

Military Family Relief Fund Post-9/11 Advisory Committee
Arizona Department of Veterans' Services
3839 N. 3rd St.
Phoenix, AZ 85012

Dear Ms. Perry,

As I have explained, the committee has consistently maintained an applicant has to have served in a DoD designated "imminent danger area" after 9/11 and as a result of that service he/she or their family now suffer financial hardship. The list of "imminent danger areas" as recorded on the DD-214 is broad and covers wide areas around the world, and includes places such as Diego Garcia. The committee considers those areas, including Iraq and Afghanistan when evaluating an applicant. The criteria used are based on the intent of the lawmakers who established the MFRF and the intent was made clear to us by those lawmakers in several meetings. I would note the timing of the initial legislation was after the deployment of the regular units of the Army, Navy, Marines and Air Force as well as activation of the National Guard and Reserve units, in support of post 9/11 operations. The activation of the National Guard and Reserve units had a major impact on their finances and the legislators intended to help those who served in those combat operations and suffered financially as a result. A significant number of our applications come from former members of those Guard and Reserve units. There was never an intent to provide financial assistance to anyone who deployed out of the country not supporting combat operations. Over the past year I contacted some of those legislators, active and retired to confirm their original intent.

Based on this draft report as well as previous findings, it became clear the legislation fell short in clarity of the intent. I have spoken with a few legislators about clarifying the statute, and I know you are aware a bill was introduced by a State Senator in this year's session to make clear the intent is to assist post 9/11 MFRF applicants who had to have served in an imminent danger area. The bill was moving through the process when this year's session was truncated by the COVID pandemic and quite a few pending bills died in session. I hope the bill will be resurrected in the next session to clear up the shortfall in the MFRF statute.

Regarding the committee by-laws, I worked through an edit earlier in the year, but suspended that effort until the amendment to the MFRF statute was signed by the Governor so appropriate changes could then be made.

My hope is the bill clarifying the post 9/11 MFRF intent is signed next session.

Regards,

Randell S. Meyer, Col, USAF (ret)
Chairman, Post 9/11 MFRF