



The Blended Retirement System: Myths Commonly Heard in the Field

Myth 1: “BRS is a bad choice and I should not opt in.”

Response: While remaining in the Legacy System may be ideal for some Service members, opting into BRS is a great choice for others. Choosing to opt into BRS is a *highly* personal decision. A Service member should ensure their retirement choice aligns with his or her personal situation. Previously, fewer than 20 percent of service members who joined the military received a government retirement benefit after they left service. Under BRS about 85 percent of service members will receive a government retirement benefit if they serve at least two years, even if they don't qualify for a full retirement. It is pretty clearly a better deal for members who are not planning to retire from the military. Even those planning to retire may want to consider BRS because if they maximize their TSP contributions, they could potentially earn a retirement equal to or more than what the Legacy System provides. Check out our [#AskRobyn video](#) that chats with Service members about the different retirement options, which ones they're choosing and why.

Myth 2: “I walk away with less money than if I remain with the legacy “High-3” system.”

Response: Each individual situation is different, which is why we strongly encourage eligible Service members to seek professional financial advice and use the [BRS Comparison Calculator](#). There are some instances where, based on the number of years in service and TSP contributions, that a member will benefit more by sticking with the Legacy System. However, the more junior and less time in service a member has, the more beneficial opting into BRS will be for that individual. For members who do not serve a full 20 years, they will leave the military with government-provided benefits under BRS, something that the Legacy System does not provide.

Myth 3: “The only reason government wants me to opt in is just because it saves them money.”

Response: BRS was enacted as part of the 2016 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) in order to provide government retirement benefits to a larger population of uniformed personnel. By creating a more flexible and portable retirement system, more than 85% of Service members will leave the military with some government-provided benefits, compared to less than 20% under the legacy systems. BRS does create long-term savings to the government due to the reduced cost of the defined benefit, but this was not the primary purpose for instituting retirement reform.

Myth 4: “I can’t afford to contribute to my retirement.”

Response: This TSP-matching element is the radical change that our military members have never had the opportunity to utilize, but it mirrors employee benefit programs both for DoD civilians and many civilian organizations. This program change affords our military members and their families significantly more flexibility and ownership of both their career and financial goals. In today’s economy, the American worker, including our military members, can’t afford NOT to plan or save for retirement. For example, a junior Service member who contributes 5% to her TSP, about the equivalent of dinner, a movie and a babysitter, is investing in herself and her family. The Marines developed a great [infographic](#) released on their [Manpower & Reserve Affairs Facebook page](#) that depicts how much a Service member can gain through contributing to TSP and earning the DoD matching contributions offered through BRS.

As we close in on the final month of the opt-in period, there are a number of resources our Service members can access for free to ensure they’re receiving credible and factual information on their retirement choice:

- BRS Website: <https://militarypay.defense.gov/BlendedRetirement/>
- BRS Comparison Calculator: <https://militarypay.defense.gov/Calculators/BRS/>
- Installation Personal Financial Managers: Every Service member has personal financial managers available to them and their families at no cost. Seek out your installation’s finance office to find out where your PFMs are located and make an appointment with them today!
- [MilitaryOneSource](#): Financial support available 24/7, which is especially helpful for Reserve and National Guard members and those stationed in remote areas. Call 1-800-342-9647.