



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

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### MILITARY COALITION PRESENTS TOP AWARDS TO HILL ADVOCATES

Alexandria, Va.....The Military Coalition (TMC), an influential Washington, DC-based consortium of 34 military and veterans groups, presented its highest awards on Oct. 6 to two legislators and two congressional staff members who have championed the causes of compensation and benefits improvements for military families. The awards ceremony was held at the Reserve Officers Association Building on Capitol Hill.

Senator Blanche Lincoln (D-AR) and Representative Joe Wilson (R-SC) received the Coalition's 2009 Award of Merit.

Lincoln was recognized for her leadership in sponsoring legislation to improve National Guard and Reserve GI Bill benefits, provide tax relief for certain disabled military retirees, and improve compensation for military widows.

Wilson was honored for his leadership in supporting military pay comparability with the private sector; retirement equity for Guard and Reserve members activated since Sept. 11, 2001; military health care improvements; and elimination of compensation inequities for disabled retirees and military survivors.

Colonel Steve Strobridge (USAF-Ret), TMC Co-Chair and Government Relations Director of the Military Officers Association of America, said, "Senator Lincoln has been in the forefront of multiple initiatives to improve the quality of life for the military community. Her efforts paved the way for adoption of an "earn as you serve" principle for activated reservists to qualify for the Post-9/11 GI Bill."

MSG Michael Cline (USA-Ret), TMC President and Executive Director of the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States, said, “As Ranking Minority Member of the House Armed Services Military Personnel Subcommittee, Rep. Wilson has played an influential role on almost every aspect of military personnel and compensation improvements this year. We’re especially grateful for his leadership in working to improve this year’s military pay raise and seeking fairer retirement and health care coverage for the Guard and Reserve community.”

TMC also presented its annual Freedom Award to Ms. Allison Witt, Legislative Director for Representative Robert Latta (R-OH) and Mr. Tony McClain, Military Legislative Assistant for Senator Lincoln, for their work in promoting support for military issues behind the scenes.

“The legislators are the champions,” said MCPO Joseph Barnes (USN-Ret), TMC Co-chair and National Executive Director of the Fleet Reserve Association, “but their staffs expend huge amounts of effort in crafting the legislation, working with the military associations to fill in the details, and coordinating our mutual efforts to get other legislators and the public on board. Allison Witt and Tony McClain have been great supporters on a wide variety of key issues affecting the military community.”

TMC represents the interests of more than six million members around the world, including active duty, National Guard, Reserve, and retired members and veterans of the seven uniformed services, plus their families and survivors.

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