



## Strickland Delivers for Servicemembers and Military Communities in Annual Defense Policy Bill

Working hard for military families and communities, Congresswoman Marilyn Strickland secured the following provisions in the federal Fiscal Year 2023 Defense Policy 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, the possible development of an algorithm by the DOD to create a more transparent and modernized option to calculate BAH.
- BAH Restoration Act: In response to Strickland's *BAH Restoration Act*, the FY23 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 homeownership 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, options to increase housing availability, recommendations for the need for a housing manager, and recommendations for improving and increasing housing affordability for servicemembers and dependents.

### Pay

- Increase in Pay: Supports an increase in military basic pay by 4.6% for service members.

- **BNA**: The bill contains a provision that increases the amount of the basic needs allowance entitlement to 150 percent of the Federal poverty guidelines of the Department of Health and Human Services for the member's location and the number of individuals in the household of the member.
- **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 and Caregiving**

- **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 Report**: 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 childcare fee assistance program.
- **Reimbursement**: Establishes a five-year pilot program to reimburse members of the Armed Forces for certain childcare costs incident to a permanent change of station or assignment.

### **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**: Directs the DoD to submit a report on traffic congestion around certain installations experiencing significant traffic congestion, including Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM).
- **Aviation**: Create a pilot program on the use of sustainable aviation fuel with the DoD.
- **Engines**: Congresswoman Strickland secured \$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.

- Electric Vehicles: Require the Secretary of Defense to carry out a pilot program to facilitate the transition to electric vehicles while mitigating grid stress through microgrids and other infrastructure to cover the energy demand required to charge these vehicles.
- Alternative Fuels: Require a report that examines the complete cost estimates, material vulnerabilities, and various other cost-benefits assessments before requiring, with certain waivers, that the Department of Defense's fleet of non-tactical vehicles be alternatively fueled vehicles by the end of 2030.

## **Education**

- 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. 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.
- 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).
- Investments: FY23 NDAA makes historic investments for HBCU research and development and supporting minority talent, including nearly \$132 million for research at HBCUs, which is \$98 million above the President's Budget Request and establishes a fellowship program to provide scholarships and internships for eligible students with high potential talent in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.
- Outreach: Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering to conduct outreach to Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Minority-Serving Institutions regarding National Security Innovation Network programs that promote entrepreneurship and innovation at higher education institutions.

## **Preparing the Military for the Future**

- Incorporating Sustainability: Require the Department of Defense to commission a study on practices related to incorporating innovative construction techniques and sustainable materials, including mass timber, into military construction projects.
- Barracks: The Department authorized \$49 million in Military Construction for new barracks at JBLM.

*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.*