May 16, 2017

The Honorable Orrin Hatch
United States Senate
104 Hart Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Hatch:

On behalf of the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States which represents the interests of over 400,000 enlisted men and women of the Army and Air National Guard, we endorse S. 1086 to remove the prohibition on eligibility for TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS) of Reserve Component (RC) servicemembers who are eligible to enroll in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Plan (FEHBP).

Expanding TRS coverage to this constituency would provide a continuity of care to the servicemember and family members before, during, and after deployments. Currently, anyone enrolled in a commercial health care plan must enroll in TRICARE during a deployment. Leaving one provider for another often causes a disruption in coverage and forces families to find new doctors during a particularly stressful transition period.

TRS is a more affordable option for RC servicemembers compared to FEHBP plans. For example, the widely utilized Blue Cross Blue Shield Basic Option costs $154.32 per month for self only and $376.12 per month for self and family in calendar year 2017. TRS coverage during calendar year 2016 cost $47.90 per month or self only coverage and $210.83 per month for member and family coverage.

Furthermore, a recent Congressional Budget Office score of S. 1086 estimates that removing the prohibition on eligibility for TRS of RC servicemembers who are eligible to enroll in FEHBP would actually save the Federal Government money.

Thank you for your hard work to support the active and reserve components, Veterans, and family members. EANGUS stands ready to work with you and your staff to make sure this important, timely bill is signed into law.

Sincerely,

Frank Yoakum, Sergeant Major, US Army (retired)
Executive Director, EANGUS