



# Veterans of Modern Warfare

December 17, 2007

Senator Harry Reid  
Majority Leader  
528 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
361-A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Max Baucus  
Chair, Senate Finance Committee  
511 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Charles Grassley  
Ranking Member, Senate Finance Committee  
135 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

RE: H.R. 3973 and H.R. 3997 (HEART)

Dear Senators Reid, McConnell, Baucus, and Grassley:

We are writing to request your support for immediate passage by the U.S. Senate of H.R. 3973, the Veterans Guaranteed Bonus Act, and H.R. 3997, the Heroes Earnings Assistance and Relief Tax (HEART) act.

Veterans of Modern Warfare, Inc. is a new, national, chapter-based, individual membership 501(c)(19) veterans service organization for veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces with military service since August 2, 1990, including the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. We have provided testimony in support of veterans deployment health issues twice in the last several months, and continue to be actively engaged in advocacy on issues of key importance to our veterans.

The Veterans Guaranteed Bonus Act is of key importance to our wounded warriors in ensuring they cannot be required to repay an enlistment or reenlistment bonus due to their inability to fulfill their entire contractual period of military service because of a combat-related injury.

The HEART Act is of key importance to our nation's current and former active, reserve, and national guard military service members. We remain in full support of H.R. 3997, the HEART Act as originally passed by the House on December 6, 2007 and again on December 17, 2007. We encourage and support your efforts to restore H.R. 3997 to the original House version.

Among the HEART Act's key provisions that we support, before having been amended by the Senate:

- (1) Make permanent the provision that permits active duty individuals to make penalty-free withdrawals from retirement plans;
- (2) Expand the provisions in the Internal Revenue Code that authorize state-level qualified veterans' mortgage bonds (QVMBs), the proceeds of which are used to make critically important state-level home mortgage loans that help veterans to affordably own their own

- homes in the five participating states, representing one-fifth of the nation's veterans; Make permanent the provisions in the Internal Revenue Code that authorize state-level qualified mortgage bonds (QMBs) to be used for home loans to veterans, a second, unrelated program;
- (3) Make permanent the ability to include combat pay as earned income for purposes of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), thereby helping lower income service members with families and dependents in qualifying for this targeted income assistance program;
  - (4) Extend the limitation period for filing tax refund claims resulting from Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) disability determinations, which is of key importance to our nation's veterans, who often experience extended delays in claims processing and even longer delays, often as long as many years, in seeking relief through the VA claims appeals process;
  - (5) Permit recipients of military death benefit gratuities to roll over the amounts received, tax free, to a Roth IRA or an Education Savings Account, thereby helping to minimize the amounts lost to taxation and assisting in the education and future financial stability of the military service member's survivor(s);
  - (6) Permit an employer to make certain contributions to a qualified plan on behalf of an employee who was killed in combat, thereby allowing aid to be provided without taxation to a military service member's survivor(s);
  - (7) Treat the day prior to the date of death as the date the employee returned to work for purpose of triggering payment of survivor benefits (or other beneficiary payments) under a qualified plan for purposes of meeting the requirements of the uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA);
  - (8) Treat differential wage payments made by an employer to an employee who becomes active duty members of the uniformed services as wages for retirement plan purposes, helping to ensure that these wages are credited for retirement purposes and employer matching contributions;
  - (9) Provide equitable treatment of most military cash allowances, beyond basic pay, for purpose of determining eligibility and benefit amounts for military families, helping to add fairness to a longstanding, problematic process;
  - (10) Disregard certain annuity payments paid specifically to blind veterans for purpose of determining Supplemental Security Income (SSI) eligibility and benefits under the SSI program, thereby helping these needy blind veterans in qualifying for this needed income assistance program.

Thank you in advance for your support for helping to quickly pass this legislation that is of key importance to current and former members of our nation's armed forces, who have been called upon to do so much for so long. We support you and stand ready to assist you in these efforts.

Please feel free to contact us for further assistance. I can be reached via cell phone at (206) 948-2908, or contact Anthony Hardie, Legislative Director, at cell phone (608) 239-4658.

Sincerely,

**VETERANS OF MODERN WARFARE**

**JULIE MOCK**  
President