



July 22, 2020

The Honorable Mark T. Esper
Secretary of Defense
1400 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Mr. Secretary:

The Military Coalition (TMC) thanks you for leading the Department of Defense (DoD) in support of our service members, retirees, their families and survivors during the crisis brought on by COVID-19. Since the early days of this crisis, DoD ensured personnel programs rose to the challenge to ensure the safety and well-being of our military and their families.

A core and integral component of our personnel programs, and the pandemic response, has been the continued operation of Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) programs, and the military exchanges who serve a valuable role in supporting them. Service members and their families depend on these programs for myriad services, including affordable childcare and mission-sustaining fitness and recreation programs that advance quality of life for those serving our country.

We commend DoD for the policy issued on May 19 to use appropriated funds to reimburse some COVID-19-related expenses, albeit subject to the availability of funds. As such, we urge this policy be supported with critical funding for these programs. We commend initial efforts in reprogramming the CARES Act allocations to help offset these unprogrammed costs, but in light of plummeting revenues from the exchanges we know there will be a need for more resources.

We urge the DoD to work with Congress to acknowledge the importance of the contributions our exchanges make to both the mission and our service members, and to seek the requisite funding to sustain this valuable relationship throughout the pandemic and any aftermath.

Thank you for supporting our Nation's service members, retirees, their families and survivors. We look forward to our continued partnership and stand ready to assist wherever possible.

Sincerely,

Jack Du Teil
President,
The Military Coalition

See attached list of organizations

Supporting Organizations:

Air Force Association (AFA)

Air Force Sergeants Association (AFSA)

Association of Military Surgeons of the United States (AMSUS)

Association of the United States Army (AUSA)

Association of the United States Navy (AUSN)

Blinded Veterans Association (BVA)

Coast Guard (CWOA)

Public Health Service, Inc. (COA)

Fleet Reserve Association (FRA)

Gold Star Wives of America (GSW)

Iraq Afghanistan Veterans Association (IAVA)

Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America (JWV)

Marine Corps League (MCL)

Marine Corps Reserve Association (MCRA)

Military Chaplains Association of the United States of America (MCA)

Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)

Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH)

National Military Family Association (NMFA)

Reserve Officers Association (ROA)

Service Women's Action Network (SWAN)

Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)

The Retired Enlisted Association (TREA)

United States Army Warrant Officers Association (USAWOA)

USCG Chief Petty Officers Association (CPOA)

VetsFirst

Wounded Warrior Project (WWP)