



April 24, 2020

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Defense
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Durbin
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Defense
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Peter Visclosky
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Defense
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kenneth Calvert
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Defense
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Shelby and Visclosky and Ranking Members Durbin and Calvert:

The Military Coalition (TMC), representing more than 5.5 million current and former service members and their families and survivors, is concerned about some issues in the defense budget for fiscal year 2021.

We recognize and appreciate the important work you are doing to support the Department of Defense during the COVID-19 pandemic with the needed Military Personnel and Operations and Maintenance funding for the Active and Reserve Components. We are especially proud of the work by the Defense Health Agency and the funding being provided for research, development, testing and evaluation to combat the coronavirus.

During this time, we stand ready to assist you in any way we can as you develop the budget. Your efforts will help the economy gain back its footing, because you were able to deliver stable and continuous funding with a passed bill rather than having DoD operate under the uncertainty of a continuing resolution.

In the next fiscal year, the National Guard and Reserve will need robust capability to restore readiness and training—at top speed—after the pandemic. We also recommend carryover authority be granted with the Military Personnel and Operations and Maintenance accounts for fiscal year 2020, to provide funding for rescheduled drills, delayed annual tours and rescheduled school training.

We have several concerns that we hope you will address in your appropriation deliberations.

- Navy Reserve End Strength: The Navy Reserve is slated for a 1,361 billet reduction to 58,800 in fiscal year 2021, with a total reduction of 2,161 by fiscal year 2025. It is hard to fathom this is being requested since they have already been reduced from 90,288 positions (fiscal year 2000) at the start of 9/11. Since then the Navy Reserve has been activated for the 20-year engagement in Iraq and Afghanistan, provided 100 percent of



the mission for organic intra-theater air logistics support and sent medical augmentation to COVID-19 hotspots. All this while incurring a 35 percent manpower reduction from fiscal year 2000 to 2021. In recent testimony to the House Defense Subcommittee on March 3, 2020, VADM Luke McCollum stated, “In 2019, Reserve Sailors provided nearly three million man-days of support to Navy missions worldwide, to include nearly 3,000 individual mobilizations. Since 2001, 65,349 Navy Reserve Sailors have executed more than 87,000 mobilizations.”

- National Guard and Reserve Equipment Account (NGREA): To say the Reserve Component relies on Congressional funding is an understatement, considering that the fiscal year 2020 NGREA report stated, “Nearly 75 percent of Air Force Reserve and 62 percent of Air National Guard procurement funding is derived from NGREA.” While we ask you to provide NGREA funding again this year, we have an additional request to include legislative language that will follow Congressional reprogramming for DoD, so that the chronically short equipment needs of the Reserve Components are not further eroded.
- Procurement: Congress directed the services to establish an audit program and you know best how difficult that has been. A key component of auditing a budget is transparency, with budget line items that enable tracking funding from start to finish. In this regard specific National Guard and Reserve line items are needed to better manage and audit the services’ equipment purchases and contracts. Making this change would not alter the reprogramming authorities of the committee. The current budget lines were understandable decades ago, but the advent of computers would certainly justify introducing more granularity into the budget process.

We appreciate your consideration on these important issues and ask you to consider them as you finalize the Department of Defense budget for fiscal year 2021.

Sincerely,

Jack Du Teil
President
The Military Coalition

See attached list of organizations



Air Force Association (AFA)

Army Aviation Association of America (AAAA)

Association of Military Surgeons of the United States (AMSUS)

Association of the United States Navy (AUSN)

Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service (COA)

Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States (EANGUS)

Fleet Reserve Association (FRA)

Gold Star Wives of America (GSW)

Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA)

Marine Corps League (MCL)

Marine Corps Reserve Association (MCRA)

Military Chaplains Association of the United States of America (MCA)

Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)

National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS)

National Military Family Association (NMFA)

Naval Enlisted Reserve Association (NERA)

Non Commissioned Officers Association of the United States of America (NCOA)

Reserve Officers Association (ROA)

Service Women's Action Network (SWAN)

The Retired Enlisted Association (TREA)

United States Coast Guard Petty Officer Association and Enlisted Association (USCGPOA)

US Army Warrant Officers Association (USAWOA)