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John Kline's Provisions in National Defense Bill Would Benefit Troops, Veterans, and Families

WASHINGTON – The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), bipartisan legislation which serves as the budgetary blueprint for the Pentagon and passed today in the U.S. House of Representatives, included provisions championed by Minnesota Congressman John Kline that would benefit our troops, veterans, and their families.

One of Kline's provisions in the NDAA provides military retirees living outside 100 miles from a military treatment facility the option to re-enroll in TRICARE Prime after losing access due to a policy change by the Pentagon. This policy change caused thousands of veterans across the country to lose their TRICARE Prime coverage at the end of 2013 leaving many retirees struggling to cover the increased costs due to their fixed incomes. **Kline's amendment provides a one-time election for all affected retirees to have access to TRICARE Prime and reduce their family's healthcare costs.**

"I was pleased to play a direct role in this bipartisan effort to ensure we keep faith with America's heroes and it is imperative we don't allow politics to get in the way of good policy. The national defense bill has a history of bipartisanship and it's unconscionable the President would play political games by threatening to veto legislation that helps ensure our nation remains secure," said Kline, who serves on the House Armed Services Committee and was a member of the conference committee that resolved final differences between the House and Senate. "We are facing greater threats than ever before and we must do all we can to ensure our sons and daughters in uniform have the resources they need to accomplish their mission of keeping America safe."

Also included in the NDAA was Kline's legislation stating it is the sense of Congress that service members should not be restricted from keeping and using weapons during an evacuation of U.S. citizens abroad. Earlier this year, Administration officials ordered U.S. Marines and other embassy personnel to destroy their weapons and equipment prior to boarding a commercial aircraft during their evacuation. **Kline's provision requires greater oversight to ensure that doesn't happen again and ensure our service members maintain the resources necessary for personal and evacuee security at all times.**

Kline's amendment to provide greater oversight while American troops are engaged in operations in Iraq was also included in the NDAA. **Kline's legislation requires the Obama Administration to justify why search, rescue, and medical evacuation capabilities are limited when U.S. service members are operating over the skies of Syria and Iraq and on the ground in the region.**

The Fiscal Year 2016 NDAA, [H.R. 1735](#), increases pay and benefits for our troops, restricts the transfer of terrorists, and reinforces our mission to defeat ISIS. The U.S. Senate is scheduled to vote on the legislation in the coming days. It will then be sent to the President's desk to be signed into law.

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John Kline is a 25-year veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps whose wife is a retired Army nurse and son has served three tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. Kline serves on the House Armed Services Committee, and also is the Chairman of the House Education and the Workforce Committee. He and his wife, Vicky, live in Burnsville.