



Jack Markell
Governor of Delaware
Chair

Mary Fallin
Governor of Oklahoma
Vice Chair

Dan Crippen
Executive Director

June 5, 2013

The Honorable Chuck Hagel
Secretary
U.S. Department of Defense
The Pentagon
Washington, D.C.

Dear Secretary Hagel:

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 Carl Levin, Chairman, Committee on Armed Services, United States Senate
The Honorable James Inhofe, Ranking Member, Committee on Armed Services, United States Senate
The Honorable Buck McKeon, Chairman, Committee on Armed Services, United States House of Representatives
The Honorable Adam Smith, Ranking Member, Committee on Armed Services, United States House of Representatives
General Frank Grass, Chief, National Guard Bureau