



October 25, 2017

Senator John McCain  
Chair  
Senate Committee on Armed Services  
228 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Jack Reed  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Armed Services  
228 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Representative Mac Thornberry  
Chair  
House Committee on Armed Services  
2216 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Adam Smith  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Armed Services  
2216 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator McCain, Senator Reed, Representative Thornberry, and Representative Smith,

As you continue your work on the FY2018 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) conference report, we are reaching out to you to highlight the importance of military personnel reform. We were pleased to see that both the Senate and House versions of the FY2018 NDAA include strong language directing the Department of Defense (DoD) to modernize several long-standing defense personnel policies.

The Bipartisan Policy Center's Task Force on Defense Personnel, co-chaired by Gen. Jim Jones, Sec. Leon Panetta, Sen. Jim Talent (R-MO), and Blue Star Families' CEO Kathy Roth-Douquet, was founded to address the strategic and personnel challenges currently facing the Department of Defense. The Task Force on Defense Personnel hopes to raise awareness of these challenges and make concrete recommendations for meaningful reforms to the next Administration and Congress.

As you know, the men and women who volunteer to serve are the foundation of our military advantage. To preserve that advantage, the DoD must reform its personnel management policies to better align military careers with the capabilities needed to defend against 21<sup>st</sup> century threats and the talents and skills of 21<sup>st</sup> century Americans. Several provisions in the Senate and House-passed bills are exactly the sort of reforms needed to better serve our troops and their families.

Specifically, Section 502 and Section 510A of the Senate-passed bill make important changes to the military promotion model, by allowing promotion boards to recommend officers of particular merit be placed at the top of the promotion list and allowing officers to opt out of promotion board consideration, if desired. Section 558 in the Senate bill would require a report analyzing modifications to Department of Defense childcare services, designed to make it easier for military families to find and utilize care. Section 563 of the Senate bill would help military spouses sustain a career when relocating by making it easier to transfer their professional licenses across state lines. Sec. 10603 orders an

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evaluation of the current military compensation model in the next Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation.

These provisions, which closely align with issues discussed and supported by BPC's Task Force on Defense Personnel Reform, will provide the Pentagon with the statutory relief needed to test new ideas for managing military personnel while also modernizing long-outdated personnel policies. Though additional steps must be taken to ensure our military remains an attractive option to America's best and brightest, the NDAA language makes strong progress on these important issues.

We encourage you to consider including these important military personnel policy provisions in your final bill. We look forward to continuing to work with you on this important issue and thank you again for your leadership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Stockwell".

Michele Stockwell  
Executive Director, BPC Action