



NATIONAL GUARD ASSOCIATION
OF NEW JERSEY

PO BOX 266, WRIGHTSTOWN • NEW JERSEY, 08648 • (732) 272-5343

August 3, 2015

Senator James Beach
1309 Route 70 West
Cherry Hill, NJ 08002

Dear Senator Beach:

On behalf of the nearly 9,000 members of the New Jersey National Guard, we urge you to protect one of our essential benefits, the New Jersey National Guard State Tuition Waiver Program.

As you know, there is currently pending legislation that would extend these tuition benefits to all members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces of the United States who reside in New Jersey, as well as to children or surviving spouses of a member of the reserves who have been killed in the line of duty. We fear this extension to all members of the reserve component will negatively impact the National Guard, primarily in regard to recruiting and retention.

Whether responding to natural disasters such as severe storms, wildfires, and hurricanes or threats to the homeland, the National Guard is the first military force to reach the scene, working hand-in-hand with state and local leaders and emergency personnel when called by the governor. The National Guard's involvement during Superstorm Sandy and the attack on September 11, 2001 was crucial to the emergency response efforts. While all reserve components work collaboratively to fight America's Wars, the National Guard, under dual control by the state and federal government, provides states and communities with a unique and distinctive resource which the other reserve components do not.

The National Guard State Tuition Waiver Program provides our organization with a mission essential recruiting tool not available to the other reserve components. Educational development is highly encouraged in the New Jersey National Guard. It provides our formations with well-rounded and highly educated members, both in civilian and military life. These Soldiers and Airmen are imbedded in their communities, and are relied upon in times of crisis and emergency.

The inclusion of this education benefit to all reserve components would nearly double the amount of eligible recipients, which we fear would impact funding of the program. Recruiters use the benefit to provide incentive for recruits to serve their state and nation rather than one of the other federally funded reserve components. The loss of this recruiting tool will thus threaten the readiness level of the New Jersey National Guard, stressing our mission execution and potentially putting New Jersey at risk.

Thank you for your consideration, as well as your continued support of the New Jersey National Guard and the members of our military.

Sincerely,

Jason C. Tiger

Jason C. Tiger
President, NGANJ

Paul Thompson

Paul B. Thompson
President, EANGNJ