

## Key Loeb sack Initiatives Supporting RIA, National Guard Pass House

Written by Vonnie Hampel

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**Defense policy bill now heads to the Senate**

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Dave Loebsack released the following statement today after key provisions he authored to support the Rock Island Arsenal and the National Guard were passed by the House. The legislation also includes language, which Loebsack supported and worked to include, that takes significant steps to address the ongoing military sexual assault crisis. Loebsack, the only member of the Iowa delegation who serves on the House Armed Services Committee, again helped draft this agreement, which was negotiated between members of the House and Senate. The National Defense Authorization Agreement for FY 2014 (NDAA) now heads to the Senate.

“The men and women who volunteer to serve our nation deserve our highest level of support and access to the resources they need,” said Loebsack. “I am proud to have authored a portion of this legislation that strengthens the Rock Island Arsenal by driving work there not just from the Army, but from across the Department of Defense. This provision helps ensure both the Arsenal and Quad Cities’ economy remain strong.”

Congressman Loebsack authored two provisions included in the final NDAA that will provide critical workload support to Rock Island Arsenal and its workforce as the

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drawdown in Afghanistan continues. These initiatives will drive workload from all of the military services and defense agencies to Rock Island Arsenal by requiring the Department of Defense to assess manufacturing work that can be performed there. They also improve Rock Island Arsenal's ability to compete for work by requiring contracting officers to review the arsenal's manufacturing capabilities when determining how to meet a manufacturing requirement and to notify the arsenal of manufacturing requirements. By driving work to the Arsenal, these initiatives will support the highly skilled workforce there and improve Rock Island Arsenal's ability to support our servicemembers across the entire Department of Defense.

The legislation that passed today also includes initiatives that Loeb sack backed and worked to include to help address the ongoing military sexual assault crisis. While these are significant and important reforms, Loeb sack is a cosponsor of legislation that would go farther by removing prosecution of sexual assault crimes from the chain of command.

"As a military parent, I am disgusted by the ongoing sexual assault crisis in the military. While I am disappointed the legislation does not go farther in responding to these horrible crimes, I am pleased that significant steps are included to address this crisis by improving prosecution of these reprehensible crimes and increasing support for victims."

Specifically, amendments authored by Congressman Loeb sack included in the FY 2014 National Defense Authorization Act are:

- Workload for Rock Island Arsenal – Loeb sack authored initiatives drive workload from all of the military services and defense agencies to Rock Island Arsenal by requiring the Department of Defense to assess manufacturing work that can be performed there. They also improve Rock Island Arsenal's ability to compete for work by requiring contracting officers to review the arsenal's manufacturing capabilities when determining how to meet a manufacturing requirement and to notify the arsenal of manufacturing requirements. These provisions will provide critical workload support to Rock Island Arsenal and its workforce as the drawdown in Afghanistan continues. By driving work to the Arsenal, they will support the highly skilled workforce there and improve Rock Island Arsenal's ability to support our servicemembers across the entire Department of Defense.
- Mental Health Care for our National Guard and Reserve Troops – Requires the Department of Defense to provide specific resources to support mental health care and suicide prevention for our National Guard and Reserve troops.
- In addition, Loeb sack pushed to include many provisions important to our troops and their families, including:
  - Prohibiting a new round of Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC)
  - A pay raise for our troops
  - Rejecting Department of Defense proposals to increase TRICARE enrollment fees and pharmacy co-pays;
  - Providing many military retirees in Iowa and elsewhere with the ability to make a one-time choice to stay on TRICARE Prime instead of being forced to move to TRICARE Standard as the Department of Defense has proposed. Switching from TRICARE Prime to TRICARE Standard would increase out of pocket costs for retirees. Loeb sack has pushed for this in order to prevent health care cost increases for Iowa's military retirees;
  - Requiring a minimum of 180 days notification for deployment of members of the National Guard and Reserve;
  - A number of important sexual assault prevention and prosecution provisions which Loeb sack has championed, including:
    - Stripping commanders of their authority to dismiss a finding by a court martial;
    - Prohibiting commanders from reducing guilty rulings;
    - Sets dismissal or dishonorable discharge dismissal as the mandatory minimum sentence for an assault conviction;
    - Removes the current five year statute of limitations on sexual assault under the UCMJ;
    - Requires victims be given access to qualified, specially trained

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lawyers to provide legal assistance;

Reforms preliminary hearing proceedings to avoid fishing expeditions that harm victim

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