

GUS M. BILIRAKIS
12TH DISTRICT, FLORIDA

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
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PROTECTION

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
VICE-CHAIRMAN
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0912

July 23, 2018

The Honorable Mac Thornberry
Chair
House Armed Services Committee
2208 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
House Armed Services Committee
2264 Rayburn House Office building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Eliminate Section 701 of S. 2987 at the conference committee for the FY19 National Defense Authorization Act

Dear Chairman Thornberry and Ranking Member Smith:

Thank you for your steadfast leadership and support of our nation's military personnel, Veterans, and their families. As you reconcile differences at the conference committee, I request that you address an area of concern to the military and Veteran communities in my district regarding the potential raising of TRICARE fees.

This Senate provision eliminates the grandfathering for beneficiaries enrolled in TRICARE prior to January 1, 2018 with the intent to establish a single co-payment structure for all beneficiaries to "correct an inequity." This provision not only disregards the intent of the FY17 NDAA, which fully appreciated the difference between the many years of service as compared with new entrants, it results in yet another round of significant increases on that select population-affecting those who served a full military career and endured increases last year when the Defense Health Agency unilaterally implemented changes to the fee tables resulting in those net increases.

These new out of pocket cost increases, if approved, would be achieved through higher enrollment fees, new non-network deductibles, higher catastrophic caps and pharmacy fee increases-all of which risk severely eroding the military health care benefit that has been earned by our men and women in uniform. Our nation's heroes have bravely served our country and have made enormous personal sacrifices that follow them in their daily lives.

I therefore respectfully request that you do not include section 701 of the Senate bill in the final Conference Report and honor Congress's earlier commitment to our service members. Thank you for your consideration.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Gus M. Bilirakis", is written over a horizontal line.

Gus M. Bilirakis
Member of Congress