Your Mission ▪ Your Voice

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December 4, 2012

Mr. Fred Hiatt
Editor, Washington Post Editorial Page
1150 15th Street NW
Washington, DC 20071

Dear Mr. Hiatt:

Members of the Fleet Reserve Association (FRA) strongly disagree with your December 3rd editorial ("Time to Rein In Tricare") regarding TRICARE fee increases for military retirees.

Personnel expenditures are directly associated with defense readiness and imposing drastic health care fee hikes on military retirees is reneging on past commitments associated with earned benefits, and will negatively impact recruiting and retention. Threats to also cut retirement benefits and other quality-of-life programs are major concerns within the active and Reserve communities and viewed as devaluing military service.

The debt crisis is a serious threat, however, total defense spending as a percentage of GDP is significantly below past war-time periods – and projected to go lower. Despite repeated claims of rising health care costs, there have also been requests from DoD to reprogram unspent Defense Health Program funding in recent years.

Military retirees under age 65 and enrolled in TRICARE Prime experienced a 13-percent increase in their annual enrollment fees last year and these fees will be increased annually based on the rate of inflation. Pharmacy copays will also increase in 2013, although the exact amounts will be established in the final FY 2013 National Defense Authorization Act.

Military service is unlike any other occupation, and roughly one percent of the population has volunteered to shoulder 100 percent of the responsibility for our national security. The benefits associated with this service have been earned through 20 or more years of arduous military service.

Sincerely,

JOSEPH L. BARNES
National Executive Director