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FOR IMMEDATE RELEASE

American Legion fights TRICARE increases

Commander says troops, military retirees and their families should not be targeted in new efforts to cut federal costs.

WASHINGTON (Nov. 19, 2013) – The leader of The American Legion says he strongly opposes White House pressures to raise the cost of TRICARE coverage for some military retirees. TRICARE is the Department of Defense's health-care insurance program for uniformed servicemembers, military retirees and their family members.

As Military.com writer Richard Sisk reports, the White House, as part of 2014 defense budget discussions, is urging the Pentagon to slow the growth of TRICARE costs by phasing in an increase in the TRICARE Prime plan's current enrollment fee for working age retirees as well as raising co-pays for military retirees under the age of 65.

"We have been down this road before," said Daniel M. Dellinger, national commander of the 2.4 million member American Legion. "So, we must again strongly reiterate our opposition to TRICARE fee increases or the imposition of new fees for military retirees, regardless of their age. While we appreciate fiscal realities and acknowledge White House and Pentagon concerns about what they term 'spiraling personnel costs,' we remain steadfast in our belief that economies should not be made at the expense of those who have already sacrificed much for our country."

During their latest national convention, leaders of The American Legion adopted a resolution http://archive.legion.org/bitstream/handle/123456789/2110/2012N024.pdf?sequence=1 opposing an earlier move to raise military health-care insurance fees and premiums. The resolution read, in part: "The American Legion sees this proposal as an erosion of quality of life earned benefits from a grateful nation for honorable military service; now, therefore, be it resolved…that The American Legion is strongly opposed to proposed hikes in premiums and or enrollment fees being paid by enrollees in the military's health insurance program known as TRICARE."

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