



September 13, 2019

The Honorable James Inhofe
Chairman, Armed Services Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Adam Smith
Chairman, Armed Services Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member, Armed Services Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mac Thornberry
Ranking Member, Armed Services Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Messrs. Chairmen and Ranking Members:

The Military Coalition (TMC), a consortium of uniformed services and veterans associations representing more than 5.5 million currently serving, retired, and former service members and their families and survivors, thank you and the Committees for your efforts to support our Armed Forces, protect the interests of service members, and enhance our nation's security in the FY2020 National Defense Authorization Act.

We applaud the bipartisan, bicameral passage of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2019, which raised defense and domestic spending caps and extended the debt ceiling through July of 2021. We hope this allows Congress to complete work on both NDAA and appropriations bills prior to the beginning of the new fiscal year, for a second consecutive year.

TMC respectfully offers the following support and recommendations for the NDAA Conference.

Military Pay Raise – The Coalition believes strongly in the principle of pay raise comparability and believes service members have earned and deserve the same annual raise as the average American's, as measured by the Employment Cost Index. We thank both the House and Senate for reinforcing this fundamental comparability principle with a 3.1% raise for FY2020. We will continue to address restoration of 2.6% in accumulated losses from pay raises that lagged ECI between 2014 and 2016 in our recommendations for future budgets.

Elimination of Medical Billets – TMC Supports H.R. 2500, Sec. 718. Eliminating military medical billets presents significant risk to service member medical readiness, uniformed medical provider readiness, beneficiary care, and the military medical education and training pipeline. Given these risks, we strongly support H.R. 2500 Sec. 718 requiring an analysis and report to ensure DoD has assessed and mitigated the potential negative impacts to readiness and beneficiary care before taking any steps to eliminate billets.

Military Resale – TMC supports reform of DoD business operations to improve quality and achieve efficiencies. But, prior to taking action to consolidate the Commissaries and Exchanges, TMC

recommends the Conferees support H.R. 2500 Sec. 631 and await results of the ongoing GAO review before taking any action on consolidation.

Survivor Benefits – TMC strongly supports Section 630A of H.R. 2500. It is time to finally eliminate the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) / Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) offset. Never have we seen such support for eliminating the offset. Congress should end this injustice.

Military Family Housing – TMC appreciates both chambers' diligence in addressing health and safety hazards in privatized family housing. We ask that conferees consider expanding the definitions of tenants where appropriate, to include other individuals who may be living in privatized military housing such as DoD civilians, veterans, and retirees. We urge the committee to also consider adding provisions such as a tenant bill of rights, transparent online work order system and complaint database, and dispute resolution process for tenants of government owned housing, to include unaccompanied service member housing.

Sexual Assault – We strongly support the Committees' commitment to combating sexual assault in the military. Sexual assault has profound impacts on the morale, welfare and readiness of the military and has long-term negative impacts on veterans.

Reserve Component Service Chiefs – TMC supports H.R. 2500, Sec. 511, Grade of certain chiefs of reserve components, ensuring grade parity among the chiefs of the reserve components and reinstating the mandatory requirement for reserve chiefs to be appointed in the grade of lieutenant general. However, TMC recommends the USMC retain the ability to fill the Marine Corps Reserve position with the best qualified candidate, irrespective of component.

TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS) – TMC supports H.R. 2500, Sec. 703, Modification of eligibility for TRICARE Reserve Select for certain members of the selected reserve, which removes the restriction of federal employees who are reserve component members from purchasing TRS.

Concurrent Receipt – TMC is disappointed that expansion of concurrent receipt was again not included in either version of the NDAA. The Coalition will continue to pursue concurrent receipt improvements to ultimately ensure full military retired pay and veterans' disability compensation for all disabled retirees.

Basic Needs Allowance (BNA) – TMC Supports H.R. 2500, Sec. 602, creating a BNA for service members whose incomes and family size place them below 130 percent of federal poverty guidelines, and urges Congress to modify the eligibility determination should be made on a rolling basis, rather than once per year, to ensure families receive aid when they need it. This would provide a much-needed income boost and ensure these service members are able to put healthy food on the table for their families.

Sincerely,



President,
The Military Coalition

See attached list of organizations:

cc: Members of House and Senate Armed Services Committees



Air Force Association (AFA)

Air Force Sergeants Association (AFSA)

Army Aviation Association of America (AAAA)

Association of Military Surgeons of the United States (AMSUS)

Association of the United States Navy (AUSN)

Blinded Veterans Association (BVA)

Chief Warrant and Warrant Officers Association of the US Coast Guard (CWOA)

Commissioned Officers Association of the US Public Health Service (COA)

Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States (EANGUS)

Fleet Reserve Association (FRA)

Gold Star Wives of America (GSW)

Iraq Afghanistan Veterans Association (IAVA)

Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America (JWV)

Marine Corps League (MCL)

Marine Corps Reserve Association (MCRA)

Military Chaplains Association of the United States of America (MCA)

Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)

National Military Family Association (NMFA)

Naval Enlisted Reserve Association (NERA)

Non Commissioned Officers Association (NCOA)

Reserve Officers Association (ROA)

Service Women's Action Network (SWAN)

Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)

The Retired Enlisted Association (TREA)

United States Army Warrant Officers Association (USAWOA)

USCG Chief Petty Officers Association (CPOA)

Viet Nam Veterans of America (VVA)

Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)

VetsFirst

Wounded Warrior Project (WWP)