

June 11, 2026

The Honorable Mike Rogers
Chairman, House Armed Services
Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member, House Armed Services
Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
Chairman, House Committee on Natural
Resources
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jared Huffman
Ranking Member, House Committee on
Natural Resources
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Brett Guthrie
Chairman, House Energy and Commerce
Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member, House Energy and
Commerce Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Rogers, Westerman & Guthrie and Ranking Members Smith, Huffman & Pallone:

The undersigned military and veteran service organizations urge all committees of jurisdiction to include the bill text of H.R. 8732, the Pensions for Retired Uniformed Servicemembers Act, in the FY 2027 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

At its core, this bipartisan legislation helps ensure equal treatment for every retired member of the nation's uniformed services.

Federal law recognizes the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) Commissioned Corps and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Commissioned Officer Corps as uniformed services. Their officers serve careers in uniform, deploy in support of national and public health emergencies, and earn retirement benefits through dedicated service to the nation. They can and have been activated into the armed services during times of war as occurred during World War II and the Korean War. Yet despite their status as members of the uniformed services, they remain the only uniformed service retirees whose earned retired pay can be interrupted during a lapse in appropriations.

During the most recent government shutdown, retired members of the USPHS and NOAA Commissioned Corps missed two retirement payments because their pensions are funded through annual appropriations to the Departments of Health and Human Services and Commerce. For retirees living on fixed incomes, that gap meant real financial hardship. In contrast, retirees of the Armed Forces, to include the Coast Guard, continued receiving their retired pay on time because those obligations are paid through the permanently appropriated Military Retirement Fund (MRF).

This is about parity. Uniformed service should carry uniform treatment when it comes to the timely payment of earned retirement benefits.

The Pensions for Retired Uniformed Servicemembers Act would correct this inequity by moving USPHS and NOAA retirement obligations into the MRF, where Armed Forces retirement obligations are already funded. This legislation does not create a new benefit, increase retired pay, or expand eligibility. It simply ensures that retired members of all uniformed services receive their earned retirement pay without interruption.

Importantly, this legislation does not increase federal spending. The Departments of Health and Human Services and Commerce would continue to fund their retirement obligations through annual actuarial contributions to the MRF, just as the Department of Defense and Department of Homeland Security do today. This bill changes the funding mechanism, not the benefit itself, which is why this bill was solely referred to the House Armed Services Committee upon introduction.

Congress has already established a successful precedent. In the FY 2021 NDAA, Congress moved Coast Guard retirement obligations into the MRF to protect Coast Guard retirees from the same vulnerability during government shutdowns. The Pensions for Retired Uniformed Servicemembers Act simply extends that proven solution to the remaining uniformed service retirees who continue to face this risk.

No retired member of the uniformed services should have to wonder whether a government funding lapse will delay the retirement pay they earned through decades of service. The FY 2027 NDAA provides an ideal opportunity to close this gap and ensure parity across all uniformed services.

Our organizations respectfully urge all committees of jurisdiction to ensure inclusion of the Pensions for Retired Uniformed Servicemembers Act in the FY 2027 National Defense Authorization Act.

Sincerely,

AMVETS
Blinded Veterans Association
Blue Star Families
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service
Fleet Reserve Association
Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America
Jewish War Veterans
Military Chaplains Association
Military Family Advisory Network
Military Officers Association of America
National Defense Committee
National Military Family Association
Navy League of the United States
Non-Commissioned Officers Association
Reserve Organization of America
Service Women's Action Network
Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors
United States Army Warrant Officers Association
USCG Chief Petty Officers Association

Vietnam Veterans of America
With Honor Action