National GOVERNORS Association

John Hickenlooper
Governor of Colorado
Chair

Gary Herbert
Governor of Utah
Vice Chair

Dan Crippen
Executive Director

February 26, 2015

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The nation's governors strongly oppose the U.S. Army's fiscal year 2016 budget proposal to reduce the size of the Army National Guard and remove its Apache helicopters. As we wrote to you last year, we recognize the need to reduce costs and restructure military forces, but firmly believe the Army's proposals are ill-advised.

The Army has proposed to eliminate more than 8,000 Army National Guard positions, including 1,700 full-time positions necessary to maintain the Guard's readiness, and transfer its Apache helicopters to the active component. As commanders-in-chief, we must express our concerns that these plans suggest a return to a pre-9/11 strategic reserve construct that would squander more than a decade of investments and discredit the Guard's accomplishments.

For more than a decade, the men and women of the National Guard have served alongside their active duty counterparts in overseas combat. They are the nation's most cost-effective fighting force and also help save lives and protect property during emergencies here at home. To reduce the Guard's ranks and remove capabilities during a time of continued global insecurity simply does not make sense.

Congress responded to these concerns last year by limiting the transfer of Apaches and establishing an independent commission to review these proposals. We encourage you to maintain the Army National Guard's personnel and combat aviation capability until the commission has had time to complete its review.

We respectfully request you work with us to fashion solutions that provide for a scalable, cost-effective force that best serves the interests of our nation.
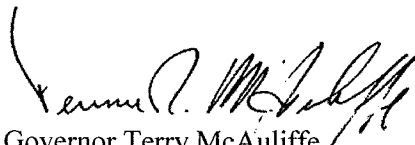
Sincerely,

Governor Terry E. Branstad
Co-Chair
Council of Governors

Governor Dannel Malloy
Co-Chair
Council of Governors

Governor Rick Snyder
Chair
Homeland Security & Public
Safety Committee

Governor Terry McAuliffe
Vice Chair
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