



PERSONNEL AND  
READINESS

UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000



DEC 3 2007

The Honorable Ike Skelton  
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-6035

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The attached report is submitted as required by the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007, Section 675(f). The legislation directed the Secretary of Defense to carry out a joint family support assistance program for families of members of the Armed Forces and to submit a report setting forth an implementation plan for the program.

Sincerely,

David S. C. Chu

Attachment:  
As stated

cc:  
The Honorable Duncan Hunter  
Ranking Member





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DEC 3 2007

The Honorable Carl Levin  
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510-6050

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The attached report is submitted as required by the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007, Section 675(f). The legislation directed the Secretary of Defense to carry out a joint family support assistance program for families of members of the Armed Forces and to submit a report setting forth an implementation plan for the program.

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The Honorable John McCain  
Ranking Member





*Department of Defense*

**Report to Congress**  
**on**  
**The Joint Family**  
**Assistance Program**

## JOINT FAMILY SUPPORT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

### **Background:**

Section 675 of the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007 directed the Secretary of Defense to carry out a joint family support assistance program (JFSAP) for families of members of the Armed Forces. Section 675(f) tasked the Secretary to "submit to the congressional defense committees a report setting forth a plan for the implementation of the program." This report responds to that requirement and sets forth the implementation plan for the JFSAP.

Section 675 required the JFSAP to provide families of members of the Armed Forces the following types of assistance:

- (1) Financial and material assistance
- (2) Mobile support services
- (3) Sponsorship of volunteers and family support professionals for the delivery of support services
- (4) Coordination of family assistance programs and activities provided by Military OneSource, Military Family Life Consultants, counselors, the Department of Defense, other Federal agencies, State and local agencies, and non-profit entities
- (5) Facilitation of discussion on military family assistance programs, activities, and initiatives between and among the organizations, agencies, and entities referred to in paragraph (4)
- (6) Such other assistance that the Secretary considers appropriate

The law required the Department of Defense to establish the JFSAP in not more than six areas of the United States, of which up to three of the areas are geographically isolated from military installations. It authorized the use of non-Government volunteers and non-profit entities under the program. The law specified that the JSFAP is not intended to operate in lieu of existing family support centers, but is instead intended to augment their activities.

### **Introduction:**

The Department of Defense recognizes that providing families access to high quality family assistance programs is a workforce issue with a direct impact on mission readiness. Military members must balance the competing demands of military service with those of their families. The Guard and Reserves are experiencing significantly increased mobilization as a result of the Global War on Terrorism, and families who previously had limited exposure to the demands

resulting from separations due to military deployments, now must deal with the likelihood of longer and often multiple deployments of the Service member.

**Challenges:**

Active duty Service members and their families who live on or near a military installation have access to a comprehensive range of well-established family support programs and systems on the installation that supplement those provided by the surrounding civilian community. However, family members who do not live near an installation, and members of the Guard and Reserve and their family members, often have fewer programs and systems of support available to them and may be unaware of support programs they can access when the Service member is deployed or activated from the Guard or Reserve.

Family members who do not live near a military installation have ongoing challenges in establishing strong links with the Service member's military unit. Because contact with a military community is limited, many Guard and Reserve families do not identify themselves as “military” families.

Guard and Reserve members and families are especially geographically dispersed and do not generally receive services from an active installation. Service members in the Guard and Reserve frequently train in a state different from the one in which they live, further increasing the likelihood of a disconnection between their military unit and their family. Their support systems embedded in the community may be sufficient until the Service member is mobilized or deployed. Many of these families are unprepared for mobilization, do not know about the resources available to them, and do not seek services until a crisis arises.

Although the Department of Defense, other Federal agencies, State and local agencies, and non-profit entities have implemented many programs to respond to the needs of Active Duty and Guard and Reserve members and their families, the programs and services need to be integrated into a well-defined and well-publicized system of support available throughout the deployment cycle so that such families can and will access them.

The Department launched a pilot project, using Minnesota as the model of success in providing integrated programs and services for family members of the National Guard through the "Beyond the Yellow Ribbon" reintegration support program. Originally, six states (Arkansas, Hawaii, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Ohio, and Oregon) were earmarked for this pilot, but response was overwhelmingly positive and an additional nine states requested to be included. The integrated pilot program is broader than family support and includes medical evaluations, Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve, and transition assistance during reintegration.

**JFSAP Mission:**

To provide mobile, high quality, effective, and efficient family assistance and services to augment current Family Programs staffing levels in order to meet the needs of family members of Active Duty, Guard and Reserve Component members, specifically targeting family members who are geographically dispersed from a military installation.

**Goals:**

- Create a "high-tech, high touch" Web-enabled integrated community to connect military families with each other and with supportive resources 24/7 regardless of where families are located. Give family members a voice through technology that can cut across geographic barriers.
- Augment the activities of Active Duty and National Guard and Reserve family support centers and/or programs.
- Provide outreach to families through mobile support services and delivery systems.
- Improve coordination of military family assistance programs, activities, and initiatives provided by the Department of Defense (active and Guard and Reserve) and other Federal, state, and local agencies, volunteers, and non-profit entities.
- Integrate services and programs into a comprehensive delivery system to enhance and sustain community capacity to respond to the needs of members and families wherever they are located, at all stages of the deployment cycle.
- Increase awareness of military members and their families about existing family assistance services and programs by developing and enhancing communication vehicles and channels (e.g., Web sites, newsletters, toll-free numbers, resource manuals, print and electronic media).
- Ensure information about community resources is relevant, timely, accurate, comprehensive and accessible and presented in ways that will appeal to families.
- Inform command leadership and service-providers about the range of available programs and services and how active and Guard and Reserve Service members and their family members can access them.
- Sponsor volunteers and family support professionals in the delivery of support services.

**Implementation Model:**

- The Department of Defense will establish JFSAPs in fifteen states.

- Each JFSAP will include a Military Family Life Consultant; a Child and Youth Specialist; and a Military OneSource Specialist.
- The JFSAP staff will provide services to families of members of all Military Components, Active Duty, Guard, and Reserves.
  - The JFSAP will augment existing resources and provide outreach and support services to members and families through all stages of a deployment cycle. The staff will travel throughout the area to meet with families and unit family support staff to assess needs and provide or arrange for family support services including counseling, child care and youth services, financial education and counseling, and information and referral.
- The JFSAP staff will partner with and augment activities of Service Family Centers, Guard and Reserve family programs, existing state and community resources and committees that provide and/or integrate resources for families of members of all Military Components to:
  - Identify family needs;
  - Catalogue existing family programs and supports; determine how well those efforts are meeting family needs;
  - Identify problems and/or gaps in service;
  - Determine methods to fill the gaps and enhance existing support systems' efforts; and
  - Integrate resources into a comprehensive, mobile service delivery system.
  - Consult with and train military commands, service providers, and community groups as requested on the impact of deployment on families and children.
  - Sponsor and train volunteers and family support professionals.
- The JFSAP will tap into military installations' resources if located within a 50 mile radius. The military Services' family programs will provide consultation and support to the JFSAP.

**JFSAP Services: Unit Commanders, individual Service members or spouses may request the following services:**

- **Counseling**
  - JFSAP staff will assess needs for and provide or arrange for face-to-face short-term, solution-focused counseling services to individuals, couples, families, and groups for situations resulting from commonly occurring life circumstances such as relationship conflicts, personal loss, crisis, and deployments.
- **Education and Training**
  - JFSAP staff will provide education and training to military members and their families to help them understand the impacts of stress,

deployments, family reunions following deployments and the stresses of the military lifestyle. The educational goal is to teach Service members and their families how to anticipate and to deal with problems such as deployment stress, how to recognize the signs of more serious issues, and when to obtain medical assistance.

- **Integration of Local and Community Resources via Military OneSource (1-800-342-9647 and [www.militaryonesource.com](http://www.militaryonesource.com))**
  - A Military OneSource specialist located at each JFSAP will become a regional expert on the resources available in the states and communities where members and their families reside. The specialist will identify and catalogue resources available to Active Duty, Guard and Reserve members and families and publish the information in both electronic & print media. The information will be accessible to commands, service providers, and members and families.
  - The Military OneSource specialist will develop a communication network for each JFSAP to link dispersed families to each other either within or across states, e.g., webinars.
- **Financial and Material Assistance**
  - A trained financial counselor can be requested to provide or arrange for personal and family financial management education, information services, and assistance through the JFSAP to assist members and families with personal financial readiness, credit and budget counseling.
- **Child Care and Youth Programs**
  - The Department of Defense provides child care and youth programs that address the needs of Active Duty and Guard and Reserve members and their families. The Department of Defense has expanded delivery systems both on and off installations through partnerships. The JFSAP will continue to support this effort in the areas where they are located.
  - The JSFAP will tap into available local resources and in coordination with existing child and youth programs will:
    - Explore funding sources for programs that “buy-down” the cost of high quality child care through existing child development programs in the local community.
    - Expand existing partnerships with national youth organizations to bridge the gap between needs and current delivery of programs and services.

- Explore new partnerships with private foundations, non-governmental organizations, school systems, and other state and federal entities to develop innovative approaches to coordination and delivery of services.
  - Expand weekend and short-term programs and services that support retention, mission readiness, and respite for families who stay behind.
- **Enhance and Sustain Community Capacity:**
    - The JFSAP will integrate family assistance programs and activities provided by Military OneSource, Military Family Life Consultants, counselors, the Department of Defense, other Federal agencies, State and local agencies, non-profit entities, and volunteers into a comprehensive, sustainable system of support for military families.

**Summary:**

The success of this pilot project is already being demonstrated with strong support by six key states. An additional nine states have expressed interest in being included in the pilot project: Alabama, California, Colorado, Florida, Indiana, Nebraska, Tennessee, Texas and West Virginia. Implementation is underway. DoD is encouraged by the intense interest in the pilot project.

## H. R. 5122

*“John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007”*.

**DIVISION A—DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AUTHORIZATIONS**  
**TITLE VI—COMPENSATION AND OTHER PERSONNEL BENEFITS**  
**Subtitle F—Other Matters**

### **SEC. 675. JOINT FAMILY SUPPORT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.**

(a) PROGRAM REQUIRED.—The Secretary of Defense shall carry out a joint family support assistance program for the purpose of providing to families of members of the Armed Forces the following types of assistance:

- (1) Financial and material assistance.
- (2) Mobile support services.
- (3) Sponsorship of volunteers and family support professionals for the delivery of support services.
- (4) Coordination of family assistance programs and activities provided by Military OneSource, Military Family Life Consultants, counselors, the Department of Defense, other Federal agencies, State and local agencies, and non-profit entities.
- (5) Facilitation of discussion on military family assistance programs, activities, and initiatives between and among the organizations, agencies, and entities referred to in paragraph (4).
- (6) Such other assistance that the Secretary considers appropriate.

(b) LOCATIONS.—The Secretary of Defense shall carry out the program in not more than six areas of the United States selected by the Secretary. Up to three of the areas selected for the program shall be areas that are geographically isolated from military installations.

(c) RESOURCES AND VOLUNTEERS.—The Secretary of Defense shall provide personnel and other resources of the Department of Defense necessary for the implementation and operation of the program and may accept and utilize the services of non-Government volunteers and non-profit entities under the program.

(d) PROCEDURES.—The Secretary of Defense shall establish procedures for the operation of the program and for the provision of assistance to families of members of the Armed Forces under the program.

(e) RELATION TO FAMILY SUPPORT CENTERS.—The program is not intended to operate in lieu of existing family support centers, but is instead intended to augment the activities of the family support centers.

(f) IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.—

(1) PLAN REQUIRED.—Not later than 90 days after the date on which funds are first obligated for the program, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the congressional defense committees a report setting forth a plan for the implementation of the program.

(2) ELEMENTS.—The plan required under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) A description of the actions taken to select the areas in which the program will be conducted.

(B) A description of the procedures established under subsection (d).

(C) A review of proposed actions to be taken under the program to improve coordination of family assistance program and activities between and among the Department of Defense, other Federal agencies, State and local agencies, and non-profit entities.

(g) REPORT.—

(1) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than 270 days after the date on which funds are first obligated for the program, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the congressional defense committees a report on the program.

(2) ELEMENTS.—The report shall include the following:

(A) A description of the program, including the areas in which the program is conducted, the procedures established under subsection (d) for operation of the program, and the assistance provided through the program for families of members of the Armed Forces.

(B) An assessment of the effectiveness of the program in providing assistance to families of members of the Armed Forces.

(C) An assessment of the advisability of extending the program or making it permanent.

(h) DURATION.—The authority to carry out the program shall expire at the end of the three-year period beginning on the date on which funds are first obligated for the program.