



NATIONAL GUARD ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES, INC.

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July 31, 2019

The Honorable James Inhofe
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Adam Smith
Chairman
U.S. House Committee on Armed Services
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mac Thornberry
Ranking Member
U.S. House Committee on Armed Services
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Inhofe, Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Reed, and Ranking Member Thornberry,

On behalf of the 45,000 members of the National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS) and the nearly 500,000 soldiers and airmen of the National Guard, we write to you outlining specific provisions we believe will significantly impact the National Guard as you formulate the final Fiscal Year 2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). We appreciate your consideration of our views as we continue our work to benefit the men and women of our National Guard while simultaneously improving their training, retention, and readiness.

1. House Section 627: Early Retirement Credit for National Guard Servicemembers under Title 10, Section 12304b Orders

We request you retain House Section 627, which would authorize reduction in the retired pay eligibility age for National Guard servicemembers deployed under Title 10, Section 12304b mobilization orders. When 12304b was authorized, important changes in law were not made in order to provide retirement benefits equal to other Reserve Component overseas mobilization authorities. As a result, National Guard servicemembers deploy on pre-planned missions in support of Combatant Commands without their full complement of benefits, often serving in dangerous and life-threatening scenarios. Retaining this provision would fix this discrepancy.

2. House Section 703: TRICARE Reserve Select Eligibility for National Guard and Reserve Servicemembers Serving as Federal Employees in Civilian Employment

We request you retain House Section 703, which, in 2030, would authorize TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS) access for National Guard and Reserve servicemembers who serve as federal employees in their civilian employment, including military technicians. Currently, these servicemembers are ineligible for TRS due to enrollment in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) or if they are covered under the FEHBP through a family member. This creates confusion in coordination of benefits for servicemembers and their families, as well as prevents them from establishing continuity of care and treatment as they deploy or transition in or out of the federal government.

3. House Section 4101: Authorization for Procurement of UH-60 Black Hawk M-model Aircraft, CH-47F Chinook Block II Aircraft

We request you retain House Section 4101 (Line 012) in Aircraft Procurement, Army, which would authorize 73 UH-60 Black Hawk M-model aircraft for the Army. This is consistent with the President's FY20 DoD budget that requested 73 UH-60M Black Hawks for the Army, of which 64 were requested for the Army National Guard. Retaining this provision is integral in significantly addressing the growing rotary wing capability gap between the Army and Army National Guard, as well as supporting Army National Guard interoperability during overseas contingency operations and in response to domestic emergencies.

We also request you retain House Section 4101 (Line 016) in Aircraft Procurement, Army, which would authorize an additional \$28.0 million in advanced procurement funding for the CH-47 helicopter for the Army. Authorization of this additional investment would ensure the CH-47F Block II program continues on time, as well as continued modernization and sustainment of Army National Guard CH-47 aircraft in 24 states while the Army simultaneously invests in the CH-47 successor.

4. House Section 4101: Authorization for Procurement of C-130H Engine and Propeller Upgrades

We request you retain House Section 4101 (Line 049) in Aircraft Procurement, Air Force, which would authorize continued procurement for C-130H Hercules modernization (\$79.0 million for T-56 3.5 engine upgrades and \$55.0 million for NP-2000 propellers). Continuing efforts to upgrade the T-56 engine with a Series 3.5 engine modification will reduce aircraft life-cycle costs with fewer depot-level inductions, increase fuel economy and acceptable cargo loads, and reduce takeoff distance and time to climb. Additionally, NP-2000 propellers provide improved thrust and readiness while reducing operations and support costs, with recent testing demonstrating at least 20% increased takeoff performance. Retaining this provision would continue to support critical modernization and safety upgrades for the Air National Guard C-130H fleet, which includes over 150 aircraft in 16 states the Air Force plans to operate until 2040 or beyond.

5. Senate Section 319: Department of Defense Environmental Restoration Authorities for the National Guard

We request you retain Senate Section 319, which would establish environmental restoration accounts for the Army National Guard and Air National Guard, as well as allow the National Guard to address other environmental contaminants. This would provide the National Guard with necessary designated funding sources to mitigate contamination caused by per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) at National Guard installations nation-wide, including those utilized under Title 32 operations. It would also provide the National Guard with enhanced authorities to enter into cooperative agreements with state or local governments to address PFAS, other environmental contaminants, and/or hazardous substances. Retaining this provision would allow the National Guard to readily and effectively address PFAS and other environmental contamination impacting local populations due to military operations.

In addition, we believe **Senate Sections 1036, 1037, and 1038** are significant cause for concern and respectfully request they not be included in the final bill. We provided further detail on our thoughts, along with those of the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the U.S. (EANGUS), in a letter addressed to you on July 29, 2019.

Once again, we appreciate your consideration of our perspective as we work together toward ensuring our Reserve Component servicemembers have the tools and benefits needed to continue to carry out their role in the Total Force mission. Thank you for your continued support of the men and women of the National Guard.

Sincerely,



J. Roy Robinson
Brigadier General (Ret.), U.S. Army
President, NGAUS