

Rep. Marie Gluesenkamp Perez -- HASC NDAA Member Day

April 11th, 2024

Thank you, Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Smith, for the opportunity to testify today.

I am here today to advocate for the inclusion of certain provisions of my bipartisan bill, the PARA-EMT Act, which I introduced with Congressman Finstad in the FY25 National Defense Authorization Act.

Our servicemembers who completed military emergency medical technician training while serving have an incredible skill set that should be celebrated and utilized as they transition out of the Armed Forces. We can better serve both those transitioning servicemembers, as well as our rural communities, by making it easier for experienced veterans to transition from medics to becoming certified civilian paramedics and EMTs.

This provision would create a program for states to facilitate and expedite the transition of medics coming out of the military to meet certification, licensure, and other requirements applicable to becoming an EMT or paramedic. This will support the recruitment of EMS staff in rural areas and cut red tape for veterans looking to build on their service to their country by becoming a certified EMT or paramedic. I appreciate Rep. Finstad's partnership to support rural first responders and strengthen this line of defense for our communities.

I also want to touch on a few other priorities that are important to my district and constituents. First, I want to say that I am grateful that my repair amendment was adopted on the floor in last year's House NDAA and I'd like to reiterate the importance of the Armed Forces being able to fix its own equipment. This continues to be critical for our military readiness and equipment confidence. When military maintenance technicians aren't able to fix equipment in the field – whether it's an engine or a simple generator – because of restrictive contracting terms, it harms our military readiness and is a gut punch to technicians, who want to work with their hands to fix things.

Lastly, I want to note that I was also glad to see last year's final NDAA include the historically high 5.2% pay raise for service members. I hope this year proves no different– and we again show our service members that their selfless service is valued and deserves appropriate compensation.

I thank you again for the opportunity to testify.