

Soldiers, Families and Army Civilians

10-04 Military Retirement

Guaranteed retirement benefits are essential to having “Boots on the Ground” in both the Active and Reserve Component. These benefits are inextricably linked to recruiting and retention of the current and future All-Volunteer Force. Retirement benefits are a covenant with our Soldiers. Any erosion of retirement benefits, implied or actually promised, affects Soldier morale and can leave retirees with the impression that they have been betrayed. Soldiers earn, and deserve, a high quality retirement program for their selfless, dedicated service to our nation.

In today’s environment of persistent global conflict, it is imperative that existing retirement benefits are sustained and enhanced for both the Active and Reserve Components (RC) of the Army. Both Active and RC Soldiers and units are being called upon repeatedly for myriad combat and support missions for extended periods, and it is essential that retirement programs further support the sacrifices they are making for our nation. The continuing 21st Century Conflict has changed the role of the RC from a strategic reserve to an operational reserve. Despite the protection provided in law, this protracted service can diminish the RC members’ opportunity for civilian career advancement and retirement. The retirement systems must ensure that all of those who serve are properly compensated, retained and encouraged to complete their careers. We must ensure the benefits available to all retired Soldiers and their Families are commensurate with the increased demands and sacrifices they endured.

While we appreciate the support of the Administration and Congress for improving the Soldier’s retirement benefits, we encourage further support for enhancements to these benefits.

WE THEREFORE RESOLVE to urge the Administration and Congress to:

- Protect the full value of retiree and annuitant income
- Give full Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) and Dependents Indemnity Compensation (DIC) entitlements to survivors of members whose death was service connected and retention of DIC upon remarriage after age 55
- Repeal the law that reduces military SBP annuities by the amount of any survivor benefits payable from the DIC program
- Enact legislation to repeal, in its entirety, the Department of Veterans Affairs offset on retirees’ military entitlement (concurrent receipt)
- Repeal the provision of the 1993 legislation that raised the tax limit on retirees’ social security benefits to 85 percent and return it to 50 percent, and adjust threshold amounts for inflation
- Make appropriate adjustments to the TRICARE for Life (TFL) program as deficiencies are identified
- Enact legislation requiring the Department of Defense to authorize parcel mail privileges for box R patrons (Retirees) for parcels up to five pounds, unless further restricted by host governments
- Expand provisions of existing laws to permit RC Soldiers with 20 years of qualifying service to begin receiving their retired pay and benefits at age 55
- Enact legislation to waive Medicare Part B premiums for military retirees who entered active duty prior to 7 December 1956
- Amend USC Title 10 to forgive any overpayment of retired pay for any period after the date of death of recipient through the last day of the month in which death occurs
- Enact legislation to fully vest RC Soldiers at the maximum 55% Survivor Benefit rate upon completing qualifying service for retirement and allow the Soldier the opportunity to accept or decline SBP upon receiving retired pay Amend legislation to increase Inactive Duty for Training (IDT) retirement points from 130 per year to 179 per year.