



Air Force Sergeants Association

Thunderbird Chapter 985, Tinker AFB, Oklahoma

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Legislative Report for May 2012

Thunderbird Chapter 985 members, many important issues have come from you, the member. So, we want to know what issues are of interest to you. For tracking purposes, we want to know all efforts members are taking to help our AFSA issues, so please let us know anytime you make contact with an elected official. Whether you call or write a letter/e-mail, help us with what topic you contacted them with and what the response was. Responses can be e-mailed or called in to me, any copies of your information can also be dropped off at our General Membership meeting on the 2nd Thursday of every month; next meeting is 10 May, 2012. Together we can make a difference! Terry Turner, AFSA Chapter 985 President.

Current Legislation

H.R. 4966, Sequester Replacement Act of 2012

As ordered reported by the House Committee on the Budget on May 7, 2012

H.R. 4966: would eliminate certain automatic spending reductions scheduled to take effect in January 2013, as well as reduce the overall limit on discretionary budget authority for fiscal year 2013. Because the provisions of the bill are contingent on enactment of reconciliation legislation as specified in section 201 of H. Con. Res. 112, the budget resolution for fiscal year 2013 as passed by the House, CBO estimates that enacting H.R. 4966, by itself, would have no impact on the federal budget.

S.2259: Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2012. A bill to provide for an increase, effective December 1, 2012, in the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Senator Tester, Jon [MT] (introduced 3/29/2012) Cosponsors (13) Related Bills: H.R.1407, H.R.4114, S.894 Committees: Senate Veterans' Affairs Latest Major Action: 3/29/2012 Referred to Senate committee. Status: Read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

S.2241: GI Bill Consumer Awareness Act of 2012. A bill to ensure that veterans have the information and protections they require to make informed decisions regarding use of Post-9/11 Educational Assistance, and for other purposes. Sponsor: Sen Murray, Patty [WA] (introduced 3/27/2012) Cosponsors (10) Committees: Senate Veterans' Affairs Latest Major Action: 3/27/2012 Referred to Senate committee. Status: Read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

H.R.4310: In late April there was a focus on next year's National Defense Authorization Act in both the House and Senate Armed Services Committees. In the House the HASC's Personnel Subcommittee marked up the FY2013 NDAA bill H.R.4310 and sent it on to the full Committee for their consideration. The mark-up did not include any of the Pentagon's proposals to increase TRICARE enrollment fees in TRICARE Prime, or creating yearly enrollment fees for TRICARE for Life and TRICARE Standard that would apply to military retirees. Subcommittee Chairman Rep. Joe Wilson (R-SC) in his opening statement said that the mark up "Make(s) clear that non-monetary contributions to health care benefits made by our troops and their families through a career of service to America represents pre-payment of health care premiums in retirement." This is very good news but is only the first step. Next comes the consideration of the full Committee. The mark-up also included:

- Authorize a troop pay increase of 1.7% and extend bonuses and special pay for our men and women in uniform.
- Limit end strength reductions for the active Army and Marine Corps.
- Provide significant new regulations and procedures for combating and prosecuting sexual assault within the military.
- Extend access to family housing for six months and Commissary and Exchange benefits for two years for troops who are involuntarily separated.
- By silence on the issue, reject the Pentagon proposal for two additional rounds of Base Reduction and Closure (BRAC) action.
- Authorize \$30 million in Impact Aid assistance for civilian schools with significant populations of military children.
- Protect child custody agreements in the event of deployment of the military parent.
- Extend certain refinancing help for qualifying servicemembers who can't sell their homes in conjunction with a military-ordered relocation.
- Authorize transition benefits of 180 days of TRICARE Reserve Select health coverage and TRICARE dental coverage for members involuntarily separated from the Selected Reserve.
- Require the Defense Department to establish a unified medical command

Active Duty News

An American Heart Association expert panel has concluded that gum disease is has not been demonstrated to be a factor in causing cardiovascular disease and treating gum disease does not appear to prevent or influence the course of atherosclerotic vascular disease. A link between the two disorders has been proposed for more than a century, and patients and providers have been increasingly presented with claims that gum treatment strategies offer cardiovascular protection. Both disorders share several common risk factors (cigarette smoking, age, and diabetes mellitus) but the most likely reason they are found together is that people who have good oral hygiene also tend to have a healthy lifestyle that helps protect against cardiovascular disease. [Source: Journal of the American Heart Assn article 18 Apr 2012 ++]

Veterans News

IRS Forms Show Charity's Money Isn't Going To Disabled Vets. CNN Special Investigation Unit, accompanying an Anderson Cooper 360 broadcast story, found that the nonprofit Disabled National Veterans Foundation "received about \$55.9 million in donations since it began operations in 2007, according to publicly available IRS 990 forms." But CNN says that "almost none of that money has wound up in the hands of American veterans." CNN added, "Charity Watch, a group that rates charities, gave

DVNF an 'F' for its effectiveness, reflecting a wider trend among veterans' charities, two-thirds of which 'were given either a D or F grade.'"

Guard/Reserve Legislation & News

H.R. 1025: entitled "*Amend title 38, United States Code, to recognize the service the service in the reserve components of certain persons by honoring them with status as veterans under law*". This bill honors as a veteran any person entitled to retired pay for non-regular (reserve) service or, but for age, would be so entitled. It also provides that such person shall not be entitled to any benefit by reason of such recognition.

Full Veteran Status

There are Guard and Reserve members who have served for 20 years of qualified service for retirement without ever being called for active duty service during their military career. At age 60, they are eligible for reserved military retirement pay, government health care and other benefits of service including some veterans' benefits. However, due to current statute they are denied full standing as a "veteran" of the armed forces.

There are numerous Guard and Reserve members whose position is to train, prepare and support the armed forces who are called to active duty. These members are ready for deployment but based on their assignment jobs are not called upon to be deployed. Nonetheless, these members have served and deserve the status "veteran" of the armed forces.

Retiree Legislation

Senator Graham Says You Were Not Promised Health Care For Life.

Last week we reported to you on the passage of the FY2013 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) by the Personnel Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee. Since that version of the NDAA did not contain provisions to allow DoD to impose new TRICARE/TRICARE for Life fees increases, it appears that the House may not go along with the President's request and we might be able to block those proposed increases. However, the story in the Senate may be very different.

The Chairman of the Personnel Subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Sen. Jim Webb (D-Va.) has spoken very eloquently in opposition to those proposed increases, but the ranking member of that subcommittee, Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) has strongly endorsed the need for increases. According to a report by military reporter Tom Philpott last Saturday, Graham argues that "retirees must be required to pay higher fees to make their TRICARE benefit 'sustainable' and to ensure that weapon modernization and force structure aren't cut more deeply than planned to satisfy reduced targets that Congress agreed to last year."

During his interview with Philpott, Graham also said, "I don't believe anybody was promised free lifetime medical care. That's a popular myth. ... That's not part of the deal and was never part of the deal."

We thought TREA members might like to let Senator Graham know if he is correct: were you promised free lifetime medical care?

If you'd like to help Senator Graham understand just what was promised to you, you can call his Washington office at 202-224-5972. You can also call one of his district offices in South Carolina at: 864-250-1417 or 843-849-3887.

Please be sure to dial carefully when you call his office.

Oklahoma Votes

April 23, 2012

In this MegaVote for Oklahoma's 5th Congressional District:

Recent Congressional Votes

- Senate: Cloture Motion; Paying a Fair Share Act of 2012
- House: Sportsmen's Heritage Act of 2012
- House: Surface Transportation Extension Act of 2012, Part II
- House: Small Business Tax Cut Act

Upcoming Congressional Bills

- Senate: 21st Century Postal Service Act of 2012
- Senate: Violence Against Women Act
- Senate: NLRB union election rule
- House: Cybersecurity Enhancement Act
- House: Cyber Intelligence Sharing and Protection Act

Recent Senate Votes

[Cloture Motion; Paying a Fair Share Act of 2012](#) - Vote **Rejected** (51-45, 4 Not Voting)

The Senate failed to reach the sixty vote threshold needed to move forward on this bill to raise tax rates on taxpayers earning more than \$1 million.

Sen. James Inhofe voted **NO**.....send [e-mail](#) or see [bio](#)

Sen. Tom Coburn voted **NO**.....send [e-mail](#) or see [bio](#)

Recent House Votes

[Sportsmen's Heritage Act of 2012](#) - Vote **Passed** (274-146, 11 Not Voting)

This bill would codify the use of public lands for recreational hunting, shooting and fishing unless the Bureau of Land Management or the Forest Service determines it is necessary to prohibit those activities. The Senate is unlikely to take up the measure.

Rep. James Lankford voted **YES**.....send [e-mail](#) or see [bio](#)

[Surface Transportation Extension Act of 2012, Part II](#) - Vote **Passed** (293-127, 11 Not Voting)

The House passed this three-month highway and transportation program bill that will serve as the vehicle to negotiate a long-term bill with the Senate. The Senate passed a two-year, \$109 billion bill in March. House Republicans would like a five year bill. The current extension runs out June 30, 2012.

Rep. James Lankford voted **YES**.....send [e-mail](#) or see [bio](#)

[Small Business Tax Cut Act](#) - Vote **Passed** (235-173, 1 Present, 22 Not Voting)

This House bill would give businesses with fewer than 500 employees a 20 percent tax deduction for the 2012 tax year. The bill is unlikely to advance in the Senate.

Rep. James Lankford voted **YES**.....send [e-mail](#) or see [bio](#)

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Rep. Tom Cole voted **YES**.....send [e-mail](#) or see [bio](#)

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April 2, 2012

In this MegaVote for Oklahoma's 5th Congressional District:

Recent Congressional Votes

- Senate: 21st Century Postal Service Act of 2011
 - Senate: Repeal Big Oil Tax Subsidies Act
 - House: Federal Communications Commission Process Reform Act of 2011
 - House: Surface Transportation Extension Act
 - House: Democratic Alternative Budget
 - House: Fiscal 2013 House Budget Resolution
-

Editor's Note: Congress is in recess this week and next. The Senate and House both return on April 16.

Recent Senate Votes

[21st Century Postal Service Act of 2011](#) - Vote **Rejected** (51-46, 3 Not Voting)

This postal overhaul bill did not receive the necessary 60 votes to proceed to debate. The bill would allow the Postal Service to recoup around \$11 billion in overpayments to a retirement account and use that money to provide financial incentives to about 100,000 employees to retire, as well as delay the plan to end Saturday delivery for two years.

Sen. James Inhofe voted **NO**.....send [e-mail](#) or see [bio](#)

Sen. Tom Coburn voted **NO**.....send [e-mail](#) or see [bio](#)

[Repeal Big Oil Tax Subsidies Act](#) - Vote **Rejected** (51-47, 2 Not Voting)

This legislation would repeal some tax breaks for large oil and gas companies and use the revenue generated by these tax repeals to pay for an extension of renewable-energy tax credits and incentives. The bill did not receive the necessary 60 votes to end debate and is unlikely to be considered again.

Sen. James Inhofe voted **NO**.....send [e-mail](#) or see [bio](#)

Sen. Tom Coburn voted **NO**.....send [e-mail](#) or see [bio](#)

Recent House Votes

[Federal Communications Commission Process Reform Act of 2011](#) - Vote **Passed** (247-174, 10 Not Voting)

The House passed this bill that would overhaul Federal Communications Commission regulatory procedures and curb the agency's ability to set conditions on transactions related to corporate mergers and acquisitions.

The bill's future is uncertain.

Rep. James Lankford voted **YES**.....send [e-mail](#) or see [bio](#)

[Surface Transportation Extension Act](#) - Vote **Passed** (266-158, 7 Not Voting)

On Thursday the House passed this bill to extend authorization for surface transportation programs through June 30. The Senate cleared the bill by voice vote later the same day, sending the bill to the president. President Obama signed it the next day. This extension gives the House and Senate more time to negotiate a long-term transportation bill.

Rep. James Lankford voted **YES**.....send [e-mail](#) or see [bio](#)

[Democratic Alternative Budget](#) - Vote **Failed** (163-262, 6 Not Voting)

The Democrats offered a substitute budget amendment that would provide \$1.05 trillion in discretionary spending for fiscal 2013, including \$546 billion for defense spending. The amendment includes a permanent extension of the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts for the middle class, but would end nearly \$1 trillion in tax cuts for millionaires and close a variety of corporate tax loopholes. The amendment was rejected.

Rep. James Lankford voted **NO**.....send [e-mail](#) or see [bio](#)

[Fiscal 2013 House Budget Resolution](#) - Vote **Passed** (228-191, 12 Not Voting)

The House passed this budget resolution providing for \$1.03 trillion in discretionary spending. That amount is \$19 billion less than the discretionary target agreed to as part of last summer's deal to raise the debt ceiling. The resolution calls for spending cuts through restructuring Medicare, converting Medicaid and the food stamp program into block grants to states, and repealing the 2010 health care law. It also calls for an overhaul of the tax code. The Senate is likely to reject the House budget resolution.

Rep. James Lankford voted **YES**.....send [e-mail](#) or see [bio](#)

AFSA Supports
Go to CAPWIZ Link below and take ACTION:
[AFSA CAPWIZ - Click Here](#)

Current Legislation		
Key Bills in Congress		
Bill Name	Number of Sponsors	Position
S. 2320 - Remembering America's Forgotten Veterans Cemetery Act of 2012	8 (4 R, 4 D)	We SUPPORT this legislation
S. 1852 - Spouses of Heroes Education Act	2 (2 D)	We SUPPORT this legislation
S. 866 - Reserve Retirement Deployment Credit Correction Act	29 (8 R, 1 I, 20 D)	We SUPPORT this legislation

S. 815 - Sanctity of Eternal Rest for Veterans Act of 2011	38 (18 R, 1 I, 19 D)	We SUPPORT this legislation
S. 724 - Ensuring Pay for Our Military Act of 2011	81 (47 R, 1 I, 33 D)	We SUPPORT this legislation
S. 697 - Military Spouse Job Continuity Act of 2011	13 (2 R, 1 I, 10 D)	We SUPPORT this legislation
S. 491 - To Recognize Service in the Reserve Components by Honoring Certain Service Members with Status as Veterans under Law	19 (7 R, 1 I, 11 D)	We SUPPORT this legislation
S. 472 - Service Members Permanent Change of Station Relief Act	4 (1 R, 3 D)	We SUPPORT this legislation
S. 344 - Concurrent Receipt for ALL Military Retirees	29 (5 R, 1 I, 23 D)	We SUPPORT this legislation
S. 260 - Repeal SBP/DIC Offset	51 (12 R, 2 I, 37 D)	We SUPPORT this legislation
S. 146 - Veteran Employment Transition Act of 2011	23 (5 R, 1 I, 17 D)	We SUPPORT this legislation
S. 113 - Repeal the Current Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP)	2 (1 R, 1 D)	We SUPPORT this legislation
S.J.RES. 19 - Flag Protection Amendment	35 (31 R, 4 D)	We SUPPORT this legislation
H.R. 3895 - Protect VA Healthcare Act of 2012	40 (33 R, 7 D)	We SUPPORT this legislation
H.R. 2886 - Ensure Servicemembers are Paid During Periods of Lapsed Appropriations	6 (4 R, 2 D)	We SUPPORT this legislation
H.R. 1591 - Sanctity of Eternal Rest for Veterans Act of 2011	35 (26 R, 9 D)	We SUPPORT this legislation
H.R. 1285 - Military Health Care Affordability Act	6 (6 R)	We SUPPORT this legislation
H.R. 1283 - Reserve Retirement Deployment Credit Correction Act	46 (17 R, 29 D)	We SUPPORT this legislation
H.R. 1092 - The Military Retirees Health Care Protection Act	28 (8 R, 20 D)	We SUPPORT this legislation
H.R. 1025 - Extend	55 (21 R, 34 D)	We SUPPORT this legislation

Veterans Status to Certain Reserve Component Members		
H.R. 865 - Veteran Employment Transition Act of 2011	60 (10 R, 50 D)	We SUPPORT this legislation
H.R. 687 - Military Spouses Employment Act	68 (34 R, 34 D)	We SUPPORT this legislation
H.R. 493 - Allow Retention of the Final Full Month of Military Retired Pay by the Surviving Spouse	6 (3 R, 3 D)	We SUPPORT this legislation
H.R. 456 - Creates a Consumer Price Index for Elderly Retirees to be Used in the Computation of Annual Cost-of-living Increases (COLAs)	34 (7 R, 27 D)	We SUPPORT this legislation
H.R. 409 - Chiropractic Health Parity for Military Beneficiaries Act	35 (17 R, 18 D)	We SUPPORT this legislation
H.R. 333 - Concurrent Receipt for All Military Retirees Including Medical Retirees with Less than 20 Years of Service	154 (46 R, 108 D)	We SUPPORT this legislation
H.R. 329 - Expand Chiropractic Care for Veterans	41 (7 R, 34 D)	We SUPPORT this legislation
H.R. 303 - Concurrent Receipt for ALL Military Retirees With More Than 20 Years of Service	89 (42 R, 47 D)	We SUPPORT this legislation
H.R. 238 - Allow a Refundable Tax Credit for Medicare Part B Premiums Paid by Military Retirees and Their Spouses	11 (6 R, 5 D)	We SUPPORT this legislation
H.R. 237 - Allow Dense Secretary to Adjust Start Dates for the DoD Homeowners Assistance Program	18 (3 R, 15 D)	We SUPPORT this legislation
H.R. 186 - Expand Concurrent Receipt to Medically Retired Personnel (Chapter 61s)	30 (18 R, 12 D)	We SUPPORT this legislation

H.R. 181 - Authorize Active Duty Credit Toward Retirement for Guard/Reserve Members Retroactive to Sept. 11, 2001	74 (39 R, 35 D)	We SUPPORT this legislation
H.R. 179 - Allow "Gray Area" Retirees to Receive Medical and Dental Care in Military Treatment Facilities	4 (4 R)	We SUPPORT this legislation
H.R. 178 - Repeal the SBP/DIC Offset	187 (86 R, 101 D)	We SUPPORT this legislation
H.R. 117 - HELP Veterans Act of 2011	1 (1 D)	We SUPPORT this legislation
H.J.RES. 13 - Flag Protection Amendment	84 (75 R, 9 D)	We SUPPORT this legislation
Veterans and Retirees		
Bill Name	Number of Sponsors	Position
S. 344 - Urge Senate to Expand Concurrent Receipt	29 (5 R, 1 I, 23 D)	We SUPPORT this legislation
H.R. 4168 - Caring for the Fallen Act	12 (6 R, 6 D)	We SUPPORT this legislation
Guard and Reserve		
Bill Name	Number of Sponsors	Position
S. 1990 - Require TSA to Comply with USERRA When Carrying Out Personnel Actions with Employees Who Are Members of Guard & Reserve	28 (10 R, 2 I, 16 D)	We SUPPORT this legislation

Military History Anniversaries

Military History Anniversaries: Significant 16-31 May events in U.S. Military History are:

- ❖ May 16 1940 - WWII: Germany occupies Brussels, Belgium and begins the invasion of France.
- ❖ May 17 1987 - An Iraqi missile hits the American frigate USS Stark in the Persian Gulf. 37 sailors die
- ❖ May 18 1863 - Civil War: The Battle of Vicksburg begins.
- ❖ May 18 1917 - WWI: The Selective Service Act of 1917 is passed, giving the President of the United States the power of conscription.
- ❖ May 18 1944 - WWII: Battle of Monte Cassino - Conclusion after seven days of the fourth battle as German paratroopers evacuate.

- ❖ May 19 1848 - U.S Mexican War: Mexico gives Texas to U.S., ending the war
- ❖ May 19 1967 - Vietnam: U.S. planes bomb Hanoi for the first time.
- ❖ May 20 1864 - Civil War: Battle of Ware Bottom Church - in the Virginia Bermuda Hundred Campaign, 10,000 troops fight in this Confederate victory.
- ❖ May 20 1902 - Latin America Interventions: U.S. military occupation of Cuba (since Jan 1, 1899) ends
- ❖ May 20 1969 - Vietnam: US troop capture Hill 937/Hamburger Hill
- ❖ May 20 1951 - Korea: U.S. Air Force Captain James Jabara becomes the first jet air ace in history.
- ❖ May 21 1941 - 1st U.S. ship sunk by a U-boat (SS Robin Moore)
- ❖ May 21 1951 - Korea: The U.S. Eighth Army counterattacks to drive the Communist Chinese and North Koreans out of South Korea.
- ❖ May 23 1900 - Civil War hero Sgt. William H. Carney becomes the first African American to receive the Medal of Honor, 37 years after the Battle of Fort Wagner.
- ❖ May 25 1915 - WWI: 2nd Battle of Ypres ends with 105,000 casualties
- ❖ May 25 1953 - The first atomic cannon is fired in Nevada.
- ❖ May 26 1940 - WWII: Battle of Dunkirk - In France, Allied forces begin a massive evacuation from Dunkirk, France.
- ❖ May 26 1945 - WWII: U.S. drop fire bombs on Tokyo.
- ❖ May 26 2004 - The U.S. Army veteran Terry Nichols is found guilty of 161 state murder charges for helping carry out the Oklahoma City bombing.
- ❖ May 27 1813 - War of 1812: In Canada, American forces capture Fort George
- ❖ May 27 1944 - WWII: American General MacArthur lands on Biak Island in New Guinea.
- ❖ May 27 1965 - Vietnam: American warships begin the first bombardment of National Liberation Front targets within South Vietnam.
- ❖ May 29 1916 - U.S. forces invade the Dominican Republic, stay until 1924.
- ❖ May 29 1945 - WWII: U.S. 1st Marine division conquerors Shuri-castle Okinawa
- ❖ May 29 2004 - The World War II Memorial is dedicated in Washington, D.C.
- ❖ May 30 1868 - Memorial Day begins when two women place flowers on both Confederate and Union graves.
- ❖ May 30 1912 - U.S. Marines are sent to Nicaragua to protect American interests.
- ❖ May 30 1965 - Vietnam: Viet Cong offensive against U.S, base Da Nang, begins
- ❖ May 31 1900 - U.S. troops arrive in Peking to help put down the Boxer Rebellion.
- ❖ May 31 1912 - U.S. Marines land on Cuba

[Source: Various May 2011 ++]

Air Force Vision

The United States Air Force will be a trusted and reliable joint partner with our sister services known for integrity in all of our activities, including supporting the joint mission first and foremost. We will provide compelling air, space, and cyber capabilities for use by the combatant commanders. We will excel as stewards of all Air Force resources in service to the American people, while providing precise and reliable Global Vigilance, Reach and Power for the nation.

This report is compiled from dozens of source to include: Gold Star Wives of America, Fleet Reserve Association, The Retired Enlisted Association, National Association of Uniformed Services, The Military Order of the Purple Heart, Uniformed Services Disable Retires, Vietnams Veterans of America, Military.com, Veteran's of Foreign Wars, The Retired Enlisted Association, a bi-weekly report by James "EMO" Tichacek, USN (Ret) Director, Retiree Assistance Office, U.S. Embassy, Philippines, American Legion, AMVETS – American Veteran, Disabled American Veteran (DAV), Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOA), Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), Oklahoma County Assessor Office, The National Archive.gov, Retirees.af.mil, Official Military Websites and most importantly from the Air Force Sergeant's Association and its members. If you need more information on a particular, please contact us.

Contacting your Elected Officials

Step 1: Determine who your Senator/Representative is.

House: <https://www.house.gov/welcome.shtml>

Senate: <https://www.senate.gov>

Step 2: Call the Capital Hill Operator and ask to be connected to the office of your elected official.
1-888-762-8760

Step 3: Tell the office staffer that you want your elected official to support the bills listed in this report. You can also send an e-mail to your elected officials through the above websites. It's important to let them know what is important to you! If you would like full details of each bill, go to this website. <http://thomas.loc.gov>

Notes from your chapter legislative team:

You can get more legislative information by visiting the AFSA Headquarters web page:

<http://www.afsahq.org/> http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm

<http://www.house.gov/writerep/> <http://thomas.loc.gov>

Please visit the AFSA Chapter 985 website at the following link for the latest information!

<http://www.afsa985.org/>

Comments and suggestions are encouraged.

Vote

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Absentee Vote = Your Voice...AFSA

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Federal Voting Assistance Program

<http://www.fvap.gov/>