



National Guard Association of the United States

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June 3, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden Jr.
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear President Biden:

On behalf of the nearly 45,000 members of the National Guard Association of the United States, I want to thank you and First Lady Jill Biden for the heartfelt statement of appreciation to National Guard members who recently completed their security mission at the U.S. Capitol.

I especially appreciated you mentioning all that the nation has asked of the Guard over the past year. “We owe you,” you wrote, “and we will always have your backs.” You had our backs when you were a U.S. Senator and Vice President, and, as you proudly stated, the Bidens are a Guard family. We ask that you now have our backs again as President and our Commander in Chief.

Specifically, we urge you to support the Healthcare for Our Troops Act (H.R. 3512) introduced recently in the House of Representatives. This bipartisan legislation would provide the military’s TRICARE medical coverage at no cost to every member of the National Guard and Reserves.

Most Americans would probably be shocked to learn that we sent soldiers and airmen to the front lines of the worst public health crisis in a century without health insurance. We did the same during civil disturbances last summer and when responding to hurricanes and wildfires. The problem is, nearly one in five Guard members has no private health insurance and they are usually not entitled to government-provided coverage when mobilized for domestic missions.

Meanwhile, those with private insurance often have to rely on that coverage for the treatment of injuries and ailments resulting from military service. This places another burden on employers. Laws and regulation simply have not kept pace with the increasing demands of Guard service.

National Guard members will continue to be deployed in high numbers at home and abroad to defend American security, and medical readiness is vital to the ability to rapidly deploy. They are part of an operational force that Americans count on to be always ready, always there. We would never debate the need to provide full medical coverage to active-component service members — it is long past time that we view the Guard and Reserve in the same light.

In addition. Gen. Daniel R. Hokanson, the Chief of the National Guard, has identified this as his top legislative priority. He believes no-fee coverage not only backs our force, it would bolster readiness and provide a boost to recruiting and retention, thereby going a long way toward covering the cost. It would also make Guard members more attractive to civilian employers.

This is the No. 1 legislative priority of the National Guard Association of the United States. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further with you or a member of your staff at any time. Toward that end, I can be reached directly by phone weekdays at [REDACTED]

We look forward to the possibility of working with you.

Sincerely,



J. Roy Robinson
Brigadier General (Ret.), USA
President