

Statement for the Record

**Reserve Officers Association of the United States
And
Reserve Enlisted Association**

for the

**House Armed Services Committee
Subcommittee on Military Personnel**

**Beneficiary and Advocacy Overview of
Fiscal Year 2015 Presidential Budget**

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The Reserve Officers Association of the United States (ROA) is a professional association of commissioned and warrant officers of our nation's seven uniformed services, and their spouses. ROA was founded in 1922 during the drawdown years following the end of World War I. It was formed as a permanent institution dedicated to National Defense, with a goal to teach America about the dangers of unpreparedness. When chartered by Congress in 1950, the act established the objective of ROA to: "... support and promote the development and execution of a military policy for the United States that will provide adequate National Security." The mission of ROA is to advocate strong Reserve Components and national security, and to support Reserve officers in their military and civilian lives.

The Association's 55,000 members include Reserve and Guard Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Airmen, and Coast Guardsmen, who frequently serve on Active Duty to meet critical needs of the uniformed services and their families. ROA's membership also includes officers from the U.S. Public Health Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, who often are first responders during national disasters and help prepare for homeland security. ROA is represented in each state with 49 departments including departments in Latin America, the District of Columbia, Europe, the Far East, and Puerto Rico. Each department has several chapters throughout the state. ROA has more than 450 chapters worldwide.

ROA is a member of The Military Coalition, where it co-chairs the Guard and Reserve Committee. ROA is also a member of the National Military/Veterans Alliance. Overall, ROA works with 75 military, veterans, and family support organizations.

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The Reserve Enlisted Association (REA) is an advocate for the enlisted men and women of the United States Military Reserve Components in support of National Security and Homeland Defense, with emphasis on the readiness, training, and quality-of-life issues affecting their welfare and that of their families and survivors. REA is the only Joint Reserve association representing enlisted reservists – all ranks from all five branches of the military.

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DISCLOSURE OF FEDERAL GRANTS OR CONTRACTS

The Reserve Officers Association and Reserve Enlisted Association are member-supported organizations. Neither ROA nor REA have received grants, sub-grants, contracts, or subcontracts from the federal government in the past three years. All other activities and services of the associations are accomplished free of any direct federal funding.

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

On behalf of our members, the Reserve Officers Association and the Reserve Enlisted Association thank the committee for the opportunity to submit testimony on personnel issues affecting serving Active and Reserve members, retirees, their families, and survivors.

We have all heard how the Army expects to reduce its numbers to below the manning levels prior to World War II. What is missing from this explanation is a back-up plan if DoD's strategy is wrong. Between 1924 and 1939, while the active Army was small in size, the plan was to mobilize 1.3 million men within 4 months of a crisis. No such fall back exists today, placing the full onus onto the Reserve and National Guard to provide any surge.

While there are an increasing number of studies supporting the Reserve and Guard cost efficiencies, the Army is pushing back against the role of the Reserve Force. Using the QDR as a reference, the Army is now challenging how quickly the Reserve or Guard can be mobilized to respond to a crisis. Over the last thirteen years, nearly 900,000 Reserve and Guard members have been mobilized.

TMC believes that the nation needs to continue to use the Reserve Components as an operational force and sustain a surge capacity for unexpected contingencies. As DoD is willing to accept risks; the Reserve and Guard are the only insurance policy. It is important to retain the combat experience of veterans in the Reserve Component during a reduction in Total Force. Cutting the Reserve and Guard as well as the active forces will make achieving readiness goals even more difficult.

One issue needing to be discussed is protecting the end strength within the Reserve and National Guard. With active duty veterans leaving, it is hard to find room for them if cuts are being made to the Reserve Force. Options should be explored that permit warriors to remain in the guard, even if new duty statuses need to be developed.

Further, there is a need for caution before making compensation cuts to the Reserve Force. Compensation needs to keep pace with the nation's ever-increasing reliance on the Reserve and the Guard. Yet DoD wants to reduce monthly reimbursement, has suggested changes to retirement, and cost increases to benefits.

If you calculate the number of days worked against current pay, the ratio's for both Active and Reserve are the same. Reducing monthly pay will drive away the best, as they can reap higher rewards elsewhere. Suggested changes to retirement will actually pay Reserve Force retirees less over a lifetime.

A fiscal year barrier exists, denying Reservists a 90-day credit if their service crosses between two fiscal years. TMC supports S.240 by Senators Tester, Chambliss and Blumenthal to retroactively fix the problem in U.S. Code. TMC also advocates extending the early retirement to the warriors who served since 9/11/2001. As many senior officers and enlisted are performing duty without pay, TMC endorses crediting all inactive duty toward Reserve retirement.

Several years ago, DoD reassured beneficiary associations that TRICARE Reserve Select would not be included in fee increases that DoD had requested. This year, if fees are increased they would be the same for TRICARE Reserve Select as for TRICARE Standard. The Pentagon views TRS not as a health program for Reserve and Guard, but as a health insurance option. Reserve Force members have proven themselves over the last 13 years, and should have a health care program fit for warriors.

Undesirably, transitions between different military health care programs are not seamless. Serving members need to reenroll at various points as they transition on and off Active Duty. This has caused many Reserve members to be uncertain about TRICARE Reserve Select. TMC supports an option to pay a stipend to employers during mobilization periods, permitting family members to continue on their civilian medical insurance.

For those Reservists who have been wounded or injured, many are not receiving the same disability rating as their Active Duty counterparts. If any warrior is asked to take a risk, their benefits should not be discounted - because no one is part-time in a war zone. Similarly, if they make the final sacrifice in the line of duty, Reserve or Guard surviving family members should receive the same level of survivor benefits as their active duty counterparts.

With less than 7 percent of the U.S. population ever having served and less than 1 percent of the population currently in uniform, the Reserve Forces provide a necessary link between the military and the civilian communities. The utilization of America's Reserve and National Guard during all phases of military operations is a fundamental enabler to properly gaining and sustaining the support of our citizens. Both the Title 10 Reserve and the National Guard provide support to States during natural and man-made disasters, as well as provide homeland defense against foreign threats.

The Federal Reserve and the National Guard are integral contributors to our nation's operational ability to defend itself, assist other countries in maintaining global peace, and fight against overseas threats. They are an integrated part of the Total Force, yet remain a surge capability as well.

ELIMINATING THE RESERVE GAP

After 13 years of war, Reserve Force members feel they have done their share as equal partners in the total force. Bolstered by comments such as "when you go into the combat theater, you can't tell the difference between Guard, Reserve or active-duty member - which have been made by both Congressional and Pentagon leadership - members of the Reserve Force feel they have contributed to the total all-volunteer force.

Congress and the American people in many cases do not recognize the incredible value of the Reserve Forces, overlooking the contributions that have been made, and the readiness factor that the Reserve Force provides. Sadly, the Reserve Force is often overlooked when legislation is written, leaving gaps in protections, benefits, and funding.

At 1.1 million serving members, the military's Reserve Force makes up 48 percent of the Armed Forces. During the last 13 years of war, the Pentagon has ordered nearly 900,000 call-ups from the Reserve and National Guard in support of the Total Force. The war couldn't have been fought without the Reserve Force.

Yet, a perception gap exists between the Active and Reserve Components that has led to the current clash between the Army and the National Guard. Recent comments by Army leadership suggested that the Army Reserve Force was assigned missions that required less sophisticated tactical planning, coordination, and execution that has been interpreted as casting the Army Reserve Component, in particular the Guard, as a second-rate fighting force. This is insulting and shocking to a generation of Guard and Reserve warriors who thought Army leaders valued their service.

Starting from the top with Army Chief of Staff Ray Odierno, Army active duty leadership have argued that Reserve Force troops who train part-time are ill-prepared to quickly mobilize for missions that are reactive to crises and rapidly emergent threats.

The Reserve Component leadership, on the other hand, wants their components to be considered equally vital and used more operationally. Active Duty leadership sees vulnerability in an availability cycle that is "mobilize, train, and deploy." Reserve leadership supports a cycle of "train, mobilize and deploy" to improve mobilization readiness. These differences in view are based on available resources and willingness to invest in advance on the training.

DoD directive 1235.10 states that "Predictability of the RC forces is maximized through the use of defined operational cycles and utilizing force generation plans to provide advanced notification that allows the implementation of the train-mobilize-deploy model."

Advance notification is becoming a stumbling block. Last year's NDAA requires a minimum 120-day notification prior to deployment and a minimum 180-day notification prior to cancellation of deployment for the operational reserves. This causes the Active duty leadership to prefer active duty forces over Reserve forces for deployment because of greater flexibility.

The active Navy views their Reserve as an augmentation force. The Navy Reserve has declined in size by nearly 63 percent since the end of the Cold War. Today, there are fewer units with specific fleet missions or operational responsibilities, although the Chief of Navy Reserve is looking at what active duty missions can be transferred back into its Reserve. Expeditionary missions that were developed within the Navy Reserve were taken over by the Active force. With the end of the Iraq War and the draw down in Afghanistan, the U.S. Navy is reducing the size of the supporting Navy Reserve Expeditionary Force. Thirteen years of war merely delayed the Active duty plans to reduce the Reserve Seabee battalions with the Navy announcing a 45 percent reduction in Navy Reserve construction forces.

The Air Force is perhaps the most integrated service. It acknowledges that traditional Guardsmen and Reservists in the Air Force dedicate themselves fully to their service's core principles and ideals, and the Reserve Components cannot be a traditional strategic reserve force, but there is still a separate but "equal"

status between the components. Unlike other services, the Air Force components don't have to necessarily train together. Associate units exist but not necessarily with integrated crews. Parallel commands, missions and administration continue despite common use of equipment.

The National Commission on the Restructuring of the Air Force found that barriers remain between the Active and Reserve Components in the Air Force. "Some of those barriers are contained in law, but others reside solely in service policy, tradition, and culture."

The report points out that "the Air Force must embrace the idea that service in the Reserve Components does not constitute 'separation' or 'getting out of the Air Force,' but rather is a way for Airmen to continue to serve and for the nation to maintain capability and preserve its investment in highly trained and dedicated people."

The Coast Guard Reserve has been embedded into the active Coast Guard since the mid-1990s. During the war it was undermanned at 8100, but met mission requirements both in war overseas and domestically during natural and man-made disasters. Budget constraints have required the Active duty leadership to transfer about 1000 of the authorized end-strength into the non-paid Individual Ready Reserve.

Also, at issue for all Reserve Components is training to service standards. Reserve and Guard members need to be trained and equipped to the standards expected of the active force, to do otherwise, will leave the U.S. a military that is ill-prepared to meet future challenges.

However, the risk continues to exist where Defense planners may be tempted to put the Federal Reserve and the National Guard back on the shelf, by providing them "hand me down" outmoded equipment and by underfunding training.

This committee need not be reminded about the 2010 study ""The Independent Panel Review of Reserve Component Employment in an Era of Persistent Conflict," written by Gen. Dennis J. Reimer, LTG Roger C. Schultz, and LTG James R. Helmly, all retired. Also known as the Reimer report, it says that Reserve forces must be "consistent and sustained over time instead of the past paradigm of fight-win-demobilize-return to garrison and subsequently mobilize for another conflict -- at huge cost in people and money."

Requested Action:

- **Include the Reserve Force in legislation protecting serving members.**
- **Recognize the Title 10 Reserves as well as the National Guard in bills and press releases.**
- **Provide funding for family, health care and veteran support for Reserve Force Members:**
 - **Family Support Programs for families of serving Reserve and Guard members.**
 - **Mental and behavioral health care for pre- and post-activation periods.**
 - **Military and Veteran Health coverage in remote locations.**
- **Restore Reserve Force education parity to Active Duty:**
 - **Begin eligibility when the service member elects to use the program the first time.**
 - Extend eligibility to 10years following enrollment.**
 - **Increase MGIB-Selected Reserve to 47 percent of MGIB-Active of \$1,564 per month.**
 - **Include four-year as well as six-year reenlistment contracts to qualify for MGIB-SR.**

- o **Allow use of the MGIB benefit to pay off student loans.**
- o **Continue eligibility for up to ten years after separation from the Selected Reserves.**

Recent studies by both the Reserve Forces Policy Board and by DoD has found that a Reserve Component member costs the Department of Defense (DoD) 31 percent of the cost of his or her Active duty counterpart over the life cycle of the warrior.

ECONOMIC ARGUMENT

The Reimer report included many common-sense ideas for maintaining what is arguably the most cost-effective part of the military.

The National Commission on the structure of the Air Force report echoes the Reserve as the cost saving component: The “Part-time” force structure—that capability delivered by traditional Reservists and Guardsmen who do not serve continuously on active duty—costs less than the force structure provided by “full-time personnel... Based on the record before the Commission, and subject to all the caveats set out [in the report], the Commission determined that the cost of a traditional Reservist, who is not performing active duty missions during a year, is approximately 1/6th the cost of a full-time Active Component Airman.”

While the Reserve Force Policy Board (RFPB) calculated different savings, it came to the same conclusion: “The cost of an RC [reserve component] service member, when not activated, is less than one third that of their AC [active component] counterpart,” reported the RFPB to the Secretary of Defense in January 2013. “According to RFPB analysis of the Fiscal Year 2013 budget request, the RC per capita cost ranges from 22% to 32% of their AC counterparts’ per capita costs, depending on which cost elements are included. While Reserve Component forces account for 39% of military end strength, they consume only about 16% of the Defense budget.”

Even DoD’s internal Cape Report concludes that Reserve and Guard troops are not only cheaper when in drilling status but also when fully mobilized, in part because their overall compensation is lower when taking into account noncash benefits such as retirement accrual and health care. Additionally, the overhead cost overall for Reservists are lower because part-time troops do not tap into many military perks such as family housing, DoD schools, military base family support and permanent change of station moving allowances while active-duty troops move every few years when they are reassigned.

With so many studies supporting the life-cycle saving if DoD better utilized the Reserve Component, the Active Component leadership is now pushing back, using the Quadrennial Defense Review as their reference. DoD is challenging how quickly the Reserve Force can be mobilized during a crisis, and emphasizing that conducting operations with Reserve Component forces is not always less expensive than doing so with Active Component forces.

An example of the latter is Gen. G. Michael Hostage, III, Commander Air Combat Command, who while acknowledging the need to operationalize Reservists in order to maintain dwell cycles for the active duty,

stressed that in order to activate a Reservists, he would have to have a 270-day call-up in order to gain 180 days of operational support.

Gen. Martin E. Dempsey noted in the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) that “since time is a defining factor in the commitment of land forces, I strongly recommend a comprehensive review of the nation's ability to mobilize its existing reserves as well as its preparedness for the potential of national mobilization.”

The Active component wants to return to the days of round-out units (strategic Reserve). No one argues that Active duty units will not always be the first responders, but Reserve Force units if properly trained and equipped are perfectly capable for follow-on operations or during a long conflict.

Rather than be limited by historical thinking, and parochial protections, creative approaches should be explored. The Reserve Component needs to continue in an operational capacity because of cost efficiency and added value. Civilian skill sets add to the value of the individual RC serving member.

A common sense balance between Active and Reserve components is needed; as the American people are unwilling to pay for an Active Army large enough to meet all of Nations defense responsibilities by itself. If we don't take care of the Guard and Reserve, we'll have no "safety net" for the next fight.

At a time when the Pentagon and Congress are examining our nation's security, it would be incorrect to discount the Reserve Components' abilities and cost efficiencies. Instead, these part-time warriors provide a cost savings solution and an area to retain competencies for missions not directly embodied in the administration's strategic guidance policy.

ROA and REA support changes to US Code to require DoD to use a costing methodology based on a true fully-burdened and life-cycle costing.”

In the Hamilton Project report – “National Defense in a Time of Change”, authors Adm. Gary Roughhead, U.S. Navy (Ret.) and Kori Schake recommend that “we must redesign our forces and budget to our strategy, and not to equal service share between branches.... Putting more of the responsibilities for ground combat into the combat-proven reserve component is both consistent with the new demands of the evolving international order and justified by the superb performance of National Guard and reserve units in our recent wars.” The study authors suggested that while Congress should reduce the Army, “the [R]eserve and National Guard units would be increased by 100,000 and would have the principal mission of arriving in a mature theater for sustained combat.”

PROVIDE AND EXECUTE AN ADEQUATE NATIONAL SECURITY

The Reserve Officers Association is chartered by Congress “to support and promote the development and execution of a military policy for the United States that will provide adequate national security.” The nation must have adequate military force structure, training, and equipment to defeat any known or emerging military force that could be used against us.

Requested Action

- **Hold Congressional hearings on the budget implications of the policy “Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for the 21st Century Defense.”**
- **Reconcile the budget in order to end the Defense Sequestration budget cuts.**
- **Study the impact of manpower cuts to Army and Marine Corps on National Security.**
- **Avoid parity cuts of both Active and Reserve Components without analyzing rebalance.**
- **Maintain a robust and versatile all-volunteer armed forces that can accomplish its mission to defend the homeland and U.S. national security interests overseas.**

ROA and REA question the current spending priorities that place more importance on the immediate future, rather than first doing a short and long term threat analysis. The result of such a budget-centric policy could again lead to a hollow force whose readiness and effectiveness is degraded, because of suggested changes to compensation and benefits.

ROA and REA are concerned that as the Pentagon strives to achieve the administration’s goals for this new strategic policy, it is not seriously considering the available assets and cost efficiencies of the Reserve Component, and that it instead views the Reserve and National Guard as a bill payer. Congress, starting with the leadership of this subcommittee, should insist on a methodical analysis of suggested reductions in missions and bases before authorizing such changes.

This lack of understanding about the contributions of the Reserve Component can handicap strategy planning and the budget process, as discussions occur in both Congress and the Pentagon on how to reduce the budget and the deficit.

The Reserve and National Guard should also be viewed as a repository for missions and equipment that aren’t addressed in the administration’s new Strategic Policy. They can sustain special capabilities not normally needed in peacetime.

To maintain a strong, relevant, and responsive Reserve Force, the nation must commit the resources necessary to do so. Reserve strength is predicated on assuring the necessary resources— funding for personnel and training, equipment reconstitution, and horizontal fielding of new technology to the Reserve Component, coupled with defining roles and missions to achieve a strategic/operational Reserve balance.

National Guard and Reserve Equipment Allowance (NGREA)

The Reserve and National Guard are faced with ongoing challenges on how to replace worn out equipment, equipment lost due to combat operations and legacy equipment that is becoming irrelevant or obsolete. The National Guard and Reserve Equipment Allowance provide critical funds to the Reserve Chiefs and National Guard Directors to improve readiness throughout procurement of new and modernized equipment. Continued receipt of NGREA and congressionally added funding will allow the Reserve Components (RC) to continue to close the Active/Reserve Component modernization and interoperability gap. Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) have helped over the last thirteen years,

but these monies will be reduced, and other committees are looking to OCO to fund their discretionary items. This places an even greater need onto NGREA to fund the Reserve and Guard.

ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR RC SUPPORT PROGRAMS

While Reserve components have worked closely with their parent services to develop seamless, integrated family readiness and support programs to provide information and services to all members, support differs between the Active and Reserve Components.

Family Support: Family readiness centers are located on military bases, but unfortunately few Reserve units are located near such bases. It is more likely for spouse and dependents to move to families for support rather than onto active military locations. Additionally, active units have developed internal family support networks. These are not as easy to maintain in the Reserve and Guard as member families are scattered throughout the civilian community. The most common support for Reserve Force families is online at such websites as Military OneSource.

Reserve Force members face unique challenges balancing military service with civilian life. Unlike active duty members of the Armed Forces, they juggle the demands of both military and civilian jobs. Their families often live where there is less community support available to them than active duty military families who can share issues and concerns with people dealing with the same challenges.

Many in Congress and in the Pentagon overlook the challenges faced by Reserve families. The 2004 Quadrennial Quality of Life Review noted, from a spouse survey, that more than sixty percent of Reserve Component spouses had two weeks or less notification before activation. The spouses indicated they needed time during pre-activation to resolve dependent care, legal, health coverage and financial issues. Due to limited support, marital problems for the Reserve Components have increased from 37 percent in 2006 to 44 percent in 2008.

With the end of conflicts, many are tempted not to fund the Yellow Ribbon reintegration program. This has been funded in earlier years by OCO money. Just because Reserve and Guard members have returned, doesn't mean there isn't further need for the Yellow Ribbon program. "The Yellow Ribbon program has saved not only families, but lives," said Force Master Chief Mark Allen of the Coast Guard Reserve at a recent Reserve Caucus breakfast. Yellow Ribbon contributes to the resiliency of both serving members and families to reduce suicides.

A child of an active duty military family whose parent is deployed often has several friends with military parents, whereas a Reservist's child may be the only one in his or her school with a parent who is deployed. ROA is working up a school kit to explain to teachers about the stresses faced by children of Reserve or Guard members who are deployed.

Mental Health: A team of Medill students found significant gaps between the health care and support for the Reserve and National Guards members who have fought in Iraq and Afghanistan and their active-duty counterparts. Many Reserve Force members have been hastily channeled through a post-deployment

process that has been plagued with difficulties, including reliance on self-reporting to identify health problems. They report higher rates of some mental health problems and related ills than active-duty troops. The students' 2011 research suggest that attempts by Congress, the military and private contractors to address the problems have been uncoordinated and often ineffective.

A study by Marian E. Lane, Ph.D. found rates of posttraumatic stress (PTSD) and suicidal ideation were significantly higher in the deployed reservists compared to deployed active-duty personnel. Lane believes that reservists may react more extremely to the anxiety of potential deployment than active-duty personnel because they are somewhat removed from the daily stresses of military action. One size treatment doesn't fit all; providing services and interventions tailored to reservists will better facilitate the successful return and reintegration of service members experiencing post-deployment mental health issues.

Reservists lack access to the system or networks that are needed to assess and treat their injuries. After brief demobilization assessments, Reserve troops return home and must navigate disparate health-care and support providers. This is further complicated by distances between Reserve Force members and the military health and behavior provider networks.

Education: The Reserve Force education allowance is woefully inadequate, at less than 23 percent of the Active Duty MGIB (Chapter 30) and 11.5 percent of the new Post-9/11 GI Bill tuition and allowances. Most Selected Reservists (which include National Guard as well as Reserve members) don't apply, because they are unable to take advantage of the education benefit while performing their Reserve duties. Based on their service in the Global War on Terrorism at home and abroad, today's military reservists deserve enhancements to their eligibility under the MGIB for Selected Reserves.

In 2008, amendments to U.S. Code, chapter 1606 made the Montgomery GI Bill for Selected Reservists in a drill status even more restrictive. The only education program is offered to traditional Reservists after their initial active duty obligation, when they reenlist is for a period of six years. Eligibility ends when the individual is separated from the Selected Reserve, either upon completion of their reenlistment, upon retirement, or when transferred out of a pay status.

Where service members once had up to 14 years to use their MGIB-SR benefits from the time they became eligible, such language has been stricken. Eligibility for these benefits now only lasts until the Reservist or Guardsman stops drilling. An exception is if a Reservist stops drilling after being activated, he or she may switch back to Chapter 1606 for a period equaling the length of deployment plus four months. Active Duty recipients have ten years after separation to use their benefits.

RESERVE LIFE

Reserve and Guard members have provided unprecedented service and sacrifice for the past decade. Congress should make a commitment to them to provide lifelong support for them through career growth, civilian employment, seamless health care, family support and deferred compensation that has been promised to them upon retirement. This will be an incentive to continue to serve.

This will require a seamless continuity of Military healthcare, supported by TRICARE; and an accumulative documentation of both Active and Reserve active duty service, published on a single DoD form, rather than a series of Certificate(s) of Release or Discharge from Active Duty (DD Form 214), whenever someone leaves active duty.

Reserve Life Issues supported by the Reserve Officers and Reserve Enlisted Associations include:

Changes to retention policies:

- Permit service beyond current mandatory retirement limitations.
- Eliminate the Fiscal Year barrier, permitting the accumulation of active service between two years.
- Retain serving members for skill sets, even when passed over for promotion.
- Support incentives for affiliation, reenlistment, retention and continuation in the Reserve Component.
- Advocate against cuts in Reserve Component; support Reserve commissioning programs
- Reauthorize yellow ribbon program to support demobilized Guard and Reserve members.

Pay and Compensation:

- Reject recommendations by The 11th Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation to reduce Reserve Component pay for monthly inactive duty training in half.
- Reimburse a Reserve Component member for expenses incurred in connection with round-trip travel in excess of 50 miles to an inactive training location, including mileage traveled, lodging and subsistence.
- Eliminate the 1/30th rule for Aviation Career Incentive Pay, Career Enlisted Flyers Incentive Pay, and Diving Special Duty Pay.
- Simplify the Reserve duty order system without compromising drill compensation.

Spouse Support:

- Expand eligibility of surviving spouses to receive Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP)-Dependency Indemnity Clause (DIC) payments with no offset.
- Provide family leave for spouses and family care-givers of mobilized Guard and Reserve for a period of time prior to or following the deployment of the military member.

Deferred Benefits and Retirement:

- Extend current early retirement legislation retroactively to Sept. 11, 2001.
- Change US Code to eliminate the Fiscal Year barrier toward full credit toward early retirement.
- Promote improved legislation on reducing the Reserve Component retirement age.
- Permit mobilized retirees to earn additional retirement points with less than two years of activated service, and codify retirement credit for serving members over age 60.
- Modify US Code that requires repayment of separation bonuses if an individual receives a Uniformed Service retirement annuity.
- Continue to protect and sustain existing retirement benefits for currently retired.

Continuity of Health Care:

REA and ROA support improving health care continuity to all drilling Reservists and their families. While Transitional Assistance Management Program (TAMP) TRICARE and TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS) are good first steps, TRICARE is neither universally accepted nor accessible to everyone entitled.

Recent DoD policies on mobilization frequency of the Reserve and National Guard members set a goal of one year out of five. This will make continuity of health care even more important to Reserve Component (RC) members.

Requested Actions:

- **Make Tricare Reserve Select a standalone health care program by:**
 - o **Decoupling it from any changes made to Tricare Standard**
 - o **Requiring members to opt out rather than enroll in.**
 - o
- **Continue to improve health care continuity to all drilling Reservists and their families by:**
 - o **providing individuals an option of DoD paying a stipend toward employer's health care,**
 - o **extending TRS coverage to mobilization ready IRR members; levels of subsidy would vary for different levels of readiness,**
 - o **allowing demobilized Retirees, and Reservists involuntarily returning to IRR to qualify for subsidized TRS coverage,**
 - o **allowing demobilized federal employees the option of TRS coverage.**
- **Fund restorative dental care prior to mobilization.**
- **Request a GAO Review of TRR premiums which currently do not support a continuity of healthcare.**

Reserve and Guard members experience problems when moving from their civilian health care to TRICARE while being deployed. They frequently must change physicians, which is extremely stressful for family members who require continuing care, such as a pregnant spouse or a family member who requires special care. Members and their families can also experience problems when returning to private healthcare insurance from TRICARE if there is a condition which began while in the TRICARE system.

Additionally, REA and ROA view the military health care provided to retirees as an earned benefit. This is also a deferred incentive that encourages both Active and Reserve members to be retained. **REA and ROA cannot support recommended fee increases and the relabeling of the military health program.** DoD health care inefficiencies and wartime expenses should not be a financial burden placed on these retirees. *ROA and REA are grateful to Congress for the passage of TRICARE Standard coverage for Gray-area reservists but hope that the Armed Services Committees can request a review of premium levels.*

A SECOND LOOK AT BRAC

Reports have surfaced that the Pentagon has authority (10 USC Section 2687) to close bases domestically, as archaic laws remain on the books providing DoD with authority to close facilities without Congressional approval. This authority only requires notification. Both the Army and the Air Force say that without further infrastructure that budget reduction would require deeper end strength cut, reduced readiness, and reductions in weapons procurement.

To oversee the process Congress must maintain control; the most effective tool is BRAC. The BRAC process reduces political influences with the establishment of an independent panel, and an up or down approval of the commission's recommendations by Congress.

Requested Action:

- **Limit any BRAC to base closures where expenses will be covered by savings within the first five years.**
- **Set a goal to maintain a Title 10 military presence in every state.**
- **Study overseas basing and relocation within the United States before determining excess domestic infrastructure.**
- **Do not use Reserve and Guard installations to be the bill payers to keep active facilities open.**
- **Update bonuses and travel allowances for Reserve Force personnel displaced by future BRAC decisions.**
- **Provide Reserve Transition Incentives to offset the penalty of earlier retirement. Include the cost of allowances and incentives in calculation of overall BRAC expenses.**

Any future round of BRAC must include force realignment analysis to take into account future integration of Reserve and Active duty units, as the elimination of parallel unit structures may give reason for consolidation of infrastructure.

CONCLUSION

ROA and REA restate our profound gratitude for the bipartisan success achieved by this committee by improving parity on pay, compensation and benefits between the Active and Reserve Components. The challenges being faced with proposed budget cuts and sequestration are going to make this committee's job that much harder.

ROA and REA look forward to working with the personnel sub-committee where we can present solutions to these challenges and other issues, and offers our support in anyway.