



May 3, 2021

The Honorable Jack Reed
Chairman, Senate Armed Services Committee
728 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable James Inhofe
Ranking Member, Senate Armed Services Committee
205 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kirsten Gillibrand
Chairwoman, SASC Personnel Subcommittee
478 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thom Tillis
Ranking Member, SASC Personnel Subcommittee
113 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Inhofe, Chairwoman Gillibrand, and Ranking Member Tillis:

The Military Coalition (TMC), representing more than 5.5 million current and former service members, veterans, and their families and survivors, is writing in support of the bipartisan and bicameral *Military Hunger Prevention Act* and urges Congress to prioritize the bill's inclusion within the FY22 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

Hunger within the military community is not a new or isolated problem. Due to the inclusion of basic allowance for housing (BAH) in determining income eligibility for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), struggling military families continue to visit food pantries and distribution sites on or around every military installation to make ends meet. Studies conducted before the COVID-19 pandemic show that 1 in 8 military family respondents were food insecure.¹ However, that number has likely grown as the pandemic has exacerbated factors contributing to food insecurity such as access to affordable child care and soaring unemployment rates among military spouses.²

The *Military Hunger Prevention Act* provides a targeted approach to addressing food insecurity among military families whose household income falls within a band of the calculated poverty line. Semi-annual notification of eligibility for the military family Basic Needs Allowance (BNA) removes the stigma junior military families face when asking for help. The 13th Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation (QRMC) reviewed the need for a BNA, but only considered military families who utilize SNAP – thus neglecting the Congressional Budget Office's estimation of 10,000 military families who would benefit from the BNA. Although the QRMC noted that many young service members promote out of food insecurity quickly, it did not address the physical and mental developmental challenges associated with food insecurity for military children. A systemic correction to military compensation is warranted for these young military families.

Ensuring military families can put food on the table contributes to mission readiness, encourages retention, and contributes to the fitness and wellbeing of the future force. We appreciate your continued support of our nation's service members and families and standby ready to work with you on this important matter.

Sincerely,

Jack Du Teil
President,
The Military Coalition

¹ "Military Family Food Insecurity: A Scientific Look at Hunger in the Military Community." Military Family Advisory Network. <https://militaryfamilyadvisorynetwork.org/food-insecurity/>

² "By the Numbers: COVID-19 Impact on Military Families." National Military Family Association. 2021. <https://www.militaryfamily.org/income-loss-unemployment-and-loss-of-childcare-the-military-family-in-pandemic-america/>

Air Force Sergeants Association (AFSA)
Association of Military Surgeons of the United States (AMSUS)
Chief Warrants & Warrant Officers Association of the U.S. Coast Guard (CWOAUSCG)
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service (COAUSPHS)
Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States (EANGUS)
Fleet Reserve Association (FRA)
Gold Star Wives of America (GSW)
Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (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)
National Military Family Association (NMFA)
Naval Enlisted Reserve Association (NERA)
Non Commissioned Officers Association (NCOA)
Reserve Organization of America (ROA)
Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)
The Retired Enlisted Association (TREA)
United States Army Warrant Officers Association (USAWOA)
U.S. Coast Guard Chief Petty Officers Association (CPOA)
Vets First
Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)
Wounded Warrior Project (WWP)