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Dec 8, 2011

The Honorable Carl Levin
Chairman
Senate Armed Services Committee
SR-269 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510 – 2202

The Honorable John S. McCain
Ranking Member
Senate Armed Services Committee
SR-241 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-0303

Dear Mr. Chairman and Mr. Ranking Member:

The Reserve Officers Association would like to highlight some provisions in H.R. 1540, the FY-2012 National Defense Authorization Bill which is now being discussed in conference. Certain key provisions that affect the Reserve and the National Guard are included in either the Senate or the House bill, but not the other.

The Reserve Officers Association represents over 1.1 million actively serving members of the Reserves and Guard. The stabilization of Reserve Component end strength and increase in manning levels to both the Navy and Air Force Reserves in both the Senate and House Bills is a good starting point as future force structure is being examined. ROA supports moving manpower and resource capability into the National Guard and Reserve as the Active Component is downsized.

Maintaining an operational Reserve Component is a forefront issue to a new generation of citizen warriors that does not want to be placed back “on the shelf” in merely a strategic role. ROA supports Senate section 511 which would provide authority to assure access for up to 60,000 Guard and Reserve members for mission support in times other than war or emergency. Senate Section 515 is also needed to allow Title 10 Reservists to provide assistance in response to a major domestic natural or manmade disaster. Not using local capabilities is neither cost efficient nor effective.

Section 703 in the House bill supports improvements to behavioral health support for members of the Reserve Components. As Guard and Reserve warriors are not collocated with military treatment facilities, any improvements in access to behavioral health professionals is a necessity in order to reduce the same stress as faced by the active duty.

One concern that ROA has is with House Sec. 706, TRICARE Standard for Certain Members of the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR). While well intended, this provision is premature and inadequate for the health care needed by this cadre. The suggested population coverage is too small, leaving out many members in the IRR who are in a drill-for-points status while training for future call-up. Further, the recommended premium is based on TRICARE Retired Reserve

premium, and should be instead based on TRICARE Selected Reserve. A TRS based premium would recognize that all members in the IRR are subject to recall to active duty. It is better to defer this provision for a year in order to write proper legislative language. ROA is willing to work with your staffs on a redraft.

House Section 595 seeks a study of the military necessity of the Selected Service. ROA has a national resolution 11-14 which supports continued funding of the Selective Service Program, and the organization feels that the system should stay in place to back up the All-Volunteer Total Force.

Senate Section 542 would correct the pay grades of commissioned officers in the uniformed medical accession programs. ROA supports this, as the military continues an ongoing need for medical professionals, and students shouldn't be penalized during training through loss of rank or delayed advancement.

The Reserve Officers Association is grateful to both the Senate and the House for your efforts on this year's National Defense Authorization Act, and your ongoing bipartisan support for the armed forces. If you have any further questions about ROA's positions, please contact Marshall Hanson, ROA Legislative Director at (202) 646-7713, or email him at mhanson@roa.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Walker M. Williams III" followed by a stylized monogram or flourish.

Walker M Williams III
National President
Reserve Officers Association