



# Hon. Doris O. Matsui

## Member of Congress

*Doris O. Matsui*

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### **MATSUI QUESTIONS FAILURE TO OFFER GUARD MEMBERS & RESERVISTS FULL ACCESS TO HEALTH INSURANCE**

*Washington, DC* – Congresswoman Doris O. Matsui (CA-5) issued the following statement on the floor of the House when an amendment to offer members of the National Guard and Reserves full access to TRICARE, the health care insurance provided for those in our Armed Forces, was rejected.

“Our men and women in uniform are honorably serving this nation on the ground in Iraq, Afghanistan and many other locations. But, because of our commitments, our Armed Forces are relying even more heavily than usual on our National Guard and Reserves. It is estimated that National Guard forces make up about half of the U.S. force on the ground in Iraq.

“With this in mind it is truly disappointing that an excellent amendment by Representative Taylor was not made in order under this rule. The Taylor amendment would give our Reserve and National Guard members full access to TRICARE, the health care insurance provided to those in our Armed Forces. It is simply irresponsible of us to allow the families of 20 percent of Reservists and National Guard members to go without health care benefits.

“Our Guard members and Reservists know they can be called up for more than the usual one weekend a month, but they never would have expected their one-year tours of duty to be extended well-beyond that time frame. I am concerned that the civilian leadership of the military has forced us to lean so heavily on our Reserve and National Guard personnel. But, what is done is done and now we must work with the situation we face.

“These men and women serving in the National Guard and Reserves are responding to the unexpected and now we, their government need to respond in kind – and not with a lot of platitudes. I have yet to hear a valid argument against enacting this proposal. For all that these men and women are doing, we should be able to find the \$1 billion necessary to provide them and their families with health care.

“Offering every member of the National Guard and Reserves the ability to access health care coverage is a moral issue. Our treatment of our reserve and guard members is unacceptable; the Taylor amendment began to address it. I’m truly saddened that at a time of great service and dedication on their part, we are quibbling about fully providing for our service men and women.

“The line between active and reserve personnel has already been blurred. Our Guard members and Reservists need to be focused on fulfilling their missions; they should not have worries in the back of their mind about whether their spouse or their child is getting health care back home.

“This provision – passed in full Committee - deserves debate on the House floor. I encourage my colleagues to oppose this rule which would allow this amendment to be made in order. We should honor our service members and give them the health care coverage they not only deserve but are entitled to.”

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