

# News Flash

From The Retired Enlisted Assn

[www.trea.org](http://www.trea.org)



## TREA WASHINGTON UPDATE FOR OCTOBER 2, 2009

### FROM TREA WASHINGTON OFFICE:

It is good to be home and it was good to see so many TREA members at our National Convention in Rapid City South Dakota. I returned to a city fighting about TRICARE (please see below), civilian healthcare, and much, much more.

[1\) DoD Announces TRICARE Inpatient Co-Pay Increases/TREA Calls For Reversal](#)

[2\) National Defense Appropriations Act's Debate Starts In Senate](#)

[3\) Continuing Resolution Passed/Federal Stopgap Funding For 1 Month](#)

[4\) Today VA Starts Issuing Emergency Checks For Enrolled Vets Who Are Waiting For GI Bill Payments](#)

### FROM TREA HQ:

The October issue of The VOICE E-Mag is available for download at:  
[www.trea.org/TheVoice.html](http://www.trea.org/TheVoice.html)

\*\*\*\*\*

**1) DoD Announces TRICARE Inpatient Co-pay Increases/TREA Calls for Reversal-**For the new fiscal year (starting October 1) DoD unexpectedly announced increases for inpatient co-pays for many TRICARE beneficiaries. This surprising announcement includes an increase of \$110 a day (from \$535 to \$645 a 21% increase!) for military retirees, their families and survivors who are now covered by TRICARE Standard.

TREA immediately wrote to Secretary Gates urging him to immediately reverse this decision. We noted that this was contrary to his announcement that he **would not propose any** TRICARE fee increases for FY2010!

This co-pay is already extremely high and much more than most civilian health care plans. For the last 3 years Congress had barred any increase in this co-pay. It did not include a similar provision in this year's NDAA based on the Secretary's assurances.

We have not yet received a response from the SecDef. **This** increase would not affect beneficiaries of TRICARE Prime or TRICARE for Life (TFL). But it may very well indicate what is to come. Please call the House and Senate Armed Services and urge Chairmen Representative Ike Skelton (D-MO) (202-225-4151) and Senator Carl Levin (D-MI) (202-224-3871) to act to stop this unfair increase. Remember this may be the first step of many planned moves. We must be clear to Washington that this is totally unacceptable.

**2) National Defense Appropriations Act's Debate Starts in Senate-**Since Tuesday the Senate has been debating FY2010's National Defense Authorization Act (HR 3326). This bill funds everything DoD does. With at \$636.3 billion in discretionary spending the debate is always long and contentious. This week the main sticking point is the level of funding to be provided to train and stand up the Afghan Security Forces. The Senate Appropriations Committee cut \$900 million from the Administration's request of \$7.5 billion for that job. The Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Senator Cal Levin (D-Mich) is opposed to any cuts in the Administration's request. Meanwhile the Administration objects to the Committee's inclusion of \$2.5 billion for 10 C-17 transport aircraft in the FY2010 budget. So debate will certainly continue on this bill next week.

**3) Continuing Resolution Passed/Federal Stopgap Funding for 1 Month-** Wednesday night (September 30) the Senate passed a continuing resolution (62-38) to fund the federal government for one month in the new fiscal year FY2010 which started the next day. The CR was included in conference report of the Legislative Branch funding bill (HR2918) The House of Representatives had passed the bill on September 25 (217-190). Since the CR was included in the Legislative Branch Conference Report there was no ability to amend it.

As is normal in CRs, discretionary spending was kept at the 2009 level the Department of Veterans Affairs' Health Administration spending levels were increased by an annualized rate of \$3.8 billion

**4) Today VA Starts Issuing Emergency Checks For Enrolled Vets Who Are Waiting For GI Bill Payments-**VA Secretary Eric K. Shinseki announced that starting on October 2, the VA will start issuing checks of up to \$3,000 to students who are waiting for payments under the new Post 9/11 GI Bill. As many at 25,000 claims are waiting for housing and book benefit payments (School tuition is separate). The VA states that over 27,500 claims have been paid.



**Department of  
Veterans Affairs**

Office of Public Affairs  
Media Relations

Washington, DC 20420  
(202) 461-7600  
[www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)

## **News Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
September 25, 2009

**Secretary Shinseki Orders Emergency Checks to Students Awaiting Education Benefits**  
***Thousands of Checks to Alleviate Student Financial Burden***

WASHINGTON – Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has authorized checks for up to \$3,000 to be given to students who have applied for educational benefits and who have not yet received

their government payment. The checks will be distributed to eligible students at VA regional benefits offices across the country starting Oct. 2, 2009.

"Students should be focusing on their studies, not worrying about financial difficulties," Secretary Shinseki said. "Education creates life-expanding opportunities for our Veterans."

Starting Friday, Oct. 2, 2009, students can go to one of VA's 57 regional benefit offices with a photo ID and a course schedule to request advance payment of their education benefits. Because not all these offices are located near students, VA expects to send representatives to schools with large Veteran-student bodies and work with Veteran Service Organizations to help students with transportation needs.

A list of those VA regional offices is available at [www.vba.va.gov/VBA/benefits/offices.asp](http://www.vba.va.gov/VBA/benefits/offices.asp).

"I'm asking our people to get out their road maps and determine how we can reach the largest number of college students who can't reach us," VA's Under Secretary for Benefits Patrick Dunne said. "Not everyone has a car. Not everyone can walk to a VA benefits office."

Although VA does not know how many students will request emergency funds, it has approximately 25,000 claims pending that may result in payments to students.

The funds VA will give to students now are advance payments of the earned benefits for education benefits. This money will be deducted from future education payments.

VA officials said students should know that after this special payment, they can expect to receive education payments on the normal schedule --the beginning of the month following the period for which they are reimbursed.

"This is an extraordinary action we're taking," said Shinseki. "But it's necessary because we recognize the hardships some of our Veterans face."

More than 27,500 students have already received benefits for housing or books under the new Post-9/11 GI Bill, or their schools received their tuition payments.

\*\*\*\*\*

**INTRODUCING -- NEW TREA PARTNERSHIPS:**



[www.treawireless.com](http://www.treawireless.com)



[www.brookdaleliving.com](http://www.brookdaleliving.com)

\*\*\*\*\*

What if TREA earned a penny every time you searched the Internet? Or how about if a percentage of every purchase you made online went to support our cause? Well, now it can!

[GoodSearch.com](http://GoodSearch.com) is a new Yahoo-powered search engine that donates half its advertising revenue, about a penny per search, to the charities its users designate. Use it just as you would any search engine, get quality search results from Yahoo, and watch the donations add up!

[GoodShop.com](http://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](http://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!



<http://www.goodsearch.com/?charityid=815089>

\*\*\*\*\*

**MAKE A DONATION TO TREA, JUST BY SHOPPING! CLICK BELOW:**



<http://www.mypowermall.com/mall/111349>

\*\*\*\*\*

**AS YOU ARE PLANNING YOUR 2009 CHARITABLE DONATIONS, PLEASE CONSIDER A DONATION TO THE RETIRED ENLISTED ASSN. MAKE YOUR DONATION ONLINE AT: [www.trea.org/DonationPage.html](http://www.trea.org/DonationPage.html)**

**OR MAIL YOUR DONATION TO: TREA HQ, 1111 S ABILENE CT., AURORA, CO 80012**

**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.**

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT!!!**

**Take advantage of a wide selection of group life and health insurance plans to meet every need. NEBCO supports The Retired Enlisted Association by offering**

members a single source solution to meet your multiple insurance needs. With access to many insurance carriers, we can provide quality group insurance plans at the best available rates. You can access detailed information about these outstanding insurance products through this website:

[www.nebenefit.com/trea](http://www.nebenefit.com/trea)



<http://www.nebenefit.com/trea>

---

If you need to change the email address that receives the Legislative Update, go to: <http://www.capwiz.com/trea/mlm/verify/>

At the bottom of the page, enter the email address that currently receives the update, verify who you are, and change your email address. If you have any problems email [editor@trea.org](mailto:editor@trea.org)

Continue to send emails to your Senators and Representatives about the bills that are of interest to you. Remember we have prepared emails available for you.

If you do not receive the Legislative Update delivered to your email box, click the above link, and sign up!

Don't forget to "Tell A Friend" about our Legislative Updates, GoodSearch, GoodShop, and TREA's My Power Mall.

\*\*\*\*\*

National Headquarters email: [treaHQ@trea.org](mailto:treaHQ@trea.org)  
Phone: 800-338-9337 - Fax: 303-752-0835

Washington Legislative Office email: [treadmin@treadc.org](mailto:treadmin@treadc.org)  
Phone: 800-554-8732 Fax: 703-548-4876