

## WE MUST REPEAL "SEQUESTRATION"!! - April 2018

### What is "sequestration" and why is it so important?

Sequestration is simply the shorthand name that refers to [automatic spending cuts](#) to [United States federal government](#) spending in particular categories of outlays that were set to begin on January 1, 2013, as an [austerity fiscal](#) policy as a result of [Budget Control Act of 2011](#). To simplify, it means that for every dollar spent on the military part of the national budget, we must spend an equal amount on non-defense items (with certain categories of nondiscretionary spending exempted.) To keep from over spending, Congress has resorted to using a "continuing resolution" to keep the national budget within the limits of the Budget Control Act of 2011. For the military this has resulted in uncertainty and limitations on what can be spent on developing new equipment, repair and maintenance, and the size of the force. The effects are NOW being felt!

**MAINTAINING VITAL EQUIPMENT:** To quote Rep Mac Thornberry of Wichita Falls, who is the Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee. He writes, **"EVERY DAY WE LIVE UNDER A CONTINUING RESOLUTION IS A DAY WE DO DAMAGE TO OUR MILITARY"**. Rep Thornberry says, "Years of under- funding and high operational tempo, have resulted in an enormous backlog of military equipment waiting to be repaired. Everything from trucks, tanks, ships, and planes is involved in this backlog. As a result, it is harder for our troops to find working equipment to train and deploy with, and the platforms that do function are being run into the ground through over-use.

**OUTRANGED, OUTGUNNED, AND OUTDATED:** Army Gen. Allyn testified, "Today we are outranged, outgunned, and outdated". An unintended consequence of current fiscal constraints is that the Army can no longer afford the most modern equipment, and we risk falling behind near-peers in critical capabilities. Under current funding levels the Army will not be able to complete upgrading the Abrams tanks until 2035. The continuing resolution slows development of 18 new initiatives and prevents production for 8 more." Of the Army's 33 Brigade Combat Teams, only 5 are considered to be "combat ready" and ready to fight tonight.

**12 O'clock High:** Navy and Marine Corps leaders testified that over 60% of the Navy's F-18s cannot fly and there is a shortfall of over 100 aircraft. General Wilson, USAF Chief of Staff stated, "We have become one of the smallest, oldest equipped and least ready forces across the full spectrum of operations, in the Air Force's history. The continuing resolutions prevent the acceleration of much needed 5th generation strike-fighter production and delays increased production of F/A 18 Super Hornets."

**READINESS:** On November 29, 2017 Rep Joe Wilson, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Readiness made the following report to Congress: "Representatives from all four services testified about the current state of military readiness. The briefing further reinforced Members concerns that the state of our military will continue to erode until Congress passes adequate and reliable resources for the Department of Defense." Note: in this case the words "reliable resources" mean that they can only be obtained through the repeal of the Budget Control Act of 2011. **DEFENSE INDUSTRY:** Defense contracts for the Army have dropped 35% during the period of the Budget Control Act. Lockheed Martin has lost 23% of its employees. Army Secretary Mark Ester, formerly of Raytheon, warned senators that uneven funding is driving small suppliers - "an engine of innovation" - out of the defense sector.

**MOAA NATIONAL POSITION: "Eliminate Sequestration. End harmful defense cuts." Lt. Gen. (Ret) Dana T. Atkins, MOAA President and CEO**

**SO, WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN? WHAT SHOULD WE DO?** Clearly this is the most important issue facing us. The current situation is a disgrace! But right now the Congress is deadlocked and consumed with other issues. They are trying to deal with a budget, deal with immigration reform, and a host of other issues. MOAA has been advocating to repeal Sequestration for 4 years now, but to no effect. We are failing. We, MOAA, need to do something different! Let's escalate our advocacy up to the highest level. We need to advocate directly to the President. There is no issue more important than our national security. Remember, **NUMBERS COUNT!**

*Sam Wilder*

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