



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

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Alexandria, Virginia 22314
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March 7, 2006

The Honorable Judd Gregg
Chairman
Budget Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman,

The Military Coalition (TMC), a consortium of uniformed services and veterans associations representing more than 5.5 million current and former servicemembers and their families and survivors, is writing to express our firm belief that two important issues deserve consideration for budget “headroom” in the FY2007 Budget Resolution.

One major concern is DoD’s plan to triple or quadruple health care fees over the next two years for retired officers under age 65, with lesser increases for enlisted members. The DoD budget submission assumes that raising these fees will drive hundreds of thousands of retirees out of the TRICARE system. But even senior DoD analysts have stated that this won’t happen. These overstated assumptions will leave the Defense Health Program underfunded by \$735M. TMC urges restoration of \$735M for the FY2007 Defense Health Program.

Another major TMC concern is ending the unfair offset of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) survivor benefits against military Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) annuities and to accelerate the effective date of paid-up SBP to 1 Oct., 2006. We strongly support Sen Bill Nelson’s letter to the Committee asking for an allocation of \$975M in budget authority for FY2007 that would allow the Armed Services Committee to take positive action on these inequities which affect over 260,000 military widows and retirees.

The nation owes fairer treatment to our military retirees and survivors. Please ensure this year’s Budget Resolution provides budget headroom for these two important issues.

Sincerely,

The Military Coalition
(signatures enclosed)

Air Force Association
Air Force Sergeants Association
Air Force Women Officers Associated
American Logistics Association
AMVETS (American Veterans)
Army Aviation Association of America
Association of Military Surgeons of the United States
Association of the United States Army
Chief Warrant Officer and Warrant Officer Association, U.S. Coast Guard
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service, Inc.
Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States
Fleet Reserve Association
Gold Star Wives of America, Inc.
Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America
Marine Corps League
Marine Corps Reserve Association
Military Chaplains Association of the United States of America
Military Officers Association of America
Military Order of the Purple Heart
National Association for Uniformed Services
National Military Family Association
National Order of Battlefield Commissions
Naval Reserve Association
Non Commissioned Officers Association
Reserve Enlisted Association of the United States
Society of Medical Consultants to the Armed Forces
The Retired Enlisted Association
United Armed Forces Association
United States Army Warrant Officers Association
United States Coast Guard Chief Petty Officers Association
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States
Veterans' Widows International Network