

Hon. Thomas E. Petri
Petri-Kind Fair Military Leave Amendment (Petri #46) and
Petri-Johnson Direct Solar Amendment (Petri #111)

H.R. 4310 - National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013
Rules Committee
May 16, 2012

Mr. Chairman, Rep. Slaughter, and Members of the Committee:

I request that you make in order Petri amendment #46, to be offered with Rep. Ron Kind, as well as Petri amendment #111, to be offered with Rep. Hank Johnson.

The Petri-Kind amendment would correct a government error and end the bureaucratic impediments keeping the Defense Department from giving National Guardsmen the pay they have earned through the Post Deployment Mobilization Respite Absence program. Specifically, the amendment would authorize the military to pay soldiers for the vacation days they were unable to take after their last deployment due to government error.

In 2007, the Post Deployment Mobilization Respite Absence (PDMRA) program was established to provide additional earned vacation days for troops serving multiple deployments. Unfortunately, the military did not issue the guidelines for calculating this benefit until several months after it went into effect. Soldiers demobilizing during this time did not have these additional days added to their leave. Now, many of them have since retired or are not deploying again and are unable to use their earned vacation days.

A provision in the 2010 NDAA authorized payments to soldiers to compensate them for the leave they were unable to take when they returned home. This provision became law in October 2009 and authorized payment for one year from the date of enactment (until October 2010). However, many soldiers did not receive the decisions correcting their records to award the additional leave days until November 2010 or later (after the provision expired). Now, the Army is no longer authorized to pay these soldiers for the miscalculated leave.

The amendment does not change the purpose of the PDMRA program, but only makes certain that service members who earn a PDMRA benefit are allowed to use it, or be compensated for being unable to use it. Service members must use the existing framework for correcting their military records, which sets time limits and other standards for the applications. The affected Guardsmen have already made applications through this process.

This amendment is similar to legislation passed by the House last night regarding leave policy, and it has the support of the National Guard Association of the United States. Please allow the membership of this House to consider giving our veterans what they are owed by making Petri amendment #46 in order.

The Petri-Johnson amendment (#111) would clarify that direct use solar energy technology is considered a renewable energy source for the purposes of the requirement that DOD obtain 25 percent of its facility energy from renewable sources by 2025. A similar amendment was passed by the House during consideration of last year's NDAA; however, the provision was not included in the final conference report.

Direct use solar energy technology channels solar energy (in the form of sunlight) into a building to provide interior light that would otherwise be generated by electricity. This technology is similar to other types of direct use renewable energy technology (geothermal heat pumps and solar thermal devices) that DOD can already use to meet its renewable goal.

This change will provide DOD with a way to meet its requirements quicker, in a more cost-effective way, and in a way that will help us cut the Defense budget over the long term. I respectfully request that the Committee also make this amendment in order.

Thank you.