

21st Century Partnership Monthly Update

July 25, 2020



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/BLUF: Below are items of interest to Middle Georgia leadership. Thank you for your continued support and, as always, let us know how we can better serve you.

[Air Logistics Complex \(ALC\) Change of Command](#)

We would like to thank Brigadier General John Kubinec for his 28 years of active service (32 including his time at the Air Force Academy) to this great nation and look forward to his continued contribution to this community in the future. We also would like to welcome Brigadier General Jennifer Hammerstedt back to Middle Georgia! The Warner Robins ALC Change of Command was held July 14th with Brig Gen Hammerstedt taking over the flag. We look forward to working with her to assist in executing her vision and help to ensure Robins Air Force Base and the ALC continues its role as an essential piece to Air Force mission execution.

[Georgia General Assembly](#)

The Georgia General Assembly held *Sine Die*...or the last day of this session...June 26th. The Partnership would like to thank all our legislators, but especially our local delegation, for the hard work in supporting our military members and the citizens of this great State, especially during this difficult time. As with all the legislation, we are grateful for our delegation leading the charge to ensure HB 914 was passed and sent to the Governor's desk for signature. This bill ensures that military spouses moving to the State can obtain their licenses and get to work quickly. This is a priority of the Partnership and is of interest to the Department of Defense and Congress. This passage came after the recess due to COVID-19 and shows the dedication our delegation has to our military members and their families.

[Department of Defense Budget](#)

After a recess the first part of July, Congress has reconvened and are getting to work. The HASC held a marathon 12+ hour session 1 July to pass their version of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), and the Senate passed their version of the NDAA to the full floor for consideration post recess. To date, there have been 779 amendments considered for the Senate NDAA, not all will be included. It passed just this last Thursday, July 23rd. The House passed their version 21 July. For appropriations, the House Appropriations Committee has marked-up all 12 of the funding bills and action on the full floor is beginning.

First, the good news to date. The House and Senate bills are focused on supporting our troops, funding to the amounts expected. Full funding is critical to ensure our forces have the equipment and training needed to increase their readiness. Both bills call for a 3% pay raise for our troops. Additionally, both the House and Senate bill show a

concern for supporting our military spouses and their ability to seek employment as the service member is transferred from base to base.

The House and Senate have focuses on ensuring the US is a leader in innovation and technology, now and in the future. There are calls to ensure there is domestic ability to mine for rare-earth metals...currently these come from China. Both bills seek to protect the weapons systems we know and love here in Middle Georgia and provide for the future mission replacements. They both are investing in emerging technology areas such as artificial intelligence and autonomous systems and enhancing U.S. presence in the Indo-Pacific by strengthening partnerships, missions, and training in the region.

For Robins Air Force Base, the Advanced Battle Management System (ABMS) and the overarching Joint All Domain Command and Control (JADC2) systems are funded, although the House bill proposes cutting funding by \$85 million due to concerns of how the program is proceeding in the Air Force. The House bill requested \$38 million for E-8 Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System (JSTARS) upgrades, an increase of \$27 million over the Air Force ask. The House proposed funding and an expansion of STARBASE, a fantastic program that exposes our nation's youth to the technological environments. This program has a component at the Museum of Aviation in Warner Robins. Finally, the Defense Community Infrastructure Program (DCIP) has proposed funding for \$50 million by both chambers of Congress.

Of course, the House and Senate still must meet to reconcile their two versions of both the NDAA and the Appropriations bills. The NDAA might well be able to meet the end of the Fiscal Year deadline, but we will have to wait and see. Leadership on both the House and Senate Armed Services Committees, from both parties, have said they want to see the bill through in a bi-partisan fashion. Once this has passed the full Senate, the House and Senate will meet to hammer out differences between the bills. There is still time, but it is going to be tight.

The Senate has not brought their version of the Appropriations bill to the floor yet...and may not until after the elections. Senate Democrats have insisted on a process to allow them to introduce contentious amendments to the Senate Appropriations bills. This violates a standing agreement between the two parties on the type of amendments allowed for the Appropriations bills. Add to this that the next big hurdle in the Senate is the pandemic relief bill, and another recess for Labor Day, it appears more likely than not that a Continuing Resolution (CR) is going to the floor before the spending bills. The elections are not helping as well, since amendments would likely be introduced to strengthen arguments going into November, regardless of whether they could actually pass.

Of course, as we have stated before, a CR is harmful to the Department of Defense. As stated by Senator Perdue, "Continuing resolutions have a direct and immediate impact across the entire Department of Defense – from training, to readiness, to maintenance, to personnel, and to contracting. CRs create inefficiencies and uncertainties that hurt the bottom line and our ability to fight." We will continue to watch this closely and keep you informed.

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