

NewsBytes April 12, 2019

In this issue:

FRA Recognizes USN Performers

Mental Health Bill Care Introduced

Senate Urges Coast Guard Pay During any Shutdown

Call for "Military Retiree Appreciation Day"

FRA Recognizes Outstanding USN Performers

The FRA continued its long-standing tradition of recognizing superior performance, by honoring Navy and Marine Corps personnel who are standouts in their respective fields. FRA's National President (NP) Bob Washington, National Executive Director Tom Snee, and members of FRA's headquarters staff participated in several events honoring the Navy's 2018 Reservists of the Year (ROYs), including a special ceremony at the U.S. Navy Memorial, hosting a luncheon on Capitol Hill, followed by a tour of the Capital Building. NP Washington addressed the awardees during the Recognition Ceremony, thanking their spouses and reserve sailor finalists for their hard work and sacrifices.

The winner of the Reserve Sailor of the Year Program was, PSC-Select Angelitta E. Baggoo. The other finalists were:

- PS1 (AW) Mary A. Dube, EM1 (SW) Christopher T. Harris;
- MA1 Justing C. Monson; and
- HM1 Reginald B. Oden.

Washington presented each finalist with an FRA Coin and 2-year FRA Membership. The association has been a supporter of this recognition program since its inception and is proud to continue the tradition of acknowledging excellence.

Bill to Improve VA Mental Health Care Introduced

Sens. Jon Tester (Mont.) and Jerry Moran (Kan.) have introduced the Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act (S.785), which will try to expand veterans' access to high-quality mental health care and help reduce the rate of veteran suicide. Currently, on average, 20 veterans commit suicide each day. The legislation would:

- Increase the VA's mental health staff to serve more veterans.
- Improve access to mental health care for veterans who live in rural areas.
- Strengthen support and assistance for transitioning service members.

- Study and expand innovative and alternative treatment options.
- Hold the VA accountable for its mental health care and suicide prevention efforts.

Members are urged to use the [FRA Action Center](#) to ask their Senators to support this legislation.

Senate Subcommittee Urges Coast Guard Pay During any Future Shutdown

The Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, Security Subcommittee held an oversight hearing on the proposed U.S. Coast Guard and Maritime FY2020 budget. The Subcommittee Chairman Sen. Dan Sullivan (Alaska) and Subcommittee Ranking Member Sen. Edward Markey (Mass.) called for legislation mandating that during any future government shutdown, Coast Guard personnel would continue being paid. Sen. Roger Wicker (Miss.), Chairman of the Senate Committee and who also serves on the subcommittee, pledged to work on passing legislation mandating Coast Guard get paid during a government shutdown, just like the other branches of the Uniform Services.

Members are encouraged to use the [Action Center](#) to ask their legislators to support this legislation.

Senate calls for "Military Retiree Appreciation Day"

The Senate has passed a resolution (S.Res.118), sponsored by Sen. Elizabeth Warren (Mass.) that designates April 18, 2019 as Military Retiree Appreciation Day. The bipartisan measure recognizes, "the importance of paying tribute to those individuals who have faithfully served and retired from the Armed Forces of the United States. On this day, people of the United States are encouraged to honor the past and continued service of military retirees in their local communities and the United States."