

## **Braley Provision to Fix Troop Pay Problem Becomes Law**

Written by Amanda Crawford  
Wednesday, 28 October 2009 13:21

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*Bill signed by Obama allows Pentagon to provide benefits to Iowa National Guard troops*

**Washington, DC** – Rep. Bruce Braley (D-Iowa) today applauded President Obama’s signing of his Guaranteed Benefits for Our Troops Act (HR 1222) into law. The Act was included in the final FY2010 National Defense Authorization Act.

Braley’s fix will ensure that hundreds of Iowa National Guard members are provided benefits they were promised under the Department of Defense’s Post-Deployment/Mobilization Respite Absence (PDMRA) program, commonly known as “Respite Leave.” Over 20,000 Army National Guard members across the country – including almost 800 members of the Iowa National Guard – did not receive benefits they earned due to delay between the announcement of the leave program by the Department of Defense and the implementation of the program by the individual services.

“As the Iowa National Guard prepares to send over 3,000 troops to Afghanistan in the largest single unit call-up since World War II, it is critical that troops receive the benefits they have earned and deserve,” Braley said. “That’s why I’m thrilled that President Obama signed this important legislation into law today. Now that the Guaranteed Benefits for Our Troops Act has finally been enacted into law, I’ll be working to ensure that the Pentagon provides these benefits to National Guard troops in Iowa and across the country immediately.”

Respite Leave was designed to provide service members deployed to places like Iraq and Afghanistan for longer than established rotation cycles additional help to reintegrate back to civilian life, as well as to improve the retention of service members who had experienced

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especially long tours of duty.

Once the Respite Leave program was announced, however, there were significant delays before its implementation. The Department of the Army, for example, didn't issue its corresponding policy for implementing Respite Leave until more than six months after the Pentagon's January 2007 announcement of the program.

Because of this gap, thousands of soldiers from the Army National Guard did not receive proper Respite Leave compensation.

Braley first introduced the Guaranteed Benefits for Our Troops Act in July 2008. The bill will allow the Pentagon to retroactively grant up to \$200 per day to affected troops.

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