



T H E M I L I T A R Y C O A L I T I O N

201 North Washington Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
(703) 838-8113

September 30, 2005

The Honorable Mike DeWine
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator DeWine:

The Military Coalition (TMC), a consortium of nationally prominent military and veterans organizations, representing more than 5.5 million members plus their families and survivors, is writing to express support for your planned amendment to the Senate FY2006 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which would help military survivors.

Your amendment would provide for a \$150,000 special death gratuity payable to all survivors of members who died on active duty between Oct 7, 2001, and August 31, 2005, effectively making up the difference between the previous \$250,000 Servicemembers Group Life Insurance (SGLI) coverage and the recently enacted \$400,000 coverage. Current law, as contained in the 2005 Defense Emergency Supplemental Appropriation Act provides this retroactive payment only to those survivors of members killed in combat-related operations, which unfairly creates two classes of survivors.

TMC believes strongly that SGLI coverage and any retroactive application of such coverage should be equal for all service-caused deaths. No survivor's loss is less worthy of compensation simply because the member's death did not happen to occur under operations-related circumstances.

The Senate recently included an amendment to its version of the FY2005 Defense Authorization Act to make the new \$100,000 death gratuity payable to all survivors, to include retroactive payments. Your amendment would bring the SGLI-related retroactive payments in line with the Senate action on death gratuity payments. Equal payments to all survivors are supported by both TMC and the Services, as indicated in testimony by senior service leaders before the Senate earlier this year.

We believe this is the right thing to do and commend your efforts to ensure fair and equitable treatment for military widows.

Sincerely,

The Military Coalition
(Signatures enclosed)