

Newsbytes
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Senate Passes Spending Minibus

The Senate passed a \$675 billion defense spending measure (H.R. 6157), that was included with Labor-HHS-Education spending legislation. This is known as a "minibus" for two-thirds of discretionary spending for the coming fiscal year commencing on October 1st (FY 2019). The bill also includes a Continuing Resolution to fund a number of agencies including the Department of Homeland Security (U.S. Coast Guard) to keep those agencies funded until December 7, 2018. The bill now goes to the House for a vote. Should it pass it would be the first time in over a decade that the two largest appropriations bills (Defense & HHS) were sent to the President to sign before the fiscal year start date of October 1st. Another "minibus" bill (H.R. 5895) includes the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations, along with three other of the 12 appropriations bills has already been sent to the President to be signed into law. FRA monitors the appropriations process to ensure that spending (appropriations) bills adequately fund Defense authorized programs, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Coast Guard.

Purple Heart Recipients Exempt from Some GI Bill Transfer of Benefit Limitations

The Department of Defense (DoD) recently issued a memorandum (DTM-18-006) to provide an exception to Post-911 GI Bill policy for active duty Purple Heart recipients. This will allow them to transfer their education benefits without requiring four more years of service. This change comes after another policy change issued in July 2018 that prohibits service members with 16 or more years of service from transferring this benefit without extending their service—including service members who were severely wounded and undergoing the medical retirement process. Transferability was intended to be a retention tool service members who are currently eligible to designate a family member as a beneficiary do so prior to separating from the service.

[Click here](#) to view a copy of the DoD Memorandum online.

POW/MIA Recognition Day Twentieth Anniversary

National POW/MIA Recognition Day is an observance that honors those who were prisoners of war (POW) as well as those who are still missing in action (MIA). It is observed in the United States on the third Friday in September (September 21, 2018). National POW/MIA Recognition Day was proclaimed by the United States Congress in 1998.

FRA is working to ensure that the Department of Defense make every effort for a complete accounting of all Prisoners Of War and Missing in Action service members for past and current conflicts. For more information about POW/MIA Recognition Day you can [click here](#).