

April 9, 2014

FY15 NDAA HASC Member Testimony Day

I. Introduction

- Thank you Chairman McKeon and Ranking Member Smith for allowing me to testify today before the House Armed Services Committee.
- Since I have numerous issues I wish to draw attention to, I will keep my remarks brief on each issue.
- My staff will be happy to follow up on any issue and provide the necessary information.

II. 440th Airlift Wing

- As you know, I am the proud representative of the second district of North Carolina which is home to Fort Bragg.
- Ft. Bragg is home to the Airborne and Special Operations Forces and a rich military history that the great state of North Carolina is proud to support.
- The first issue I would like to address is the president's proposal to inactivate the 440th Airlift Wing located at Pope Field.
- I have serious concerns with this proposal and the negative impacts it would have on training.
- The 440th Airlift Wing provides 33 percent of crucial Joint Airborne and Air Transportability training to the forces stationed at Fort Bragg.
- This Joint Mission was formed over the last seven years to provide Airborne and Special Operation Forces with the accessible, flexible, and quality training they need to continue to be the ready for whatever mission they are asked to carry out.
- Cutting Ft. Bragg's airborne operations by an estimated 33 percent could further erode our readiness at a time when the United States simply cannot afford it - particularly when the Department of Defense recognizes the continued need to enhance and utilize Special Operations Forces.
- Eliminating the ability to rapidly mobilize to train and deploy with local commanders, aircrews, and aircraft that have an established relationship with our most in-demand forces increases risk at an unacceptable rate.
- Mr. Chairman, I respectfully request you maintain the mission of the 440th Airlift Wing and its C-130s.

III. TRICARE

- The next issue I would like to discuss is the lack of timely and consistent notification from TRICARE regarding changes made to beneficiary's insurance coverage.
- While sitting down with one particular military spouse - Susan Reynolds - I was stunned to learn that her family was not notified about TRICARE's decision to end coverage for compounded pharmaceuticals.
- Her son Ian is allergic to red dye and relies on compounded pharmaceuticals for his medication.
- Mrs. Reynolds husband, Jeremy, was deploying in less than a month and was blindsided by the changes made to his family's TRICARE coverage.
- The Reynolds family was left with the struggles of deployment and the unnecessary burden of wondering if their son's medication would be covered and how would they replace it.
- This was an unnecessary hardship placed on the backs of a deploying family simply because there is no standard notification system in place for changes in TRICARE coverage.
- Mr. Chairman, I came to Washington to fix problems for families and this is a problem that is easily solved.
- After speaking with numerous military families like the Reynolds, I introduced H.R. 4101 - The TIME Act.
- This legislation would restructure TRICARE's notification process and require TRICARE to notify beneficiaries and providers no less than 90 days before a change to their coverage is made.
- It is imperative that military families have the appropriate time they need to find suitable alternatives for the coverage lost. Instead, they were left to see their insurance coverage pulled out from underneath them.
- Mr. Chairman, I request that this problem be addressed in this year's NDAA and that the TIME Act be a part of that discussion. I would like to work with the House Armed Services Committee to fix this problem.

IV. Conclusion

- In closing, I would like to express the need for a fully-funded and supported military.

- It is more important than ever that the United States maintain its military superiority and continue to be the dominate force for freedom in the world.
- Thank you Chairman McKeon and Ranking Member Smith for allowing me to speak before this distinguished committee and for all of your hard work in support of our armed forces and military families.
- I look forward to working with this committee on the challenges facing our military.