

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS  
OF THE UNITED STATES  
FOUNDED 1899



**RICHARD L. DENOYER**  
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

VFW MEMORIAL BUILDING  
200 MARYLAND AVENUE, NE  
WASHINGTON, DC 20002-5799

November 18, 2011

The Honorable John S. McCain III  
Russell Senate Office Building (SR-241)  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator McCain:

The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States appreciates your membership in our great organization and your years of outstanding service to our great nation, but we are absolutely opposed to your efforts, and that of Chairman Levin, to further balance the budget on the backs of military service members, their families, and retirees.

Your acceptance of the President's proposed commission to examine the current military retirement system, the Chairman's suggestion to expand the commission's scope to include all military pay and allowances and their tax implications, and your recommendation to exclude military retirees from enrolling in TRICARE Prime, implies that your unwavering support of the military exists only as long as you are wearing the uniform. Please tell us that perception is wrong.

Senator, the VFW is about people first, not weapons systems, and we have gone to the ends of the Earth to meet and thank our military men and women and their families for their continued service and sacrifice. We also go to listen to their concerns to help shape our advocacy efforts here on Capitol Hill. That is why we are so adamantly against any proposal that would have those who sacrifice the most to sacrifice even more.

Our troops are of one voice against cutting their pay and benefits. They view these threats as a supreme breach of faith, regardless of promises to grandfather those currently serving into the existing retirement system. They recognize this as a further attempt to "civilianize" a professional military that—through no fault of their own—is disconnected from 99 percent of the country. And they view these threats as the beginning of the end to an all-volunteer force that has worked exceptionally well since 1973, which is a price this nation and its government cannot afford to pay.

Senator, I urge you to reconsider your position and to look deeper into the management efficiencies that have to exist in abundance within DOD. Perhaps you could start with the TRICARE Management Activity itself, which earlier this year awarded a \$52 million one-year

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IT contract to SAIC, plus announced a layoff of 700 contract employees. The obvious question those actions beg is just how large is this organization that contracts out all of its managerial responsibilities? There are probably similar efficiencies that can be found throughout the federal government, to include inside Congress.

On behalf of our 2 million VFW and Auxiliary members, I look forward to working with you and your staff to explore other possible ways to keep the force intact.

Respectfully,



RICHARD L. DENOYER  
Commander-in-Chief

cc: The Honorable Carl M. Levin  
Russell Senate Office Building (SR-269)  
Washington, DC 20510