

November 3, 2015

Senator Cadman,

Today's media report a state budget surplus and a projected, associated refund to taxpayers under TABOR. I'd like to suggest introduction and passage of a measure to reduce the tax burden on Colorado's military retirees. A TABOR of sorts, that is long overdue.

Military careers are distinguished by dedicated service in the defense of our nation over a minimum of 20 years. They are characterized by multiple, prolonged periods of separation from their families to remote areas throughout the world that present high risks of injury and loss of life as no other careers do.

Unfortunately, military pensions are now treated as any other pension when determining state income tax liability. It didn't used to be this way; Colorado state income tax policy for military retirement pensions should once again be distinguished from all other pension types, and should be taxed less. Military retirees have already sacrificed; asking them to pay tax on their pensions at rates equivalent to non-military pensions borders on a lack of recognition or appreciation of their service.

In addition to 9 states that have no state income tax, 13 states have chosen not to tax military retirement pensions in any manner (ref: <http://www.rapidtax.com/blog/states-that-dont-tax-military-retirement-pay/#.VjjMcKJ4y0Y>).

Please consider working with the Joint Budget Committee and the Governor's Office toward adding Colorado to the list of states that refrain from taxing military pensions. In the event only interim steps can be taken now, Colorado should restore the separate treatment of military pensions, significantly increase the current retirement benefits exemption, and remove the minimum age requirement. The unparalleled sacrifices of those who've made a career of defending our nation warrant these actions.

Sincerely,
Commander Steven R. Jung, U.S. Navy (retired)
975 Royal Crown Lane
Colorado Springs, CO 80906

(719) 579-7422 (home)