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COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-6035

ONE HUNDRED SIXTEENTH CONGRESS

May 21, 2020

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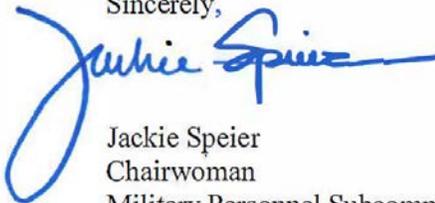
Dear Mr. President:

As members of the House Armed Services Committee, we are deeply concerned with the June 24 activation authority end date for the National Guard under section 502(f)(2)(A) of Title 32, U.S. Code. Many states are still utilizing these citizen soldiers to perform critical tasks during this pandemic. They are being used to conduct contact tracing, assisting nursing homes and other tasks to help states control the spread of the virus in order to open the nation to a more normal status. An additional oversight of ending the authority on June 24 is that many of those mobilized will fall short of the 90-day mark to accrue earned benefits for the Post 9-11 GI Bill and Retirement reduction. As some of these citizen soldiers are de-mobilized, they could find themselves unemployed and will only add to the economic crisis this pandemic has created.

As you know, the states' National Guards were mobilized in a rolling fashion; therefore, you should extend the orders at a minimum until the end of September 2020, if not the end of the calendar year, to allow for the states who mobilized the ability to utilize their citizen soldiers to assist controlling this pandemic. An extension is critical to ensuring the safety and health of our citizens across the nation. Thousands of National Guard service members have been providing invaluable support for testing civilians and Guard personnel, logistics, and warehouse distribution support, and all these efforts are essential to mitigating the impact of COVID-19 on every state.

We request you listen to the Governors and extend the authority and funding under section 502(f)(2)(A) of Title 32, U.S. Code. The use of the citizen soldiers of the National Guard is the primary reason the nation will be able to reopen responsibly this summer and get our economy back on a path to recovery.

Sincerely,



Jackie Speier
Chairwoman
Military Personnel Subcommittee



Adam Smith
Chairman