



Jack Markell  
Governor of Delaware  
Chair

Mary Fallin  
Governor of Oklahoma  
Vice Chair

Dan Crippen  
Executive Director

June 5, 2013

The Honorable Carl Levin  
Chairman  
Committee on Armed Services  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable James Inhofe  
Senator  
Committee on Armed Services  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Buck McKeon  
Chairman  
Committee on Armed Services  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Adam Smith  
Representative  
Committee on Armed Services  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Levin, Senator Inhofe, Chairman McKeon and Representative Smith:

After a decade of war and in the face of continuing fiscal challenges, strategic choices must be made regarding the organization of our military forces. On behalf of the nation's governors, we encourage you to fully utilize the National Guard's cost-effectiveness and high level of skill to maintain critical capabilities for the federal government and states while reducing the overall size and costs of our nation's military.

Since the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the National Guard has evolved from a strategic reserve into a highly capable operational force. The men and women of the Guard have regularly served overseas, supported border security efforts and responded to domestic emergencies including complex natural disasters and terrorist attacks. The Guard has developed specialized capabilities such as chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear responses and has more recently begun to develop innovative cybersecurity capabilities that could fulfill identified needs of states and the federal government.

As commanders-in-chief, we appreciate the need to reorganize, restructure and modernize the military to meet new threats and economic realities. We also understand the need for cost-effective means to achieve these goals. Given these realities, the National Guard is the best choice to meet our nation's needs.

We urge you to ensure the Guard maintains its current level of capability and continues to serve as an integral partner to both governors and the federal government.

Sincerely,



Governor Martin O'Malley  
Chair  
Health & Homeland Security Committee  
Co-chair  
Council of Governors



Governor Brian Sandoval  
Vice Chair  
Health & Homeland Security Committee



Governor Terry Branstad  
Co-Chair  
Council of Governors

cc: The Honorable Chuck Hagel, Secretary, U.S. Department of Defense  
General Frank Grass, Chief, National Guard Bureau