



November 21, 2024

The Honorable Jack Reed  
Chairman  
Senate Armed Services Committee  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roger Wicker  
Ranking Member  
Senate Armed Services Committee  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Wicker and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the National Military Family Association (NMFA), I write to share our appreciation for your leadership and support of our nation's Uniformed Services members and their families, and for your ongoing attention to our organization's commitments. As you finalize the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2025, we would like to reiterate our priorities and request your consideration of several critical provisions that will strengthen and safeguard military families.

Service is a choice, yet the rising costs of this commitment are impacting military families and, ultimately, national readiness. Our service members are struggling under the high and rising cost of living. Compensation for junior enlisted members is not keeping pace with inflation, and we have staggering rates of food insecurity. Our household income lags the civilian sector primarily due to a high spousal unemployment rate, and those families fortunate to have two working parents face another challenge: accessible and affordable child care.

We strongly support the provisions recommended by the House Armed Services Committee Quality of Life Panel and included in the House version of the FY 2025 NDAA. These policies are essential for families facing the challenges detailed above.



NMFA urges the Senate's support and final passage of the following House-approved provisions:

- **Increased pay for service members:** A pay increase of 19.5% for junior enlisted members (E1-E4) and 4.5% percent for all others, to keep pace with the high and rising cost of living that disproportionately impacts low-income service members.
- **Increased eligibility threshold for the Basic Needs Allowance (BNA):** An increase from the current threshold of 150% to 200% of federal poverty guidelines.
- **Restoration of Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH):** Coverage for 100% of housing costs so that service members do not have to shoulder the burden of unpredictable and high costs associated with relocation and housing options.
- **Fee assistance for child care:** Full funding for child care fee assistance programs, increased child care eligibility for spouses who are seeking employment, and free child care for CDC employees.

One of our main priorities is ensuring that the health care available to military families through the TRICARE benefit is on par with the offerings of top civilian plans. In addition to the Quality of Life panel recommendations, we strongly support Section 705 of S. 4638 and Section 701 of H.R. 8070, which would expand coverage of reproductive health care to active duty service members and their spouses. We urge you to ensure that this coverage is included in the final version of the NDAA.

As the FY 2025 NDAA offers an historic opportunity to advance these quality-of-life improvements, we count on your leadership to champion these recommendations, demonstrate our nation's commitment to military families, and send a clear message to our military families that America has their back—just as they have ours—every single day.

Thank you for your time and consideration for our concerns and policy priorities as negotiations on the FY2025 NDAA come to a close. NMFA stands ready to serve as a resource on issues impacting military families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Besa Pinchotti".

Besa Pinchotti  
CEO, National Military Family Association