

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 23, 2013

The Honorable Richard Durbin  
Chairman  
Defense Appropriations Subcommittee  
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Vice Chairman  
Defense Appropriations Subcommittee  
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Durbin and Vice Chairman Cochran:

We are pleased that the Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee has historically led congressional efforts to ensure that the National Guard and Reserves are adequately equipped. As the Subcommittee reviews the fiscal year 2014 Department of Defense budget, we hope the panel will add \$1 billion exclusively for the Army and Air Guards to the National Guard and Reserve Equipment Account with an appropriate additional sum for the Reserve Components based on their unfunded equipment shortfalls delineated in the National Guard and Reserve Equipment Report.

As in prior years, the two Guard Components alone face a multi-billion dollar shortfall in critical overseas combat and homeland security equipment requirements. This shortfall is substantially worsened by the impacts of sequestration, which will put Service-sponsored equipment projects for the Guard and Reserve on hold indefinitely. While we do not view National Guard and Reserve Equipment funding as a substitute for fixing the sequester, and we both continue to pursue an overall solution, this funding is absolutely necessary in the meantime to keep the National Guard and Reserve an operational, deployable force.

The Army National Guard desperately needs at least \$500 million to fill critical equipment gaps. The Army Guard requires \$187 million for the chemical biological protection systems it will use to equip its homeland emergency responders for no-fail response missions. Another \$96 million will fund a training system absolutely critical to maintaining readiness when facing operations and maintenance budget gap. Almost \$40 million will be spent on five-ton trucks to meet a longstanding ground mobility shortfall. Another \$30 million will be used on Light Utility Helicopter flight simulators which will allow the Army Guard to save on operations and maintenance costs while keeping pilots qualified. In addition to these larger purchases, the Army National Guard will use the remaining funds to cover critical shortages in other equipment needs.

The Air National Guard requires at least \$500 million this fiscal year to continue critical modernization projects. Among its funding requirements, the Air Guard needs: \$18 million for F-16 and A-10 avionics test equipment upgrades; \$11.5 million for disaster relief bed-down sets; \$11.5 million for firefighting vehicles; \$11 million for RC-26 avionics modernization; nearly \$60 million for KC-135 and C-130J large aircraft infrared countermeasures; and almost \$12 million for C-130H electronic propeller control systems.

National Guard Caucus Letter on the National Guard & Reserve Equipment Account

We still watch with concern as the Reserve Components of the Services receive the oldest and least capable equipment in the total force. Without these added funds appropriated to the National Guard and Reserve Equipment Account, we fear that headquarters-driven budget cuts may reverse recent progress in Guard component equipment stockpiles. The Guard may lose ground at a time when our country needs it more than ever. Considering the importance of the National Guard to our security, and its overall cost-effectiveness, we hope the Subcommittee will fully support additional Guard and Reserve Equipment funding for fiscal 2014. As Co-Chairs of the 81 member-strong Senate National Guard Caucus, we appreciate your leadership and your support of the National Guard and Reserve.

Sincerely,



PATRICK LEAHY  
Co-Chair  
U.S. Senate National Guard Caucus



LINDSEY O. GRAHAM  
Co-Chair  
U.S. Senate National Guard Caucus