

***Bipartisan legislation will restore benefits designed to help veterans find good paying careers***

***Senator Klobuchar has companion legislation in the Senate***

Washington, D.C. – Bipartisan legislation, co-sponsored by Congressman Tim Walz, that would ensure members of the Minnesota National Guard receive the benefits that were promised to them prior to their deployment passed unanimously in the U.S. House last night. Walz Co-Chairs the National Guard and Reserve Caucus. The bill, introduced in the House by fellow Minnesota Congressman John Kline, now moves to the Senate where Senator Amy Klobuchar is sponsoring companion legislation.

“We have a moral responsibility to do all we can to take care of our brave service members when they get home. Our troops were promised time to spend with their families and seek employment when they returned from war. It isn't right that this promise was broken while many were still overseas protecting our freedom,” said Walz, a 24 year veteran of the Army National Guard. “I am pleased the House took bipartisan action and passed this common sense legislation.”

The Post Deployment/Mobilization Respite Absence (PDMRA) program was designed to provide paid time-off to allow troops to spend time with their family and seek good paying careers within their communities after they returned from war.

The program specifically targets troops who have had their deployment extended or who have been deployed multiple times.

The Minnesota National Guard ‘Red Bulls’ were deployed for 22 straight months in 2007—making them the longest deployed military unit in Operation Iraqi Freedom—and were then redeployed last summer to Kuwait.

Prior to their deployment last summer, the Minnesota Red Bulls were promised this time off when they returned home. But on October 1, 2011, while they were still serving overseas, the Department of Defense released new guidance that significantly reduced the time-off they were promised—some stand to lose as many 27 days of paid leave.

[Walz recently spoke out](#) about the issue on the House floor and sent a bipartisan letter with fellow Co-Chair of the Guard and Reserve Caucus, Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-CA), to Secretary Panetta, calling on him to grandfather in troops who were deployed prior to the change in policy.

This is [not the first time Congressman Walz has fought for PDMRA](#) benefits for our troops. In 2010, Walz worked with both the Pentagon and the White House to ensure 2,500 Minnesota Guardsmen—and 23,000 nationwide—received the PDMRA bonus pay they had earned. This payment had been delayed for three years before Walz's involvement.

Last night, Walz again spoke out about the importance of restoring PDMRA benefits on the House Floor. To watch, please [click here](#) .

To read the bipartisan letter Walz & Hunter sent to Secretary Panetta, please [click here](#) .

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