

# Military Technicians

March 04, 2016

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
Speaker of the House  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Minority Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Ryan, Leader Pelosi, Leader McConnell and Leader Reid:

The nation's governors call on Congress to repeal Section 1053 of the fiscal year (FY) 2016 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which requires the conversion of certain Title 32 National Guard military technicians into non-uniformed Title 5 federal civilian employees. We are gravely concerned about how this provision will affect overall National Guard readiness and our ability to use the Guard to respond to emergencies.

In a January 7 letter to Armed Services Committee leadership, the Council of Governors (Council) co-chairs emphasized the changes required by Section 1053 represent a serious shift in authority from governors, whose constitutional duty is to protect our citizens and lead our National Guard. We are responsible for the safety and welfare of our citizens and are in the best position to manage our full-time military technicians.

For years governors have raised concerns about reductions to full-time National Guard personnel as cuts have been made to end strength in the face of ongoing budget challenges. These conversions would exacerbate two consecutive years of reductions in National Guard uniformed end strength and deny governors' access to thousands of dual-status technicians available for immediate military response to domestic emergencies. The Council discussed this issue at its recent plenary meeting on February 19, and senior leadership from the Department of Defense voiced equally grave concerns about the impact this conversion will have on National Guard readiness.

Governors appreciate the commitment to collaboration expressed by Senate Armed Services Committee leadership in their February 26 letter. We are committed to working with Congress and the Department of Defense on collective solutions to address technical adjustments, if any, that may be warranted in a military technician program. Unfortunately, the deadlines provided in the FY 2016 NDAA provide little time for our input into the process before implementation is set to begin in January 2017. Consequently, we call on Congress to repeal Section 1053 as part of this year's defense authorization bill.

Sincerely,

Governor Gary R. Herbert, Chair  
Utah

Governor Terry McAuliffe, Vice Chair  
Virginia

Governor Robert Bentley  
Alabama

Governor Bill Walker  
Alaska

Governor Douglas A. Ducey  
Arizona

Governor Asa Hutchinson  
Arkansas

Governor John Hickenlooper  
Colorado

Governor Dannel P. Malloy  
Connecticut

Governor Jack Markell  
Delaware

Governor Eddie Calvo  
Guam

Governor David Y. Ige  
Hawaii

Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter  
Idaho

Governor Bruce Rauner  
Illinois

Governor Michael R. Pence  
Indiana

Governor Terry E. Branstad  
Iowa

Governor Sam Brownback  
Kansas

Governor Matt Bevin  
Kentucky

Governor John Bel Edwards  
Louisiana

Governor Paul R. LePage  
Maine

Governor Charles Baker  
Massachusetts

Governor Rick Snyder  
Michigan

Governor Mark Dayton  
Minnesota

Governor Phil Bryant  
Mississippi

Governor Jay Nixon  
Missouri

Governor Steve Bullock  
Montana

Governor Pete Ricketts  
Nebraska

Governor Brian Sandoval

Governor Maggie Hassan

Nevada

Governor Susana Martinez  
New Mexico

Governor Jack Dalrymple  
North Dakota

Governor Kate Brown  
Oregon

Governor Alejandro J. García-Padilla  
Puerto Rico

Governor Dennis Daugaard  
South Dakota

Governor Greg Abbott  
Texas

Governor Jay Inslee  
Washington

Governor Scott Walker  
Wisconsin

New Hampshire

Governor Pat McCrory  
North Carolina

Governor Mary Fallin  
Oklahoma

Governor Tom Wolf  
Pennsylvania

Governor Nikki R. Haley  
South Carolina

Governor Bill Haslam  
Tennessee

Governor Peter Shumlin  
Vermont

Governor Earl Ray Tomblin  
West Virginia

Governor Matthew H. Mead  
Wyoming

CC:

The White House  
Senate Armed Services Committee  
House Armed Services Committee



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