

August 10, 2009

The Honorable Howard P. McKeon
United States House
Committee on Armed Services
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Ranking Member McKeon:

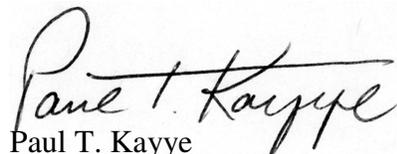
I am writing on behalf of the Reserve Officers Association of the United States, chartered by Congress with a membership of 65,000, to express our support for protecting the child custody rights of deployed service members in the House's version of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), HR.2647, Section 584.

This is, as you understand, a critical and complex issue due to the contending interests to protect military children just as we honor service members who sacrifice a great deal, and both are vitally important to our nation. In favor of these reasons we support the much needed actions associated with the child custody protection section in the House Fiscal Year 2010 NDAA. This section provides partial authority to courts to protect children in cases that necessitate temporary custody but also secures service members' rights while they are deployed on contingency operations. The legislation does not establish Federal right of action or hinder states' authority. The provision affords the desired balance between children's welfare and recognizing military service.

The nation that is able to bail out numerous businesses should do the right thing for those who are putting their lives and their families' well-being at risk to defend their fellow Americans. Our citizen-warriors are not asking for a hand out, only to protect their families who endure arduous and dangerous service to the country.

The Reserve Officers Association strongly supports the House's child custody protection provision and requests that you find the means to adopt it in the final version of the FY2010 NDAA

Sincerely,



Paul T. Kayye
Rear Admiral, MC, USNR (Ret)
National President