

TRICARE PROTECTED

Washington, DC – Senator Jim Webb (D-VA) secured full protection of military health care for service members, veterans and their families when the U.S. Senate unanimously approved the ***TRICARE Affirmation Act, S. 3148***. Webb’s legislation explicitly states in law that TRICARE and Department of Defense (DOD) nonappropriated fund (NAF) health plans meet the minimum essential coverage standard for individual health insurance required by the recently enacted health care reform law.

Webb’s bipartisan legislation, which was cosponsored by 65 members of the Senate, mirrors the successful legislation of House Armed Services Committee Chairman Ike Skelton (D-MO). The bill now heads to the President’s desk to be signed into law.

“Following months of confusion surrounding military health care programs, we can now definitively tell our service members and their families today that their health care is secure,” said **Senator Webb, who serves as chairman of the Personnel Subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Armed Services**. “Thanks to the strong support of our nation’s leading military and veterans organizations, we will be able to write into law that the coverage provided by TRICARE and other military health programs meets the minimal essential coverage required under the new health care reform law.”

Continued **Webb**: “As one who grew up in the military, served as a Marine in Vietnam and spent five years in the Pentagon, I know the special obligation we have to provide our military service members, their families, and our veterans with the very finest health care coverage available. Today, we can tell them that we’ve continued to make good on that promise.”

Success of Senator Webb’s *TRICARE Affirmation Act* was received with strong praise today from numerous military service organizations, including the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), the National Association for Uniformed Services (NAUS), and the Air Force Association (AFA).

“This is a great victory for military families,” said **Thomas J. Tradewell Sr., National Commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S.** “Senator Webb is a true military champion, and along with House Armed Services Committee Chairman Ike Skelton (D-Mo.), the VFW is most grateful for their leadership to recognize and protect all military TRICARE programs under the national healthcare law.”

“We’re very grateful for Sen. Webb’s leadership in ensuring the law explicitly states that TRICARE meets coverage requirements under the new national health reform legislation,” said **VADM Norb Ryan, Jr. (US Navy-Ret), President of the Military Officers Association of America**. “MOAA accepts assurances that there was no danger of it being considered otherwise, but the lack of statutory clarity was a source of concern to many. We appreciate Sen. Webb’s initiative in establishing that clarity beyond any doubt.”

“The National Association for Uniformed Services (NAUS) congratulates Senator Webb on his success in the passage of legislation that explicitly states in law that TRICARE meets requirements under the new health care bill,” said **Major General William M. Matz, Jr. (US Army-Ret), President of NAUS**. “The men and women who serve our country in uniform deserve complete assurance that their earned health care benefits are fully protected and this legislation will do just that. On behalf of our more than 180,000 NAUS members and supporters, I thank you for your leadership to see this fundamental responsibility is fulfilled.”

“We appreciate Senator Webb’s commitment to preserving TRICARE for all those who have earned this important benefit through their patriotic service,” said **Mike Dunn, President of AFA**. “The TRICARE Affirmation Act reinforces our national commitment to care for our veterans and their families.”

TRICARE, TRICARE for Life, and the DOD nonappropriated fund (NAF) provide health coverage to members of the military and their families, military retirees and their families, and employees of U.S. military post/base exchanges and other nonappropriated fund activities. Beneficiaries of TRICARE for Life and military veterans’ health care programs also satisfy requirements for individual health insurance under the health care reform bill and will not be required to purchase additional coverage.