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UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

January 18, 2012

The Honorable Leon E. Panetta
Secretary of Defense
1400 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301-1400

Dear Secretary Panetta:

As you know, the Post Deployment/Mobilization Respite Absence Program (PDMRA) was instituted to allow service members mobilized and deployed in excess of 12-24 months to accrue leave in addition to their regular leave. This program aims to provide service members the opportunity to spend more time with their families and readjust after multiple deployments.

PDMRA contributes to the readiness of each service member by boosting morale for members and their families. PDMRA days allow for a healthy and successful reintegration after extended mobilizations and deployment – a benefit our men and women have rightly earned.

PDMRA policy is set forth in Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 1327.06. On September 30, 2011, Change 1 to DoDI 1327.06 was issued, reducing the earned PDMRA days for service members deployed in excess of 24 months from four days per month to two days per month beginning October 2011.

The 1/34 Heavy Brigade Combat Team (HBCT), Minnesota's 'Redbulls,' are mobilized and deployed under 12302 orders in a Combat Zone Tax Exclusion Area (CZTE) in Kuwait. If the new PDMRA guidance is instituted, Minnesota's Redbulls and similar deployed units stand to lose on average 16 days of earned PDMRA for the time period October 2011 to May 2012. These service members were mobilized and deployed under one policy, only to have it change midcourse.

I request you provide my office with the following information:

1. Why did the Department of Defense change the PDMRA calculation policy, effectively reducing the accrual of PDMRA leave for service members?
2. Did the Department of Defense consult with the relevant Armed Services Committees prior to making a change that affects many constituents?

3. When will the Service Secretaries release their guidance on implementation of Change 1 to DoDI 1327.06 and make that available to currently mobilized and deployed service members?

4. Some service members made career decisions based on the policy in affect at the time of their deployment. Does the Department of Defense plan to grandfather currently mobilized and deployed units to ensure they are not affected by this change in policy?

We must not break faith with our service members and their families. Thank you for your consideration of my request. I look forward to working with you to address this issue. Should you have any questions, your staff can contact Ryan Silverberg in my office at (202) 225-2271 or ryan.silverberg@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,



JOHN KLINE
Member of Congress