

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 26th, 2012

The Honorable Leon Panetta
Secretary
The Pentagon
U.S. Department of Defense
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Secretary Panetta,

We are writing in regards to the new Post-Deployment/Mobilization Respite Absence (PDMRA) policy as set forth in Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 1327.06. On September 30, 2011, while many members of the National Guard and Reserve component were mobilized and deployed, the Pentagon released new guidance that significantly reduces the PDMRA benefits promised. In fact, some members of the Guard and Reserve stand to lose more than 27 days under this new policy.

Since September 11, 2001, members of the National Guard and Reserve component have been uniquely affected by long deployments, leaving their families and careers to answer their nation's call. When the brave men and women who serve our nation in uniform leave to deploy overseas, they not only leave behind their family and friends, but frequently their jobs and livelihoods as well. As two prior service members who have led troops through a deployment, we understand that PDMRA plays a vital role in helping Guard and Reserve members' transition back into their civilian lives.

PDMRA does more than just improve performance and increase motivation of each service member; or boosts morale for members and their families. PDMRA also gives returning service members a chance to find meaningful employment. Many members of the National Guard and Reserve do not return home from a deployment to a job, as evidenced by record high veteran unemployment rates. We encourage the Department of Defense to continue to provide a healthy and successful reintegration for Guardsmen and Reservists – a benefit they have rightly earned.

As Co-Chairs of the National Guard and Reserve Caucus we ask you to review DODI 1327.06. Furthermore, we encourage you to “grandfather” in the military members who were deployed prior to the September 30, 2011 change in policy. These men and women were counting on PDMRA time to help them reintegrate into society, seek employment, and make up for lost time with their families.

Sincerely,



Representative Tim Walz

Co-Chair

National Guard and Reserve Caucus



Representative Duncan Hunter

Co-Chair

National Guard and Reserve Caucus