

now that the Guard and Reserves play, the Guard and Reserves, for a personal commitment that I outlined in my remarks a moment ago—\$1.37 a day for individuals, \$4.90 a day for families—ought to be entitled to that same level of confidence. Today the law denies that.

I thank the Senator for asking the question.

Mr. WARNER. Madam President, I appreciate that the Senator at least clarified that point. I would like to point out also that in the existing bill, we have added 6 months after demobilization in a transition to civilian life. They are entitled to these same benefits. It isn't as if we drop them the day they walk out of the gate, having served with distinction in his or her service on active duty.

I think we are framing this debate correctly. We have to look at the associated costs with this permanent entitlement program which is being proposed. Bear in mind, particularly to my colleagues who have had experience in the military themselves, we are narrowing the gap between the benefits for reservists and guardsmen and those who commit to enlistment for 5 years or those who aspire to be careerists for 20-plus years. Pretty soon people are going to say, why should I become a regular member of the U.S. Army and sign up for commitments of many years when I can stay in the Reserve and just about get all the same benefits that a regular gets? Once we start that breakdown, I dare say, my dear friends, we will have a lot of difficulty recruiting for the Active Forces and much less difficulty recruiting for the Reserve and the Guard.

I believe the Senate is under an order.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the hour of 12:30 having arrived, the Senate will stand in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, at 12:34 p.m., the Senate recessed until 2:17 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. SUNUNU).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. In my capacity as a Senator from New Hampshire, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2005—Continued

AMENDMENT NO. 3258

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, as to the points of the pending amendment

that the Senator from South Carolina and the Senator from South Dakota have spoken very eloquently about with regard to their amendment, I will interject briefly my own observations and strong opposition because I believe that the Armed Services Committee structured a very adequate program for the Reserves.

I direct the attention of Members to page 135 and thereafter in the bill on each desk, which outlines what the committee did. Roughly, the President's bill had \$300 million in allocations toward additional benefits for the Reserve and Guard. The committee went beyond that and added another \$400 million, and now along comes this proposal which would add on top of that another \$700 million.

We are really beginning to face quite a severe dollar problem because unless this amendment is defeated, it would require the conference to seek out cuts in other military programs, all of those programs having been carefully evaluated by the two committees, the House and the Senate, and reduce them by some \$700 million. That is the bottom line.

The other reason I feel very strongly about that this proposed legislation is not in the best interest of the services, it really begins to provide for the Reserve and Guard Forces in a manner that is commensurate with the Active-Duty military personnel.

Stop and think. When a young person—and oftentimes that person now has a family with a wife and vice versa as the case may be—sits down and evaluates their life and how they would like to make a commitment to service in uniform to this country, suddenly they look at the alternatives. Well, there is the Active and we get a certain degree of benefits under the Active; then there is the Reserve or the Guard, and they compare the benefits that they would get under that program. If this legislation is passed, it is beginning to close the last gap between the benefits on the Active side and the benefits on the Reserve and Guard side.

Now, one might say, well, Senator, when the Reserves are called to active duty, they perform just as the Active member, and that is correct; they take the same risk as the Active member, and that is correct; the family assumes much the same hardships as the Active member, and that is correct. But when the Reserve completes his or her obligation of a callup, they return to the Reserve status, they return to their homes, they return to their civilian jobs and their life in the civilian community with such obligations as their Reserve or Guard requirements require.

The Active person perhaps finishes their overseas commitment, they go back to the training base, they are fully in the military, fully subjected to the regimen of the military, fully subjected to going right back overseas on a very short turnaround basis. We have witnessed that during this conflict period covering the AORs of Afghanistan

and Iraq. But the regular soldier, sailor, airman, and marine, when they commit to a tour of duty of 3 or 4 years' obligated service, or the officers accept their commissions and obligate themselves for 4 or 5 years, whatever the case may be, they understand that, but it makes for equity and fairness that the Active rolls have some benefits that compensate for the rigors, the constant risk, the constant disruption, the constant moving of the Active-Duty Force, unlike the reservist who is called back for a period of time, then released to go back to their civilian jobs and their homes. They could own that one home, whereas the military soldier, the careerist on active duty, often has to get a home, sell it, go get another one, sell it, move, move, sell, rent. Those are hardships for which I think through the years the Congress has carefully balanced out an equitable formulation of the benefits for the Active Force and the Guard and Reserve.

This amendment makes a very substantial closing of that gap, and I think it will be an inducement for young people now to go into the Reserve and Guard because they are going to have just about the same benefits as the individual on active duty, but they can stay in their homes, stay in their jobs, perform their weekends and 2 weeks in the summer active field training. They can match both their civilian life and their Guard and Reserve life and balance it in such a way as to basically stay home. That is not so with the regular force.

So when we reported out the bill S. 2400, we went further than the Senate has ever gone before to improve health care benefits for Reserve members, and it reflects our Nation's growing reliance on their service. When a Reserve or Guard is called up, within 30 days—and I think in a respectful way I brought this to the attention of the distinguished Democratic leader—they are treated just as an active Regular once they go on that active duty. We have added permanent TRICARE coverage before and after mobilization and created a new option for the Reserves and their families to participate in TRICARE while they are enjoying the benefits of civilian life. They have an option but they have to pay something for it.

The bottom line is we are dealing with the taxpayers' money. That is what we are dealing with, the taxpayers' money, and it is quite a considerable commitment under this amendment.

Our fundamental disagreement is how we achieve these goals. The difference, again, is cost. The amendment would be \$700 million for this 1 fiscal year, \$5.7 billion over the ensuing 5 years, and \$14.2 billion over a 10-year period from adoption. We are under stringent budgets these days, and our military is very much in need of modernization, new equipment, additional training, reconfiguration, particularly the U.S. Army, and all those are costly