



*ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY*

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

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On behalf of the 100,000 members of the Association of the United States Army, I write to urge that Congress maintain the current military retirement system intact. Recent proposals to change that system seem to characterize the costs of paying retired military personnel as a budgetary burden. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

Guaranteed retirement benefits are essential to recruitment and retention. Any erosion of those benefits, implied or implemented, affects Soldier morale and can leave them with the impression that they have been betrayed.

Our nation demands much from its military, and retirement benefits are not gifts – they have been earned through blood, sweat, toil, repeated deployments, missed births, birthdays and anniversaries and sometimes loss of limbs or life.

Shifting the burden of our nation's current fiscal crisis on to the backs of our military – less than one percent of our population who volunteer for decades of service and in essence write a blank check to the United States for an amount up to and including their life – is morally bankrupt.

However, fiscal responsibility must not lead to a target on the center of the military retirement system. The richest nation on earth can afford to continue the current retirement program for those who defend it with a lifetime of service. As has been said time and again – defending freedom is not free.

The Association of the United States Army and I will continue to say just that.

Sincerely,

GORDON R. SULLIVAN

General, USA Retired