



January 19, 2020

To: Department of the Army
From: The Council of Governors
RE: Council Views on Army National Guard Full Time Support

Last year, the Council of Governors (Council) selected full-time support (FTS) for the National Guard as a top priority. The Council also used the “2013 State-Federal Consultative Process for Programming and Budgetary Proposals Affecting the National Guard” (often referred to as the 2013 Consultative Budget Agreement, or, 2013 CBA) as the mechanism to provide federal partners with state input on FTS needs for Army and Air National Guard components for consideration in Defense Budget decisions. In accordance with the 2013 CBA, we are providing you with our observations, analyses, and future requirements of FTS manning as you make decisions about the FY23 Defense Budget.

According to the Department of Defense July 2019 report to congressional defense committees titled “Full-Time Support Effect on Readiness”, FTS personnel are critical to ensuring the reserve component’s readiness and ability to support the Department’s missions at home and around the world in support of the National Defense Strategy. In fact, the report, which was prepared in consultation with the Departments of the Army and Air Force as well as the Chief of the National Guard Bureau, states the following:

“In building a more lethal Joint Force as directed by the National Defense Strategy (NDS), the [Reserve Component] must maintain sufficient readiness. FTS personnel enable RC units’ personnel and equipment readiness, serve as a direct link in integrating RC units into the operational force, and are the daily administrators for the RC. FTS personnel provide efficiencies and support for commanders by preparing for Inactive Duty Training (IDT) weekends and Annual Training (AT) activities in advance of traditional Service member’s participation. FTS personnel perform functions that unit leaders regard as essential to enabling operational readiness (O/R). In short, FTS personnel are both a strategic and operational ‘enabler’ that directly affects the readiness of the RC through foundational support activities.”

The Council appreciate the acknowledgment of the importance of FTS to the National Defense Strategy, and the Council agrees completely with the above statement as reported to Congress. The ability of the reserve component to ensure adequate administration, recruitment, training, maintenance and support on federal missions is dependent on sufficient FTS.

As noted in the above-mentioned report, the Army National Guard (ARNG) is manned at nearly 58,000 FTS personnel, which translates into only 64 percent of the established 90,000+ FTS requirement. And though ARNG personnel comprises nearly 44 percent of the total personnel within the Army and Air reserve components, ARNG FTS manning falls far short of the other reserve component FTS percentage levels in comparison. As the use of the National Guard nationwide shifted from a strategic reserve to an operational force, and continues to require more frequent and regular deployments to support the nation’s warfighting needs, this issue needs to be addressed.

Setting aside the data point of the significant disparity between FTS levels for the ARNG in comparison to the other reserve components, under-resourcing ARNG FTS impacts our shared interest in the

wellbeing of Soldiers as they fulfill missions both at home and abroad. The ARNG Service Members have taken on additional burden and stress to support the missions of our states and nation, to include the unprecedented response to the novel coronavirus (COVID-10) and civil unrest across the country. Under-investing in additional FTS manpower to support them poses a threat to team morale, individual health and wellbeing, and overall readiness.

Relatedly, lack of prioritizing ARNG FTS impacts our ability to retain Soldiers, which ultimately undermines the significant investments made by the state and federal government in their overall training and benefits. These adverse impacts of under-resourcing ARNG FTS put at risk the strength and readiness of the force overall in training and deploying across the globe, and in our states and communities.

As you make recommendations in the Department of Defense's annual budget formulation for FY23, the Council respectfully request that you tend to the observations in the 2019 report to Congress, which identifies the fact that sufficient FTS has impacts on the DoD's "*responsibility to maintain both operational and strategic depth through the RC, as required by the NDS.*" To ensure optimal strength and readiness that would both benefit our states and our nation, the Council requests that you ensure adequate funding in future budgets to meet minimum FTS levels for the ARNG.

cc:

Secretary of Defense
Chief, National Guard Bureau