



**OFFICIAL ADDENDUM TO
STATEMENT OF
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**FOR THE
U.S. HOUSE AND SENATE
COMMITTEES ON APPROPRIATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEES ON DEFENSE**

**ON
FY 2027 APPROPRIATIONS PRIORITIES**

APRIL 15, 2026

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ROA'S FY 2027 DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS PRIORITIES

- ✚ Fund national defense at no less than 5 percent of GDP, with RC integration central to that investment, and with Operation Epic Fury and future combat operations funded through supplemental appropriations.
- ✚ Increase investment in large-scale mobilization exercises directed toward strengthening RC integration and Total Force readiness.
- ✚ Statutory availability of appropriations to sustain RC pay and readiness during any government shutdown.
- ✚ Concurrent and proportional fielding of equipment for the RC.
- ✚ Additional C-130J recapitalization funding for the Navy Reserve (USNR), Air Force Reserve (USAFR), and Air National Guard.
- ✚ \$200 million for Army National Guard HMMWV modernization and \$100 million for Army Reserve (USAR) HMMWV modernization.
- ✚ A proportional increase to National Guard and Reserve Equipment Appropriations (NGREA) reflecting the historic growth in the PBR's defense topline.
- ✚ Implementation of the Duty Status Reform Act (H.R. 6976).
- ✚ Prohibition on the use of funds for any divestiture of dedicated USAR MEDEVAC capability.
- ✚ Funding for Section 623 of the FY 2025 NDAA and H.R.7593, the *Reserve Forces Travel Fairness Act* (travel reimbursement for drilling reservists).
- ✚ Appropriation of funds to sustain the 442nd Fighter Wing at Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri, and other USAFR A-10 units that do not have a follow-on mission identified.
- ✚ Investment in Counter-Unmanned Aircraft Systems (C-UAS) capabilities that match the realities of modern asymmetric warfare.
- ✚ Authorization and appropriation of \$6 million for the TriService Nursing Research Program (TSNRP) in a dedicated budget line item.

END STRENGTH ECONOMICS: THE RC COST ADVANTAGE

Before addressing our specific priorities, ROA respectfully submits for the Subcommittee's record a comprehensive analysis of Military Personnel (M-1), Operations & Maintenance (O-1), and Military Construction (C-1) appropriations data from FY 1999 through FY 2026 — covering nearly three decades of enacted actuals — that demonstrates the extraordinary fiscal advantage of the RC model.

Military Personnel (MilPers): RC per-capita MilPers costs run at approximately 0.31 times the cost of equivalent Active Component (AC) personnel — a ratio that has held steady across 28 fiscal years of enacted data, reflecting the compensation differences between the RC and AC models. In FY 2026 alone, MilPers savings attributable to the RC totaled approximately \$63.4 billion. However, when accounting for the full cost of government compensation — including TRICARE premium equivalents, retirement accrual, and MERHCF contributions — the true per-person RC cost drops to approximately 0.15 times the full AC compensation cost. In other words, the RC cost advantage is roughly twice as large as the headline MilPers ratio suggests,

and cumulative savings over FY 1999–FY 2026 far exceed the \$1.3 trillion reflected in MilPers figures alone.

Operations & Maintenance (O&M): RC O&M costs run at approximately 0.09 times AC O&M — a gap driven by the fact that the RC does not require the same permanent infrastructure, continuous readiness operations, or forward deployment support that drives AC costs. This ratio has declined from roughly 14 percent to 9 percent of combined O&M over 28 years, meaning the structural efficiency of the RC model is widening over time. In FY 2026, O&M savings alone totaled approximately \$217.2 billion — more than 3.4 times the MilPers savings figure.

Military Construction (MilCon): RC MilCon costs run at approximately 0.09 times the per-capita equivalent AC cost, adding a third savings stream reaching an estimated \$9.3 billion in FY 2026.

FY 2026 Combined Annual Savings: Across all three appropriation streams, the RC model generated approximately \$290 billion in combined savings in FY 2026 alone. Cumulative savings from FY 1999 through FY 2026 total approximately \$4.4 trillion in nominal dollars — \$1.3 trillion in MilPers, \$3.0 trillion in O&M, and \$0.1 trillion in MilCon — derived directly from DoD's enacted appropriations data.

These figures carry a direct implication for the Subcommittee's deliberations: every dollar invested in RC readiness, equipment, and modernization is leveraged against a structural cost advantage that no amount of active-force restructuring can replicate. The RC generates \$290 billion in annual savings — it deserves an appropriations process that invests commensurately in its readiness.

To that end, ROA recognizes that the RC's remarkable cost efficiency has not come without consequence. Years of chronic underinvestment have produced tangible shortcomings that demand correction. ROA urges the Subcommittee to view this testimony not as a collection of discrete line items, but as a unified argument for restoring the balance between what the RC contribute and what the nation invests in return.

THE ROLE OF THE RC IN THE TOTAL FORCE

Title 10 U.S.C. Sec. 10102 – Purpose of the Reserve Component

"The purpose of each reserve component is to provide trained units and qualified persons available for active duty in the armed forces, in time of war or national emergency, and at such other times as the national security may require, to fill the needs of the armed forces whenever more units and persons are needed than are in the regular components."

There is a fundamental misalignment between the above statute, and the reality of how the RC is employed today. The RC does not simply support Total Force readiness. It enables it. Without the RC, the Total Force cannot fight, deploy, or sustain itself. The operational reliance on the RC is both immediate and indispensable:

- **Army Reserve:** Nearly one-quarter of Army Reserve units are required within the first 60 days of any contingency. The USAR provides more than half of the Army's maneuver-support capability and over 90 percent of certain critical theater-level enablers, including sustainment, medical, and engineering forces.
- **Air Force Reserve:** The Air Force Reserve supplies some of the most experienced fighter pilots in the Department of the Air Force. Its Airmen routinely demonstrate a 72-hour response capability and have consistently exceeded Global Force Management Allocation Plan requirements.
- **Navy Reserve:** The Navy Reserve delivers essential operational capability across a broad mission set, including SEAL Teams and approximately half of the Navy Expeditionary Combat Command and intelligence capacity.
- **Marine Corps Reserve:** The Marine Corps Reserve is operational and globally employed. In FY 2025, it activated more than 1,000 Marines in support of five Combatant Commands and, at one point, comprised approximately 15 percent of all deployed Marine Corps forces.
- **National Guard:** The Army National Guard supplies approximately 54 percent of the Army's total combat units, while the Air National Guard provides nearly 34 percent of the Department of the Air Force's total flying capability—ranging from 90 percent of the domestic air-defense mission to 14 percent of strategic airlift.

Across all six components, RC personnel constitute nearly half of the total United States military end strength.

Beginning with Operations *Desert Shield* and *Desert Storm* and accelerating through two decades of sustained operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and beyond, the RC transitioned from a strategic reserve held in readiness to an operational reserve in continuous use. During the peak years of the Global War on Terror, RC personnel accounted for more than 40 percent of forces deployed to combat theaters—not as temporary augmentees, but as essential units executing missions the active force lacked the capacity or specialized capability to perform.

That degree of integration has not diminished. Deployments in support of Operations *Epic Fury* and *Midnight Hammer* confirm that Reserve forces are already deployed, already exposed to risk, and already bearing the consequences of sustained operational demand. That operational tempo carries real, measurable cost.

West Virginia National Guard Specialist Sarah Beckstrom was killed, and Air Force Staff Sgt. Andrew Wolfe was critically wounded, in the 2025 ambush near the White House. Six Army Reserve soldiers from the 103rd Sustainment Command were killed when an Iranian drone struck a U.S. tactical operations center at Port Shuaiba, Kuwait, on March 1, 2026. On March 12, 2026, six American aviators were killed when their KC-135R Stratotanker crashed in western Iraq while supporting Operation Epic Fury, including three members of the Ohio Air National Guard's 121st Air Refueling Wing: Capt. Seth R. Koval, 38, of Mooresville, Indiana; Capt. Curtis J. Angst, 30, of Wilmington, Ohio; and Tech. Sgt. Tyler H. Simmons, 28, of Columbus, Ohio. On January 28, 2024, three Army Reserve soldiers—Staff Sgt. William Jerome Rivers,

Sgt. Kennedy Ladon Sanders, and Sgt. Breonna Alexsondria Moffett of the 718th Engineer Company, 926th Engineer Brigade, Fort Moore, Georgia—were killed at Tower 22 in Jordan.

Together, these incidents are solemn reminders that Reserve service is neither theoretical nor peripheral. It is lethal, continuous, and consequential. ROA honors their memory and the sacrifice of their families.

A force that provides nearly half of the nation’s military end strength, executes some of its most critical warfighting missions, and absorbs casualties in combat overseas and on U.S. soil must be invested in accordingly. The FY 2027 Defense Appropriations Act is an opportunity for Congress to align national investment in the RC with the weight of what it is being asked to carry.

FUNDING NATIONAL DEFENSE AT 5 PERCENT OF GDP — WITH RESERVE INTEGRATION AT THE CENTER

ROA strongly supports funding national defense at no less than 5 percent of GDP. The FY 2027 President’s Budget Request (PBR) represents a historic step toward that goal.

The PBR builds upon the \$1 trillion overall defense topline enacted for FY 2026 and requests \$1.5 trillion in total budgetary resources for FY 2027, a \$441 billion or 44 percent increase over the FY 2026 enacted level, when combined with the \$151.5 billion in mandatory funding provided through the Working Families Tax Cut Act (P.L. 119-21). Of this total, the Budget includes \$1.1 trillion in base discretionary budget authority for DoD and \$350 billion in additional mandatory resources dedicated to munitions and defense industrial base priorities. ROA commends the President for this extraordinary commitment.

However, ROA urges the Subcommittee to ensure that historic topline growth is not mistaken for a guarantee that the RC will benefit proportionally.

The pattern of prior defense buildups demonstrates that Active Component platforms, personnel, and installations tend to absorb the majority of topline increases. A 44 percent increase in the defense budget that leaves the Reserve Component’s modernization, training, and equipment accounts near prior-year levels does not represent a defensible Total Force investment strategy.

Any defense budget funded at or approaching 5 percent of GDP should clearly demonstrate RC integration across three dimensions:

1. Modernization timelines that are concurrent and proportional rather than sequential;
2. Operational planning and resourcing frameworks that integrate the RC from initial strategy development and budget formulation through mission planning and execution; and
3. Mobilization readiness funding sufficient to test, validate, and correct the assumptions on which Total Force planning depends.

The Nifty Nugget mobilization exercise, described in further detail in this statement, is one example of how a portion of the FY 2027 topline increase can be directed specifically toward this third dimension.

ROA also urges Congress to fund Operation Epic Fury through supplemental appropriations rather than absorbing those costs within the base defense budget.

When the Department funds named combat operations within its base budget, it does so by deprioritizing the very investments the base budget is intended to sustain: modernization programs that preserve technological advantage, infrastructure investments that support long-term readiness, research and development pipelines that generate future capabilities, and training and exercise programs that validate the force's ability to execute joint warfighting concepts.

These are not discretionary conveniences. They are the strategic foundation on which deterrence rests. Diverting strategic account resources to cover operational costs reflects a well-documented pattern that has historically produced readiness crises, equipment shortfalls, and training deficits, all of which then require years and billions of dollars to reverse (if not trillions).

Supplemental appropriations for combat operations preserve the integrity of the base budget, maintain transparency regarding the true cost of ongoing military operations, and ensure that strategic modernization needs are not quietly liquidated to meet day-to-day operational demands.

LARGE-SCALE MOBILIZATION EXERCISES: THE NIFTY NUGGET LEGACY AND THE CASE FOR RENEWED INVESTMENT

One of the best examples of how the historic growth in the FY 2027 defense topline can be directed toward strengthening RC integration is the funding of a recurring, Joint-level, large-scale mobilization exercise program modeled on the 1978 Nifty Nugget exercise, the first comprehensive national mobilization test since World War II and one of the most consequential military exercises in American history.

In October 1978, DoD and 30 civilian agencies conducted a 21-day exercise simulating the mobilization of U.S. forces in response to a Soviet and Warsaw Pact attack on NATO in Europe. It was the most realistic, full-scale mobilization test the nation had attempted in decades. The exercise, which involved 24 military commands, was designed to determine whether U.S. plans, procedures, logistics, and communications systems could support wartime mobilization. The results were sobering.

Major deficiencies in planning, coordination, and logistics resulted in up to half a million troops arriving late to the simulated fight, often piecemeal and without their equipment, and far too delayed to be operationally relevant. The exercise produced an estimated 400,000 notional U.S. casualties. A noncombatant evacuation of more than one million military dependents from Europe generated an airlift demand ten times larger than the available mobility airlift force, collapsing the system at precisely the moment it was most needed. The Worldwide Military

Command and Control System, the computer backbone of command authority, suffered a catastrophic failure lasting 12 hours during the peak of the crisis, leaving commanders without essential readiness data when decisions of strategic consequence were being made. An unrecoverable shortfall of approximately one million tons of ammunition and military gear that had been assumed to be prepositioned in European reserve stocks was discovered not to exist. Emergency orders, policies, regulations, and procedures were outdated, disconnected, and internally inconsistent. The mobilization of the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) revealed serious deficiencies in databases, locating procedures, and compliance expectations.

As one senior Pentagon official who observed the exercise stated, the Army “ran out of everything.” No single component performed adequately. The civil-military coordination that wartime logistics demands was neither practiced nor, as the exercise revealed, meaningfully planned. The official evaluation concluded that there were serious shortcomings in nearly every phase of the mobilization process.

Nifty Nugget was not a failure as an exercise. It was a success precisely because it identified these deficiencies before a real war did. Its findings drove a decade of institutional reform, including the creation of the Joint Deployment Agency in 1979 and the eventual establishment of United States Transportation Command in 1987.

A series of follow-on exercises, including Proud Spirit (1980), Potent Punch (1981), Proud Saber (1982), Proud Scout (1987), and Proud Eagle (1989), built on these lessons and were essential to the United States’ ability to mobilize and deploy more than 500,000 servicemembers to the Gulf in 1990. Without Nifty Nugget and the exercise program it seeded, the Desert Storm mobilization would likely have resembled Nifty Nugget’s failures rather than its successes.

That mobilization exercise program was subsequently shelved. According to independent national security analysts, U.S. mobilization capability has not only atrophied but has plausibly regressed to readiness levels comparable to those revealed by Nifty Nugget. No federal office today is formally charged with responsibility for national mobilization.

In fact, the same systemic gaps Nifty Nugget exposed in logistics databases, airlift and sealift allocation models, ammunition prepositioning, industrial surge planning, and interagency coordination remain largely unresolved. In many cases, these challenges are more acute given the complexity of modern joint warfighting and the demands of the Indo-Pacific operating environment.

With this in mind, a 21st-century mobilization exercise must address challenges Nifty Nugget did not face. These include the effects of cyber-attacks on command-and-control infrastructure, the influence of social media on Individual Ready Reserve compliance, the ability (or inability) of industry to provide ample supply and surge capacity, the immense strategic lift requirements imposed by Indo-Pacific distances and contested environments, and the deep reliance on civilian infrastructure such as ports, rail, telecommunications, and data systems. At present, there is no mechanism to test these interdependencies under realistic, execution-level conditions.

ROA was encouraged that the FY 2026 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) included language directing the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in coordination with the Commander of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, to assess the Department's ability to rapidly mobilize, deploy, and sustain Active and Reserve Component forces in a major Indo-Pacific contingency. That provision appropriately calls for the identification of logistics vulnerabilities, mobilization bottlenecks, and command-and-control challenges, as well as an inventory of civilian skills resident in the Reserve force.

However, that provision is limited to a study. While valuable, an analytical assessment alone does not substitute for execution, nor does it meaningfully reintegrate mobilization into the Department's budgeting, planning, and readiness baseline. Mobilization capability that is studied but not exercised, particularly at scale, under Joint command, and with live forces, remains theoretical. History demonstrates that the most dangerous failures occur not in plans on paper but in execution under stress.

For these reasons, ROA urges the Subcommittee to provide appropriations for a recurring, Nifty Nugget-style mobilization exercise series conducted at the Joint level, with full Active and Reserve Component participation. These exercises should stress real-world mobilization elements and timelines, personnel flows, sustainment capacity, command relationships, and operational integration under contested conditions.

Tabletop and command-post exercises provide useful insight, but only live execution reveals the friction that delays mobilization, degrades mission success, and costs lives.

ROA recognizes that this may entail additional costs, including in MilPers funding, Active Duty for Operational Support (ADOS) requirements, transportation, sustainment, and temporary enabling infrastructure. However, these costs must be evaluated in context.

Title 10 U.S.C. Section 10208 requires the Secretary of Defense to conduct at least one major national mobilization exercise each year that is comprehensive, realistic, and inclusive of both Active and Reserve Component forces. The statute further directs the Secretary to maintain a deliberate, recurring plan to test all U.S.-based units and their interactions—including sustainment—so Congress can evaluate whether planning assumptions and resource allocations are adequate. A recurring, Joint-level mobilization exercise series modeled on Nifty Nugget is therefore not a discretionary initiative—it is a direct and appropriate execution of existing requirements.

Based on enacted appropriations data analyzed by ROA, the RC generated approximately \$217 billion in O&M savings in FY 2026 alone, with hundreds of billions more annually across MilPers and MILCON accounts. Against those savings, the cost of even an ambitious Joint mobilization exercise is modest.

Reinvesting a small fraction of the savings the RC produces into realistic, Joint, execution-level mobilization exercises is not discretionary spending. It is a necessary step to restore mobilization as a credible, budget-anchored capability.

Such investment will compress mobilization timelines, strengthen Joint Force cohesion, improve RC integration, and most importantly, reduce risk to mission success and to the servicemembers who will be called upon to execute the nation's plans when theory becomes reality.

AVAILABILITY OF APPROPRIATIONS DURING GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

ROA supports S.3168, the Shutdown Fairness Act, and urges its inclusion in the FY 2027 Defense Appropriations Act. This would ensure uninterrupted pay for servicemembers during a lapse in appropriations by authorizing such sums as necessary to compensate covered personnel, including RC members performing active service or inactive duty training (IDT).

However, S.3168 does not address the broader challenges the RC faces during a shutdown. When appropriations lapse, any activity not designated as excepted must cease, resulting in the suspension of routine IDT, many annual training events, and most professional military education (PME). When drills are cancelled, training does not occur and the associated compensation is not earned — directly affecting household finances and unit readiness.

Although S.3168 provides pay when duty is performed, it does not designate routine training, PME, or the support functions required to execute IDT, annual training (AT), active duty for training (ADT), and PME as excepted activities. Nor does it provide obligation authority for orders, travel, civilian and contractor support, or schoolhouse operations. Without this authority, scheduled training halts, qualification timelines slip, PME is delayed, and units experience avoidable readiness loss.

For these reasons, ROA respectfully urges the Subcommittee to incorporate these additional provisions into the FY 2027 Defense Appropriations Act. Doing so would preserve pay continuity during a funding lapse, designate scheduled RC training and PME as excepted activities, authorize the orders, travel, and support necessary to execute that training, and establish a narrowly tailored compensation or funded reschedule option when drills are cancelled solely due to a shutdown.

This comprehensive approach would protect RC readiness, prevent avoidable training and PME delays, and uphold the Department's responsibility to the force and their families.

CONCURRENT AND PROPORTIONAL FIELDING OF RC EQUIPMENT

ROA is aligned with DoD Instruction 1225.06, *Equipping the Reserve Forces*, insofar that the RC 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.”

The current method for equipping and modernizing the RC relies on budgeted procurement appropriations, NGRE, congressionally directed appropriations, and AC to RC redistribution

(known as cascading). Rather than new procurement, the armed forces primarily rely on cascading to equip their RC. In fact, the RC allocation of defense appropriations for equipment procurement (including congressional adds) is less than 10 percent of the total defense allocation. Within the RCs themselves, the Guard components have historically received substantially more in funding for their equipment than the reserves.

While this is largely because the Army National Guard is the largest reserve component of the largest military branch, it is often the case that the modernization needs of the reserves are overlooked or purposefully put on the back burner.

The result is a Reserve force that is perpetually one or several generations behind on key platforms, creating interoperability gaps, readiness risks, and training inefficiencies that ultimately cost more to remedy than concurrent fielding would have required. ROA urges the Subcommittee to concurrently and proportionally field the needs of the RC, in accordance with force flow and Total Force needs.

C-130J RECAPITALIZATION: BUILDING ON FY 2026 PROGRESS

ROA commends the President for the extraordinary commitment to RC C-130 modernization reflected in the FY 2027 budget request. For example, the FY 2027 P-1R represents a historic investment in Navy Reserve aviation recapitalization, requesting 18 KC-130J aircraft — more than triple the 5 aircraft funded in FY 2026. ROA thanks the President for this commitment and urges the Subcommittee to fully fund this request.

ROA recently endorsed a letter spearheaded by Representative Barry Loudermilk, signed by 83 Members of Congress, urging the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense to prioritize C-130J funding in FY 2027.

As acknowledged in the *Introduction* of this statement, the FY 2026 Defense Appropriations Act delivered vital C-130 recapitalization funds for both the Air National Guard and Navy Reserve. However, both continue to face significant interoperability challenges driven by delayed recapitalization and persistent obsolescence risks.

The unfunded recapitalization gap remains substantial: 48 legacy ANG and AFRC C-130H aircraft remain without a recapitalization program of record; the 30-aircraft Navy Reserve C-130T logistics fleet continues to age; and 9 New York ANG LC-130H arctic aircraft require full recapitalization.

The Navy Reserve has identified KC-130T recapitalization to the KC-130J standard as an enduring operational priority. As the Navy's only organic intra-theater airlift capability for oversized cargo — and the only platform capable of fulfilling every airlift requirement Distributed Maritime Operations demands — the KC-130J is operationally irreplaceable.

The C-130J is the only active U.S. airlifter in production and the longest continuously running military production line in American history. A stable production rate sustains 497 suppliers

across 38 states, supporting 33,563 direct and indirect jobs and more than \$3.9 billion in total economic impact. Production has declined from more than 24 aircraft per year in 2020 to approximately 20 per year today.

Only sustained congressional investment will prevent further decline — and a significant production reduction could raise per-unit C-130J pricing, erode the supplier base, and undermine national security at precisely the moment when future requirements remain substantially unfilled.

ROA urges the Subcommittee to fund, at minimum:

- The full FY 2027 PBR request of 18 Navy Reserve KC-130Js, representing a generational recapitalization of the C/KC-130T fleet, but no fewer than six (6) aircraft if full funding cannot be achieved.
- At least eight (8) C-130Js to continue the unfunded recapitalization of the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve Command.
- \$100 million for fleet-wide Diminishing Manufacturing Sources (DMS) requirements arising from USAF funding shortfalls — failure to address DMS imperils sustainment of the entire C-130 fleet across all services and threatens new aircraft production.
- Four (4) LC-130J ski-equipped aircraft for the New York Air National Guard.
- \$25 to \$40 million to complete non-recurring engineering (NRE) requirements for the LC-130J.
- Two (2) KC-130Js to replace operational losses sustained by the United States Marine Corps — noting that the FY 2027 P-1R does not include a Marine Corps Reserve KC-130J procurement line, underscoring the urgency of congressional action to address this gap.

Further, the C-130J Multiyear Procurement III contract (FY 2019–2023) demonstrated the tangible value of multiyear procurement authority, delivering approximately 11 percent in savings — roughly \$580 million — compared to prior annual procurement costs. ROA encourages the Subcommittee to support a Multiyear Procurement IV contract beginning in FY 2028 to sustain these efficiencies and provide the production line stability the industrial base requires.

HMMWV AND LIGHT TACTICAL VEHICLE MODERNIZATION

ROA calls the Subcommittee's attention to the bipartisan letter championed by Representative Yakym regarding Light Tactical Vehicle funding, and thanks the Congressman for his leadership on RC ground vehicle modernization (in what has proven to be an increasingly hostile environment for this critical platform).

Despite its omission from the President's FY 2027 budget request, the Army has affirmed a requirement for more than 100,000 light tactical vehicles, retaining approximately 50,000 HMMWVs balanced with approximately 50,000 JLTVs to be sustained beyond 2050.

In 2023, the Army awarded AM General a 10-year contract for over 20,000 JLTV A2s and nearly 10,000 JLTV trailers. The JLTV and HMMWV are proven, global, combat-tested systems that have provided a comparative advantage for U.S. forces and allies for decades. AM General, the manufacturer of both vehicles, employs more than 1,100 Americans at major facilities in Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio, with a supplier base spanning 48 states.

The Army Reserve's HMMWV fleet is aging rapidly, with significant portions of the inventory approaching or exceeding service life limits.

Safety-related readiness failures — including brake system degradation, steering component wear, and electrical system failures — are occurring with increasing frequency. The Army Reserve is not programmed to receive the Common Tactical Truck until after 2032, leaving a critical gap in ground mobility capability. The Bulk Fuel Distribution System is similarly not programmed for complete fielding until 2031.

Meanwhile, more than 4,500 recapitalized HMMWVs are already in the Army National Guard because of sustained congressional investment, and the program has demonstrably delivered capability and readiness improvements. Halting this investment now — at a point when the Reserve Components' operational demands are increasing, not decreasing — is fiscally indefensible and operationally irresponsible.

Reduced funding also unnecessarily jeopardizes the LTV supplier base. The time required to qualify a new supplier is a minimum of six to eight months, creating substantial risk in meeting production requirements when demand returns. Once supplier capacity is lost, it cannot be reconstituted quickly or cheaply. ROA urges the Subcommittee to fund:

- The highest possible level of funding for the JLTV program for the Army and Marine Corps Reserve.
- \$200 million for the Army National Guard HMMWV Modernization program.
- \$100 million for the Army Reserve HMMWV Modernization program.

NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVE EQUIPMENT APPROPRIATION (NGREA): A PROPORTIONAL SHARE OF A HISTORIC TOPLINE

The FY 2027 PBR includes an unprecedented defense topline. ROA commends the Administration for this commitment. The FY 2026 Defense Appropriations Act provided \$800 million in NGREA. This is meaningful funding, and ROA thanks the Subcommittee for providing it.

The President's NG&RE (a.k.a. NGREA) budget request for FY 2027 is \$1 billion, a 25 percent increase over the FY 2026 enacted level. ROA commends the President for requesting it. However, ROA believes it *is not* proportional to the documented need, nor to the PBR.

The RC have long documented billions of dollars in unfunded requirements. A defense topline that grows by 44 percent while NGREA remains at or near prior-year levels sends a clear and

unmistakable signal that RC equipment modernization is not participating proportionally in the nation’s defense investment.

ROA urges the Subcommittee to fund NGREA at no less than \$1.3 billion in FY 2027—a level consistent with the \$1.3 billion Congress provided in FYs 2018, 2019, and 2020, and one that ROA believes represents the minimum acceptable investment given the documented modernization needs of the RC.

To be clear about what proportionality would require: during FYs 2018 through 2020, Congress funded NGREA at a median rate of approximately 0.2059 percent of the total defense topline.

Applied to the FY 2027 President’s Budget request of \$1.5 trillion, that same proportional rate would yield NGREA funding of approximately \$3.09 billion. ROA is not requesting \$3.09 billion (although it would be greatly appreciated). ROA is requesting \$1.3 billion—less than half of what a truly proportional investment would demand.

The Subcommittee should understand that even ROA's floor request represents a significant concession from proportionality. A defense topline that grows to \$1.5 trillion while NGREA is held at \$1 billion does not reflect an intentional commitment to RC modernization.

ROA respectfully urges the Subcommittee to fund NGREA at \$1.3 billion as an absolute floor, and to begin a good-faith dialogue about restoring NGREA to a historically proportional share of the defense investment.

Fiscal Year	DoD Topline (\$B)	NGREA (\$B)	NGREA as % of Topline
FY16	\$521.7	\$1.000	0.1918%
FY17	\$523.2	\$0.750	0.1434%
FY18	\$589.5	\$1.300	0.2206%
FY19	\$638.8	\$1.300	0.2035%
FY20	\$671.5	\$1.300	0.1936%
FY21	\$705.4	\$0.950	0.1347%
FY22	\$742.3	\$0.950	0.1280%
FY23	\$857.9	\$1.000	0.1166%
FY24	\$886.3	\$1.000	0.1129%
FY25	\$831.3	\$0.800	0.0962%
FY26 Enacted	\$832.0 (base discretionary)	\$0.800	0.0962%
FY27 PBR	\$1,500.0 (total)	\$1.000	0.0667%
FY27 ROA Ask (Floor)	\$1,500.0 (total)	\$1.300	0.0867%
FY27 ROA Median % Ask	\$1,500.0 (total)	\$3.090	0.2059%

IMPLEMENTING DUTY STATUS REFORM

H.R. 6976, the *Duty Status Reform Act*, represents one of the most consequential and overdue pieces of legislation affecting the RC in a generation. ROA has placed implementation of Duty Status Reform at the center of its FY 2027 NDAA statement and urges this Subcommittee to support and facilitate its implementation.

PROHIBIT USE OF FUNDS FOR ARMY RESERVE MEDEVAC DIVESTITURE

ROA urges the Subcommittee to include in the FY 2027 Defense Appropriations Act a provision prohibiting the use of funds for any divestiture, transfer, or inactivation of dedicated Army Reserve medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) aviation capability, including any Army Transformation Initiative (ATI) action that would eliminate or reassign organic Army Reserve MEDEVAC helicopter units or assets.

The Army Reserve has long maintained dedicated MEDEVAC units equipped with HH-60M Black Hawk medical helicopters and trained, certified medical flight crews, including physicians, flight nurses, and medics qualified to provide advanced trauma care during aeromedical evacuation. These units are not administrative adjuncts to a broader Army capability. They are organic, self-contained medical response assets that the Army Reserve can deploy, sustain, and reposition in support of both domestic and overseas missions.

Following the April 30, 2025, ATI direction to streamline force structure and divest legacy systems, the Army began realigning aviation and medical enterprises and reviewing aircraft allocations and headquarters constructs that shape MEDEVAC doctrine, personnel, and fleet mix. Early implementation steps related to headquarters rationalization and platform divestments carry direct implications for intra-theater evacuation capacity, medical command and control, and the Army's ability to generate clinically capable evacuation forces at scale.

ATI proposals would divest the Army Reserve of this organic capability, replacing dedicated Reserve MEDEVAC units with a model that has been previously attempted—and quickly reversed. That approach failed because it degraded readiness, increased operational risk, and reduced the Army's ability to generate medically capable forces under sustained operational demand.

Targeted statutory guardrails such as those proposed by S. 1951, the *Retaining Essential Support for Combat and Unified Evacuation (RESCUE) Act of 2025*, would provide important protections against the erosion of MEDEVAC capability. The legislation requires the Army to maintain a dedicated MEDEVAC capability, including personnel, training, doctrine, and aircraft configured specifically for medical evacuation, and anchors medical command and control and clinical standards within the medical department.

By doing so, the bill helps prevent degradation of the MEDEVAC enterprise through ad hoc restructuring or asset shifts undertaken without comprehensive, risk-based assessment. It further aligns MEDEVAC governance with operational planning assumptions, contingency

requirements, support to civil authorities, Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) response, humanitarian assistance, and installation emergency medical response. This alignment helps ensure the capability remains properly scaled to support Combatant Commanders across the full spectrum of missions.

While authorization-level guardrails like the *RESCUE Act* are essential, a clear and enforceable prohibition on divestiture through the FY 2027 Defense Appropriations Act would be a complementary and necessary measure. Such a prohibition would provide the clearest possible guidance to the Department of Defense during ATI implementation.

ROA acknowledges that a conflict in the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command area of responsibility (INDOPACOM) would differ fundamentally from operations in Iraq or Afghanistan. China's integrated air defense systems across the first island chain are designed to contest or deny aeromedical evacuation throughout the operating area, meaning the United States is likely to enjoy, at best, episodic air superiority rather than persistent permissive access.

In this environment, every organic MEDEVAC asset—including every Army Reserve MEDEVAC helicopter crew—becomes more valuable, not less. Large-Scale Combat Operations (LSCO) are expected to generate casualties at rates that rapidly degrade combat power; as wounded personnel accumulate, units lose tempo, mobility, and cohesion. Dedicated MEDEVAC capability is therefore central to preserving and regenerating combat effectiveness. Doctrine and operational experience make clear that MEDEVAC and CASEVAC are not interchangeable. MEDEVAC provides protected movement with clinically supervised en route care under medical authority; CASEVAC does not.

Substituting general-purpose aviation for MEDEVAC diminishes specialized medical training, weakens medical command relationships, and reduces survivability in high-threat environments. In INDOPACOM, vast distances, contested airspace, and episodic air superiority demand clinically governed MEDEVAC capable of exploiting narrow access windows, integrating with maritime evacuation pathways, and sustaining prolonged en route care when timelines to Role 2 or Role 3 facilities are extended. The Army's HH-60M fleet, equipped with dedicated medical interiors, mission systems, oxygen generation capability, and reconfigurable litter capacity, is specifically designed to meet these requirements.

Divesting Army Reserve MEDEVAC capability while INDOPACOM is demanding greater Prolonged Casualty Care capacity is not a rational force-design choice. It is a strategic contradiction that the Subcommittee should explicitly prohibit.

FUNDING SECTION 623 OF THE FY 2025 NDAA — TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT FOR DRILLING RESERVISTS

Section 623 of the FY 2025 NDAA addressed a longstanding and fundamental inequity: drilling reservists bearing out-of-pocket travel costs to fulfill their military obligations.

In the All-Volunteer Force era, asking citizen-warriors to personally subsidize the cost of their own service is not merely unfair — it is a barrier to participation, a disincentive to continued affiliation, and an implicit signal that the nation does not fully value the commitment these individuals make.¹

Sec. 623 requires that implementation begin no later than January 1, 2027 — a deadline that falls squarely within the FY 2027 appropriations year. ROA's review of the FY 2027 PBR does not indicate that the military services have included dedicated funding to meet this statutory requirement. ROA acknowledges that the J-Books and detailed service budget justification documents may provide a clearer picture not yet publicly available.

In the absence of that evidence, however, ROA urges the Subcommittee to ensure that the FY 2027 Defense Appropriations Act includes the resources necessary for the services to implement this mandate on schedule.

ROA estimates the cost of full implementation at approximately \$3.2 billion. This is a significant figure, but one that must be evaluated in context.

According to ROA's analysis of congressional appropriations data spanning FY 1998 to present, the RC save DoD (and the American taxpayer) approximately \$63.4 billion in MilPers costs in a single FY.

Fully reimbursing reservists for the cost of traveling to drill — an expense the active component never bears — would consume less than five percent of the annual military personnel savings the RC model generates.

In the event full implementation of Sec. 623 cannot be resourced within FY 2027 constraints, ROA offers H.R. 7593, the *Reserve Forces Travel Fairness Act*, as a lower-cost alternative that would nonetheless deliver meaningful and immediate travel equity to drilling reservists.

The *Reserve Forces Travel Fairness Act* provides a targeted correction to Title 37 U.S.C. § 452 by authorizing reimbursement of necessary rental vehicle costs for the full drill or muster period and for one adjacent travel day when a member must travel 150 miles or more from their permanent residence. This change aligns the Joint Travel Regulations with the practical travel timelines required for safe and timely reporting, without expanding any other entitlements.

¹ DoD periodically conducts a Status of Forces Survey for the RC. The most recent publicly available results, published in 2020, revealed several troubling indicators, including an average of 9.1 hours of uncompensated work per Reserve Component servicemember devoted to routine “unit business.” ROA has submitted a pending Freedom of Information Act request for the results of the most recent RC survey, filed on February 23, 2026.

DoD is well beyond the statutory period for completing this request. ROA respectfully requests the Committee’s assistance in obtaining these results, which would inform congressional oversight and benefit both the Department and the Reserve force.

The Department has already acknowledged the challenges associated with long-distance Inactive Duty Training travel and has adjusted certain reimbursement caps to mitigate out-of-pocket costs for members operating outside normal commuting distance. These steps, while helpful, do not resolve the specific gap this legislation addresses: unreimbursed rental vehicle costs for the adjacent travel day required to safely reach and return from the drill location.

The *Reserve Forces Travel Fairness Act* closes that gap — narrowly, practically, and at a fraction of the cost of full Sec. 623 implementation.

SUSTAINING THE 442ND FIGHTER WING AND RESERVE COMPONENT A-10 UNITS WITHOUT A FOLLOW-ON MISSION

ROA urges the Subcommittee to sustain the 442nd Fighter Wing (442 FW) at Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri, alongside other Reserve Component A-10 units that currently lack an identified follow-on mission. Allowing these units to atrophy would amount to the deliberate destruction of a national security investment built over decades.

Section 147(c) of the FY 2026 NDAA directed the Department of the Air Force to identify follow-on missions for units affected by A-10 divestment. In direct support of this statutory requirement, ROA has requested information from the Secretary of the Air Force regarding planning efforts and has urged the identification of a viable, enduring flying mission for the 442nd Fighter Wing.

The 442nd's record of service spans more than 70 years, from its World War II lineage through Desert Storm and repeated post-9/11 deployments. In recent combat operations, the Wing executed taskings initially aligned to Operation Inherent Resolve and later redirected to Afghanistan, where it provided decisive Close Air Support (CAS) under combat conditions. This depth of operational experience represents institutional capability that cannot be rapidly regenerated once lost.

ROA remains committed to working constructively with the Department of the Air Force to help define and shape an appropriate follow-on mission—one that preserves the combat experience, lethality, and readiness of these proven Airmen. However, if the Department's report does not identify a suitable follow-on mission, ROA urges the Subcommittee to act, as it has done in similar circumstances.

The FY 2025 Defense Appropriations Act included a general provision prohibiting the divestiture of F-15 aircraft unless the Secretary of Defense certified to the Committees on Appropriations that any such aircraft would be replaced in a manner that maintained unit aircraft strength and preserved readiness.

ROA respectfully asks the Subcommittee to apply the same framework to the 442nd Fighter Wing.

Retaining experienced Reserve pilots is both an operational imperative and a cost-avoidance measure. Producing a fighter pilot—from accession through undergraduate pilot training and Formal Training Unit qualification—requires multiple years and substantial investment per aviator, followed by additional time and resources to achieve mission-ready and instructor status. Preserving experienced pilots in units like the 442nd sustains immediate combat capability, reduces strain on the training pipeline, avoids significant replacement costs, and preserves instructor depth essential for force regeneration at scale.

A common and legitimate objection to force-structure advocacy is that retention and readiness arguments could apply equally to any unit facing platform divestiture. That objection warrants a direct answer.

In the case of the 442nd Fighter Wing, the following factors are specific, unique, and not readily replicated elsewhere:

1. **Geographic Joint Synergy:** The 442nd's proximity to Fort Leonard Wood—one of the Army's primary Joint Terminal Attack Controller qualification pipelines—creates a standing, high-frequency joint training relationship. Loss of the Wing's flying mission would also deprive Fort Leonard Wood of an essential live-air CAS partner.
2. **Organic Force Architecture:** The 442nd is one of the few fully organic, self-sustaining expeditionary fighter wings in the Reserve Component, possessing its own operations, maintenance, mission support, and medical groups. This 40-year, multi-billion-dollar architecture cannot be recreated by simply redistributing personnel to other bases.
3. **Irreplaceable Cognitive Skill Sets:** A-10 pilots are not merely operating an airframe. The A-10 mission profile—low altitude, low speed, and extended loiter—instills a distinct, CAS-first operational mindset. If these pilots separate without a follow-on mission, that cognitive expertise exits the Air Force inventory permanently.
4. **Identity-Driven Retention:** The 442nd's specific lineage and unit identity serve as powerful retention drivers that cannot be recreated through reassignment or redesignation. These Airmen remain in uniform because of this unit's history and role.
5. **Infrastructure Efficiency:** Whiteman Air Force Base already hosts the B-21 Raider and the 509th Bomb Wing, making it a secure, capability-dense installation. Assigning a Reserve follow-on mission at Whiteman leverages existing runways, munitions storage, and intelligence infrastructure at a fraction of the cost required for new construction elsewhere.
6. **Mission Continuity:** A formally assigned follow-on mission—whether F-35A, F-15EX, F-22 associate, or adversary air—is a more effective retention incentive than bonuses ranging from \$50,000 to \$600,000. Bonuses compensate for sacrifice; missions provide a reason to serve. Historical precedent from prior force transitions—including B-52 to B-1, F-4 to F-15, F-15 to F-22, and KC-135 active-associate models—demonstrates that mission continuity is the decisive factor in retaining top talent.

The 442nd Fighter Wing is not a unit seeking merely to preserve its past. It is a ready, infrastructure-rich combat asset the Joint Force needs in a follow-on role.

Congress should ensure that four decades of accumulated institutional excellence are not exchanged for the illusory short-term savings of unmanaged attrition.

COUNTER-UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS (C-UAS): ADAPTING TO THE ECONOMICS OF MODERN WARFARE

Six Army Reserve soldiers from the 103rd Sustainment Command were killed when an Iranian drone struck a U.S. tactical operations center at Port Shuaiba, Kuwait, on March 1, 2026.

On January 28, 2024, at Tower 22 in northeastern Jordan near the Syrian border, three Army Reserve soldiers were killed in a drone attack launched by Iran-backed militants. At least 47 additional service members were injured in the attack.

A subsequent military investigation into the Tower 22 attack concluded that the strike was likely preventable. Air defenses failed in part because the hostile one-way attack drone approached as a U.S. surveillance drone was returning to the base, creating confusion and delaying engagement.

Their deaths are a direct indictment of the Total Force's current capacity to counter the fastest-growing and most pervasive threat in modern warfare. They are not an isolated tragedy. They are one data point in a broader pattern that extends from the Strait of Hormuz, where Iranian drones and mine vessels have demonstrated how low-cost asymmetric capabilities can challenge U.S. naval dominance, to Ukraine, where both sides have employed consumer-grade commercial drones to achieve tactical effects at a fraction of the cost of the conventional weapons they target.

The economic arithmetic of this threat is stark. A \$500 commercial drone can destroy a \$3 million vehicle. A \$10,000 one-way attack drone can kill servicemembers whose training, equipment, and institutional value represent millions of dollars of national investment.

Operation Epic Fury reinforces this lesson from a different direction. The operation has required the expenditure of large, sophisticated, and costly munitions against targets that often represent far lower-cost threats. This investment asymmetry, precision-guided munitions costing \$1 million or more per round used against adversary capabilities costing orders of magnitude less, is not sustainable as a long-term warfighting strategy. It is precisely the economic dynamic that adversaries such as Iran, its proxies, and China are studying and deliberately exploiting.

The lessons of Ukraine, the Strait of Hormuz, and Tower 22 are in many respects one in the same. The U.S. must develop and field capabilities optimized for the cost-economics of asymmetric drone warfare, while simultaneously preserving the high-end platforms and munitions necessary to deter and defeat a near-peer competitor in the Indo-Pacific theater.

This challenge is not confined to any single component. It is a Total Force problem that demands a Total Force solution. U.S. forces operate from a broad constellation of installations, forward operating locations, ports, airfields, training centers, and domestic infrastructure nodes that were not designed for constant exposure to low-cost unmanned threats. Many of these locations, active and reserve alike, were built for a different threat environment and lack the layered sensing,

command and control, and engagement capabilities required to defeat today's proliferating UAS threat.

At the same time, the RC possesses unique advantages that, if fully leveraged, can strengthen national resilience against unmanned threats. These include the geographic distribution of forces across the homeland, established relationships with civil authorities and critical infrastructure partners, and access to the commercial technology sector that is both driving UAS innovation and generating many of the platforms adversaries are weaponizing. Integrating counter-UAS capability across the RC and Total Force is therefore not only a force protection imperative but a homeland defense and resilience requirement.

ROA urges the Subcommittee to invest in dedicated counter-UAS capabilities as a core element of Total Force readiness and protection.

The deaths of Staff Sgt. Rivers, Sgt. Sanders, and Sgt. Moffett demand action. The United States cannot ask its servicemembers to operate in an environment saturated with unmanned threats without providing the layered, resilient counter-UAS capabilities necessary to protect the force. Strengthening counter-UAS capacity across the Total Force is not an incremental upgrade. It is a prerequisite for force protection, mission success, and credible deterrence on today's battlefield.

TRISERVICE NURSING RESEARCH PROGRAM: APPROPRIATE \$6 MILLION

ROA urges the Subcommittee to appropriate \$6 million for the TriService Nursing Research Program (TSNRP) in FY 2027 through a dedicated appropriations line item, potentially within the President's Combat and Operational Medicine Program account, which the FY 2027 Budget establishes as a focused vehicle for enhancing warfighter medical readiness.

ROA commends the Administration for the FY 2027 Budget's structural reform of combat medical readiness funding.

By establishing a dedicated Combat and Operational Medicine Program account—and explicitly treating combat medicine as a warfighting capability rather than a health-system byproduct—the Budget takes an important step toward ensuring that combat casualty care resources are managed with the same discipline, prioritization, and accountability as the weapons systems and platforms they support.

The Budget's investment in predictive analytics to modernize force health readiness assessments, along with its commitment to stable, mission-focused funding for combat casualty care training and deployable medical platforms, reflects a serious and necessary approach to this challenge.

TSNRP can serve as the research engine providing the Combat and Operational Medicine Program with the evidence-based knowledge on which effective combat medicine depends. Funding TSNRP through this account is not a workaround; it is a logical and deliberate alignment of TSNRP's mission with the account's stated purpose.

TSNRP is the Pentagon's only military nursing research program. Since its establishment in 1992, TSNRP has funded more than 545 research projects representing over \$200 million in total investment; conducted research at 32 military medical centers worldwide; published findings in more than 60 peer-reviewed journals; and trained 1,013 nurses through evidence-based practice courses at 35 university research partners.

Its research portfolio has produced hemorrhage control protocols now standard in battlefield first aid, intraosseous access techniques proven effective under combat conditions, medication stability data for austere and extreme-temperature environments directly applicable to island-chain operations, and the Patient Caring Touch System, adopted Army-wide in 2011 to improve patient outcomes and nurse retention across the Military Health System.

The strategic importance of TSNRP's work is magnified by the medical challenges inherent in INDOPACOM—challenges that are inseparable from contemporary force design and medical evacuation realities.

A conflict in the Indo-Pacific would place unprecedented demands on forward-deployed medical personnel precisely because the evacuation corridors assumed by legacy MEDEVAC doctrine may not be available. If forward surgical teams are not adequately pre-positioned, if evacuation timelines extend to 72 hours or longer, and if medical personnel must sustain casualties far forward for prolonged periods, then the quality of care enabled by evidence-based nursing research becomes the difference between survivable and non-survivable wounds.

TSNRP-funded research in Prolonged Casualty Care, Expeditionary Nursing, Resuscitative Medicine, and Biobehavioral Health directly addresses these operational realities. Research on medication stability in austere environments informs forward pharmacy stockpiling for island-chain operations. Hemostatic agent and intraosseous access protocols enable combat nurses to manage severe trauma at the forward edge without immediate evacuation. Telehealth and health-system informatics research enable remote clinical decision support for medically isolated personnel. These are not academic exercises or civilian health-system contributions; they are operational requirements for the force the Indo-Pacific theater demands.

Despite its operational relevance, TSNRP lacks a dedicated appropriations line item. As a result, the Department may redirect TSNRP's Operations and Maintenance funding to other priorities at any time, without congressional consent. This vulnerability has already constrained innovation and threatens the long-term sustainability of the program.

The contrast with civilian nursing research funding underscores the imbalance. TSNRP received approximately \$7.6 million in FY 2024, while the National Institute of Nursing Research at the National Institutes of Health received approximately \$198 million for civilian nursing research without direct national security application.

TSNRP receives less than four cents for every dollar allocated to civilian nursing research, despite serving a population whose health, performance, and survivability have direct consequences for national defense.

SUFFICIENTLY FUNDING AND SUPPORTING THE INDIVIDUAL READY RESERVE AND INACTIVE NATIONAL GUARD

On March 23, 2026, DoD issued updated guidance on the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) that explicitly identified the IRR as “first and foremost a mobilization asset” and directed that deliberate plans be in place for its employment, particularly in scenarios involving full mobilization.

IRR musters are a foundational element of the nation’s readiness posture. While all Services maintain some form of IRR muster capability and are now directed to conduct musters pursuant to this updated policy, the Marine Corps currently stands alone in executing musters at the scale required to support a robust mobilization.

Across the other Services, practices range from purely administrative musters—such as the mailing of documents to capture updated contact information—to limited, short-duration, in-person musters focused primarily on basic administrative processing.

By contrast, the Marine Corps Reserve conducts large-scale “mega-musters,” which are structured, multi-day, multi-regional events supported by engaged senior leadership and comprehensive operational resources.

One such muster, held March 5–10, 2026, in Arlington, Virginia, brought together Marines from the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia region. The event included readiness updates, records maintenance, medical screenings, administrative processing, and informational briefings on benefits and opportunities within the Marine Corps Reserve.

Staff from the Marine Corps Individual Reserve Support Activity guided participants through the process, and attendees had access to physical preparedness resources as well as spiritual and personal support services. Musters of this scope—when supported by adequate funding, manpower, and dedicated force structure—ensure that IRR Marines remain informed, connected, and prepared to serve if called upon during a national emergency.

As the Services implement the updated DoD guidance, it is essential that they do more than comply in form. Effective execution will require the establishment of dedicated IRR management and support structures comparable to those maintained by the Marine Corps, along with the funding and full-time support personnel necessary to plan, staff, and operate musters at scale.

Absent such institutional infrastructure, IRR musters risk devolving into episodic administrative exercises rather than meaningful readiness events conducted in accordance with both the intent and the requirements of the Department’s directive.

ROA urges the Subcommittee to ensure that all RCs are resourced accordingly, including the provision of dedicated full-time support personnel, to conduct meaningful IRR musters on a nationwide basis for approximately 256,000 members of the IRR and the Inactive National Guard (ING).

Properly structured and funded IRR muster programs are essential to restoring mobilization as an executable capability embedded in force planning, rather than a theoretical construct addressed only on paper.

CONCLUSION

The Reserve Component has earned a singular place in the American military tradition.

The nation asks its citizen-warriors to be ready. The FY 2027 Defense Appropriations Act is an opportunity for Congress to demonstrate that it is equally ready by investing proportionally in the force that saves DoD and the taxpayer hundreds of billions of dollars each year, while providing the operational backbone of every contingency plan.

The requests outlined in this statement are specific, justified, and proportionate to that advantage.

On behalf of the Reserve Component members ROA represents, including servicemembers of all ranks, veterans, and families from all eight uniformed services, ROA thanks the Subcommittee for its leadership, sustained oversight, and continued commitment to the RC and Total Force.

Questions regarding this statement may be directed to:

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