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I recently posted information about the effort in Congress to protect military pay from the budget battles (HR 1297), but one important bill has seemingly gone unnoticed - the Combat Act of 2011 – HR 1110.

Rep. Jerry McNerney (D-CA) introduced legislation in March that would give servicemembers modest increases in their combat related special pays and the Family Separation Allowance. Specifically, the bill would raise Hostile Fire Pay/Imminent Danger Pay and Hazardous Duty Pay to \$260 a month. In addition, the bill would increase the Family Separation Allowance to \$285 a month. This would mean an increase of \$35 for HFP/IDP, FSA and a \$10 for HDP.

McNerney cited his visit to Afghanistan as the reason for seeking the pay increases. “Since my visit, I’ve strongly advocated for increasing pay for our troops, many of whom haven’t seen a raise in military specialty pay in years,” said McNerney. “Increasing pay for the men and women who are putting themselves in harm’s way is simply the right thing to do.”

According to information posted on his website, McNerney introduced a similar bill last year – the Combat Act in 2010. Provisions from that bill subsequently passed the House with bipartisan support. But they obviously didn’t make it through the Senate.

Not surprisingly, the National Military Family Association (NMFA), the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), and the Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH) support McNerney’s bill.

While the budget battles are being waged in D.C. it appears that at least some in Congress are looking out for those fighting the real battles in Iraq and Afghanistan.

