



**TMC Guard and Reserve Committee
FY 2024 NDAA reconciliation statement**

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For contact:

TMC G&R Committee Co-Chair, Matthew Schwartzman, mschwartzman@roa.org

TMC G&R Committee Co-Chair, Aniela Szymanski, aniela@cwoauscg.vet

Statement:

Both the United States House of Representatives and the Senate have passed their respective versions of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024. To improve the readiness of the Reserve Components and the care and wellbeing of those who serve in them and their families, we, the *undersigned members of The Military Coalition's (TMC) Guard and Reserve (G&R) Committee*, respectfully request the following:

➤ **Sustain dental readiness by including House sec. 701 in the final FY 2024 NDAA.**

Members of the Reserve and National Guard not on active-duty or not covered by the Transitional Assistance Management Program can enroll in the TRICARE Dental Program (TDP).

The TDP requires enrollees to pay monthly premiums and cost-shares, making dental care more unaffordable for the reserve forces. Despite this, both components are evaluated by the same standards for dental readiness.

This inequity makes it more difficult for the Department of Defense (DoD) to sustain the medical readiness of the Total Force. House sec. 701 simply establishes a no-premium, no-copayment dental plan for all members of the Selected Reserve.

By ensuring the affordability of dental care, members of the Reserve and National Guard will be better equipped to maintain their dental (and financial) readiness. TMC's G&R Committee urges the inclusion of House sec. 701 in the final FY 2024 NDAA.

➤ **Provide survivors of Reserve and National Guard service with extended health care coverage by including House sec. 702 in the final FY 2024 NDAA.**

Inequities in health care law and policy also extend to survivors of Reserve Component service. Take the tragedy of Sgt. 1st Class Michael D. Clark, for example.

On July 20, 2022, while on training at Fort Gordon for the U.S. Army Reserve, Sgt. 1st Class Clark was killed by a lightning strike. However, because he died within 30 days on a training exercise while serving in a Reserve Component, his family was forced off TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS) after six months. If Sgt. 1st Class Clark was on day 31 of training or served in the active component, his family would have been covered for up to three years.

House sec. 702 and Senate sec. 701 both eliminate this inequity by extending TRS coverage from six months to three years for all survivors of reserve component service members. However, Senate sec. 701 delays implementation until Oct. 1, 2025.

TMC's G&R Committee thanks both the House and Senate for their support of these sections and urges immediate implementation of this policy change upon the NDAA's signing, which is facilitated by House sec. 702.

➤ **Provide parental leave parity by including House sec. 601 in the final FY 2024 NDAA.**

Sec. 621 of the FY 2022 NDAA enhanced the military parental leave program by authorizing 12 weeks of parental leave following a period of convalescence (regardless of whether the members gives birth or is the non-birth parent). However, for members of the Reserve and National Guard, spouses and parents of adoptive or foster children cannot receive this benefit. This *is not* the case for active-duty.

House sec. 601 simply provides for parity between components in parental leave policy by righting this wrong. TMC's G&R Committee urges the inclusion of House sec. 601 in the final FY 2024 NDAA.

➤ **Provide incentive pay parity by including Senate sec. 621 in the final FY 2024 NDAA.**

Currently, DoD uses 56 Special and Incentive pays to help recruit and retain service members with specific skill sets for roles that are not easy to replace. However, because of DoD policy, Reserve Component service members are not always compensated at the same S&I pay rate as their active component counterparts. Two of the most egregious examples are Hazardous Duty Incentive Pay (HDIP) and Aviation Incentive Pay (AvIP).

Senate sec. 621 simply amends existing law to ensure parity in HDIP and AvIP between components. TMC's G&R Committee urges the inclusion of Senate Sec. 621 in the final FY 2024 NDAA.

➤ **Fund the National Guard and Reserve Equipment Account at the House's level.**

TMC's G&R Committee is aligned with DoD Instruction 1225.06, *Equipping the Reserve Forces*, insofar that the Reserve Components must be "equipped to provide the operational capabilities and strategic depth required of an operational force, be consistently and predictably equipped, and have the right equipment, available in the right quantities, at the right time, and at the right place to support a 'Train, Mobilize, and Deploy' Total Force construct."

Fully funding the National Guard and Reserve Equipment Account (NGREA) is necessary to ensure the readiness and lethality of Reserve Component equipment and weapons systems. Despite this, congressional funding for the NGREA has fluctuated significantly, with no funding provided as recent as FY 2020.

The House's FY 2024 NDAA funds the NGREA at \$1 billion, the same as the previous FY. TMC's G&R Committee urges your support for funding the NGREA at \$1 billion, which is facilitated by the House's FY 2024 NDAA.

Conclusion

The Reserve Components fill the role of both a Strategic Reserve, as well as a fully integrated operational reserve. Congress should adequately man, train, and equip the Reserve and National Guard as a vital element of the Total Force.

TMC's G&R Committee stands ready to assist our partners to achieve this desired end-state. While this statement does not address the TMC G&R Committee's positions on all NDAA matters, it does reflect our approved 118th Congress legislative and policy goals.

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List of supporting TMC G&R Committee organizations:

Air Force Sergeants Association (AFSA)

Chief Warrant Officers Association of the US Coast Guard (CWOA)

Commissioned Officers Association of the US Public Health Service (COA)

Fleet Reserve Association (FRA)

Marine Corps Reserve Association (MCRA)

Non-Commissioned Officers Association (NCOA)

Reserve Organization of America (ROA)

United States Army Warrant Officers Association (USAWOA)