



T H E M I L I T A R Y C O A L I T I O N

201 North Washington Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
(703) 838-8113

December 11, 2013

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker and Madam Minority Leader:

The Military Coalition (TMC), a consortium of uniformed services and veterans associations representing more than 5.5 million current and former servicemembers and their families and survivors, appreciates the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013 which helps to ease the harmful effects of sequestration on the defense budget; however, we wish to express our grave concern and strong objection to the proposal within the Act that specifically seeks to penalize current and future military members who have served our nation for over twenty years.

The 1 percent annual reduction to uniformed service retired pay Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) will have a devastating financial impact for those who retire at the 20 year point by reducing retired pay by nearly 20 percent at age 62.

While portrayed as a minor change, a 20 percent reduction in retired pay and survivor benefit values is a massive cut in military career benefits and an egregious breach of faith.

The Coalition believes that service in uniform is unlike any other occupation. Roughly one percent of the nation's population is currently serving and shouldering 100 percent of the responsibility for our wartime and national security requirements. The benefits connected with this service have been earned through 20 or more years of arduous military service.

Ending the harmful effects of sequestration is a top priority for our nation's security and military readiness, but to tax the very men and women who have sacrificed and served more than others is simply a foul.

Congress mandated the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission (MCRMC) in the FY 2013 National Defense Authorization Act and wisely removed the "BRAC-like", fast-tracking rule so that the appropriate committees would have adequate time to assess any recommendations that could significantly impact retention and readiness. Moreover, any

changes that the MCRMC recommends will grandfather the existing force and retirees to keep promises that have been made by our nation's leadership.

This radical proposal basically kills the grandfather-concern addressed by both Congress and the Administration and actually eliminates the appropriate review process failing to consider long-term readiness and retention outcomes in order to meet an arbitrary deadline so that Congress can go home for the holidays.

The Secretary of Defense succinctly warned on July 31, "It is the responsibility of our nation's leadership to work together to replace the mindless and irresponsible policy of sequestration. It is unworthy of the service and sacrifice of our nation's men and women in uniform and their families."

The Military Coalition shares the Secretary's concerns.

Currently serving members look at how they, their families, retirees, and survivors are being treated when making career decisions. If Congress arbitrarily cuts the retirement benefit for those who have served their country for over 20 years, there could be a lasting adverse impact on uniformed service career retention, and ultimately, national security.

Sincerely,

The Military Coalition
(signatures enclosed)

cc: President Obama
Secretary Hagel
Members of the House of Representatives
Members of the Senate

Air Force Sergeants Association
Air Force Women Officers Associated
AMVETS (American Veterans)
AMSUS, the Society of Federal Health Professionals
Association of the United States Navy
Chief Warrant Officer and Warrant Officer Association, U.S. Coast Guard
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
Society of Medical Consultants to the Armed Forces
The Military Chaplains Association of the United States of America
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: Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013 December 11, 2013



T H E M I L I T A R Y C O A L I T I O N

201 North Washington Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
(703) 838-8113

December 11, 2013

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority and Minority Leaders:

The Military Coalition (TMC), a consortium of uniformed services and veterans associations representing more than 5.5 million current and former servicemembers and their families and survivors, appreciates the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013 which helps to ease the harmful effects of sequestration on the defense budget; however, we wish to express our grave concern and strong objection to the proposal within the Act that specifically seeks to penalize current and future military members who have served our nation for over twenty years.

The 1 percent annual reduction to uniformed service retired pay Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) will have a devastating financial impact for those who retire at the 20 year point by reducing retired pay by nearly 20 percent at age 62.

While portrayed as a minor change, a 20 percent reduction in retired pay and survivor benefit values is a massive cut in military career benefits and an egregious breach of faith.

The Coalition believes that service in uniform is unlike any other occupation. Roughly one percent of the nation's population is currently serving and shouldering 100 percent of the responsibility for our wartime and national security requirements. The benefits connected with this service have been earned through 20 or more years of arduous military service.

Ending the harmful effects of sequestration is a top priority for our nation's security and military readiness, but to tax the very men and women who have sacrificed and served more than others is simply a foul.

Congress mandated the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission (MCRMC) in the FY 2013 National Defense Authorization Act and wisely removed the "BRAC-like", fast-tracking rule so that the appropriate committees would have adequate time to assess any recommendations that could significantly impact retention and readiness. Moreover, any

changes that the MCRMC recommends will grandfather the existing force and retirees to keep promises that have been made by our nation's leadership.

This radical proposal basically kills the grandfather-concern addressed by both Congress and the Administration and actually eliminates the appropriate review process failing to consider long-term readiness and retention outcomes in order to meet an arbitrary deadline so that Congress can go home for the holidays.

The Secretary of Defense succinctly warned on July 31, "It is the responsibility of our nation's leadership to work together to replace the mindless and irresponsible policy of sequestration. It is unworthy of the service and sacrifice of our nation's men and women in uniform and their families."

The Military Coalition shares the Secretary's concerns.

Currently serving members look at how they, their families, retirees, and survivors are being treated when making career decisions. If Congress arbitrarily cuts the retirement benefit for those who have served their country for over 20 years, there could be a lasting adverse impact on uniformed service career retention, and ultimately, national security.

Sincerely,

The Military Coalition
(signatures enclosed)

cc: President Obama
Secretary Hagel
Members of the Senate
Members of the House of Representatives

Air Force Sergeants Association
Air Force Women Officers Associated
AMVETS (American Veterans)
AMSUS, the Society of Federal Health Professionals
Association of the United States Navy
Chief Warrant Officer and Warrant Officer Association, U.S. Coast Guard
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
Society of Medical Consultants to the Armed Forces
The Military Chaplains Association of the United States of America
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: Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013 December 11, 2013