

Tricare Correspondence From Senator Lieberman

Thank you for contacting me regarding rumored cuts in benefit programs for military retirees, including TRICARE for Life. Currently, a wealth of false and misleading information is being distributed on this matter; and I welcome the opportunity to explain the source of the confusion.

I am aware of several chain emails, online discussion boards, blogs, and even articles in well-intentioned veterans' publications that imply that President Obama and Congress plan on eliminating TRICARE for Life. The insinuations put forth by these sources are false.

The source of these stories is a report issued by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), entitled Budget Options Volume 1: Health Care, released in December 2008. Before jumping to conclusions about the report itself, however, it is important to know exactly what the CBO is. CBO is a nonpartisan federal agency, tasked with providing Congress with cost estimates for the many legislative proposals considered each year. It also periodically offers Congress suggestions for adjusting federal spending. CBO is an information gathering body for Members of Congress. Its recommendations about the budget are completely non binding; and its officers do not draft actual policy, legislation, or law.

The Budget Options report in question offers a total of 115 options for reducing (or, in some cases, increasing) federal spending on health care, only three of which relate to TRICARE. These options are merely suggestions, not policy statements or actual legislation. Reports such as this one are routine, and very few options or recommendations made by CBO are typically acted upon. President Obama has not indicated support for the three recommendations in this report related to TRICARE, nor has any Member of Congress, to the best of my knowledge. Any suggestion that the Administration is affiliated with this report ignores the fact that it was drafted by the CBO - which, again, is an advisory body of the legislative branch, not the executive branch.

You may also be interested to know that both the Reserve Officers Association (ROA) and the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) have issued statements condemning the aforementioned rumors that are being perpetuated through these chain emails.

I hope that you have found this letter informative, and I encourage you to share this information with members of your community who are concerned about issues relating to military retirees. As a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, please be assured of my continued commitment to protecting the various interests of all those who have fought tirelessly to protect our cherished freedoms.

Thank you again for sharing your views and concerns with me. I hope you will continue to visit my website at <http://lieberman.senate.gov> for updated news about my work on behalf of Connecticut and the nation. Please contact me if you have any additional questions or comments about our work in Congress.

Sincerely,

Joseph I. Lieberman
UNITED STATES SENATOR