



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

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May1, 2009

The Honorable John Kerry
Senate Russell Room 304
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Saxby Chambliss
Senate Russell Room 416
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Kerry and Senator Chambliss:

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 thank you for your leadership in sponsoring improvements to the reserve retirement system to reflect the realities of “operational reserve” service in the 21st century.

TMC appreciates that Congress endorsed the need for change by including Senator Chambliss’ provision in the FY 2008 National Defense Authorization Act establishing prospective early reserve retirement credit for reservists who serve 90 or more days active duty in a fiscal year. For each such tour, they can retire 3 months earlier than age 60, if otherwise eligible. But the Coalition was very disappointed that the change excluded early retirement credit for the extraordinary service and sacrifice already provided by nearly 700,000 National Guard and Reserve warriors who have served since September 11, 2001, including nearly 200,000 with multiple active duty tours.

TMC strongly recommends that S. 831, the National Guard and Reserve Retired Pay Equity Act of 2009, which would make the early retirement provision retroactive to September 11, 2001, be passed by Congress this year.

Today’s “operational reserve” forces are essential to every national security mission at home and overseas. The nation asks these service members and their families to make enormous sacrifices that take them away from their families, communities and civilian careers more and more frequently. The reserve retirement system was created over 60 years ago when routine activations for the full range of operations were unimaginable.

TMC also believes strongly that ultimate reform of the reserve retirement system should include access to military healthcare for these warriors. We believe the government should not undermine Guard and Reserve families’ health coverage continuity by cutting off TRICARE eligibility once a member has completed career service but has not attained age 60.

TMC strongly supports S. 831 and urges it to be included in the FY 2010 National Defense Authorization Act. TMC deeply appreciates your commitment to our Guard and Reserve servicemembers and pledges our full support towards enactment of your bill.

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
Association of the United States Navy
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.
Iraq & Afghanistan Veterans of America
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 Guard Association of the United States
National Military Family Association
National Order of Battlefield Commissions
Naval Enlisted Reserve Association
Non Commissioned Officers Association
Reserve Enlisted Association of the United States
Reserve Officers Association
Society of Medical Consultants to the Armed Forces
The Retired Enlisted Association
United States Army Warrant Officers Association
United States Coast Guard Chief Petty Officers Association
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States