



## **Strickland Stands Up For Servicemembers and Military Communities in FY2023 Defense Bill**

Working hard for military families and communities, Congresswoman Marilyn Strickland secured the following provisions in the federal fiscal year 2023 defense bill:

### Housing

- The BAH Calculation Improvement Act: Directs the Department of Defense (DoD) to examine the current Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) rates' efficiency and efficacy, determine if BAH should be calculated more often if school districts can be included in BAH calculations, and more to create a responsive, and transparent way to calculate BAH.
- BAH Restoration Act: In response to Strickland's *BAH Restoration Act*, the FY23 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) directs the DoD to consider reversing the housing allowance reduction and restoring servicemembers to 100 percent of the calculated Basic Allowance for Housing and to submit a report on a timeline to reverse the Department's policy decision, cost and additional increase by grade and dependency status.
- Homeownership: Strickland's Increasing Homeownership for Servicemembers Act was also included and would direct the Secretary of Defense to conduct a study of the barriers to ownership for members of the Armed Forces so that the opportunity to own a home and build family wealth is within reach for service members.
- Housing Availability: Creates a follow-on report from last year's "Wait Times for On-Base Housing" on housing availability by directing the DoD to report to Congress on options for increase housing availability, recommendations for need for a housing manager, and recommendations for improving and increasing housing affordability for servicemembers and dependents.

### Pay

- COLA: Directs the DoD to submit a report on the value of servicemember compensation including if there should be a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) in expensive U.S. locations, an evaluation of how BAH adjusts to inflation and cost fluctuations in local

rental markets if SNAP and the Basic Needs Allowance (BNA) are appropriately targeting service members in the appropriate pay grades and geographic locations, and more.

- Basic Pay Model: Requires the DoD to determine the value and validity of the basic pay model for members of the Armed Forces to meet the needs of the 2023 employment model.

### Childcare

- Childcare Employees: Requires the Secretary of Defense to complete a pay study of child development center employees, as compared to similarly trained and qualified public elementary school employees, for regions with the longest waiting lists for childcare.
- Caregiver Grant Program: Directs a report on the prevalence of caregivers in military families and an assessment of the need for establishing a grant program to support organizations that assist caregivers in military families.
- Au Pairs: The DoD would be required to assess the feasibility of adding au pairs to the in-home child care fee assistance program and members of the Armed Forces who participate in the au pair exchange visitor program should be eligible for assistance.

### Tribal Communities

- Consulting with Tribes: Directs the DoD to brief Congress on how it will standardize best practices to improve government-to-government consultation with federally recognized tribes.

### Transportation

- Traffic Congestion: The DoD will submit a report on traffic congestion around certain installations experiencing significant traffic congestion including Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM).
- Transportation Demand Management (TDM): Adds the definition of TDM in the NDAA so that these projects can be eligible for federal funds. TDM means the use of strategies to inform and encourage travelers to maximize the efficiency of a transportation system leading to improved mobility, reduced congestion, and lower vehicle emissions. TDM will help alleviate congestion around military installations, including JBLM.
- Aviation: Create a pilot program on the use of sustainable aviation fuel with the DoD.
- Engines: Congresswoman Strickland secured \$6.5 million for the design and development of an engine infrared suppressor for the C-17 aircraft to help protect the C-17 pilots at JBLM.

### Education

- HBCUs: Added the [HBCU RISE Act](#), which Congresswoman Strickland is a co-lead, this bill will help HBCUs remain competitive against other academic institutions by creating equitable research opportunities. This also directs the Secretary of Defense to establish a pilot program to increase capacity at high research activity status (R2) for Historically Black Colleges and Universities to achieve very high research activity status (R1).

- Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC): The DoD will collect data on scholarship awards and ROTC program completion by gender, race, and ethnicity. A smaller proportion of officers of color commission through ROTC scholarships compared to other commissioning sources and capturing this data will enable the DoD and researchers to develop support systems as needed to support future officers of color enrolled in ROTC scholarship programs.

### Supporting the South Sound

- The North Clear Zone: Encouraging the Army to use all available authorities to expedite the acquisition of lands within JBLM's North Clear Zone.
- Maintenance and Repair: Encourages the Army to work to complete agreed-upon water utility repair and develop a maintenance plan for Sequatchew Creek.
- Puget Sound: The PUGET SOS Act was added to the NDAA so the federal government can enhance the federal government's role and investment in Puget Sound, the nation's largest estuary by volume and the heart of Washington state's identity and economic engine.

*U.S. Representative Marilyn Strickland serves on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, and is the only African-American woman who serves on the House Armed Services Committee. She is a member of the New Democrat Coalition, is one of the first Korean-American women elected to Congress and is the first African-American elected to represent the Pacific Northwest at the federal level.*