



The Voice  
for Military  
Families

*Serving the families of the seven Uniformed Services through education, information & advocacy*

April 16, 2007

The Honorable Solomon P. Ortiz  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington DC 20515

Dear Representative Ortiz,

The National Military Family Association (NMFA) is the only national organization whose sole focus is the military family and whose goal is to influence the development and implementation of policies that will improve the lives of the families of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and the Commissioned Corps of the Public Health Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. For more than 35 years, its staff and volunteers, comprised mostly of military family members, have built a reputation for being the leading experts on military family issues. On behalf of NMFA and the families it serves, we commend your proposal of legislation that will repeal the requirement for reduction of survivor annuities under the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) by veterans Dependency and Indemnity compensation (DIC) and make other corrections that benefit surviving spouses and children.

As we have stated in Congressional testimony this year and for the past several years, NMFA believes that ending the DIC offset to SBP is essential in protecting both the long and short-term financial security of military survivors, especially those of career service members. While both NMFA and the survivors are grateful for the increases to the death gratuity and the Servicemembers Group Life Insurance, this bill acknowledges the long term financial security of these survivors. Many of these survivors find their monthly family income decreases substantially in the years following the service member's death, due in large part to the DIC offset to SBP. Widows of retirees who die of service-connected illnesses or injuries also experience a decrease in their benefit income following the retiree's death. The DIC offset to SBP affects the most vulnerable members of our military community: the surviving spouses of those who have given their lives for our country. While surviving spouses of active duty deaths who are affected by the offset have the option of choosing child-only SBP, they do so knowing their DoD SBP benefits will end as soon as their child reaches adulthood. Child-only SBP payments do not compensate for the lost income caused by the DIC offset. We appreciate the foresight of the bill that would extend the eligibility for receiving both SBP and DIC payments to those widows who had made the choice of the child-only option for SBP.

Thank you for sponsoring this important legislation. Should you have any questions please contact Kathleen Moakler, Director of Government Relations ([moakler@nmfa.org](mailto:moakler@nmfa.org), 703.931.6632).

Survivors have made the ultimate sacrifice. Thank you for your work to ensure the Nation provides the full benefits due them in recognition of that sacrifice.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tanna Schmidli".

Tanna Schmidli  
Chairman of the Board of Governors