



News from Congressman

Tom Lantos

**12th Congressional District of California
San Mateo/San Francisco**

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FOR INFORMATION CALL

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Lantos Lambastes “Sham Legislation” Offering Minimal Support of Reservists, National Guard Calls for Passage of Bill Equalizing Pay With Their Civilian Salaries

Washington, DC – Congressman Tom Lantos (D-San Mateo, San Francisco) today called for more significant financial relief for members of the Reserves and National Guard than was offered in “sham legislation” today affecting easier access to their own retirement funds, and he urged the Congress to consider a bill closing the pay gap faced by activated Reservists and National Guard members.

Lantos said today’s bill, the Guardsmen and Reservists Financial Relief Act (H.R. 1779) was “the absolute height of hypocrisy” because it “provides the tiniest of tiny benefits” – allowing fee waivers for those Reservists and Guard members who need to withdraw funds from their retirement savings.

“Instead of considering serious and substantive Democratic proposals to help those who risk their lives for all Americans, the leadership continues to adopt grandly titled legislation which does little or nothing,” Lantos said. “At the same time the Republican leadership continues to press for the top White House domestic priority – another tax cut for the wealthiest Americans. Where is the shared sacrifice? Where is the effort to balance what all Americans are being asked to sacrifice as we fight the war on terrorism?”

Lantos is the author of the Equity for Reservists Pay Act (H.R. 1345), a bipartisan bill that will ensure that Reservists and Guard members who work as civilians for the federal government will continue to earn the equivalent of their civilian salaries, while employers in state and local governments and in the private sector would receive various incentives to do the same for their workers on active duty. Currently, 760 state government and private employers provide some form of benefit to activated employees; H.R. 1345 would ensure that the financial hardships of more soldiers and their families are lessened. Even though this bill has the backing of the National Guard Association and the Reserve Officers Association, along with 80 House members, it is bottled up in a subcommittee.

“I challenge the Republican majority in this House to take meaningful action that will truly benefit the soldiers in our Reserve and National Guard units,” Lantos said. “It is time to stop playing with sham legislation like this bill we are considering today.”

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