

**From:** [Trace, Howard C.](#)  
**To:** [Trace, Howard C.](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Legion to Senate: Do not reduce COLA for veterans  
**Date:** Thursday, December 19, 2013 7:56:16 AM

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**From:** Raughter, John B.  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 19, 2013 7:34 AM  
**To:** All Legion Leadership  
**Subject:** Legion to Senate: Do not reduce COLA for veterans

## Legion to Senate: Do not reduce COLA for veterans

WASHINGTON (December 18, 2013) –The American Legion voiced its outrage over budget cuts on military retirees’ benefits at a Dec. 18 press conference in Washington. The U.S. Senate had just passed the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013, which – if signed by the president – will reduce cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) benefits for America’s retired veterans by more than \$6 billion.

The bill was worked out between Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., and Rep. Paul Ryan, R-Wis., and passed the Senate by a 64-36 vote. Murray and Ryan claim the measure will drop the country’s deficit by \$23 billion and reduce the impact of sequestration.

“Passing this broken legislation today was wrong,” said Louis Celli, the Legion’s Legislative director. “It was wrong because (the Senate) had time to fix it, and ... chose not to.”

While several bills have already been introduced into Congress to repeal the COLA cuts, “some who seek to ‘technically fix’ this provision are only looking to repeal the portion that affects medically retired veterans,” Celli said. “I guess the rest of the military retirees aren’t worth the trouble to fix.”

The reductions in COLA benefits would affect about 900,000 military retirees, including those who are medically retired. Over a 10-year period, COLA benefits would be reduced by 1 percent per year, resulting in a total savings of \$6.3 billion.

Noting that the 113th Congress has passed only 58 pieces of legislation out of more than 6,600 introduced, Celli said, “And now we’re supposed to put our faith and trust in the same Congress to pass a law that overturns this (COLA provision), when they were unable to fix it in the first place? Make no mistake – The American Legion will dedicate every available resource to repealing and overturning this provision.

“The day would go down in history as the day Congress turned their backs on veterans everywhere by selling out 0.2 percent of the American population and asking them to be held financially responsible to pay for sequestration.”

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