



THE MILITARY COALITION

June 28, 2016

The Honorable Richard Blumenthal
706 Hart Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable David Cicilline
2244 Rayburn House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Blumenthal and Congressman Cicilline:

The Military Coalition (TMC), a consortium of uniformed services and veterans associations representing more than 5.5 million current and former service members, their families and survivors strongly supports S.3042/H.R.5426, the “Justice for Service Members Act,” introduced by Senator Blumenthal and Congressman Cicilline. This important bi-cameral bill is a concise, straightforward bill which ensures that our service members and veterans can enforce the rights afforded to them under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).

Under USERRA veterans and service members, including members of the Reserves and the National Guard, are guaranteed the right to be free of discrimination based on their military service and the right to return to their civilian jobs after serving in the military. Under USERRA, returning service members must be promptly reemployed in the same position they would have attained had they not been absent for military service. If an employer doesn’t offer the same pay, benefits or status when a service member comes back from duty, USERRA allows the service member to hold the employer accountable for these violations in court.

However, some service members have been unable to exercise their USERRA rights due to increased use of forced arbitration clauses buried in the fine print of employment contracts. Usually presented on a take-it-or-leave-it basis, these clauses preclude access to the judicial system and instead funnel service members’ employment discrimination or wrongful termination USERRA claims into private, costly arbitration systems set up by the same employers. The “Justice for Service members Act” gives service members the ability to pursue their USERRA claims in court while preserving the option to enter into an arbitration agreement after a dispute arises.

The Military Coalition strongly urges Congress to quickly pass the “Justice for Service Members Act.” It is important for Congress to guarantee that the men and women in our nation’s Uniformed Services can exercise the rights Congress has intended them to have but are currently denied.

Sincerely,

The Military Coalition
(Signatures enclosed)

Air Force Association
Air Force Sergeants Association
Air Force Women Officers Associated
AMVETS (American Veterans)
Army Aviation Association of America
AMSUS, the Society of Federal Health Professionals
Association of the United States Army
Association of the United States Navy
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
Marine Corps Reserve Association
Military Officers Association of America
Military Order of the Purple Heart
National Association for Uniformed Services
National Guard Association of the United States
National Military Family Association
Naval Enlisted Reserve Association
Non Commissioned Officers Association
Reserve Officers Association
The Military Chaplains Association of the United States of America
Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors
The Retired Enlisted Association
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

Military Coalition Letter in re: June 28, 2014