



Klein Supports Legislation to Ease Debt Burden on National Guard and Reservists

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Representative Ron Klein (FL-22) today joined a bipartisan majority of his House colleagues to pass legislation easing the debt burden on National Guard and Reserve soldiers. The legislation, H.R. 4044, the National Guard and Reservists Debt Relief Act of 2008, provides assistance to National Guard members and Reservists who face financial difficulties because of lengthy, unanticipated deployments, by exempting them from provisions currently making it more difficult for them to file for bankruptcy protection.

“We should be offering the men and woman who risk their lives to protect us greater financial relief, not greater hardships and definitely not more red tape,” Klein said. “The legislation passed today is a bipartisan fix for a specific problem impacting National Guard members and Reservists, and it was long past time for us to ease the debt burden faced by far too many of these citizen soldiers.”

Current bankruptcy law contains provision that forces individuals to meet a “means test.” The legislation passed today shields members of the National Guard and Reserves from this means test, a standard that has no true reflection of whether they can pay their debts, making it easier for them to file for bankruptcy and eventually make a full financial recovery.

“National Guard members and Reservists and their families make extraordinary sacrifices when they are called up to active duty. One of those sacrifices is unfortunately financial, as the National Guard tells us that four out of ten members of the National Guard and Reserve lose income when they leave their civilian jobs for active duty. The burden is especially heavy on those who are self-employed or run small businesses, and today’s legislation shows our commitment to honoring their service and easing their financial burden.”

Since September 11, 2001, approximately 470,000 Reservists and Guardsmen have been called to active duty, some more than once, and 183,366 Reservists and National Guardsmen are currently activated in support of ongoing military operations.

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