



Strategic Viewpoint

Support Reserve Component Benefits Parity Act of 2017 Issue

The Reserve Component Benefits Parity Act H.R.1384/S. 667 will eliminate the benefits disparity between 10 U.S.C. § 12304(b) mobilization authority and all other non-voluntary mobilization authorities. Created by the 2012 NDAA, § 12304(b) authorizes the Department of Defense (DoD) to involuntarily deploy reserve forces for pre-planned missions in support of combatant commanders when approved by Congress. However, unlike all other involuntary mobilization authorities, § 12304(b) does not provide mobilized reserve forces with pre- and post-mobilization TRICARE, post-9/11 G.I. Bill benefits, reduction in retirement age, and credit for time spent while deployed.

Recommendation

Support the Reserve Component Benefits Parity Act H.R.1384/S. 667 that amends United States Code to ensure that an involuntary activation order to serve on active duty under sections 12304(b) of Title 10 U.S.C. is treated the same as other similar orders for determining eligibility and deadlines for certain benefits.

Background

Since introducing § 12304(b), National Guard and Reserve component service members have been deployed on operations to support the Multinational Force Observers mission in the Sinai, Egypt, NATO's Operation Joint Guardian in Kosovo, and most recently the European Reassurance Initiative countering Russian aggression in Eastern Europe.

Guard and Reserve forces have provided a cost-effective means of meeting the needs of combatant commanders and have provided important experience and expertise. However, when § 12304(b) was authorized, it failed to amend Titles 5, 37, 38, and 10 U.S.C., that would authorize National Guard and Reserve members serving under § 12304(b) health, education, leave, pay, and retirement benefits Active Component troops serving the same missions receive.

Importance

The Reserve Component Parity Act will eliminate the benefits disparity created by the 12304(b) mobilization authority and authorize reserve forces to receive equivalent benefits as their active duty counterparts performing the same missions.

The Reserve Component Benefits Parity Act will provide:

- Pre-deployment Health Care;
- Transitional Health Care;
- Reduced Age for Non-Regular Retirement;
- High Deployment / frequency Allowances;
- Post 9-11 GI Bill;
- Non-Reduction in Pay;
- Volunteer Separation Pay;
- Break in Studies impact on educational assistance.