RESERVE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION
One Constitution Avenue, NE, Washington, DC 20002-5655
Telephone: 800-809-9448 ext. 713 or 202-646-7713
Web: www.roa.org email: mhanson@roa.org

The Reserve Officers Association's Legislative Agenda for 2010

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FOR ROA

- Reset the whole force to include fully funding equipment and training for the National Guard and Reserves.
- Assure that the Reserve and National Guard continue in a key national defense role, both at home and abroad.
- Provide adequate resources and authorities to support the current recruiting and retention requirements of the Reserves and National Guard.
- Support warriors, families and survivors

Issues to help FUND, EQUIP, AND TRAIN

- Advocate for timely, adequate funding to maintain National Defense during times of war and peace.
- Advocate for both the Reserve and Reservists; protecting the mission and contributions being made by Guard and Reserve members.
- Support Active and Reserve end-strengths that support mission requirements.
- Regenerate the Reserve Components with field compatible equipment.
- Improve and implement adequate tracking processes to return or replace borrowed Reserve Component equipment.
- Fully fund Military Pay Appropriation to guarantee a minimum of 48 drills and two weeks of training.
- Sustain authorization and appropriation to National Guard and Reserve Equipment Account (NGREA) to permit flexibility for Reserve Chiefs in support of mission and readiness needs.
- Optimize funding for additional training, preparation and operational support.
- Keep Active and Reserve Personnel and Operation & Maintenance funding separate.

Issues to DEFINE the Reserve Component

- Work with Congress and Department of Defense (DoD) to implement recommendations of the Commission on the National Guard and Reserve
  - Analyze proposed plans of action
  - Support requested studies
  - Suggest alternatives when necessary

Legislative Director, Marshall Hanson, CAPT, USNR (Ret)
202-646-7713, mhanson@roa.org

Issues to assist RECRUITING AND RETENTION

Access:

- Monitor access of military recruiters to institutions of higher education, providing the same access as other employers.

Changes to retention policies:

- Permit service beyond the current Reserve Officers Personnel Management Act (ROPMA) limitations.
- Support incentives for affiliation, reenlistment, retention and continuation in the Reserve Component.

Mobilization:

- Oversee service sections' policies to reimburse mobilized Reservists on Temporary Duty Orders (TDY) orders with lengths over 179 days.
- Provide differential pay for deployed federal employees permanently.

Pay and Compensation:

- Reimburse a Reserve Component member for expenses incurred in connection with round-trip travel in excess of 100 miles to an inactive training location, including mileage traveled, lodging and subsistence.
- Obtain professional pay for Reserve Component medical professionals, consistent with the Active Component.
- Eliminate the 1/30th rule for Aviation Career Incentive Pay, Career Enlisted Flyers Incentive Pay, Diving Special Duty Pay, and Hazardous Duty Incentive Pay.
- Simplify the Reserve duty order system without compromising drill compensation.

Education:

- Include US Public Health Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Corps members in the Post 9/11 GI Bill.
- Include Title 32 AGR eligibility for the Post 9/11 GI Bill.
- Adopt MGIB (Ch. 30, 38 USC) program eligibility rules for non-degree vocational, OJT, apprenticeship, and flight training programs to Post 9/11 GI Bill.
- Sustain timely reimbursement of full tuition and fees for those attending public undergraduate colleges and set a national standard for private and graduate schools, under the Post 9/11 GI Bill.
- Increase MGIB-Selected Reserve (MGIB-SR) to 47 percent of MGIB-Active.
- Include 4-year reenlistment contracts to qualify for MGIB-SR.
- Enact Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) and Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) protections for mobilized Guard-Reserve students granting academic leave of absences, protecting academic standing and refund guarantees.
- Adjust interest rates on federal student loans of mobilized Reservists when the market rate drops below 6 percent.

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Employer Support:

- Continue to enact tax credits for health care and differential pay expenses for deployed Reserve Component employees.
- Provide tax credits to offset costs for temporary replacements of deployed Reserve Component employees.
- Support tax credits to employers who hire servicemembers who served in the Global War on Terrorism.

Employee Support:

- Permit delays or exemptions while mobilized of regularly scheduled mandatory continuing education and licensing /certification/promotion exams.
- Continue to support a law center dedicated to USERRA/SCRA problems of deployed Active and Reserve servicemembers.

Health Care:

- Improve continuity of health care for all drilling Reservists and their families by:
  - Monitoring the implementation of DoD paying a stipend toward employer's health care for dependents.
  - Allowing gray-area retirees to buy-in to TRICARE by mid-2010.
  - Permitting active members in the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) who qualify for a 20-year retirement to buy-into TRICARE.
  - Allowing demobilized Retirees and Reservists involuntarily returning to IRR to qualify for subsidized TRS coverage.
  - Providing TRS coverage to mobilization ready IRR members; levels of subsidy would vary for different levels of readiness.
  - Improve post deployment mental health evaluations of returning Reserve Component members.
- Fund restorative dental care prior to mobilization.
- Extend military coverage for restorative dental care following deployment to 90 days.
- Evaluate the Post Deployment Medical Evaluation process.
- Protect military and veteran's health care from inclusion in national health legislation.

Spouse Support:

- Expand eligibility of surviving spouses to receive Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP)-Dependency Indemnity Clause (DIC) payments with no offset.
- Provide employment protection and 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.
- Promote better 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.

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Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) / Servicemembers' Civil Relief Act (SCRA):

- Codify USERRA/SCRA protections for mobilized Guard-Reserve students.
- Improve SCRA to protect deployed members from creditors that willfully violate SCRA.
- Fix USERRA/SCRA to protect health care coverage of returning servicemembers and family for pre-existing conditions, and continuation of prior group or individual insurance.
- Enact USERRA protections for employees who require regularly scheduled mandatory continuing education and licensing/certification and make necessary changes to USERRA to strengthen employment and reemployment protections.
- Exempt Reserve Component members from federal law enforcement retirement application age restrictions when deployment interferes in completing the application to buy back retirement eligibility.
- Amend SCRA to prohibit a court from modifying any previous judgment that would change the custody arrangements for a child of a servicemember deployed in support of a contingency operation.
- Encourage Federal agencies to abide by USERRA/SCRA standards.

Veterans Affairs:

- Calculate years of service for disability retired pay for Reserve Component members wounded or injured in combat under section 12732 of USC Title 10.
- Extend veterans preference to those Reserve Component members who have completed 20 years in good standing, or,
- Permit any member who has served under honorable conditions and has received a DD-214 to qualify for veteran status.
- Make permanent Reserve Component VA Home Loan Guarantees expiring in Oct. 2012.
- Eliminate the 3/4 percent fee differential between Active Component and Reserve Component programs on VA Home Loan.
- Support burial eligibility for deceased gray-area retirees at Arlington National Cemetery.
- Continue to seek timely and comprehensive implementation of concurrent receipt for disabled receiving retired pay and VA disability compensation.

Voting:

- Ensure that every deployed servicemember has an opportunity to vote by:
  - Working with the Federal Voting Assistance Program
  - Supporting electronic voting
- Ensure that every military absentee ballot is counted.

Service Specific Issues: The Army, Naval Services, and Air Force Affairs Directors provide service specific legislative agendas and they can be contacted by calling 1-800-809-9448.

ROA resolutions, position papers, and white papers supporting these initiatives are available at www.roa.org/advocate. Or contact CAPT Marshall Hanson, director of legislation and military policy at mhanson@roa.org, or 800-809-9448 ext 713.