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Blunt Introduces Bill To Assist Guardsmen

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Blunt Introduces Bill To Assist Guardsmen WASHINGTON D.C. – U.S. Senator Roy Blunt (Mo.) joined U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (N.Y.) to introduce two bills that will address the needs of America's National Guard.

The "National Guard Employment Protection Act of 2011" (S. 1823), which Blunt introduced and Gillibrand cosponsored, would authorize the U.S. Secretary of Defense to include full-time National Guard duty for possible exemption from the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) five-year limit on service.

"The needs of today have left our Guardsmen and women performing duties which are not covered under the USERRA, forcing Guard units to return to duty much sooner than usual. This, in turn, keeps service members away for longer periods of time, often beyond the five-year limit," Blunt wrote in a statement submitted for the Senate record. "When National Guardsmen and women are working side by side with their Active Duty counterparts supporting critical active duty missions, they should not be forced to decide between keeping their civilian jobs or supporting critical national security missions."

Blunt also joined Gillibrand in introducing the "National Guard Outreach Act of 2011" (S. 1820), which would help to provide National Guardsmen and women with secure health services, marriage and financial counseling, substance abuse treatment and other services necessary to aid in a smooth transition for those returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan.

"Undiagnosed illnesses, left untreated, have long-lasting social, emotional, and financial impacts long after service members are re-integrated into a community. Many Guardsmen and women today lack health insurance and go without health care as well as behavioral health care," Blunt wrote. "At no time in America's history has the National Guard played such a critical role in the defense and security of our homeland. We must make sure all of our nation's heroes can fulfill their missions without worrying about supporting their families when returning home."

The bill – Senate Bill 1823 - was introduced on Nov. 8 and was referred to the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee.

Links of Interest

- [Library of Congress - Full Text of Legislation](#)
- [Blunt's Senate Website](#)

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