



*ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY*

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

March 1, 2011

On behalf of the more than 100,000 members of the Association of the United States Army, I write to express support for your proposed legislation to authorize the Defense Department to provide up to \$250,000 to support programs that provide pro bono legal assistance for members of the Armed Forces.

Military members and their families receive military legal assistance in matters of consumer law, domestic and family law, income tax preparation, wills, notarizations, and powers of attorney. However, military judge advocates cannot represent their clients in civilian courts and cannot provide assistance outside the area of their military installations.

The services' Judge Advocates General have unanimously supported a pilot program instituted by the American Bar Association that connects military clients with volunteer civilian attorneys who provide pro bono legal services in matters not covered by on-base legal assistance. It has proven an important resource for improving readiness and morale, especially among junior personnel who are often targeted by unscrupulous lenders and lack the resources to protect themselves from serious financial consequences. However, private program funding has been exhausted, and the Defense Department lacks explicit authority to provide financial support.

AUSA strongly endorses your amendment to authorize the Department to use existing operations and maintenance funds to support this worthwhile program, and is grateful for your efforts to assist Service members and their families in this regard

Sincerely,

GORDON R. SULLIVAN

General, USA Retired