

Army Times: Lawmaker Pushes 3.9% Military Raise in 2009

This week, Gus introduced legislation that would boost military pay by 3.9 percent in FY 2009. This number is 0.5 percent higher than the President's requested increase of 3.4 percent. In 2007, Bilirakis introduced H.R. 2027, which provided for a 0.5 percent raise above the President's FY 2008 request. The FY08 Defense Authorization bill signed into law this past January contained language similar to Gus's bill.

From the Army Times . . .

A Republican lawmaker assigned by his party to work on military and veterans' issues has become the first member of Congress to introduce legislation providing a bigger pay raise to troops in 2009 than proposed by the Bush administration.

Rep. Gus Bilirakis, a member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee and chairman of the veterans' affairs task force of the House Republican Policy Committee, introduced a bill on Monday to provide a minimum 3.9 percent increase in basic pay and drill pay for reservists.

The Bush administration is asking for a 3.4 percent pay increase for the military, an amount that equals the average private-sector pay increase last year. Bilirakis wants slightly more, to continue closing the gap that grew between military and private-sector pay in the 1990s, when military raises lagged those of non-government workers.

"It is critical for the continued growth and morale of our armed forces that we work toward improving the existing military and private sector pay gap," Bilirakis said in a statement. "While I applaud the administration's efforts to boost military pay, I believe we can and should do better."

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