Rush (D-IL)

Rep. Darin LaHood (R-IL)

Rep. Rodney Davis (R-IL)

Federal - S 21: Pay Our Coast Guard Act. A bill making continuing appropriations for Coast Guard pay in the event of an appropriations act expired prior to the enactment of new appropriations (official title to be confirmed). [MOAA supports](#).

Introduced January 3, 2019

Original sponsor: Sen. John Thune (R-SD); 40 Co-Sponsors

Illinois Co-Sponsors: Sen. Tammy Duckworth (D-IL)

Federal – HR 333: Disabled Veterans Tax Termination Act. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to permit retired members of the Armed Forces who have a service-connected disability rated less than 50 percent to receive concurrent payment of both retired pay and veterans' disability compensation, to extend eligibility for concurrent receipt to chapter 61 disability retirees with less than 20 years of service, and for other purposes. [MOAA supports](#).

Introduced: January 8, 2019

Original Sponsor: Rep. Sanford Bishop (D-GA); 36 Co-Sponsors

Illinois Co-Sponsors: None

Federal - HR 413: Hire A Hero Act of 2019. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow the work opportunity credit to small businesses which hire individuals who are members of the Ready Reserve or National Guard, and for other purposes. [MOAA supports](#).

Introduced: January 9, 2019

Original Sponsor: Del. Stacey Plaskett (D-VI); 20 Co-Sponsors

Illinois Co-Sponsors: Rep. Robin Kelly (D-IL2)

Federal – HR 847: Protecting Gold Star Spouses Act of 2019. A bill to provide interim appropriations for the Coast Guard Retired Serviceman's Family Protection and Survivor Benefits Plans for each fiscal year after fiscal year 2018, and for other purposes. [MOAA supports](#).

Introduced: January 29, 2019

Original Sponsor: Rep. Mark Green (R-TN); 45 Co-Sponsors

[Illinois Co-Sponsors:](#)

Rep. Bobby Rush (D-IL1)

Rep. Robin Kelly (D-IL2)

Federal – S 3393: Concurrent Receipts of Veterans' Disability. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to provide for concurrent receipt of veterans' disability compensation and retired pay for disability retirees with fewer than 20 years of service and a combat-related disability, and for other purposes. [MOAA supports](#)

Introduced March 4, 2020

Original sponsor: Sen. Jon Tester; 31 Co-Sponsors

Illinois Co-Sponsors: None

Federal – S 1047: Surviving Spouse DIC Compensation. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to create a dependency and indemnity compensation allowance for surviving spouses receiving dependency and indemnity compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes. [MOAA supports](#).

Introduced: April 4, 2019

Original Sponsor: Sen. Jon Tester (D-MT); 4 Co-Sponsors

Illinois Co-Sponsors: None

Federal – S 2216: Secretary of Veterans Affairs recognition caregivers of veterans. A bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to formally recognize caregivers of veterans, notify veterans and caregivers of clinical determinations relating to eligibility for caregiver programs, and temporarily extend benefits for veterans who are determined ineligible for the family caregiver program, and for other purposes. [MOAA supports](#).

Introduced: July 23, 2019

Original Sponsor: Senator Gary Peters (D-MI); 18 Co-Sponsors

Illinois Co-Sponsors:

Sen. Richard Durbin (D-IL)

Status: Read twice and referred to: Senate Veterans' Affairs. Congressional record P.S5012.

Federal – S 2981: Amend National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Commissioned Officer Corps Act of 2002. A bill to reauthorize and amend the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Commissioned Officer Corps Act of 2002, and for other purposes. [MOAA supports](#).

Introduced: December 4, 2019

Original Sponsor: Sen. Daniel Sullivan (R-AK); 2 Co-Sponsor

Illinois Co-Sponsors: None

Latest action:

December 4, 2019 – Read twice and referred to: Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee. Congressional record P.S6858

December 11, 2019 – Full committee consideration and markup held by the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee

December 11, 2019 – Committee vote: En bloc bills and amendments-vote to report ordered reported favorable to the full senate (en bloc, as amended) by voice vote.

December 11, 2019 – Committee vote: En bloc bills and amendments. Vote to report ordered. Reported favorably to the full Senate (en bloc, as amended) by voice vote.

September 30, 2020 – Reported to the Senate amended by the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee and placed on the Senate legislative calendar. S REPT 116-273 (in the legislative day that began on Tuesday, September 29, 2020.) Congressional record P. S5948

Federal – HR 2406: Amend National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Commissioned Officer Corps Act of 2002. A bill to reauthorize and amend the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Commissioned Officer Corps Act of 2002, and for other purposes. [MOAA supports.](#)

Introduced: April 30, 2019

Original Sponsor: Rep. Ed Case; 11 Co-Sponsors

Illinois Co-Sponsors: None

Latest actions:

September 18, 2019 – Committee vote: NOAA commissioned officer corps – substitute amendment Grijalva, D-AZ

Full committee consideration and markup held by the House Natural Resources Committee.

Federal – S 2629: Amend Public Health Service Act with respect to the Public Health Service Corps. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act with respect to the Public Health Service Corps. [MOAA supports.](#)

Introduced: April October 17, 2019

Original Sponsor: Sen. Mike Rounds (R-SD); 2 Co-Sponsors

Illinois Co-Sponsors: None

Latest action:

January 9, 2020 – Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee-Reported amendment adopted by unanimous consent. Congressional record P.S147.

January 9, 2020 – Measure, as amended, passed in the senate by voice vote. Congressional record P.S147.

January 13, 2020 – Received in the House and referred to the House Energy and Commerce Committee. Congressional record P.H184.

Federal – S 2297: Appropriations for the Coast Guard. A bill to authorize appropriations for the Coast Guard, and for other purposes. [MOAA supports.](#)

Introduced: April July 25, 2019

Original Sponsor: Sen. Daniel Sullivan (R-AK); 3 Co-Sponsors

Illinois Co-Sponsors: None

Latest action:

July 31, 2019 – Committee vote: Coast Guard reauthorization-En bloc amendments

July 31, 2019 – Full committee consideration and markup held by the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee.

September 26, 2019 – Reported to the senate amended and without a written report by the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee and placed on the senate legislative calendar. Congressional record P.S5747.

Key Bills in the Illinois Legislature

Last month COL (USA, Ret) Michael Peck, (a member of the Illinois Council of Chapters) sent out an email stating that he and the Lake County VAC were developing a voter legislative guide on veteran issues in Illinois. They were using 10 priority legislations developed by the IDVA Advisory Council to urge voters to contact their state legislators and urge them to be co-sponsors. The 10 bills were viewed as key for veterans, but none of the 10 were voted on in the Illinois House. Especially sad was the failure of SB 110, an amendment to the disabled veterans act to provide DIC for surviving spouses. The Illinois bills that are listed below that have direct impact on our veterans and military families.

Illinois - SB 110 Surviving Spouse. Amends the Property Tax Code. Provides that, for the 2015 taxable year and thereafter, the exemption for veterans with disabilities also carries over to the surviving spouse of a veteran who was killed in the line of duty in the current taxable year or any preceding taxable year. Provides that, for the 2019 taxable year and thereafter, the exemption for veterans with disabilities also carries over to (i) the surviving spouse of a veteran who did not obtain the exemption before death, but who would have qualified for the exemption in the current taxable year if he or she had survived and (ii) the surviving spouse of a veteran whose death was determined to be service-connected and who is certified by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs as being a current recipient of Dependency and Indemnity Compensation. Provides that, in the case of a surviving spouse who is certified by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs as being a current recipient of Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, the property is exempt.

Illinois - SB 1255 Transfer of Veterans Education Benefits Amends the Higher Education Student Assistance Act. With regard to the Illinois Veteran grant program, provides that, beginning with the 2019-2020 academic year, a veteran may transfer his or her benefits to a qualified dependent if certain conditions are met; defines "qualified dependent". Provides that a veteran may transfer benefits to multiple qualified dependents; however, the total number of credit hours of assistance transferred may not exceed 120 credit hours, and a veteran may transfer benefits to only one qualified dependent at a time.

Illinois – SB 2293 Admission to the Veterans Homes for Retired Guard Reserve Amends the Department of Veterans' Affairs Act. Provides that a veteran is entitled to admission to an Illinois Veterans Home if he or she has served in the National Guard or Reserve Forces of the United States and completed 20 years of satisfactory service, is otherwise eligible to receive reserve or active duty retirement benefits, and has been an Illinois resident for at least one year before applying for admission for purposes of eligibility for domiciliary care or nursing home care (currently, only domiciliary care).

Illinois – HB 5422 - Tax Credit for Guard and Reserve Employers Amends the Illinois Income Tax Act. Makes changes to a credit awarded for wages paid to qualified veterans. Provides that the credit shall be: (1) \$5,000 (instead of 20% of the gross wages, but not to exceed \$5,000) for certain veterans who were unemployed at the time of hire; and (2) \$1,200 (instead of 10% of the gross wages, but not to exceed \$1,200) for other qualified veterans. Changes the definition of "qualified veteran" to include all Illinois residents who are members of the National Guard, reserve, or regular component of the Armed Forces of the United States. Allows the credit to be prorated. Provides that the credit is exempt from the Act's automatic sunset provision.

Illinois – SB 3761 - Tax Credit for Guard and Reserve Employers Amends the School Code. Beginning with the 2021-2022 school year, requires a school district to provide to students enrolled in grades 10 through 12 the opportunity to take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery test and consult with a military recruiter during. There will not be a veto session of the Illinois legislature. The bills before Illinois and the Congress will probably be addressed next year.



COL (USMC, Ret) Tyler meeting with Congressman Rodney Davis

