



National Guard Association of the United States

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March 19, 2024

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Republican Minority Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
568 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Democratic Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
2243 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Leader McConnell, Speaker Johnson, and Leader Jeffries:

The National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS) urges you to pass the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 defense appropriations bill as soon as possible at no less than the level authorized in the recently enacted FY24 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

Our nation faces many threats, both at home and abroad, which makes timely and adequate appropriations a critical need. Another Continuing Resolution (CR) would diminish national security and the capabilities of the Armed Forces by harming readiness, modernization, and quality of life programs. These impacts inherently harm our service members and their families. A CR of any type reduces the Guard's ability to maintain interoperability and serve as the primary combat reserve of the Army and Air Force.

A CR would freeze FY24 funding levels at FY23 rates, further amplifying the challenges created by Military Pay and Allowance budget cuts, higher inflation, and an over-all erosion of buying power. This deficit is intensified when compared to the primary pacing threat, China, whose government continues to increase military funding and invest in advanced military capabilities. In place of a FY24 Appropriation, a CR is effectively "running backwards" on National Defense Strategy (NDS) goals and does not provide the Department with adequate means to execute the three NDS key strategic priorities.

For the National Guard, a short-term CR presents a high risk in Military Pay and Allowances, and moderate risk in Operations and Maintenance. CR periods that extend beyond 60 days will cross over decision making cycles and cause delays in the effective execution of funds. CRs immediately hinder the execution of recruiting and retention strategies, disrupt training, impede readiness, delay maintenance of equipment, impose uncertainty across

numerous programs, and induce inefficient and constrained contracting practices, including restrictions on beginning new contracts for multi-year (e.g. military construction) projects. A CR dramatically impacts our #1 asset: people, by delaying much needed pay and benefit rate increases. The Guard will be unable to meet accessions goals, pay bonuses and incentives, nor meet end strength targets. As a result, a CR will force the Guard to prioritize the limited funding to fulfill statutory, life, health, and safety requirements.

The Guard would not receive funds in the National Guard and Reserve Equipping Account (NGREA) under a CR. A CR delays existing production, procurement, and delivery schedules; increases impacts of inflation by decreasing buying power; and negatively impacts the Guard's ability to secure items vital for readiness. A lapse in appropriations without specific program exemptions will reduce the readiness of the National Guard by forcing the cancellation of statutory training requirements including monthly unit training assemblies and annual training. It will result in furloughed employees and over 56,000 full-time military will continue to work without immediate pay.

We strongly urge you to pass the FY24 Defense Appropriations bill by the March 22nd deadline and avoid the devastating impacts to the National Guard and the defense of the nation of operating under a CR.

Sincerely,



Francis M. McGinn
Major General (Ret.), U.S. Army
President, NGAUS