

## John Kline Provisions Included in Final National Defense Legislation Passed by House

Washington, May 15

WASHINGTON – Minnesota Congressman John Kline’s bipartisan legislation to reverse a decision by the Pentagon which broke the promise of accessible and affordable health care benefits to our veterans was part of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) which passed the U.S. House of Representatives today. Kline’s provision provides military retirees living outside of 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.

“Minnesota veterans and their families continue to share with me concerns about losing access to health benefits after the Pentagon unilaterally changed policy,” said Kline, 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. “I was pleased to right this wrong and deliver a solution for nearly 4,000 Minnesotans and thousands of veterans across the country through this important legislation which provides for the men and women in uniform that safeguard our freedom.”

Due to a policy change made by the Pentagon, thousands of veterans across the country who live outside 100 miles of a military treatment facility lost access to TRICARE Prime at the end of 2013 leaving many retirees struggling to cover the increased costs due to their fixed incomes. Kline’s amendment would provide a one-time election for all affected retirees to have access to TRICARE Prime.

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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 also sent a letter to the Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense requesting answers earlier this year and, during a House Armed Services hearing in March, Kline pressed for answers on the evacuation.

The Fiscal Year 2016 NDAA, H.R. 1735, serves as the budgetary blueprint for the Pentagon. The bill increases pay and benefits for our troops, restricts the transfer of terrorists, and reinforces our mission to defeat ISIS, and passed the House with bipartisan support.

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.