



THE MILITARY COALITION

June 28, 2018

The Honorable James N. Mattis
Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Mattis:

The Military Coalition (TMC), a consortium of uniformed services and veterans associations representing more than 5.5 million currently serving, retired, and former service members and their families and survivors, writes to express our frustration with the lack of parity between the active duty and reserve components regarding the Joint Travel Regulations and their implementation.

A recent story published by Stars and Stripes was titled, “Reservists say Army denied housing benefits, garnished wages and launched unfair criminal probes. Now they’re suing.” For several years, our organizations have been working with the services, and through the Reserve Forces Policy Board, to ensure service members doing the same work have access to the same benefits. The Stars and Stripes story highlights a disconnect for implementation of housing allowance payments which Congress approved for member of the reserve components while serving on active duty.

At issue is whether Army Europe “willfully disregarded” travel policies to refuse basic allowance for housing (BAH) payments to Army Reserve Soldiers who deployed to Europe. In their lawsuit filed in the U.S. Court of Federal Claims, the service members allege Army Europe chose to no longer pay housing allowances due to Army Reserve and National Guard members who were activated for service in Europe. The stoppage in housing allowances led to reprimands and possible negative repercussions for service members’ careers.

The Military Coalition hopes these are isolated cases. As the military continues to rotate members of the reserve components throughout Geographic Combatant Commands for exercises and training, we ask the Department of Defense to ensure there is parity between the service components regarding travel regulations and their implementation. We fear continued misunderstanding of the benefits accessible for activated members of the reserve components will hurt retention for our all-volunteer force.

Sincerely,

The Military Coalition
(Signatures attached)

cc: Members of House and Senate Armed Services Committees

Air Force Association
Air Force Sergeants Association
Army Aviation Association of America
AMSUS, the Society of Federal Health Professionals
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
Iraq & Afghanistan Veterans of America
Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America
Marine Corps League
Marine Corps Reserve Association
Military Officers Association of America
Military Order of the Purple Heart
National Guard Association of the United States
National Military Family Association
Naval Enlisted Reserve Association
Reserve Officers Association
Service Women's Action Network
The Military Chaplains Association of the United States of America
The Retired 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
Vietnam Veterans of America