



# Veteran At Double Talk

## *Obama Talks Up Veterans Benefits, Ignores The Steep Cuts In His Own Budget*

**At A Campaign Event Today In Virginia, Obama Pledged To Fight “Any Kind Of Cutbacks On Veterans’ Services.”** OBAMA: “That’s also, by the way, how we take care of our veterans. Now they’re coming home, they shouldn’t have to fight for a job after they fought for us and they should get the benefits that they’ve earned. So we’ll be fighting any kind of cutbacks on veterans’ services. We’ve got to take care of folks who took care of us.” (President Barack Obama, [Remarks At A Campaign Event](#), Glen Allen, VA, 7/14/12)



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## **BUT OBAMA’S BUDGET SEEKS DRASTIC CUTS IN VETERANS HEALTH BENEFITS**

**Obama’s FY2013 Budget Cuts Military Health Care Funding By \$12.9 Billion Over The Next Five Years.** “In the next fiscal year, the military has outlined a \$1.8 billion cut as part of a projected \$48.7 billion health care budget covering 9.6 million people. The cuts would total \$12.9 billion over five years. To offset the loss, retirees would pay higher enrollment fees based on how much they earn through their military pensions. Retirees and active-duty family members would pay more for pharmacy copayments, too.” (Barrie Barber, “Military Retirees Could See Increase In Health Insurance Costs,” [Dayton Daily News](#), 3/30/12)

**“The Administration Has Proposed Increasing The Fees And Co-Pays For Retired Service Members Covered By The Military Health Care Program, TRICARE.”** “With U.S. combat troops out of Iraq and a timetable set for drawing down in Afghanistan, the Pentagon is under increasing pressure to cut spending to help ease the nation’s burgeoning deficit. Among other things, the administration has proposed

increasing the fees and co-pays for retired service members covered by the military's health care program, TRICARE. The increases, to be phased in over four years, must be approved by Congress, which is facing the prospect of deep defense cuts already mandated by law." (Leigh Munsil, "TRICARE Cost Hikes Draw Fire," [Politico](#), 4/4/12)

**"The Pentagon Is Proposing Substantial Increases In Health Care Premiums For Working-Age Military Retirees."** "Benefits for military retirees are also targeted. The Pentagon is proposing substantial increases in health care premiums for working-age military retirees. For some retirees, the premiums for TRICARE, the military health-care program, would nearly quadruple from \$520 per year to \$2,480 in 2017." (Tom Vanden Brook, "Pentagon Budget Calls For Cuts To Jets, Benefits," [USA Today](#), 2/13/12)

### ***Under Obama's Budget, TRICARE Enrollees Would See Sharp Rises In Their Premiums***

**TRICARE Prime Enrollment Fees Will "Rise By 30 Percent To 78 Percent, Depending On Retirement Income."** "The Defense Department's proposed 2013 budget calls for an increase in annual enrollment fees for retirees in Tricare Prime to rise by 30 percent to 78 percent, depending on retirement income." (Patricia Kime, "Lawmakers Warn Of Fight Over Tricare Increases," [Marine Corps Times](#), 3/28/12)

- **Some Retirees "Will See Their Health Care Costs Nearly Quadruple."** "Military-age retirees who make more than \$45,179 annually — a pension usually reserved for officers — will see their health care costs nearly quadruple, from \$600 annually in fiscal year 2013 to \$2,048 in 2017." (Nancy Youssef, "Heaviest 2013 Defense Budget Cuts Would Fall On Troops," [McClatchy](#), 2/13/12)

**Veterans' Advocates Call Increased Fees "A Significant Breach Of Faith" With Military Retirees.** "Veterans' advocates denounced the proposed increases. Retired vice admiral Norb Ryan, president of the Military Officers Association of America, called it 'a significant breach of faith with those who have already completed arduous careers of 20-30 or more years in uniform.'" (Tom Vanden Brook, "Pentagon's \$525B Budget Lists Cuts To Jets, Benefits," [USA Today](#), 2/14/12)

**The VFW Called TRICARE Hikes "An Attempt To Balance The Budget On The Backs Of Disabled Veterans And Men And Women In Uniform."** "Still, veterans' organizations are angry at the proposed TRICARE cost increases. The Veterans of Foreign Wars, for example, panned them as an attempt to balance the budget on the backs of disabled veterans and men and women in uniform." (Leigh Munsil, "TRICARE Cost Hikes Draw Fire," [Politico](#), 4/4/12)

- **The Military Officers Association Of America "Generated More Than 110,000 Messages To Members Of Congress" Expressing "Outrage" Over The Cuts.** "When the cuts first surfaced, the Military Officers Association of America sent an alert to its mailing list and within eight days generated more than 110,000 messages to members of Congress, by far the biggest response to an issue the organization has ever seen, said the association's director of government relations, retired Air Force Col. Steve Strobege. 'We're inundated with comments from outraged people,' he said. 'They feel like that is a gross devaluation of the service they've already rendered.'" (Leigh Munsil, "TRICARE Cost Hikes Draw Fire," [Politico](#), 4/4/12)

**Sen. Jim Webb (D-VA) Opposed TRICARE Cuts, Saying: "No Marine Is Ever Left Behind, And I Feel Just As Strongly About The Commitment That We Have Made To Lifetime Medical Care For The People Who Have Served."** "All of this boils down to what a soldier or Marine or sailor or someone in the Air Force can see about what happened to the people who went before them, how they were treated after they left the uniform,' said Sen. Jim Webb (D-Va.), a highly decorated Marine who was secretary of the Navy in the Reagan administration. 'No Marine is ever left behind, and I feel just as strongly about the commitment that we have made to lifetime medical care for the people who have served,' he said in a

statement.” (Leigh Munsil, “TRICARE Cost Hikes Draw Fire,” [Politico](#), 4/4/12)

- **Sen. Webb: “You’re Changing Someone’s Contract After The Contract Has Been Signed.”**  
“Members of a key Senate panel warned Pentagon officials Wednesday of a looming, lengthy debate on the Defense Department’s proposal to raise Tricare fees for military retirees, saying the increases unfairly target those who devoted their careers to the armed forces. Sen. Jim Webb, D-Va., a former Marine and current chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee’s personnel panel, said the proposal reneges on an obligation established when the nation’s volunteer forces signed up. ‘You can’t renegotiate the front end once the back end is done,’ Webb said. ‘You’re changing someone’s contract after the contract has been signed.’” (Patricia Kime, “Lawmakers Warn Of Fight Over Tricare Increases,” [Marine Corps Times](#), 3/28/12)

**“[Retired Air Force Col. Steve] Strobbridge, In A Blunt Assessment Of The Proposed TRICARE Cost Increases, Said, ‘Military People Paid Horrendous Premiums Upfront, Through Decades Of Service And Sacrifice.’”** (Leigh Munsil, “Hikes In Cost Of Veterans’ Health Care Draw Fire,” [Politico](#), 4/4/12)

### ***Obama Even Attacked Republicans For Refusing To Increase Veterans’ Health Care Costs***

**Obama Was “Disappointed” That The House Refused To Increase TRICARE Fees In Its FY2013 Budget.** “The Administration is very disappointed that the Committee did not support the proposed TRICARE fee increases and included section 718, which, while supporting some fee increases, caps them at levels below those allowed under current law and below the requested authorization.” (President Barack Obama, Statement Of Administrative Policy, H.R. 4310 – National Defense Authorization Act For FY2013, [Washington, DC](#), 5/15/12)