

News Flash

From The Retired Enlisted Assn

www.trea.org



TREA WASHINGTON UPDATE FOR SEPTEMBER 18, 2009

From TREA HQ: PLEASE NOTE: TREA's National Headquarters will be closed the week of September 21 due to TREA National Convention in Rapid City, SD. The staff will be checking emails and phone messages during the week. The office will reopen on September 28, at 7 am (Mountain Time).

From TREA's Washington Office: Next week is TREA's National Convention in Rapid City, South Dakota. I hope many of you will be joining us. If you are coming I would be delighted if you could come and ask me questions, give me suggestions and just talk about legislation.

Washington is back working on health care, missile defense and much more. With the Senate Finance Committee rolling out its version of health care reform this week; and the House leadership indicating that it won't bring up its proposal until October, it is not clear when the NDAA will be ready for a vote.

Please Note: Congress is not in session today because of Rosh Hashana and will also not be in session on Monday, September 28, due to Yom Kippur.

- 1) Senate Tentative Schedule for Spending Bills Floor Debate
- 2) Vietnam Memorial's National Call for Photos Campaign Starts
- 3) VA Secretary Shinseki Announces Plan for More Vietnam War Health Research
- 4) VA Puts Out Warning of Telephone Prescription Scam
- 5) Senate VA Committee Holds Hearing on Disabled Vets

1) Senate Tentative Schedule for Spending Bills Floor Debate-Senator Daniel K. Inouye (D-HI). The Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee has indicated that the Senate may start to take up its Defense spending bill as early as next week. Yesterday, the Senate passed its Transportation- HUD Appropriations bill (HR3288) 73-25 and moved onto debate over the Interior-Environment (HR2996). Majority Leader Senator Harry Reid (D-NV) said that the debate over that bill will continue on Tuesday with a vote expected sometime next week.

Senator Inouye said that he intended Defense (HR3326) to be taken up after that; then followed by Military Construction-VA (S1407) (These are the two Appropriation Bills that are of most concern to us.) However, (there is always a however) an aide for Senator Reid said that things are still in flux about the schedule "and nothing is decided yet.

With 2 weeks before the start of the new federal fiscal year the Senate has only passed 3 of its 12 Appropriation bills. The House has passed all 12 of its measures.

2) Vietnam Memorial's National Call for Photos Campaign Starts-Yesterday the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund and FedEx launched a campaign to collect pictures of all the men and women whose names appear on the Wall. The pictures are going to be an exhibit in the planned "Education Center at the Wall" This is going to be an underground museum near the memorial. FedEx offices throughout the country will serve as collection points for the pictures. The planned center will also celebrate the values embodied by America's servicemembers: "loyalty, duty, respect, service, honor, integrity and courage"

The Center is expected to cost \$85 million. \$20 million has already been raised, including a \$10 million donation from TimeWarner.

3) VA Secretary Shinseki Announces Plan for More Vietnam War Health Research-This week VA Secretary Eric Shinseki announced plans for a new study on the physical and psychological health effects of service in the Vietnam War. "The National Vietnam Veterans Longitudinal Study (NVVLS) will allow VA to pursue another valuable research tool. The insight we gain from this study will help give us an understanding of how to better serve America's Veterans." This is a follow-up to a study conducted in 1988. Presently the VA is conducting Vietnam studies on PTSD and health of women Vietnam studies. The VA is soliciting bids to conduct the study that will run from 2011-2013.

4) VA Puts Out Warning of Telephone Prescription Scam-Yesterday the VA warned all veterans of a new telephone scam asking vets for credit card information to "update the VA's information." **The VA is not making any such calls.** Please read the following press release:



Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations

Washington, DC 20420
(202) 461-7600
www.va.gov

News Release

VA Warns Veterans of Telephone Prescription Scam

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is warning Veterans not to give credit card numbers over the phone to callers claiming to update VA prescription information.

"America's Veterans have become targets in an inexcusable scam that dishonors their service and misrepresents the Department built for them," said Dr. Gerald Cross, VA's Under Secretary for Health. "VA simply does not call Veterans and ask them to disclose personal financial information over the phone."

Veteran Service Organizations have brought to VA's attention that callers are misrepresenting the VA to gain personal information over the phone. They say VA

recently changed procedures for dispensing prescriptions and ask for the Veteran's credit card number.

"VA has not changed its processes for dispensing prescription medicines," Cross said. "Nor has VA changed its long-standing commitment to protect the personal information of this nation's Veterans."

Veterans with questions about VA services should contact the nearest VA medical center or call, toll-free, 1-877-222-8387.

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5) Senate VA Committee Holds Hearing on Disabled Vets- Yesterday, the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs heard testimony from VSOs representing disabled veterans (DAV and PVA) as well as other organizations that help the disabled. After the hearing Chairman Daniel Akaka called for careful, judicious improvements to the system. Below please find the press release issued by his office.

AKAKA & TESTER CALL FOR DELIBERATE ACTION TO FIX VA'S VETERANS' DISABILITY COMPENSATION SYSTEM

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today U.S. Senator Daniel K. Akaka (D-HI), Chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, heard testimony on the state of VA's system for disability compensation. Witnesses from VA, veterans service organizations and the larger disability policy community urged cautious movement toward fixing what many acknowledge is a broken system.

Senator Akaka stated: *"To bring the right changes to a process this complicated and important, we must be deliberative, focused, and open to input from all who are affected. At the same time, we cannot be paralyzed by complexity; the current system is already outdated, and it will get worse until we act."*

Senator Tester stated: *"No doubt about it – we need to measure twice and cut once, not the other way around. I hope that among the experts in the room making decisions on ratings are the fighting men and women who are coming back. I would bring them in early in the process, not after the fact."* Later in the hearing, under further questioning from Tester, VA officials pledged that veterans would be involved early in the process of any revisions to the disability compensation process.

Today's hearing is the latest in a series on veterans' disability compensation. Witnesses included representatives from [VA](#), [Economic Systems Inc](#), VA's [Advisory Committee on Disability Compensation](#), [Disabled American Veterans](#), [Paralyzed Veterans of America](#), and [Easter Seals](#). Records of earlier hearings are available at <http://veterans.senate.gov>, and the full written opening statements and written testimony are available [here](#).

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GoodShop.com is a new online shopping mall which donates up to 37 percent of each purchase to your favorite cause! Hundreds of great stores including Amazon, Target, Gap, Best Buy, ebay, Macy's and Barnes & Noble have teamed up with GoodShop and every time you place an order, you'll be supporting your favorite cause.

Just go to www.goodsearch.com and be sure to enter **Retired Enlisted Association (Aurora, CO)** as the charity you want to support. And, be sure to spread the word!



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YOU MAY EARMARK YOUR DONATION TO SUPPORT WHATEVER YOU WOULD LIKE. (GENERAL FUND, THE VOICE/WEB, MEMORIAL FOUNDATION, SCHOLARSHIP, OR JUST MARK "WHERE IT IS NEEDED MOST")! DONATIONS TO TREA ARE DEDUCTIBLE.

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