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**Subject:** Press Release: Legion leader says "no" to military pay cut plan

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Legion leader says “no” to military pay cut plan**

WASHINGTON (Feb. 6, 2013) -- The leader of the nation’s largest wartime veterans’ service organization, The American Legion, is taking strong exception to a recommendation by outgoing Defense Secretary Leon Panetta that would effectively cut the pay of active duty military personnel. Panetta, in a speech at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., Wednesday, said he plans to ask Congress to limit troop salary increases to 1% in 2014. Since this hike is below the estimated rise in the cost of living for that year, the limitation would effectively reduce service members’ pay.

“This is not the way to go about saving money,” said James E. Koutz, national commander of the 2.4 million member Legion. “Making the men and women of the military pay for out of control spending by others is unwarranted, unfair and just plain wrong. Our soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines deserve a raise to at least keep pace with the cost of living -- certainly not a cut. This unwise move would punish our service members for the sins of others.” Koutz also said that no federal employee should receive a higher increase than members of the military.

Koutz said he did, however, “agree wholeheartedly” with Secretary Panetta’s repeated warnings about the potentially dire consequences of proposed massive cuts in military spending. Panetta, who retires from office later this month, reiterated his anti-sequestration stance during his Georgetown speech.

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202-263-5758/202-515-8644. A high resolution photo of Nat. Cmdr. Koutz is available at  
[www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org).*