



ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY

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

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I write to you as a fellow Army veteran. As Congress considers ways to reduce the nation's deficit, I am concerned that military retirement and healthcare benefits have been deemed easy bill payers and termed "overly generous".

From sources as varied as the Office of Management and Budget, the Congressional Budget Office, the Defense Business Board and congressional offices, proposals have emerged that seem to show a complete failure to understand the enormous difference between a soldier's career in the profession of arms and the civilian job environment.

As a former Soldier, you are aware of the extraordinary sacrifices demanded of those serving and their families. A military career entails decades of service and, in essence, writing a blank check to the United States for an amount up to and including a servicemember's life. The unique nature of military retirement and healthcare benefits plays a key role in inducing high quality people to serve a full career under such conditions.

As you work to correct the nation's fiscal crisis, I urge you to remember the implicit promise to servicemembers of a substantial and predictable compensation package that is earned by less than one percent of our population. Further, I ask that you remind your colleagues who have not served that we as a nation must not break faith with those who are willing to carry our colors into battle.

Simply stated, I am fully aware of the nation's fiscal crisis and that at some point military personnel might be called on to make some adjustments. However, I have not seen any realistic proposals, and until I do, my position remains as I state it in this letter.

This nation is fortunate to have men and women willing to devote their lives to the defense of our nation. They must be given the respect and dignity that such service demands.

Sincerely,

GORDON R. SULLIVAN
General, USA Retired