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ONDRA BERRY  
*Major General*  
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NGNV-Z

25 March 2021

Awards Committee  
National Guard Association of the United States  
One Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Committee Members:

It is with the highest of regard that I endorse Senator Catherine Cortez Masto for the prestigious Montgomery Medal. The criteria for this award is no easy task; however, I believe that Senator Cortez Masto's dedication to the National Guard is truly reflective of what the Montgomery Medal stands for.

Senator Cortez Masto has worked tirelessly to ensure National Guard men and women receive the same pay, benefits, educational assistance and access to critical care programs that the active component received during the COVID-19 pandemic response. As a proponent of the Counter Drug Program and the State Partnership Program, Senator Cortez Masto was instrumental in getting an increase of funding and an acceptance of additional programs within USINDOPACOM and USAFRICOM.

Please direct any questions to CPT Jasmin Herrera at [jasmin.r.herrera.mil@mail.mil](mailto:jasmin.r.herrera.mil@mail.mil) or 775-887-7319.

ONDRA L. BERRY, Maj Gen, USAF  
The Adjutant General, NVMD

## **INDIVIDUAL AWARD NOMINATION FORM**

**AWARD NOMINATED TO RECEIVE:** Montgomery Medal

**NAME:** Senator Catherine Cortez Masto (D- NV)

**NOMINATED BY:** Maj Gen Ondra Berry, Adjutant General of Nevada

**YEARS IN THE NATIONAL GUARD:** N/A

### **JUSTIFICATION FOR THE AWARD:**

Born and raised in Las Vegas, Catherine Cortez Masto has spent her career fighting for Nevada's working families. She served two terms as Attorney General of Nevada and in November 2016, she made history by becoming the first woman from Nevada and the first Latina ever elected to the United States Senate.

U.S. Senator Catherine Cortez Masto (D-Nev.) joined 33 U.S. Senators, led by Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), in a letter asking President Trump to restore full funding to states, including Nevada, for the National Guard forces responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. Understanding the role of the National Guard during the pandemic response, Senator Cortez Masto fought to ensure our Guard's men and women had the support necessary during the 502(f) activation.

Senator Cortez Masto remains a strong advocate for women and children and is working to pass legislation to strengthen women's health care. Senator Cortez Masto continues to support our servicewomen by addressing the unique challenges they face as they transition from active duty. To ensure that they are empowered to access the full range of services they need to thrive, she has introduced the Servicewomen's Health Transition Training Act of 2019, which would increase the knowledge of available VA health care resources like mental health assistance, maternity care, cancer screenings and casework management.

As an advocate of the men and women who served, have served and continue to serve, Senator Cortez Masto has sponsored a myriad of legislation in order to preserve the benefits of those who have served their country. Senator Cortez Masto sponsored and cosponsored the following legislation:

- S.3580- A bill to require the Comptroller General of the United States to submit to Congress a report assessing the billing practices of the Department of Defense for care received under the TRICARE program and at military medical treatment facilities, and for other purposes. It is the sense of Congress that it is in the national interest of the United States to ensure members of the Armed Forces, former members of the Armed Forces, and their dependents receive high-quality health care, and that Federal agencies prioritize fairness and accessibility when administering health care.
- S. 3581- A bill to require the Comptroller General of the United States to submit to Congress a report assessing Federal, State, and other mental health services available to members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces, and for other purposes. It is the sense of Congress that it is in the national interest of the United States to ensure that members of the National Guard and Reserves receive high-quality mental health care and

appropriate support to ensure their successful reintegration into civilian life following deployments.

- S.3503- A bill to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to treat certain programs of education converted to distance learning by reason of emergencies and health-related situations in the same manner as programs of education pursued at educational institutions, and for other purposes. Public Law No: 116-128
- S.3492- A bill to transfer administrative jurisdiction over certain Bureau of Land Management land from the Secretary of the Interior to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for use as a national cemetery, and for other purposes.
- S.3444- A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to expand the list of diseases associated with exposure to certain herbicide agents for which there is a presumption of service connection for veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam, and for other purposes.
- S.3339- A bill to restore military priorities, and for other purposes. “Support for DHS Counter-Drug Activity Reprogramming Action”, shall be restored to the appropriation accounts and the programs, projects, and activities for which such amounts were appropriated or otherwise made available by the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2020 (division A of Public Law 116–93).
- S.2547- Indo-Pacific Cooperation Act of 2019. To state the policy of the United States with respect to the expansion of cooperation with allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific region and Europe regarding the People's Republic of China. Expanding the opportunities in USINDOPACOM for State Partnership Program.
- S.2324- A bill to direct the Secretary of Defense and the Secretaries of the military departments to encourage women members of the Armed Forces who separate or retire from the Armed Forces during fiscal year 2020 to participate in the Women's Health Transition Training Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.
- S.1370- Gold Star Family Tax Relief Act. This bill treats certain military survivor benefits that are received by children as earned income of the child for the purposes of the kiddie tax (the tax on the unearned income of children). This has the effect of exempting the benefits from such tax.
- S.1511- A bill to require a mechanism for the regular evaluation by the Air Force of justifications for the continuing maintenance of non-operational staff positions in the Air Force that require pilot expertise.
- S.2488- Military Hunger Prevention Act: To amend title 37, United States Code, to exclude the receipt of basic allowance for housing for members of the Armed Forces in determining eligibility for certain Federal benefits, and for other purposes.
- S.2430- A bill to provide a permanent appropriation of funds for the payment of death gratuities and related benefits for survivors of deceased members of the uniformed services in event of any period of lapsed appropriations.
- S.2416- National Guard and Reserves Benefits Parity Act: This bill makes reserve component members who are deployed to support pre-planned operations of a combatant

command eligible for: (1) non-reduction in pay while serving in the uniformed services or National Guard, (2) consideration of active duty service to reduce the age for retired pay, and (3) the high-deployment allowance for lengthy or numerous deployments and frequent mobilizations.

**PROPOSED NARRATION:**

Senator Catherine Cortez Masto distinguished herself as a Senator for Nevada and as a lifetime supporter of the men and women who have served, continue to serve and currently serve the uniformed services of the United States. Understanding the challenges of National Guard service, Senator Cortez Masto has worked tirelessly to ensure National Guard men and women receive the same pay, benefits, educational assistance and access to critical care programs that the active component receives. Her dedicated work in ensuring National Guard parity with its active component was prevalent during her fight to ensure 502(f) activated members received the same benefit as their active counterparts. As a proponent of the Counter Drug Program and the State Partnership Program, Senator Cortez Masto was instrumental in getting an increase of funding and an acceptance of additional programs within USINDOPACOM and USAFRICOM. Additionally, Senator Cortez Masto has ensured that men and women of the Armed Forces have unfettered access to sexual assault and post-deployment mental health counselors and that transition services are readily available. Senator Cortez Masto's service has kept with the finest traditions of public service and reflect great credit upon Congress, the State of Nevada, the United States Armed Forces and the National Guard Association of the United States.

**ADJUTANT GENERAL ENDORSEMENT:** Yes

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:** Attached

<https://www.cortezmasto.senate.gov/>