



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

March 5, 2010

The Honorable Blanche Lincoln
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Lincoln:

The Military Coalition, a consortium of nationally prominent uniformed services and veterans associations representing approximately 5.5 million current and former service members and their families and survivors, is writing to express our strong support for “The Military Retiree Survivor Comfort Act” which will authorize the retention of the full final month’s retired pay by a surviving spouse (or other designated survivor) for the month in which the member was alive for at least 24 hours.

The Military Coalition supports this important legislation. Our organizations have heard complaints from surviving spouses who were unaware that the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) should be notified immediately on the death of the military retiree. The vast majority of survivors who have joint bank accounts are unaware that DFAS has the authority to recoup any overpayments of retirement pay directly from their bank and in some cases emptying the account. As you can well imagine such actions wreak financial havoc.

The current practice is also inconsistent with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) treatment of survivors of disabled veterans. The VA authorizes the survivor to retain the full month’s VA disability compensation for the month in which the veteran dies. It was discovered several years ago that the VA had not been complying with that law and Congress pressed the VA to ensure prompt compliance. DoD owes the same treatment to military widows and widowers. Congress should be no less concerned about changing the law for the survivors of military retirees.

The Military Coalition applauds you for sponsoring “The Military Retiree Survivor Comfort Act” and we pledge our full support toward its enactment this year. If you have any questions please contact Survivor Committee co-chairs Kathleen Moakler (KMoakler@MilitaryFamily.org) or Deirdre Holleman(dholleman@treadc.org).

Sincerely,
The Military Coalition

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