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## **Kline's Legislation to Address Sexual Assault, Keep Faith with Veterans Included in National Defense Bill**

### *Bipartisan Legislation Passes House, Advances to Senate*

WASHINGTON – Minnesota Congressman John Kline's bipartisan legislation to secure legal services for victims of sexual assault in the National Guard and Reserve, and hold the Pentagon accountable for their decision to end TRICARE Prime for Minnesota veterans were included in the national defense bill that passed the U.S. House of Representatives. The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which serves as the budgetary blueprint for the Pentagon, also maintains Kline's Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program benefiting the Minnesota National Guard and service members nationwide.

"This bill includes important initiatives I championed for members of our military and our veterans from addressing sexual assault to ensuring our service members receive the benefits they were promised," said Kline, a 25-year veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps whose wife is a retired Army nurse and son who has served three tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. "Our sons and daughters in uniform sacrifice a great deal to protect our freedoms, and I am pleased to have supported this legislation which is critical to them, our veterans, and their families."

Included in this year's national defense bill is legislation Kline authored to provide members of our National Guard and Reserve access to important legal resources in the aftermath of a sexual assault. Under current policy, a member of the Minnesota National Guard who was sexually assaulted while not on drill weekend or military duty cannot access critical Special Victims Counsel (SVC) services. An SVC, made available by Kline's legislation, helps and assists victims so they can come forward and receive the support they need.

Kline also championed legislation holding the Pentagon accountable for increasing health care costs for more than 4,000 Minnesotans who were covered under the TRICARE Prime health insurance program. Kline's provision responds to the Department of Defense's unexplainable decision to end TRICARE Prime coverage for Minnesota veterans which resulted in increased health care costs.

This year's national defense bill maintains Kline's Yellow Ribbon Reintegration legislation which provides for a stronger and more resilient ready reserve component. This unique program has proven effective in preparing veterans and their families for safe, healthy, and successful reintegration.

Congressman John Kline serves on the House Armed Services Committee. He also serves as the Chairman of the Education and the Workforce Committee. He and his wife, Vicky, live in Burnsville.

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