



THE SERGEANT MAJOR OF THE MARINE CORPS

11 April 2014

Marines,

There is no more noble or honorable profession than to serve your nation, to serve the flag, to serve an idea. I believe in what America stands for – we represent goodness. I believe in service. And I believe in duty. Marines in uniform today, every single one of you, had a choice and all of you chose to serve. I'm humbled, thank you.

On Wednesday, I testified in front of the Senate Armed Services Committee Subcommittee on Personnel about the Active, Guard, Reserve, and civilian personnel programs in review of the Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2015 and the Future Years Defense Program.

Recent reporting of my testimony may have left you with a mistaken impression that I don't care about your quality of life and that I support lower pay for servicemembers. This is not true.

What you need to know about this hearing is that we discussed quality of life and personnel issues. Some of our civilian leaders have proposed a 1% pay raise (vice larger ones we've enjoyed in the past), a reduction of annual BAH rates over time (not to exceed 5% out-of-pocket) and a subsidy reduction for our commissaries.

Nobody wants less ... But if we don't slow the growth of our hard-earned, generous compensation/benefit entitlements that we have enjoyed over the past decade, we won't have sufficient dollars for what we need – investment in our warfighting capabilities and our wonderful Marine and family care programs. We're not done fighting or serving as America's Expeditionary Force in Readiness and we need to be more prepared for what's around the corner.

The responsibilities put on your shoulders are great – from standards and discipline, to giving orders to kill, to risk being killed yourself. I know you will continue to be selfless. I know you will continue to sacrifice for one another. I know you will continue to succeed during these times and the tough times that lay ahead.

Keep your eye on the ball. We need to focus our efforts on the things that are REALLY important to us. Have an able and willing attitude, a purpose (goals), be the go-to-Marine, give all your efforts, and make quality a part of everything you do!

Marines are thinkers, selfless and fearless. Our martial spirit, our storied legacy, our history, is forged in the eagle, globe, anchor – it's forged in YOU.

Always Faithful,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael P. Barrett".

MICHEAL P. BARRETT

17th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps