

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the yeas appeared to have it.

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

FURTHER MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A further message from the Senate by Mr. Monahan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate agrees to the report of the committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2657) entitled "An Act making appropriations for the Legislative Branch for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2004, and for other purposes."

MOTION TO INSTRUCT CONFEREES ON H.R. 1588, NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2004

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I offer a privileged motion.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion.

The Clerk read as follows:

Mr. CROWLEY moves that the managers on the part of the House at the conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the Senate amendment to the bill H.R. 1588 be instructed to agree to the provisions contained in paragraphs (3) and (4) of section 1074a(f) of title 10, United States Code, as proposed to be added by section 701 of the Senate amendment (relating to health care for members of reserve components).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XXII, the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. MCHUGH) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY).

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

This motion is an easy one and one that should be accepted by everyone in this Chamber, if they are serious about supporting our troops and supporting our Nation. This is where I say rhetoric meets reality.

My motion would instruct the conferees working on the bill authorizing actions by the Defense Department to allow our Nation's reservists and National Guard members and their families to be eligible to receive medical coverage from TRICARE on a cost-share basis. TRICARE, as my colleagues know, is the U.S. military's comprehensive health care plan.

Reservists have taken on a new and more active role since the 1991 Gulf War. Today, we see these brave young men and women risking their lives on a daily basis in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere in this world. After September 11, the President signed an Ex-

ecutive Order authorizing the activation of reservists for up to 2 years of Active Duty, and up to 1 million reservists may be on Active Duty at any one time. Reservists have left their families, their friends and their jobs behind to serve our country, and they deserve health care for themselves and for their families.

I am offering this motion today because in our Nation we are still facing the same problems we did during the first Gulf War call-up, poor medical care for reservists as they get ready to be deployed. We are seeing many people sent to the front lines in Afghanistan and Iraq who may not always be at peak readiness due to a lack of access to medical care necessary to ensure maximum performance. We rely on these reservists so much now that it would be a mistake not to include them in TRICARE. Their health and their ability to fight should be of our utmost concern.

Our reservists should be provided with health care so they can remain in good health while they are not in service so that they are always prepared for mobilization in our global war on terrorism.

The Congressional Budget Office estimated the cost of this program to be \$460 million during the fiscal year 2004 and about \$7.2 billion over a 5-year period.

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Some Republicans and the Bush administration say that this is too costly, and I just do not see how that argument holds water, as the Bush administration has sent Congress a supplemental bill for Iraq that proposes over \$20 billion in reconstruction and rebuilding efforts in Iraq alone, \$20 billion in reconstruction and rebuilding in Iraq alone.

Yes, U.S. tax dollars are rebuilding the irrigation system of Iraq, and this administration and this Republican Congress refuse to fund medical care for our Reserves and National Guard members. This \$460 million is a small price to pay to provide for our troops and to ensure their readiness when they are stateside. The U.S. will spend more to upgrade the housing of Iraqi citizens in the next month than we will on medical care for our Reserves and National Guard if we do not include this provision.

In comparison to the tax cuts for the richest 1 percent given by this administration and this Congress and the enormous cost of military operations and reconstruction in Iraq and Afghanistan, this should be, quite frankly, a no-brainer.

Some might say we need to do studies on this to see if it is feasible. We have done enough studies on this subject. Americans want action, not more studies. Studies are nice, but providing for readiness for our guard and reserve is a necessity. In fact, in 2002, a GAO report recommended Tri-Care assistance be provided during mobilizations

targeted to the needs of Reservists and their dependents. Another GAO report that dealt with Reservists being mobilized during the 1990-91 Persian Gulf War came to similar conclusions.

We cannot afford to do another study when 40 percent of our Reservists on active duty between the ages of 19 and 35, 40 percent of those people are uninsured. Tri-Care is only extended to active duty and not to Reservists, even though they are required to maintain the same standards.

Mr. Speaker, with the war on terrorism and continuing military operations in Iraq, with no valuable contribution from our European allies to this effort in sight, U.S. Reservists are clearly being called upon more and more. In fact, after September 8, it was announced that the deployment of Reservists in the combat theater is being extended from 6 months to 1 year. This is in addition to the fact that about half of the active duty Army is currently deployed abroad, up from 20 percent before 9/11.

Certainly our heavily stressed armed services and their families being required to make such extensive sacrifices deserve these health benefits. While many Reservists do have health benefits through their current employers, we cannot forget the 40 percent who do not. These are the patriots who make up the fabric of our communities and form the backbone of our defense forces. We cannot keep looking the other way when it comes to the Reservists of our armed services.

The administration already refuses to provide concurrent receipt for our veterans who are protecting our freedoms abroad. Until just this morning we were charging people who got injured on active duty for their food at U.S. military hospitals. Now we tell people, the local hardware store owner, the local Realtor, the stay-at-home mom raising a family, that we would love for them to serve as a Reservist, but we cannot offer them the same health care as active duty servicemen and servicewomen.

We continue to ask our Reservists to live up to their duties when we are not willing to provide them and their families with the proper health care that they need and that they deserve. We are creating a two-tiered military, with a separate set of benefits for Reservists than those offered active duty servicemembers. We cannot let this happen.

Join me in urging the conferees to accept the Senate provisions. Anything else, in my opinion, is a slap at our troops on the front line in our epic war against terrorism.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCHUGH. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and let me begin by expressing my appreciation to my friend and colleague, my fellow Representative, the gentleman from the great State of New York (Mr. CROWLEY), for his concern