

Affordable Health Care for Gray Area Reserve Retirement

ROA urges Congress to provide the same health care coverage to retirees who qualify for gray area early age retirement. (Title 10 U.S.C. §1074)

Reserves and National Guard can retire after at least 20 good years of service. A “good year” requires a minimum number of points. However, reservists must wait until age 60 before they can receive retirement pay. Now there is an exception to that rule.

The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2008 enacted the Reduced Retirement Age for Reserve Component (RC) members based on Active Duty (AD) days. This legislation provides a way to reduce the retirement age from 60 to an earlier age that cannot be reduced below age 50. Only certain AD orders on or after January 29, 2008 qualify for early retirement. Active Duty days are credited in aggregates of 90 days only within any fiscal year. A day of duty shall be included in only one aggregate of 90 days. Retired Reserve and Guard members are referred to as gray area retirees once they are eligible for early retirement.

When this legislation passed it did not include eligibility for the same retirement health care program of TRICARE Prime, under Title 10 U.S.C. 1074(b), that is offered to all other retirees. Rather Congress enacted TRICARE Retired Reserve under Public Law 111-84 which provided a non-subsidized health care program from the early retirement age of 50 to 59. Once the retiree reaches age 60, the service member and qualifying family members become eligible for TRICARE Select and Prime (where available).

As a comparison, TRICARE Retired Reserve is a **per month payment** and TRICARE Prime is an **annual payment**. For those same servicemembers in TRICARE Select there is no enrollment fee. Once the retired reservist reach age 60, the servicemember and their qualifying family members become eligible for TRICARE Select and Prime (where available).

| | TRICARE Prime, Retired, Group A* | TRICARE Retired Reserve | TRICARE Select, Retired, Group A* |
|-----------------|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| Enrollment Fees | \$300/year for individual or \$600/year for family | Member only: \$444.37/month or \$5332.44/year Member + Family: \$1,066.26/month or \$12,795.16/year | \$0 |

* Began service prior to January 1, 2018

The gray area law was meant to recognize the increased reliance on the Reserve Components and ROA urges congress to reduce the age of TRICARE eligibility to match the intent of early retirement.

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