



**News from Congressman**

# **Tom Lantos**

**12<sup>th</sup> Congressional District of California  
San Mateo/San Francisco**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**FOR INFORMATION CALL**

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## **Deployed National Guard Members Should Be Paid What They Earn in Civilian Life, Lantos Says**

**Washington, DC** – Military and state government witnesses at a hearing today affirmed that National Guard members' families suffer serious financial setbacks when they are placed on active duty, a problem that would be alleviated with bipartisan legislation authored by Congressman Tom Lantos.

During a heated House Government Reform Committee discussion of the National Guard, Lantos said it is unacceptable that the Department of Defense allows significant discrepancies between what it pays Reservists and National Guard personnel, and what they earn in their civilian jobs.

"It's an idiotic policy, and I use the term advisedly," Lantos told Thomas F. Hall, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, who had just noted that at least one-third of activated Reservists and Guard members stand to lose thousands of dollars in earning per year while they are deployed.

In earlier testimony, Governor George Pataki of New York noted that his state pays the difference between the civilian salaries of its employees and their military pay at no detriment to the state budget. Pataki said the state's program has been successful both in assisting recruiting of National Guard and Reserve members, and in convincing them to remain in service.

"We have to be concerned about the impact on those soldiers and sailors and their families," Pataki added.

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 providing employers in state and local governments and in the private sector various incentives to do the same for their workers on active duty.

More than 700 state and local 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 84 House members, it is bottled up in a subcommittee.

At the hearing, Lantos pointed out the irony of the Bush Administration objection that his bill would create inequities between regular military pay and that of the citizen-soldiers in the National Guard and Reserves, since the Secretary of Defense and other officials have publicly applauded private sector employers that bridge the pay gap for their staff who go on active duty.

"They can't have it both ways," Lantos said. "They can't praise a company for doing exactly what my legislation is calling for while opposing the legislation. This is profoundly inconsistent."