

Issues & Actions for 2012




Our Nation's military is facing changes after more than 10 years of war. As some of the troops come home, many will find realigning the work/life balance as a family may not be easy. Military families worry that budget cuts will affect the service member and erode the foundation of support they have relied on.

Our Association believes the Federal government has an inherent responsibility to provide support for military families and to ensure the readiness of the service member.

To address the challenges facing our Nation and its military families this year, our Association has identified critical priorities.


Readiness


We remain a Nation at war. The readiness of service members and the families that support them needs to be paramount. Families rely on a **foundation of support**: accessible quality health care; responsive behavioral health support; spouse employment options; quality children's education; comprehensive child care; a secure retirement; and unwavering support when wounded, widowed, or orphaned. Military families should be able to access some level of this support no matter where they live – in the United States or overseas.

-  Family Support Programs shall be funded and implemented at the level necessary to maintain the readiness of service members and their families.
-  TRICARE needs to remain a high quality, accessible, and affordable benefit.
-  The annual appropriation to support the Commissary system must remain robust to provide the important benefit to military families and a good deal for the taxpayer.

Recovery and Renewal




Our Nation's warriors are returning to their families after multiple deployments and frequent separations. Our research shows children are especially affected by repeated separations from their mom or dad, and by how well their parent/caregiver has handled deployments. We cannot begin to anticipate the long-term impact on our families. The ability to achieve and maintain a work/life balance needs to include time for reintegration for all families, including those of the wounded, ill, and injured.

-  Service members and their families need to have access to a continuum of quality behavioral health services.

-  Effective reintegration programs must remain robust across the Services, components, and geographic locations and must address challenges all families face as well as the unique challenges faced by the families of our wounded, ill, and injured.

Transition

With the change in mission and expected reduction of forces, some families will be forced to make unexpected transitions. Some may enter a world filled with uncertainties, especially in the area of employment. Those who make the military a career also face uncertainties as they perceive threats to their retirement benefits. A review of the military retirement system must be made within the context of the entire military compensation package. It should recognize the need to recruit and retain the best possible force and recognize the service of those who don't or can't make the military a career.

-  Retirement benefits must be reviewed as part of a comprehensive package, not in isolation.
-  Military families need to be prepared for any transition.
-  The Nation shall recognize the sacrifice of survivors and protect their benefits.

Bringing the troops home does not end our military's mission or the necessity to support military families. All Americans must recognize their role in helping military families, especially their children, deal with the long-term effects of more than a decade at war. The government must ensure military families have the tools to remain ready. Effective support for military families must involve a broad network of government agencies, community groups, businesses, and concerned citizens.

Our Nation must continue to fund what works to support military families, protect the most vulnerable, and, above all, value their service.

About Us

The National Military Family Association is the leading nonprofit organization committed to strengthening and protecting the families of the men and women currently serving, retired, wounded or fallen. We provide families of the Uniformed Services with information, work to get them the benefits they deserve, and offer programs to improve their lives. For more than 40 years, our service and accomplishments have made us a trusted resource for military families and the Nation's leaders. To learn more, visit www.MilitaryFamily.org.