

## **Supporting Statements for Hardship & Dependency Claims**

The military provides for the discharge of people who are needed at home because someone in their immediate family becomes severely dependent on the servicemember. In order to qualify for discharge on the basis of hardship or dependency, the servicemember must document for military authorities that his or her retention in the military perpetuates this hardship on the dependent.

The person submitting the application for discharge on the basis of dependency or hardship must submit letters which substantiate the claim. These letters can come from persons who know the situation well, such as friends, neighbors, clergy, social workers, and doctors. These letters greatly improve the likelihood of discharge.

The servicemember who has requested that you write a letter of support must show the following:

- That his or her presence and/or increased financial support is essential to prevent the dependent from suffering severe hardship, and that there is no one else both able and willing to take the servicemember's place.
- That the hardship condition developed after the member entered the military.
- That the condition is not temporary in nature.
- That every other means of attempting to solve the problem has been tried and that discharge from the military is now the only remaining solution which offers the possibility of greatly reducing or eliminating the problem.

To help you write an effective supporting letter, the following guidelines are offered. Please use specific examples to support your statements.

### **State how you are familiar with the situation.**

Please describe:

- Your relationship to the family (friend, employer, grocer, minister, doctor, teacher, etc.).
- How long you have known the family and the person filing the claim.
- How much contact you have with them (note frequency of visits, correspondence, etc.).

### **Describe the circumstances of the hardship or dependency.**

Include information such as:

- How long the problem has existed.
- When it began, or got worse, after the person entered the military.
- What services and support are needed and how the servicemember could provide these.
- Why no one else in the family can provide the support in his or her place.
- What other solutions have been tried.

Explain the consequences of the member's discharge, including:

- Why and how the discharge would help.

- What, in your opinion, will happen to the dependent if the discharge is denied.

Make the letter concise — usually no longer than two pages. If possible, it should be typed, and where applicable, on letterhead indicating title and organizational affiliation. If it is convenient, it helps to have the letter notarized.

Address the letter to “Commanding Officer of [applicant’s name]” but send it to the applicant to include in the request for discharge. Please keep a copy for your records.