

## National Guard Association of Delaware

### 2017 Federal Legislative Priorities

- 1) Maintain military capabilities and Force Structure through leveraging the efficiency of the National Guard: Our nation can reduce defense spending and maintain the necessary force structure and experience to meet future challenges by growing the National Guard as a percentage of the Total Force. Funding for equipment and modernization is critical to ensuring the National Guard is properly resourced to respond both overseas and domestically. Congress must recognize the service and commitment of every member of the National Guard serving in 2600 communities nationwide by ensuring the National Guard has an equal voice in Department of Defense, Army and Air Force policy, planning and budgetary deliberations. NGAUS will play an essential role in advocating to Congress and our industry partners to upgrade, modernize and when possible, recapitalize National Guard platforms.
  - a) Preserve the Army National Guard as an Operational Force
    - i) We are concerned: that allowing the National Guard to regress back to a strategic reserve would squander over a decade of investment in training, equipping, and readiness. The Department of Defense proposes a reduction in Army National guard (ARNG) end strength to 342,000, and if sequester returns in 2016 as projected, the Army Guard will be reduced further to 315,000.
    - ii) We support: The Army National Guard maintains 33% of the total Army Force with 16% of the Army's budget. We must assure that Congress maintains the National Guard as a viable and operational force.
    - iii) We are concerned: that conversion of Title 32 personnel to Title 5 would degrade the state's ability to respond to an emergency, further, the administrative burden of managing non dual status employees will undermine the concept of chain of command, and limit the TAG's authority.
    - iv) We support: Converting all federal technicians to AGRs
- 2) Keep the National Guard Modern: Funding for equipment and modernization is critical to ensuring the National Guard is properly equipped to respond both overseas and domestically.
  - a) Assure and Maintain UH-60 Blackhawk Fleet
    - i) We are concerned: that a disproportionate number of older model Black Hawks will make the National Guard irrelevant to future engagements, and limit our capacity to meet homeland support taskings.
    - ii) We support: Maintaining the Army National Guard Black Hawk Fleet and attack helicopters in the National Guard inventory.
  - b) Update and Upgrade C-130's
    - i) We are concerned: There is insufficient time and resources to recapitalize the entire legacy fleet (170 aging reserve C-130 aircraft); at a replacement cost of \$90M each. By 2020, Delaware's C-130's will no longer be Inter-operable due to outdated Communications Navigation System/Air Traffic Management (CNS/ATM) requirements grounding C-130H's
    - ii) We Support: A balanced plan of inter-operable C-130J and Modernized C-130 Aircraft will ensure that the Air Guard maintains relevancy in the total force. We must assure the NDAA is fully funded through appropriations to assure upgrades are made timely; we also advocate for

recapitalization of C130s to newer J models with concurrent and proportional fielding to the ANG.

- 3) National Guard ANG and ARNG facilities fiber upgrade: Funding is required to support a growing requirement for bandwidth DoD wide.
  - a) Upgrade communication infrastructure
    - i) We are concerned: There is insufficient communication infrastructure to support the growing number of Enterprise Services that DoD is moving to, without upgrading our facilities the current cabling infrastructure will not provide sufficient bandwidth and will degrade services.
    - ii) We support: An upgraded communication infrastructure will provide the proper bandwidth to support DoD growing reliance on Enterprise Services. The National Guard's facilities must maintain appropriate infrastructure in order to remain relevant and ready.

#### State of Delaware

- 1) Exempt retirement pay of Delaware Guardsmen from State Income Tax
  - a) Makes Delaware a more attractive location for retirees and their families. Guard retirement income is significantly less than active duty income. The small amount of tax revenue lost is negated by retirees and their families living and spending all of their income, from retirement or other employment, in Delaware.
- 2) Increased financial support of the National Guard
  - a) Currently the Delaware National Guard is funded 95% federally bringing in more than \$100M to the state. In return, the state provides about \$5M in funding. More funding is needed to support education funding to maintain our recruiting and retention strength.
- 3) Tuition assistance at state colleges and universities for dependents of Delaware Guardsmen.
  - a) First Fully Fund Tuition Assistance. Would require an authorization to transfer unused State Tuition Assistance funds to DNG dependents (as can be done with Post 9-11 Federal GI Bill benefits). First priority is active Guardsmen and any unused funds could be transferred to dependents. DNG would manage the tracking.
- 4) Create a state reenlistment bonus for Delaware Guardsmen
  - a) We are suggesting \$500 per troop for first-time reenlistments, but the legislature could come up with its own amount or an annual lump sum. This would be a one-time bonus per individual.
- 5) Establish a line item to support the DE NG voice
- 6) Delaware legislature to establish a caucus on the National Guard.
  - a) The National Guard is a unique entity and needs to be looked at separately from active duty service members, veterans, retirees, etc. The DNG has different agenda items and needs than veterans groups.
- 7) No, or reduced, fees for Delaware vehicle registration for Delaware Guardsmen
  - a) Estimated max \$84,000 (\$40 a year x 2,100 troops) Limit one vehicle per Guardsman.
- 8) No fees for Delaware driver license for Delaware Guardsmen
  - a) Estimated \$12k. There are approximately 2,600 members of the Delaware Guard. At most, 80% are Delaware residents. Estimated annual loss of state income would be \$10.5k (\$5 a year x 2,100 troops).
- 9) No fees for use of Delaware state parks for Delaware Guardsmen
- 10) Amend Title 29, Chapter 87, Section 8720 "Delaware Commission of Veterans Affairs -- Established; composition" to consist of at least one member from the National Guard Member of Delaware (NGADE).