



National Military and Veterans Alliance
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December 18, 2009

The Honorable Carl Levin, Chairman
Senate Armed Services Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John McCain, Ranking Member
Senate Armed Services Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Levin and Ranking Member McCain:

The National Military and Veterans Alliance (NMVA), representing 32 military, veterans and family associations, with a combined membership of over 3.5 million members, is writing to express our deep concern about the health care bill, H.R. 3590, that is currently being considered by the Senate. Specifically, we are alarmed that there is no language in the bill that would expressly protect VA health-care or TRICARE and fulfill President Obama's promise last August that neither program would "be affected by our efforts at broader health-care reform."

In addition, unless there is specific language excluding TRICARE, TRICARE for Life, and VA health care programs from a proposed excise tax, veterans and military retirees face the very real prospect of paying a new tax on so-called "Cadillac" health care plans, which TRICARE and VA health-care could easily be considered. As has been pointed out by a number of federal employee labor unions, such a tax would "have a discriminatory impact on plans that cover older workers and retirees" Furthermore, it could result in a tax increase of as much as 1.4 percent on veterans and military retirees, many, or most of whom are retired with no way to make up for that additional tax other than by cutting back elsewhere in their family budgets.

VA and TRICARE healthcare programs are earned benefits – earned through sacrifice and service and enacted by Congress that understands that taking care of veterans and military retirees is a cost of defending our nation. Not only would taking away these benefits break a promise made to those who served in the Uniformed Services, it would threaten the viability of the all-volunteer force because it breaks faith with those who serve based in part on the promises that were made to them when they signed up for duty.

We urge you to immediately seek an amendment to the bill and add language to make it clear that nothing in the act interferes with the Department of Veterans' Affairs or Department of Defense's existing authorities and that VA health care programs and the TRICARE and TRICARE for Life programs are excluded from any excise tax on health care programs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Deirdre Parke Holloman".

Deirdre M. Parke-Holloman
Co-Director

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rick Jones".

Richard A. Jones
Co-Director



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- American Logistics Association
- American Military Retirees Association
- American Military Society
- American Retirees Association
- American WWII Orphans Network
- AMVETS (American Veterans)
- Armed Forces Marketing Council
- Army Navy Union
- Association of the United States Navy
- Catholic War Veterans
- Gold Star Wives of America
- Japanese American Veterans Association
- Korean War Veterans Foundation
- Legion of Valor
- Military Order of the Purple Heart
- Military Order of Foreign Wars
- Military Order of the World Wars
- National Association for Uniformed Services
- National Gulf War Resource Center
- Naval Enlisted Reserve Association
- Paralyzed Veterans of America
- Reserve Enlisted Association
- Reserve Officers Association
- Society of Military Widows
- The Retired Enlisted Association
- TREA Senior Citizen League
- Tragedy Assistant Program for Survivors
- Uniformed Services Disabled Retirees
- Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States
- Veterans of Modern Warfare
- Vietnam Veterans of America
- Women in Search of Equity