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**An Independent Nonprofit Aerospace Organization**

*Michael M. Dunn*  
*President/CEO*

November 2, 2010

Mr Mark Hoffman  
President, CNBC  
900 Sylvan Avenue  
Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 07632

Dear Mr Hoffman:

I am writing to express my severe disappointment over the CNBC segment hosted by Erin Burnett, "Cut Military Benefits?", 25 October. During this segment, Ms Burnett was joined by Todd Harrison of CSA Budget Studies and MacKenzie Eaglen of the Heritage Foundation.

From the beginning, this piece was riddled with distortions, half-truths, and inaccuracies. For example, Ms Burnett set up the discussion by saying that military benefits account for "more than half of active duty troops compensation, more than they ever did for General Motors". Assuming she was referring to the relationship of pay to benefits for both groups, the message she was apparently trying to convey was the lavishness of military benefits when in fact the real message here is the meagerness of military pay when compared to that of General Motors' employees.

Moreover, both Ms Eaglen and Mr Harrison alleged that DoD cost cutting proposals would increase military healthcare premiums only "slightly", and Eaglen cited a "\$2-\$3 co-pay increase" when in fact the DoD proposals in question would boost beneficiary fees by \$1000-\$2000 per year...a significant bump for a retired Technical Sergeant (E-7) drawing \$21,000 per year in retired pay. The greatest error, however, in the segment was one of omission.

None of the participants recognized nor spoke of the unique nature of military service experienced over a 20-30 year career. These decades are characterized by arduous service, frequent deployments often to remote areas and Spartan conditions, lengthy family separations, and the risk of physical harm. These sacrifices are essentially an up-front payment made by the service member in return for the promise of future benefits such as healthcare. To now change the ground rules would be grossly unfair and could have serious consequences to military recruiting and retention.

To summarize, this piece needed balance. You did your viewers a great disservice by not including in the discussion someone more familiar with the subtleties and nuances of military compensation and its relationship to military readiness. If a remedy to the military healthcare budget problems were as simple as Burnette, Harrison, and Eaglen would have us believe, it would have been fixed long ago... Congress has been wise to demand further information, study and alternatives before implementing a fix that would have far reaching, negative consequences for military readiness.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael M. Dunn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the name.

Michael M. Dunn  
Lieutenant General, USAF (ret)