

News From _____

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**BYRD, ROCKEFELLER “DEEPLY DISAPPOINTED”
BY OBSTRUCTION OF MEASURE TO INCREASE REST
TIME FOR COMBAT TROOPS**

Byrd, Rockefeller Vow to Continue Fight to Give Troops Needed Break and Time with Families Between Deployments

WASHINGTON, D.C... U.S. Senators Robert C. Byrd and Jay Rockefeller, both D-W.Va., expressed their deep disappointment today that a minority of Senators blocked an effort to give our troops well-deserved rest time between combat deployments. The measure, which Byrd and Rockefeller co-sponsored, required sixty votes to move forward under Senate rules. Forty-four Senators refused to allow a vote on the proposal, which would have required that troops receive at least as much time at home as they spend deployed in Iraq or Afghanistan. The measure was proposed as an amendment to the Department of Defense Authorization bill, which is currently before the Senate.

“I am extremely disappointed that a minority of Senators are blocking consideration of this vital proposal. This measure is right for our troops and in the best interests of our national security,” said Byrd. “Our servicemen and women have made enormous sacrifices on our behalf. They need and deserve more rest time in between deployments overseas to care for their children and spend time with loved ones. The current length of deployments is unsustainable. It is burning out our ground forces, undermining readiness and morale, and weakening our nation’s security. I will continue to fight to ensure that our troops and their families get the rest time they have earned.”

“West Virginia’s National Guard and Reservists are doing incredible work in Iraq and Afghanistan. But the reality is that even when they return home to West Virginia, homeland security missions and training for natural disasters keep them away from their families and their careers. The Webb Amendment was both pro-military and pro-family, and would have gone a long way to improving readiness and morale on both the front lines and the home front,” Rockefeller said. “Our soldiers deserve to spend as much time with their families as they can before they’re sent back into harm’s way – and a majority of the Senate agrees. I’m hopeful that we’ll be able to address this issue again during conference committee negotiations on the legislation.”

The amendment, authored by Senator Jim Webb, D-Virginia, a decorated Vietnam veteran, required that active units receive at least as much time at home as time deployed overseas. The historic policy and current goal of the Defense Department is a two-to-one ratio of time at home vs. time deployed.

Extended deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan have negatively impacted the readiness of Army and Marine Corps units. As a result, our military's ability to respond to threats or crises around the world has been severely undermined.

“If we are not better stewards of our troops and their families in the future than we have been in the recent past, MOAA believes strongly that we will be putting the all-volunteer force at unacceptable military risk,” said Vice Admiral Norbert R. Ryan, Jr, USN (Ret.), president of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA).

The Amendment includes a waiver in event of an operational emergency posing a vital threat to U.S. national security interests. The President may waive the amendment's limitations by certifying to Congress that the deployment of the unit or member is necessary.

Supporters of the Amendment Include:

Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) and its 368,000 members
National Military Families Association
Veterans for America
VoteVets.org
Major General Robert B. Newman Jr., the Adjutant General of Virginia

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