



Marine Corps Reserve Association
8626 Lee Highway Suite 205
Fairfax, VA 22031
Phone (703) 876-9026
www.usmcra.org

January 22, 2014

The Honorable Bernie Sanders, Chairman
Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee
412 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

On behalf of the Marine Corps Reserve Association membership, I am writing to thank you for your leadership in crafting and introducing S. 1950 the "*Veterans Health and Benefits Improvement Act of 2013*." This bipartisan legislation provides solutions to multiple situations currently being faced by our returning warriors, veterans, survivors and family members.

The Association is very appreciative that this legislation, if enacted, repeals the 1% COLA reduction created by the passing of Balanced Budget Act of 2013. In addition, this legislation addresses many of the MCRA priorities for veterans including:

- Extension of advance appropriations for all Dept of Veterans Affairs accounts
- Authorization for in-state tuition rates at any public college or university for all student veterans using the new GI Bill, regardless of where they live.
- Authorization for in-state tuition rates at public colleges for student veterans using the new GI Bill
- Honoring certain career Reserve members, eligible for reserve retirement pay
- Authorization for Iraq and Afghanistan surviving spouses to the Post-9/11 GI Bill via the "Gunnery Sgt. John D. Fry Scholarship Program".
- A two-year extension to the Veterans Training Assistance Program.
- Solve a 2+-year stalemate in VA's authority to lease facilities for health care treatment and other purposes.

These and other measures will provide a strong foundation for our nation's veterans who have already given so much. We look forward to working with you and the other Senators to ensure this legislation is adopted as soon as possible. Thank you for your leadership in protecting the interests of all our veterans wounded.

Sincerely,

Ken Hopper
Col., USMC (Ret)
President, MCRA