



U.S. Congressman
Nick Rahall
WORKING FOR WEST VIRGINIANS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RAHALL INTRODUCES BILL TO PROTECT RESERVE FORCES IN PERSIAN GULF

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall (D-WV) today introduced legislation that will protect our American reservists serving in the Persian Gulf. His bill would see to it that Reservists serving in the Persian Gulf are entitled to the same VA-Guaranteed Home Loans that wartime veterans and peacetime servicemen are eligible for.

"The reservists of our Armed Forces are in a peculiar situation," said Rahall. "They are serving their country, showing the highest degree of honor and duty, and they find themselves falling into neither category which would entitle them to VA-Guaranteed Home Loans. They are not peacetime servicemen nor are they war veterans since war has not been declared in the Persian Gulf. Yet there they are, risking their lives for God and country. This bill is for them."

Rahall's bill, H.R. 5896, simply changes the United States code by designating the term "veteran" to also include "an individual who was, before August 2, 1990, serving as a member of the Selected Reserve, and after such date served on active duty in the Persian Gulf area in connection with Operation Desert Shield."

"My bill is quite simple," stated Rahall. "It lets American reservists know that we understand. Many of our troops have been there for some time already, and as far as we know, could be there for a prolonged period. Their lives already have been and will continue to be disrupted. This bill will give these service members a chance to achieve stability for themselves and their families upon their return to America."

"With all the problems we are having with the budget and with our domestic agenda, we still should not lose sight of the fact that our fighting men and women are over in the desert giving themselves unselfishly for America," said Rahall. "This is one way that we can show our troops in the Middle East that they are not forgotten, and that we understand their need for stability when they return home."

Rahall concluded: "The United States is only now moving toward fair compensation for our Vietnam veterans for exposure to agent orange. We must not make the same mistake, we should take care of our reservists before they come home asking for our help. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and support the only kind of foreign aid I believe in: aid to our boys overseas."

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"favorable conditions"

STATEMENT OF HONORABLE NICK J. RAHALL, II (D-WV)
OCTOBER 22, 1990
ACCESS TO VETERANS HOUSING PROGRAM FOR DESERT SHIELD RESERVES

Mr. Chairman, today I have introduced a bill which will make members of the Selected Reserve who served in Operation Desert shield in the Persian Gulf eligible for the Department of Veterans Affairs home loan program. While our young men and women serving in the Gulf continue to face this explosive situation with courage and perseverance, we must show them that their service will not go unrecognized here in America.

My bill is quite simple. It says to American reservists serving in the Gulf, "we understand." Many of our troops have been there for some time already, and as far as we know, could be there for a prolonged period. Their lives already have been and will continue to be disrupted. This bill will give these service-members a chance to achieve stability for themselves and their families upon their return to America.

Over the past two months, I have seen countless news reports containing messages from our troops in the desert to their loved ones who remain here in safety. I have seen young men and women who have displayed absolute devotion to America despite this unexpected call to duty. All I want to do is assure these soldiers that they do not have to give up their plans for the future, regardless of the upheaval in their lives. When they return, they will be able to purchase a home under the existing VA program. This is not a reward for their bravery, for although there can be no doubt of their courage, there can be no reward equal to their service. This is one way that we in Congress can show our troops in the Middle East that they are not forgotten, and

that we understand their need for stability when they return home.

The United States is only now moving toward fair compensation for our Vietnam veterans for such issues as exposure to agent orange. We must not make the same mistake this time. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation and those who need our support now more than ever.