



August 20, 2020

The Honorable James Inhofe
Chairman, Armed Services Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Adam Smith
Chairman, Armed Services Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member, Armed Services Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mac Thornberry
Ranking Member, Armed Services Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Messrs. Chairmen and Ranking Members:

The Military Coalition (TMC), a consortium of uniformed services and veterans associations representing more than 5.5 million currently serving, retired, former service members, survivors, and their families, thank you and the Committees for your efforts to support our Uniformed Services, protect the interests of service members, and enhance our nation's security in the FY2021 National Defense Authorization Act.

We applaud the concurrent, bipartisan, bicameral passage of important legislation to protect service members and their families in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, and hope this is the harbinger of Congress' completion of work on both NDAA and appropriations bills this fall. Moreover, we respectfully offer the following support and recommendations for the NDAA Conference:

Military Pay Raise – We thank both the House and Senate for reinforcing the fundamental comparability principle with a 3 percent raise for FY2021. We will continue to address restoration of the 2.6 percent in accumulated losses from pay raises that lagged behind the Employment Cost Index between 2014 and 2016 in our recommendations for future budgets.

MTF Restructuring/Medical Billet Cuts – TMC supports H.R. 6395, Sec. 715 and Sec. 716. We understand COVID-19 has forced a delay to MHS reform efforts, but we believe legislation is needed to ensure both MTF restructuring and proposed medical billet cuts allow for transparency, greater DoD reporting requirements, and Congressional oversight.

TRICARE Waiver Authority during National Emergencies – TMC supports S. 4049, Sec. 723. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated it is crucial to authorize DoD to waive or modify TRICARE policy or regulation during a declared national emergency.

TRICARE Extended Care Health Option Program – TMC supports H.R. 6395, Sec. 706. It is important to align TRICARE ECHO program coverage with state Medicaid waivers, consistent with recommendations from the 2015 MCRMC report.

Safe to Report Provision – TMC thanks the House and Senate for addressing Safe to Report in their versions of NDAA and looks forward to measures improving accountability on sexual harassment and assault.

Military Resale – TMC supports H.R. 6395, Sec. 633. Although reform of DoD business operations to improve quality and achieve efficiencies is important, the Defense Resale System – together with MWR

and other quality-of-life programs it supports – represents a holistic, vital, and fragile ecosystem. DoD needs to update its Business Case Analysis, addressing concerns raised by the Government Accountability Office report GAO–20–418SU, and re-staff it with the service secretaries prior to Congressional approval of its planned consolidation efforts.

DD Form 214 – TMC Supports S. 4049, Sec. 518. NDAA 2020 directed a working group to explore a form like the DD Form 214 for the Reserve Components. Because RC service members do not receive DD Form 214s at the same milestones as AC service members, they may never receive one during their careers – an issue prevalent during the Vietnam Era. Because the RC currently performs more operational service, its members are often inundated with multiple DD 214s in one year – a swing of too few to too many – under current policy. These issues can be solved by issuing them the same DD Form 214 in the same manner as the AC at the same milestones.

Hazardous Duty Incentive Pay – TMC supports H.R. 6395, Sec. 613. Both the Active and Reserve Components maintain the same standards for specialty codes qualifying for HDIP. Currently, RC service members only receive 1/30th of the monthly HDIP when they perform duty. Often RC service members perform more hazardous duty in a month than AC counterparts, who still get the full month of pay. The RC should be paid the same monthly rate as the AC, if they meet the same standards.

NGREA Funding – TMC supports H.R. 6395, Sec. 1512. The FY2019 NGREA report shows the RC equipment shortage to be \$33.8 billion. As high as that may be, the RC would have a much higher shortage if not for NGREA funding by Congress. Losing even one year’s worth of funding can have a significant impact to the services. Transfer of funds from NGREA must be prohibited.

Concurrent Receipt – TMC is disappointed that expansion of concurrent receipt was not included in either version of the NDAA. The Coalition will continue to pursue concurrent receipt improvements to ultimately ensure full military retired pay and veterans’ disability compensation for all disabled retirees.

180-Day Hiring Rule – TMC strongly prefers S. 4049, Sec. 1108, to repeal the 180-day hiring rule across all DOD locations in a 3-year pilot; moreover, we urge Congress to consider permanent repeal.

Basic Needs Allowance (BNA) – TMC supports H.R. 6395, Sec. 602, creating a BNA for service members whose incomes and family size place them below 130 percent of federal poverty guidelines, and urges Congress to modify the eligibility determination – which should be made on a rolling basis, rather than once per year – to ensure families receive aid as they qualify for it. BNA would promote readiness by providing a much-needed income boost, alleviating food insecurity and hunger.

Addition of Three Agent Orange Presumptives – TMC supports S. 4049, Sec. 1090B. Bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, and Parkinsonism meet the scientific threshold to be associated with exposure to Agent Orange. These presumptives will extend crucial care and benefits to tens of thousands of veterans.

Access of Veterans to Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record (ILER) – TMC supports S. 4049, Sec. 753. Veterans need – and have the right – to know what they were exposed to during their service.

Cheryl Lankford Memorial Expansion – TMC supports H.R. 6395, Sec. 628. This provision provides much needed support and education on benefits to dependent children who have lost both parents.

Sincerely,



President,

The Military Coalition

See attached list of organizations:

cc: Members of House and Senate Armed Services Committees

Air Force Sergeants Association
AMSUS, the Society of Federal Health Professionals
Association of the United States Navy
Blinded Veterans Association
Chief Warrant & Warrant Officers Association, USCG
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
Iraq & Afghanistan Veterans of America
Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America
Marine Corps League
Military Officers Association of America
National Guard Association of the United States
National Military Family Association
Naval Enlisted Reserve Association
Non-Commissioned Officers Association
Reserve Officers Association
Service Women's Action Network
The Military Chaplains Association of the United States of America
TREA: The Enlisted Association
Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors
United States Army Warrant Officers Association
United States Coast Guard Chief Petty Officers Association
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States
VetsFirst
Vietnam Veterans of America
Wounded Warrior Project