

Washington, DC – Today, Congressman Tim Walz (D-MN), the highest ranking enlisted soldier to ever serve in Congress and co-chair of the National Guard and Reserve Components Caucus, introduced the *Honor America's Guard-Reserve Retirees Act* to give military retirees the honor they deserve. Walz's legislation grants full veteran status to members of the guard and reserve components who have served at least 20 years, but have not been called up for active duty.

Despite spending two decades serving our nation and standing ready to be deployed at a moment's notice to anywhere in the world in defense of freedom, under current law these brave men and women cannot legally call themselves veterans. Walz believes the time is now to change this outdated policy and give our brave military retirees the honor they deserve.

"These men and women took an oath to defend our nation at any cost and have dedicated their lives in service to our country," said Walz, a Member of the House Veterans Affairs Committee. **"Many stood at the ready for decades in defense of our nation and the time is now to give them the honor and recognition they have earned and deserve. I am proud to introduce this legislation and am optimistic it will finally become law this year."**

The House passed Walz's legislation last Congress only to see it blocked in the Senate due to unwarranted concerns about cost. The CBO scored the bill as "cost neutral" and military retirees who would fall under the bills jurisdiction would receive no extra benefits besides being legally recognized as veterans for their two or more decades of service to our country.

The bill enjoys bipartisan support in Congress and also from veterans' organizations, including The Military Coalition which is a group of 34 military, veterans, and uniformed services organizations that has over 5.5 million members nationwide.

"This bill is strongly endorsed by The Military Coalition and we thank Congressman Tim Walz for taking the leadership in pushing for passage of this legislation," said Marshall Hanson of The Military Coalition.

"The men and women who have served in uniform for 20 or more years as Guard or Reserve members should be recognized as military veterans, but are being overlooked

by our government.□ This legislation corrects this injustice, at no cost to taxpayers."

Members who have signed on as co-sponsors include: Rep. Jon Runyan (R-NJ), Duncan Hunter (R-CA), Jim Matheson (D-UT), Tom Latham (R-IA), and Nick Rahall (D-WV)

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