

Soldiers, Families & Army Civilians

10-01 Supporting Soldiers and Families

People - our Soldiers and their Families - are the first and most important component of our Army. Caring for them is a vital part of our nation's defense; it requires our leaders' utmost attention and a significant application of resources. The Army values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage go beyond Soldiers and include their Families. The sacrifices and dedication of Family members are significant and complement those of our Soldiers.

The U.S. Army is the decisive component of America's national security and a critical part of the Joint team. Soldiers (both Active and Reserve Component) are the heart of the Army and the foundation of its combat power. The support and services that we as a nation provide Soldiers and their Families are combat multipliers. As a result, Soldiers and their Families deserve a quality of life and educational opportunities that are commensurate with their service. It is this faith in the reciprocity of commitment that enables Soldiers and their Families to endure the unique challenges of military life.

The Army Chief of Staff's first imperative is to sustain the Army's Soldiers, Families, and Civilians. This includes the need to ensure that the quality of life the Army provides to Soldiers and Families is second to none. The level of medical care, pay and allowances, as well as Family member care and educational benefits, should properly reflect the demands and risks associated with the profession of arms. Demands on Soldiers and their Families created by repeated deployments continue to generate additional challenges, concerns, and stresses for Families. Thus, the ability of the Army to deliver a quality of life that meets the needs of its Soldiers and their Families worldwide is critical to attracting and retaining high quality Soldiers, as well as stabilizing the force.

We commend the Administration and Congress for their efforts to address numerous issues related to improving the quality of life for Soldiers and their Families; however, a number of issues remain.

WE THEREFORE RESOLVE to urge the Administration and Congress to:

- Fully fund the construction of government-owned Army Family Housing; fund the modernization of permanent party barracks to one-plus-one or equivalent by 2011 and training barracks to adequacy standards by 2013
- Continue to expand the use of public/private partnerships such as Residential Communities Initiative (RCI) and Privatization of Army Lodging (PAL)
- Fully fund the Federal Impact Aid Program in the U.S. Department of Education budget that addresses the educational needs of military children to preclude these children from being disadvantaged in public schooling
- Fully fund the DOD Impact Aid initiatives ensuring that school districts affected by Global Rebasing, Base Realignment and Closure, or Army modularization are provided adequate funds
- Continue to fund the commissary system at a level that will ensure no increase in the current surcharge and limit the use of surcharge dollars to commissary store construction and maintenance
- Support full commissary and Army and Air Force Exchange Services (AAFES) access for military members at Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) sites
- Fully fund programs, facilities, schools and housing necessary to maintain the quality of life at installations that gain Soldiers and Family members due to Realignment, prior to re-stationing
- Fund affordable, high quality child care and youth services programs

- Enact legislation that allows Soldiers to pay childcare expenses on a pre-tax basis
- Fund Family support and benefit programs to meet the needs of Reserve Component deployments
- Amend legislation to authorize the Temporary Lodging Expense (TLE) allowance of up to 60 days for areas experiencing a significant increase in personnel
- Continue to fund dependent schools operated by DOD for military children
- Fully fund the Strong Bonds Relationship Building Program for all Soldiers and their Families
- Fully fund skill building and employment programs such as: "Work Place Essentials," the Army Spouse Employment Partnership, and other programs that help the Soldier's spouse and Family members to increase skills and pursue personal careers
- Enact legislation which will give Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Companies government preference above that of all other special programs
- Enact legislation to amend the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR), as well as agreements with States and Territories for federally reimbursed grants and agreements to provide goals and set asides for businesses that employ Reserve Component Soldiers
- Enact legislation to allow military spouses to claim a permanent state of residence just as Soldiers currently are allowed
- Enact legislation to remove impediments limiting or prohibiting not-for-profit organizations' support for Soldiers and their Families, and permit public recognition of those organizations' support
- Encourage states that offer property tax reductions for veterans to allow alternate forms of proof of military service
- Encourage states to support in-state tuition for Soldiers and their Family members at institutions of higher learning
- Encourage states to provide unemployment benefits for job loss based on a military relocation for the eligible Servicemember's spouse
- Encourage states to fully support the provisions of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) that protect activated Servicemembers
- Encourage states to waive professional licensing application fees for professionally licensed military spouses relocating from another state
- Encourage states to grant greater reciprocity to professionally licensed military spouses who have temporarily relocated to another state and to waive or reduce annual licensing fees for those professionally licensed spouses in all states of residence
- Encourage states to pass regulatory and licensure exemptions and tax incentives to ease the burden on entrepreneurial and working military spouses
- Encourage states to join the interstate compact on educational opportunity for military children