

AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION'S

REBUILD FULL COMBAT READINESS

- The Air Force is the first responder for engagement around the globe.
- The demand is rising: Russia, Chinese Pacific posturing, North Korea, ISIS, Libya, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and future unforeseen crises or natural disasters.
- Readiness has eroded under Budget Control Act (BCA) restrictions:
 - The standdown of 31 flying squadrons
 - The furlough of most of the Air Force's 180,000 civilians
 - The drastic reduction of training exercises like Red Flag
 - The curtailment of advanced mission training
 - Canceled operations at the Air Force Weapons School
- Fifty percent of the affected squadrons have yet to return to pre-sequestration levels of readiness.
- The Air Force faces the possibility of not being able to respond to a crisis when America needs it most.

RECAPITALIZATION/MODERNIZATION

The Air Force needs to continue to invest in aircraft modernization programs for our aging fleet to ensure all mission sets remain viable now and in the future.

- AFA supports the Air Force's top three acquisition priorities: The F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, KC-46 tanker, and Long-Range Strike Bomber programs must stay on schedule and on budget.
- Congress should provide the Air Force the resources to acquire the needed capability and capacity of fifth generation fighter aircraft platforms and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets to meet growing threats.
- The Air Force must have flexibility to make budget decisions for more survivable, multirole platforms to provide close air support in high-end threat environments.
- AFA supports the Air Force's need for recapitalizing its trainer fleet of T-38s, its combat search and rescue fleet, and its Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System (JSTARS) fleet.

TRAINING

AFA supports continual investment in high-end pilot training, aircraft/equipment maintenance, and range operations.

SECURE SPACE AND CYBERSPACE

In the face of rising threats, AFA supports investment in capabilities and platforms to defend and maintain US superiority in space and cyberspace.

The US must retain clear superiority in these critical mission areas, and Congress must act to end Budget Control Act limits, invest steadily and strategically, and strengthen air, space, and cyber forces to support the national military strategy.

INVEST IN AIRPOWER FOUNDATIONS: INNOVATION, EDUCATION, AND TECHNOLOGY

AFA promotes early and continued education in science, technology, engineering, and math to stimulate the development of the next generation of aerospace engineers, scientists, and technicians conducting future research and development.

AFA supports science and technology funding necessary to support and maintain a robust defense industrial base necessary for meeting national defense objectives.



PROMOTING AIR FORCE AIRPOWER

REVITALIZE AND SUSTAIN THE NUCLEAR DETERRENT

AFA supports strengthening and modernizing our nuclear deterrent. We must maintain readiness of delivery systems and warheads, upgrade support equipment and infrastructure, and ensure accountability of the nuclear force.

PREPARE AND SUPPORT AIRMEN; CARE FOR VETERANS AND RETIREES

Military and veterans benefits are earned through years of service, sacrifice, and in many cases, personal injury and disability.

Tricare for life is a national obligation to retirees, long ago earned.

MILITARY RETIREMENT REFORM

AFA supports combining a matching 401(k) and a defined benefit for career military members while maintaining the overall value of the current military retirement system.

The volunteer force increasingly comprises service members born after 1980, the millennial generation. Research has shown millennials change jobs frequently and favor flexible retirement options, rather than defined benefit pension plans. The blended system proposed by the FY 16 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) tries to attract and retain the talent of the best and the brightest of today, and those we need to serve tomorrow.

The proposal offers the 83 percent of service members who serve for less than 20 years an opportunity to participate in a new plan that blends the recruiting benefits of a modern 401(k) plan with the retention benefits of the current military retirement annuity, career continuation pay, and retention bonuses paid at important career milestones.

AFA was behind military retirement reform from the beginning and urged members of the House and Senate Armed Services Committees to retain the following provisions in the final version of the FY16 NDAA:

- Initial one percent employer contribution to a service member's TSP upon entry of service, then matching contributions to five percent.
- Continued government contributions through the end of the service member's career.

SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

The Air Force has led the way among the services and improved every aspect of the sexual assault response system. This has resulted in fewer incidents and more victims reporting the crime. However, there is more work to be done.

TOUGH CHOICES

With so many security challenges, it is imperative America has a strong national defense. The Department of Defense needs a budget that provides world-class training, readiness, and equipment, and it must offer service members fair pay and a compensation package to recruit and retain the very finest.

Tough decisions must be made. Personnel compensation must be weighed against the need for readiness and recapitalization of an aging fleet. The Air Force of the 21st century must have the capability, capacity, and readiness to perform its core missions today and in the future.