

106TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 2966

To restore health care coverage to retired members of the uniformed services.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 28, 1999

Mr. SHOWS (for himself and Mr. NORWOOD) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Government Reform, and in addition to the Committee on Armed Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

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## A BILL

To restore health care coverage to retired members of the uniformed services.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Keep Our Promise to  
5 America’s Military Retirees Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) No statutory health care program existed  
9 for members of the uniformed services who entered

1 service prior to June 7, 1956, and retired after serv-  
2 ing a minimum of 20 years or by reason of a service-  
3 connected disability.

4 (2) Recruiters for the uniformed services are  
5 agents of the United States government and em-  
6 ployed recruiting tactics that allowed members who  
7 entered the uniformed services prior to June 7,  
8 1956, to believe they would be entitled to fully-paid  
9 lifetime health care upon retirement.

10 (3) Statutes enacted in 1956 entitled those who  
11 entered service on or after June 7, 1956, and retired  
12 after serving a minimum of 20 years or by reason  
13 of a service-connected disability, to medical and den-  
14 tal care in any facility of the uniformed services,  
15 subject to the availability of space and facilities and  
16 the capabilities of the medical and dental staff.

17 (4) After 4 rounds of base closures between  
18 1988 and 1995 and further drawdowns of remaining  
19 military medical treatment facilities, access to  
20 “space available” health care in a military medical  
21 treatment facility is virtually nonexistent for many  
22 military retirees.

23 (5) The military health care benefit of “space  
24 available” services and Medicare is no longer a fair

1 and equitable benefit as compared to benefits for  
2 other retired Federal employees.

3 (6) The failure to provide adequate health care  
4 upon retirement is preventing the retired members  
5 of the uniformed services from recommending, with-  
6 out reservation, that young men and women make a  
7 career of any military service.

8 (7) The United States should establish health  
9 care that is fully paid by the sponsoring agency  
10 under the Federal Employees Health Benefits pro-  
11 gram for members who entered active duty on or  
12 prior to June 7, 1956, and who subsequently earned  
13 retirement.

14 (8) The United States should reestablish ade-  
15 quate health care for all retired members of the uni-  
16 formed services that is at least equivalent to that  
17 provided to other retired Federal employees by ex-  
18 tending to such retired members of the uniformed  
19 services the option of coverage under the Federal  
20 Employees Health Benefits program, the Civilian  
21 Health and Medical Program of the uniformed serv-  
22 ices, or the TRICARE Program.

1 **SEC. 3. COVERAGE OF MILITARY RETIREES UNDER THE**  
2 **FEDERAL EMPLOYEES HEALTH BENEFITS**  
3 **PROGRAM.**

4 (a) EARNED COVERAGE FOR CERTAIN RETIREES  
5 AND DEPENDENTS.—Chapter 89 of title 5, United States  
6 Code, is amended—

7 (1) in section 8905, by adding at the end the  
8 following new subsection:

9 “(h) For purposes of this section, the term ‘employee’  
10 includes a retired member of the uniformed services (as  
11 defined in section 101(5) of title 10) who began service  
12 before June 7, 1956. A surviving widow or widower of  
13 such a retired member may also enroll in an approved  
14 health benefits plan described by section 8903 or 8903a  
15 of this title as an individual.”; and

16 (2) in section 8906(b)—

17 (A) in paragraph (1), by striking “para-  
18 graphs (2) and (3)” and inserting “paragraphs  
19 (2) through (5)”;

20 (B) by adding at the end the following new  
21 paragraph:

22 “(5) In the case of an employee described in section  
23 8905(h), the Government contribution for health benefits  
24 for such employee shall be 100 percent, payable by the  
25 department in which the employee is serving.”.

1 (b) COVERAGE FOR OTHER RETIREES AND DEPEND-  
2 ENTS.—(1) Section 1108 of title 10, United States Code,  
3 is amended to read as follows:

4 **“§ 1108. Health care coverage through Federal Em-**  
5 **ployees Health Benefits program**

6 “(a) FEHBP OPTION.—The Secretary of Defense,  
7 after consulting with the other administering Secretaries,  
8 shall enter into an agreement with the Office of Personnel  
9 Management to provide coverage to eligible beneficiaries  
10 described in subsection (b) under the health benefits plans  
11 offered through the Federal Employees Health Benefits  
12 program under chapter 89 of title 5.

13 “(b) ELIGIBLE BENEFICIARIES; COVERAGE.—(1) An  
14 eligible beneficiary under this subsection is—

15 “(A) a member or former member of the uni-  
16 formed services described in section 1074(b) of this  
17 title who is entitled to hospital insurance benefits  
18 under part A of title XVIII of the Social Security  
19 Act (42 U.S.C. 1395c et seq.);

20 “(B) an individual who is an unremarried  
21 former spouse of a member or former member de-  
22 scribed in section 1072(2)(F) or 1072(2)(G));

23 “(C) an individual who is—

24 “(i) a dependent of a deceased member or  
25 former member described in section 1076(b) or

1           1076(a)(2)(B) of this title or of a member who  
2           died while on active duty for a period of more  
3           than 30 days; and

4           “(ii) a member of family as defined in sec-  
5           tion 8901(5) of title 5; or

6           “(D) an individual who is—

7           “(i) a dependent of a living member or  
8           former member described in section 1076(b)(1)  
9           of this title who is entitled to hospital insurance  
10          benefits under part A of title XVIII of the So-  
11          cial Security Act, regardless of the member’s or  
12          former member’s eligibility for such hospital in-  
13          surance benefits; and

14          “(ii) a member of family as defined in sec-  
15          tion 8901(5) of title 5.

16          “(2) Eligible beneficiaries may enroll in a Federal  
17          Employees Health Benefit plan under chapter 89 of title  
18          5 under this section for self-only coverage or for self and  
19          family coverage which includes any dependent of the mem-  
20          ber or former member who is a family member for pur-  
21          poses of such chapter.

22          “(3) A person eligible for coverage under this sub-  
23          section shall not be required to satisfy any eligibility cri-  
24          teria specified in chapter 89 of title 5 (except as provided  
25          in paragraph (1)(C) or (1)(D)) as a condition for enroll-

1 ment in health benefits plans offered through the Federal  
2 Employees Health Benefits program under this section.

3 “(4) For purposes of determining whether an indi-  
4 vidual is a member of family under paragraph (5) of sec-  
5 tion 8901 of title 5 for purposes of paragraph (1)(C) or  
6 (1)(D), a member or former member described in section  
7 1076(b) or 1076(a)(2)(B) of this title shall be deemed to  
8 be an employee under such section.

9 “(5) An eligible beneficiary who is eligible to enroll  
10 in the Federal Employees Health Benefits program as an  
11 employee under chapter 89 of title 5 is not eligible to en-  
12 roll in a Federal Employees Health Benefits plan under  
13 this section.

14 “(6) An eligible beneficiary who enrolls in the Federal  
15 Employees Health Benefits program under this section  
16 shall not be eligible to receive health care under section  
17 1086 or section 1097. Such a beneficiary may continue  
18 to receive health care in a military medical treatment facil-  
19 ity, in which case the treatment facility shall be reim-  
20 bursed by the Federal Employees Health Benefits pro-  
21 gram for health care services or drugs received by the ben-  
22 eficiary.

23 “(c) CHANGE OF HEALTH BENEFITS PLAN.—An eli-  
24 gible beneficiary enrolled in a Federal Employees Health  
25 Benefits plan under this section may change health bene-

1 fits plans and coverage in the same manner as any other  
2 Federal Employees Health Benefits program beneficiary  
3 may change such plans.

4 “(d) GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTIONS.—The applica-  
5 ble administering Secretary shall be responsible for the  
6 Government contribution for an eligible beneficiary who  
7 enrolls in a health benefits plan under chapter 89 of title  
8 5 in accordance with this section, except that the amount  
9 of the contribution may not exceed the amount of the Gov-  
10 ernment contribution which would be payable if the elect-  
11 ing beneficiary were an employee (as defined for purposes  
12 of such chapter) enrolled in the same health benefits plan  
13 and level of benefits.”.

14 (2) The item relating to section 1108 at the begin-  
15 ning of such chapter is amended to read as follows:

“1108. Health care coverage through Federal Employees Health Benefits pro-  
gram.”.

16 (3) The amendments made by this subsection shall  
17 take effect on January 1, 2001.

18 **SEC. 4. EXTENSION OF COVERAGE OF CIVILIAN HEALTH**  
19 **AND MEDICAL PROGRAM OF THE UNI-**  
20 **FORMED SERVICES.**

21 Section 1086 of title 10, United States Code, is  
22 amended—

1           (1) in subsection (c), by striking “Except as  
2           provided in subsection (d), the”, and inserting  
3           “The”;

4           (2) by striking subsection (d); and

5           (3) by redesignating subsections (e) through (h)  
6           as subsections (d) through (g), respectively.

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