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COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-6035

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ROBERT L. SIMMONS, II, STAFF DIRECTOR

April 30, 2012

The Honorable Dave Heineman
Chairman
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The Honorable Jack Markell
Vice Chair
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The Honorable Terry Branstad
Co-Chair, Council of Governors
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The Honorable Christine Gregoire
Co-Chair, Council of Governors
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Dear Governors:

As the Chair and Vice-Chair of the National Governors Association, I would like to thank you for your continued support and advocacy for the Air National Guard and our men and women in uniform.

On February 26, 2012, you and 47 other Governors wrote to Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta to "strongly oppose the disproportionate cuts facing the Air National Guard as part of the U.S. Air Forces' fiscal 2013 budget request." I also am in receipt of your letter from last Friday and I am concerned that a satisfactory resolution with the Secretary Panetta has not yet occurred. As Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, you have my commitment to make sure your concerns are considered during Congress' legislative efforts this year.

I write today to seek your and other Governors insight on an equally troubling set of defense cuts that will hit the National Guard as a result of the automatic across-the-board discretionary spending cuts known as sequestration that are scheduled to occur on January 2, 2013.

The sequester will result in a 10% across the board reduction in Department of Defense programs, cuts that could be higher if the President exempts military personnel accounts. The House Armed Services Committee has analyzed the impact of the sequestration and found that if left in place, sequestration would cut the military to its smallest size since before the Second World War. Major consequences include:

- More than 200,000 soldiers and Marines separated from service, bringing our force well below our pre-9/11 levels;
- A reduction of 20 percent in defense civilian personnel; and,
- An additional two BRAC rounds of base closings.

Of particular concern to the Committee is the potential impact of sequester to the Army and Air National Guard. At a hearing last week with Secretary Panetta and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Martin Dempsey, Representative Wilson asked General Dempsey the following:

"General, I'm very concerned about the National Guard. ... If there was sequestration, a concern I have is the reduction in the size of our Army Guard... How large will these be - a 50,000 reduction? A 100,000 reduction? What could our governors, our TAGs, our National Guard families see coming their way?"

General Dempsey responded:

"....if you're asking me would a further reduction in our budget authority result in an effect on the Army National guard, yes. I can't tell you today how deeply, because it would depend on the depth of the cut."

Governors, I know you and your colleagues across the country share my concerns about the Air National Guard and I suspect that those concerns would extend to the Army Guard as well. I would also highlight for you that the sequester will also impact the Reserve forces that are based throughout the 50 states and would likely impact a Governor's ability to respond to natural disasters in their state.

The Committee would greatly appreciate any insight and concerns that you and other Governors could share regarding the impact of potential defense sequester cuts to the Guard for both your state and national missions.

Again, we appreciate your advocacy on behalf of our men and women in uniform. As Congress continues to deliberate, I believe your voices are critical to help prevent these devastating cuts to our troops and I commit to work closely with you moving forward.

Sincerely,



Howard P. "Buck" McKeon
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee