



Congresswoman Susan A. Davis

53rd District, San Diego, California

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SUSAN DAVIS INTRODUCES BILL TO PROTECT FINANCIAL SECURITY OF MILITARY FAMILIES

San Diego, CA — Congresswoman Susan Davis today announced legislation to protect military families who are in danger of losing federal assistance to care for a disabled child. The Military Families Financial Security Act would require the Social Security Administration (SSA) to alter how it calculates income to determine eligibility for Supplemental Security Income (SSI). If enacted, the bill would affect nearly 500 military families in San Diego County.

“As our sailors and soldiers are in harm’s way, there is not a worse time for concerns of whether loved ones are getting the care they need,” said Davis, a member of the House Armed Services Committee. **This legislation will give these families the peace of mind that critical support will always be there.”**

Military families can face a financial crisis based on how the SSA looks at additional pay given to military personnel for certain services. If a service member eligible for SSI is deployed, that service member will receive what is known as separation pay added onto their basic pay. This increase in income makes that family no longer eligible for SSI.

Under current law, SSA is required to consider the total amount of the additional pay when determining eligibility for SSI. The SSA designates this extra pay as “unearned income.” Under Davis’s bill, any additional pay would require the SSA to look at it as “earned income”, in which only a portion of the pay in considered.

The bill would also mean that military families are treated equally under the law as non-military families, whose additional income is already considered as earned income.

“After seeing the work that our military men and women did in Iraq these past weeks, there is no doubt that they earned their pay,” added Davis. **“This income should be treated the same whether it goes to a military family or a non-military family.”**

Recently, at the behest of Davis, the SSA altered the eligibility formula in relation to the basic allowance for housing (BAH) military personnel receive to pay for housing. The increase in income due to the BAH was also affecting SSI benefits.

For the announcement, Davis was surrounded by military spouses at risk of losing SSI to care for their children. Also in attendance were Tom Margeau of the Social Security Administration and Chris Bastian, the Military Outreach Coordinator for TASK (Team of Advocates for Special Kids).

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