

THE NATIONAL GUARD ASSOCIATION OF NEW JERSEY

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2025 Legislative Committee Report

I. NGAUS/NGAJ Legislative Partnership

We have worked hard this past year to increase our influence in Congress and in the NJ Assembly. We proudly partnered with NGAUS where we could on some very important issues. We hope you see the benefit of joining your Association and helping advance what is important to you.

II. Joint

1. Health Care Access and Medical Readiness

- **Issue:** National Guard and Reserve service members struggle with health care access and continuity of care, affecting their medical readiness and deployability, especially with the rise in no-notice deployments.
- **Recommendation:** Support the Healthcare for Our Troops Act and the Dental Care for Our Troops Act to provide zero-cost health and dental benefits. Also, authorize TRICARE Reserve Select eligibility for federal employees in the National Guard and Reserve.

2. Post-9/11 GI Bill Benefits for the National Guard

- **Issue:** National Guard members serving under Title 32 do not receive the same post-9/11 GI Bill benefits as Active-duty members, despite serving alongside them in various operations.
- **Recommendation:** Support the Guard and Reserve GI Bill Parity Act to expand post-9/11 GI Bill education assistance for Guard members.

3. Military Construction Funding for the National Guard

- **Issue:** Both the Army National Guard and Air National Guard lack sufficient military construction funding to ensure readiness and adequate facilities.
- **Recommendation:** Increase military construction funding for the National Guard and authorize a study within the National Defense Authorization Act to improve project efficiency and completion timelines.

4. Cyber Security and National Guard's Role in Cyber Operations

- **Issue:** The National Guard plays a critical role in cyber operations but lacks sufficient resources for full participation in cyber strategy execution.
- **Recommendation:** Fully resource the National Guard for cyber operations, improve training pipelines, establish Cyber Security Incident Response Teams in each state, and increase full-time staffing for robust network defense.

III. Army

1. Equipment and Weapons Platform Equity

- **Issue:** Despite the Army National Guard's critical role in both overseas combat and domestic emergency response, it is not equipped at the same

level as the Active Component, impacting interoperability and effectiveness.

- **Recommendation:** NGAUS urges Congress to field new equipment and weapons platforms to National Guard units concurrently and proportionally with the Active Component to ensure a fully interoperable and lethal Total Force.

2. **HMMWV Modernization Shortfall**

- **Issue:** More than 50% of Army National Guard High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWVs) are operating beyond their expected useful life, compromising unit readiness.
- **Recommendation:** NGAUS urges Congress to appropriate \$200 million for the Army National Guard HMMWV Modernization Program in FY2026 to address this readiness shortfall.

3. **Aging UH-60 Black Hawk Fleet**

- **Issue:** The Army National Guard's UH-60/HH-60 Black Hawk fleet, with many units operating aircraft over 26 years old, faces challenges in supporting missions such as overseas operations, homeland response, and MEDEVAC transport.
- **Recommendation:** NGAUS urges Congress to designate 10 additional UH-60M Black Hawk aircraft for the Army National Guard in FY2026 to ensure readiness and mission effectiveness.

IV. **Air**

1. **Air National Guard Fighter Fleet Modernization**

- **Issue:** The Air National Guard's fighter fleet is deteriorating, requiring immediate modernization to meet the readiness and lethality needs outlined in the National Defense Strategy.
- **Recommendation:** NGAUS urges Congress to preserve the current USAF Fighter Force Structure, fund 24 F-35A and 24 F-15EX aircraft until all Air National Guard squadrons are fully recapitalized, and prioritize a 3:1 recapitalization ratio for service-retained fighters.

2. **Establishing the Space National Guard**

- **Issue:** The Air National Guard currently provides over 10% of Space Force manpower, but the creation of the Space Force in 2020 failed to establish a Space National Guard, leaving space professionals and missions disconnected from their parent service.
- **Recommendation:** Support the Space National Guard Establishment Act to create the Space National Guard as the primary combat reserve component of the Space Force and resource the National Guard to meet current and emerging space warfighting requirements.

Douglas Coppola
NGANJ Secretary/Legislative
Chair