



The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

March 23, 2020

Dear Mr. President:

The Military Coalition (TMC), representing more than 5.5 million current and former servicemembers, veterans, their families, and survivors would urge you to authorize the use of National Guard members under Title 32, U.S.C. §502(f) orders in response to the COVID-19 outbreak instead of the current use of “State Active Duty” (SAD) orders. As the primary uniformed military first responders to homeland emergencies such as the current crisis, National Guard Soldiers and Airmen deserve full federal support and benefits. We thank you for doing so with the National Guard troops for New York, California, and Washington and ask you to continue this for other states.

As of March 19, all 54 states and territories have declared emergencies in response to COVID-19 and more than 2,000 members of the National Guard across 27 states were activated by their individual governors. Reports indicate further spread of COVID-19 among the American people should result in more National Guard servicemembers being activated.

While SAD is an effective way to quickly mobilize the National Guard in absence of a federal emergency declaration, it is an inferior duty status given the lack of typical federal military support and benefits. Additionally, as these orders are 100% state funded, this financially discourages states from mobilizing critical National Guard assets. This will particularly hamper smaller states from mobilizing the number of troops required to provide essential services should the medical caseload increase as predicted. This will prove even more true if states are forced to divert funds to shore up hospitals when the demand spikes.

Title 32 orders would allow a governor to order National Guard servicemembers to full-time duty status under the command and control of the State, but their mission would be federally funded. Title 32 status would also provide Guardsmen with:

- TRICARE medical coverage
- Access to military hospital facilities
- Federal workman’s compensation
- Death gratuity
- GI Bill eligibility
- Service credit for military retirement



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We are particularly concerned that should one of our young men or women contract the virus on duty responding to COVID-19, they will not have access to immediate military medical care. Under SAD orders, National Guard servicemembers not only do not have access to TRICARE but they are not granted access to Active Duty military treatment facilities. Currently, if a servicemember gets sick or injured it would be up to the state to put the servicemember in civilian health care under the state medical system, adding yet another burden to our over-extended state governments.

We advocate for the requirement that the Department of Defense establish a formal process for governors to request the activation of our National Guard under Title 32, United States Code, §502(f), in response to catastrophic disasters and national emergencies. We believe that this authority, in support of the current National Emergency, will ensure a more streamlined, effective, and responsive activation to operations that support our communities and citizens in combatting COVID-19.

We appreciate your consideration of this important issue and ask you to consider the use of Title 32 to respond to this national emergency.

Sincerely,

Jack Du Teil
President
The Military Coalition

See attached list of organizations



Air Force Association (AFA)
Association of Military Surgeons of the United States (AMSUS)
Association of the United States Navy (AUSN)
Chief Warrant Officers Association of the U.S. Coast Guard (CWOA)
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service, Inc. (COAUSPHS)
Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States (EANGUS)
Fleet Reserve Association (FRA)
Gold Star Wives of America (GSW)
Iraq Afghanistan Veterans Association (IAVA)
Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America (JWV)
Military Chaplains Association of the United States of America (MCA)
Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)
Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH)
National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS)
National Military Family Association (NMFA)
Non Commissioned Officers Association (NCOA)
Reserve Officers Association (ROA)
Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)
The Retired Enlisted Association (TREA)
United States Army Warrant Officers Association (USAWOA)
Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)
VetsFirst (United Spinal Program)