Dear Ranking Member Hunter:

I write to commend you for including a provision in the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009 (HR 5658) to prevent proposed increases in enrollment fees, premiums, and pharmacy copayments for TRICARE, the military community's health plan.

As you know, career members of the uniformed services and their families endure unique and extraordinary sacrifices over the course of a 20 or more year career in protecting freedom for all Americans. Your effort to block Pentagon plans to steeply raise TRICARE fees and copays recognize that these brave men and women deserve the best retirement benefits a grateful nation can provide.

Those who compare benefit programs provided to our retired military members with programs paid by civilians completely fail to understand the demands of our military. Our uniformed service members earned their healthcare benefits, and they rely on them for their health and that of their families.

I urge you to defend your position in conference with the Senate knowing that our service personnel prepay a very large advance premium for health care in retirement through their extraordinary service. The price our nation pays for these benefits will never be more than the value given in the service of freedom.

Sincerely,

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Member
NAUS 40 Years