

Klobuchar announces Minnesota National Guard PDMRA Payment Plan

Written by

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Washington, D.C. – Today U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar announced that the Minnesota National Guard has introduced its Minnesota Payment Plan for the provision of Post Deployment & Mobilization Respite Allowance (PDMRA) benefits.

“Our Minnesota soldiers are now one step closer to receiving the benefits that they deserve,” said Klobuchar. “This news is very promising, and I will continue to work with Army and National Guard Bureau officials until every member of the Red Bulls is holding the paycheck that they earned.”

Minnesota soldiers seeking more information on eligibility should visit www.MinnesotaNationalGuard.org and click on the PDMRA special feature. Klobuchar’s staff is also available to answer questions on this issue and can be reached at 612-727-5220.

Klobuchar, along with Minnesota Representatives John Kline, Tim Walz, and others, has repeatedly taken action to rectify the situation. On February 12, the Army issued a memorandum outlining the procedures for the National Guard Bureau and the Chief of Army Reserve to begin implementation of the benefit program. The National Guard Bureau followed-up February 17 by releasing a memorandum outlining the procedures for States to submit personnel information required for the reimbursement process. The Department of the Army expects that the majority of claims will be paid by March 15 to 19.

In 2008, Klobuchar introduced legislation with Senators Ron Wyden and Chuck Grassley to require the military to provide these troops the benefits they are due. Klobuchar also supported an amendment to the Fiscal Year 2009 National Defense Authorization Act and sent a letter to the House and Senate Armed Services Committees urging them to include language addressing the PDMRA implementation in the Defense Authorization bill. In 2009, Klobuchar worked to address the situation by introducing amendments to the DOD Appropriations bill as well as through the Authorization process.

On February 5, Klobuchar sent a letter to Defense Secretary Robert Gates urging him to take immediate action to expedite implementation of these benefits. She also raised this issue with Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen who was well aware of the distinguished service of the Minnesota National Guard ‘Red Bulls’ in Iraq.

The Department of Defense (DOD) established the PDMRA program in January 2007 to provide benefits to service members deployed beyond established DOD rotation cycles. However, the delay between the announcement of the program by the DOD and the implementation of the program by the individual services has prevented thousands of these troops from receiving the Respite Leave benefits they earned almost three years ago. This problem has affected over 22,000 Army National Guard members nationwide.

The Minnesota National Guard currently has a list of 2,132 Minnesota troops owed approximately \$12,600,000 for 63,070 days of service. The national stats they have are 13,853 national troops owed approximately \$60,305,000 for 301,528 days of service.