

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 8, 2019

The Honorable Barbara M. Barrett
Secretary of the Air Force
United States Department of the Air Force
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330

Colonel Kelli Smiley
Commander
Air Force Reserve Personnel Command
18420 E Silver Creek Ave Bldg 390 MS 68
Buckley AFB, CO 80011

Dear Secretary Barrett and Commander Smiley:

We write to express our concern regarding delays in determining veterans' military pensions and to urge you to take immediate action to ensure that our retired servicemembers receive the benefits they have earned.

According to the Defense Finance and Accounting Service, a major information technology system malfunction in 2018 at the Department of the Air Force and Air Force Reserve Personnel Command (ARPC), created a backlog in processing of retirement paperwork. It is our understanding that the delays in processing the backlog of servicemembers' military pensions was exacerbated by an outdated IT system and inadequate staffing levels. While we understand that you have taken steps to eliminate the backlog, we are concerned that ARPC has yet not reached its goal of processing pending retirements 60 days in advance of a servicemember's retirement.

These processing delays have impacted servicemembers across the country. For example, in Minnesota, Senior Master Sergeant (SMSgt) Brian Magnuson – an Air Force veteran who served our nation for more than 33 years – worked for over three years to resolve an error that prevented proper calculation and payment of his military pension.

It is imperative that measures are taken to prevent situations like the ones faced by SMSgt Magnuson from happening to other men and women who have served in defense of our nation. We urge the Air Force and ARPC to review the processes for administering retirement benefits for our servicemembers. In addition, we respectfully request that you provide responses to the following questions:

1. How many servicemembers have been affected by this backlog?
2. What actions have you taken to ensure that this type of computation errors do not occur in the future—including steps taken to prevent major system malfunctions?
3. What actions have you taken to reach your stated goal of processing pending retirement benefit applications in 60 days or less before a servicemember's retirement? When do you anticipate reaching this stated goal?
4. What actions have you taken to advise servicemembers regarding the financial benefits that they have earned shortly before they leave service?

Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



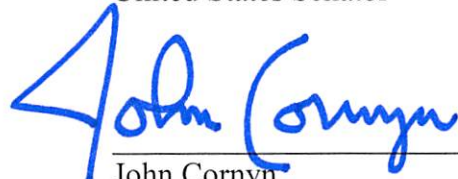
Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Rob Portman
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



John Cornyn
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator