



POSITION PAPER

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ELIMINATING THE RESERVE GAP

Requested Action:

- Include the Reserve Force in legislation protecting serving members.
- Recognize the Title 10 Reserves as well as the National Guard in bills and press releases.
- Provide funding for family, health care and veteran support for Reserve Force Members:
 - Family Support Programs for families of serving Reserve and Guard members.
 - Mental and behavioral health care for pre- and post-activation periods.
 - Military and Veteran Health coverage in remote locations.
- Restore Reserve Force education parity to Active Duty:
 - Begin eligibility when the service member elects to use the program the first time.
 - Extend eligibility to 10-years following enrollment.
 - Increase MGIB-Selected Reserve to 47 percent of MGIB-Active of \$1,564 per month.
 - Include four-year as well as six-year reenlistment contracts to qualify for MGIB-SR.
 - Allow use of the MGIB benefit to pay off student loans.
 - Continue eligibility for up to ten years after separation from the Selected Reserves.

Discussion:

Congress and the American people in many cases do not recognize the incredible value of the Reserve Forces. Confusion exists, in part, because in addition to the military's Reserve, you have the Federal Reserve banking system, the federal Strategic Petroleum Reserve and even the Helium Reserve.

At 1.1 million serving members, the military's Reserve Force makes up 48 percent of the Armed Forces. During the last 13 years of war, the Pentagon has ordered over 900,000 call-ups from the Reserve and National Guard in support of the Total Force. Sadly, the Reserve Force is often overlooked when legislation is written, leaving gaps in protections, benefits, and funding.

With less than 7 percent of the U.S. population ever having served and less than 1 percent currently in uniform, the Reserve Forces provide the link between the military and the civilian communities.

Both the Title 10 Reserve and the National Guard provide support to States during natural and man-made disasters, as well as provide homeland defense against foreign threats.

Funding: While Reserve components have worked closely with their parent services to develop seamless, integrated family readiness and support programs to provide information and services to all members, support differs between the Active and Reserve Components. Family readiness centers are located on military bases, but unfortunately few Reserve units are located near such bases. It is more likely for spouse and dependents to move to families for support rather than onto active military locations. Additionally, active units have developed internal family support networks, which are not as easy to maintain as Reserve and Guard member families are scattered throughout the civilian community. The most common support for Reserve Force families is online at such websites as Military OneSource.

Reserve Force members face unique challenges balancing military service with civilian life. Unlike active duty members of the Armed Forces, they juggle the demands of both military and civilian jobs. Their families often live where there is less community support available to them than active duty military families who can share issues and concerns with people dealing with the same challenges.

Many in Congress and in the Pentagon overlook the challenges faced by Reserve families. The 2004 Quadrennial Quality of Life Review noted, from a spouse survey, that more than sixty percent of

Reserve Component spouses had two weeks or less notification before activation. The spouses indicated they needed time during pre-activation to resolve dependent care, legal, health coverage and financial issues. Due to limited support, marital problems for the Reserve Components have increased from 37 percent in 2006 to 44 percent in 2008.

A child of an active duty military family whose parent is deployed often has several friends with military parents, whereas a Reservist's child may be the only one in his or her school with a parent who is deployed. ROA is working up a school kit to explain to teachers about the stresses faced by children of Reserve or Guard members who are deployed.

A team of Medill students found significant gaps between the health care and support for the Reserve and National Guards members who have fought in Iraq and Afghanistan and their active-duty counterparts. Many Reserve Force members have been hastily channeled through a post-deployment process that has been plagued with difficulties, including reliance on self-reporting to identify health problems. They report higher rates of some mental health problems and related ills than active-duty troops. The students' 2011 research suggest that attempts by Congress, the military and private contractors to address the problems have been uncoordinated and often ineffective.

A study by Marian E. Lane, Ph.D. found rates of posttraumatic stress (PTSD) and suicidal ideation were significantly higher in the deployed reservists compared to deployed active-duty personnel. Lane believes that reservists may react more extremely to the anxiety of potential deployment than active-duty personnel because they are somewhat removed from the daily stresses of military action. One size treatment doesn't fit all; providing services and interventions tailored to reservists will better facilitate the successful return and reintegration of service members experiencing post-deployment mental health issues.

Reservists lack access to the system or networks that are needed to assess and treat their injuries. After brief demobilization assessments, Reserve troops return home and must navigate disparate health-care and support providers. This is further complicated by distances between Reserve Force members and the military health and behavior provider networks.

Education: The education allowance is woefully inadequate, at less than 23 percent of the Active Duty MGIB (Chapter 30) and 11.5 percent of the new Post-9/11 GI Bill tuition and allowances. Most Selected Reservists (which include National Guard as well as Reserve members) don't apply, because they are unable to take advantage of the education benefit while performing their Reserve duties. Based on their service in the Global War on Terrorism at home and abroad, today's military reservists deserve enhancements to their eligibility under the MGIB for Selected Reserves.

In 2008, amendments to U.S. Code, chapter 1606 made the Montgomery GI Bill for Selected Reservists in a drill status even more restrictive. The only education program available to traditional Reservists is offered to them after their initial active duty obligation, when they reenlist for a period of six years. Eligibility ends when the individual is separated from the Selected Reserve, either upon completion of their reenlistment, upon retirement, or when transferred out of a pay status.

Where service members once had up to 14 years to use their MGIB-SR benefits from the time they became eligible, such language has been stricken. Eligibility for these benefits now only lasts until the Reservist or Guardsman stops drilling. An exception is if a Reservist stops drilling after being activated, he or she may switch back to Chapter 1606 for a period equaling the length of deployment plus four months. Active Duty recipients have ten years after separation to use their benefits.

Equipment Gap: LPP-04-14 Resetting and Reequipping the Reserve Force
LPP-06-14 National Guard and Reserve Equipment Appropriations



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