



April 27, 2021

The Honorable Tim Ryan
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steven Palazzo
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Ryan and Palazzo:

The Military Coalition (TMC), a consortium of organizations representing 5.5 million service members, veterans, their families, and survivors, writes to express our support of the *National Guard and Reserve Incentive Pay Parity Act*. This bill ensures that the military branches compensate reserve component (RC) service members in the Guard and Reserves with the same Special and Incentive Pays as their active component (AC) counterparts.

This bill specifically addresses growing concerns with retention in the ranks of trained personnel in all services – both RC and AC. Aviators are an excellent example. In July 2020 the *Military Times* reported, "... the entire Air Force finished fiscal 2019 short about 2,100 pilots — 950 in the active-duty Air Force, 650 in the Air National Guard, and 500 in the Air Force Reserve."

The Army is concerned as well. As reported on August 21, 2020 – by Jennifer H. Svan of *STARS AND STRIPES* – the Army announced an increase in the service obligation for new pilots from 6 years to 10. Explaining, Ms. Svan further reported "the Army's pilot attrition rate grew to a record 10 percent of its force [the previous year], due largely to aging aviators and competition from commercial airlines." Meanwhile, Army National Guard sources continue to report they remain critically short of their authorized strength.

It would be easy to think airline furloughs during the pandemic would be a boon to the services, however, American, Delta, Southwest and United all offered staff reductions of 25 to 30 percent through furloughs and early retirements that will create pilot shortages as the airlines return to regular flying schedules. A May 29, 2020 *Financial Review* article ("US major airlines roll out more options to avoid staff layoffs") observed, "If airlines furlough too many workers, 'the bounce-back is almost impossible,' United CEO Scott Kirby said at a conference on Thursday."

Proposed legislation would incentivize critical RC personnel to remain by appropriately compensating them for their valuable skillsets and operational experience. For example, The Defense Manpower Requirements Report Fiscal Year 2020 stated, "In particular, the Marine Corps has targeted incentives toward pilots, non-commissioned officers, staff non-commissioned officers, and warrant officers in our Reserve units. These incentives are critical to attracting and retaining the best and most qualified Marines and have a proven track record." Moreover, incentives would encourage departing AC service members to continue their service as members of the Guard and Reserve.

This legislation will also prove more than cost-effective, when compared with training new personnel, from an ever-dwindling pool. In the case of aviation, for example, this fact is supported by a 2019 RAND report, which concluded that increased aviation incentive pays – and even bonuses – would improve pilot retention and reduce overall costs to the Department of Defense through savings in training. This study identified the cost of training a basic qualified fighter pilot ranges from \$5.6 million for an F-16 pilot to \$10.9 million for an F-22 pilot.

Thank you again for your leadership as Co-Chairs of the Congressional Guard and Reserve Caucus and in introducing this important legislation. We appreciate your commitment to the men and women serving in uniform, particularly those serving in the RC. We stand ready to continue working with you to ensure the preservation of our RC uniformed services as the operational force-multipliers they are.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jack DuTill". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

President,
The Military Coalition
See attached list of organizations

TMC Organizations:

Air Force Association (AFA)
Air Force Sergeants Association (AFSA)
Association of Military Surgeons of the United States (AMSUS)
Association of the United States Army (AUSA)
Chief Warrant Officers Association of the US Coast Guard (CWOA)
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service, Inc. (COA)
Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States (EANGUS)
Fleet Reserve Association (FRA)
Gold Star Wives of America (GSW)
Iraq Afghanistan Veterans Association (IAVA)
Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America (JWV)
Marine Corps League (MCL)
Marine Corps Reserve Association (MCRA)
Military Chaplains Association of the United States of America (MCA)
Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)
Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH)
National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS)
National Military Family Association (NMFA)
Naval Enlisted Reserve Association (NERA)
Non Commissioned Officers Association (NCOA)
Reserve Organization of America (ROA)
Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)
The Retired Enlisted Association (TREA)
The Independence Fund (TIF)
United States Army Warrant Officers Association (USAWOA)
USCG Chief Petty Officers Association (CPOA)
Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)
VetsFirst, United Spinal Association
Wounded Warrior Project (WWP)