

Word Count: 380

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Tricare Premium Program Reimbursement

For Brigadier General Andrew Collins

Good afternoon Chairman Beidle and members of the Senate

Finance Committee, my name is Brigadier General Andrew

Collins and I am here today to speak on behalf of the dedicated men

and women of the Maryland National Guard and advocate for the

cap removal of the Health Care for Heroes TRICARE premium

reimbursement program.

As a member of the National Guard, I can attest to the sacrifices that

my fellow Citizen Soldiers and Airmen make to ensure the safety

and well-being of our great state and nation. Providing our Guard

members and their families with affordable health care ensures

readiness when we are called to serve our nation or our state.

Medical readiness is a key component in our ability to provide ready

service for the mission.

Removal of the cap will have NO fiscal impact on the FY25 budget as explained in our written testimony, and I am happy to answer any questions from the Committee.

With the cap removed, service members like Staff Sgt. James Whiting, a firefighter with the Maryland Air National Guard, said he would use the extra money from his reimbursed premiums to help fund his retirement savings. For other Guard members, the extra money could go toward daycare, gas for commuting to work, groceries, or college tuition for themselves or their kids.

I know firsthand the challenges of balancing military service and civilian life. The demands of the Guard often require service members to take time away from work and their families to serve their country. It is only fitting that we provide them with the support they need, including affordable health care.

Governor Moore proclaimed 2024 as Maryland's "Year of the Military Family." Providing health care for them is an important tool for recruiting and retention of Maryland's citizen soldiers and airmen.

Please consider this critical readiness issue for Guard members to be always there when the state and nation needs them. Our citizen Soldiers and Airmen are worth the investment and I know it will make us a better state now and into the future as we can retain their incredible talent and dedication.

In conclusion, I respectfully ask the Committee for a favorable report on the Health Care for Heroes Tricare Premium Reimbursement Program.

Thank you for your time and consideration.