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## Achieving a “Good” Retirement Year During the Coronavirus Pandemic

***ROA urges Congress to provide authority for constructive credit to be given to Reserve and National Guard members during the pandemic. (Title 10 USC 10147 And 10 USC 12732)***

In December 2019 the world first heard about the coronavirus and over the weeks watched China, other countries, and America decide that avoiding close contact was required to flatten the curve of infection. The "curve" refers to the number of people who could contract COVID-19 based on observation of the disease progression in other countries. The concept of flattening the curve comes from principles of epidemiologic in public health practice.

President Trump and his health advisors announced a plan to flatten the curve that included groups of 10 or fewer persons, quarantining of individuals who test positive or are older adults, 65 years and older, at higher risk and closing of restaurants, bars and other businesses.

The Department of Defense Reserve Components responded by canceling the March weekend drill. The services are going to allow drill weekends to be rescheduled but Reserve and National Guard members may incur a “bad” retirement year because they cannot attain the required 50 points of service. This may occur for two reasons, first, the contagious nature of the coronavirus may require additional drill weekends to be cancelled. Second, drill weekends also have a fiscal year component that is required which may prevent the budget having enough funding for rescheduled drill weekends.

ROA believes giving constructive credit reduces future problems on many levels. Constructive credit is a self-leveling approach because it will only be given to servicemembers who are not able to reschedule cancelled drill weekends or annual tour in time to earn a good year. Twenty years from now when the Defense Finance and Accounting Service will not automatically count this year as a “bad” year because the servicemember did not get 50 points which would then trigger an appeal and delay of retirement pay. A waiver of good year for points cannot be coded in the personnel system which is why it would lead to confusion. Finally, the servicemember will not lose any points toward pay that was through no fault of their own. Bottomline is we would rather pursue legislation that rules in favor of the servicemember.

It is suggested that Congress pass in legislation an authority for this pandemic that states that members of the uniformed services on active status will be given constructive credit to ensure they meet the requirements of 10 USC 10147 and 12732(a)(2) if they are not otherwise being processed for separation under 10 USC Chapter 1221.

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