

Congress of the United States Washington, DC 20515

March 24, 2020

The Honorable Mark Esper
Secretary
Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Esper,

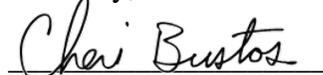
We urge that you consider more authorizations of Title 32, Section 502(f) activations of the Army and Air National Guard. Across all 54 states and territories and the District of Columbia, governors and mayors continue to marshal limited resources to respond to COVID-19. The National Guard can help.

In his March 19th press conference, General Lengyel summed up the advantages of the National Guard well. Our citizen-Soldiers and Airmen live in nearly every ZIP code and “don’t have to mobilize from some base.” After all, they can “pack a lunch, ... [and] go to work, because [they] are already there in the communities where these events are taking place.”

Currently, states are activating personnel under State Active Duty. Doing so, however, requires states to stretch their own funds while waiting months for reimbursement. Governors, along with their Adjutants General, need more of these men and women now, and we must not let accounting gimmicks get in the way. Title 32, Section 502(f) activations are federally funded, which would save these states from acute financial burden, standardize the (federal) benefits and entitlements across all those who become activated, and would most importantly keep those Soldiers and Airmen under their governors’ oversight.

In this whole-of-nation fight against COVID-19, Title 32, Section 502(f) authorizations allow states another means of harnessing the resources of the federal government while retaining the agility of state control. It is encouraging then, that the Administration has recently authorized them for California, New York, and Washington, but more states need help. If you need additional support for this, let us know. The men and women who serve in the National Guard are ready. The governors are ready. We must not let them down.

Sincerely,



Cheri Bustos
Member of Congress

List of Signatories

Cheri Bustos
Daniel W. Lipinski
Raja Krishnamoorthi
Bill Foster
Adam Kinzinger
Mike Bost
Jan Schakowsky
Mike Quigley
Robin Kelly
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