



ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY

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4 December 2012

General Gordon R. Sullivan
United States Army (Ret.)
President

The Honorable John McCain
United States Senate
241 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator McCain:

On behalf of the members of the Association of the United States Army, I write to urge the Senate to maintain its position of limiting TRICARE fee increases to no more than the annual military retiree cost-of-living increase.

AUSA agrees with the Congress that there is no need to impose fees when the Department of Defense underspent its TRICARE budget in each of the last three fiscal years and recently asked to reprogram TRICARE funds that were "excess to the Defense Health Program requirements and can be used for higher priority items." Clearly, the Defense Health Program does not need to drastically increase costs to beneficiaries if it is consistently overestimating health care cost growth rates. Unifying military health care delivery and incentivizing wellness programs will create savings and a healthier military force.

Congress understands that perceived erosion of benefits creates morale, recruiting and retention problems among those serving, those retired, and those who might join the all-volunteer military. Shifting the burden of our nation's fiscal crisis on to the backs of military retirees – three percent of our population who volunteered for decades of service and wrote a blank check to the United States for an amount up to and including their life – is not the way to repay a lifetime of service.

Stand fast in your determination to limit TRICARE fee increases to no more than the annual military retiree cost-of-living increases and maintain a benefit that is a powerful incentive for top-quality personnel to serve full careers despite the burdens that military service imposes on troops and their families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gordon R. Sullivan".

GORDON R. SULLIVAN
General, USA Retired

GRS/wbl