



# LEGISLATIVE POINT PAPER

## ENSURE THE COAST GUARD IS PAID

### BACKGROUND

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Defending our nation comes with the obligation for the U.S. government to adequately fund the Department of Defense (DOD), especially during government shutdowns. While the U.S. Coast Guard is not a part of DOD, its role involving national security on our nation's borders and around the world is equally vital to the work our military performs. The U.S. Coast Guard provides law enforcement, port security, and maritime and coastal safety, while too often operating outdated equipment and vessels.

Organized under the Department of Homeland Security, more than 50,000 members of the U.S. Coast Guard operate a multi-mission, interoperable fleet of 259 Cutters, 200 fixed and rotary-wing aircraft, and over 1,600 boats and vessels. Previous government shutdowns caused members of the Coast Guard to temporarily lose pay and benefits, resulting in unnecessary stress, financial problems, significant degradation in readiness, and an increased threat to the nation. Despite not being paid, they would continue to work because their jobs are a matter of national security. During the 2019 government shutdown, The American Legion stepped up and issued more than \$1 million in expedited Temporary Financial Assistance grants to Coast Guard personnel and their families.

The American Legion believes that the Coast Guard's mission is essential to national security, and its personnel should never go without pay. The Coast Guard is also in critical need of significant modernization to keep pace with today's emerging threats to the nation.

### KEY POINTS

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- The U.S. Coast Guard is the only branch of the Armed Forces that does not fall under DOD. During federal government shutdowns, Coast Guard personnel are more exposed to working without pay.
- The Coast Guard is uniquely responsible for maritime security, search and rescue, port security, law enforcement, and military readiness with jurisdiction in domestic and international waters. American presidents have transferred Coast Guard assets to the Department of the Navy during almost every conflict. The Coast Guard should be treated and funded accordingly.
- The Coast Guard is in the midst of the largest recapitalization effort in its history – an effort critical to rebuilding the service branch. However, until recapitalization is fully

completed, servicemembers must continue to conduct missions with legacy assets, some of which are over 50 years old and require parts that are either no longer made or readily available.

## **WHAT CONGRESS CAN DO**

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- Approve and continue to increase the Coast Guard's budget annually to meet national security requirements and funding priorities such as restoring readiness and recapitalizing legacy assets and infrastructure.
- Pass legislation that would ensure pay and allowances for members of the Coast Guard during a funding gap.

## **RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS**

- Resolution No. 23 (2016): Support for the Department of Homeland Security and Coast Guard.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The American Legion Resolution No. 23 (2016): [\*Support for the Department of Homeland Security and Coast Guard\*](#)