



**OFFICIAL 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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The Reserve Organization of America (ROA) is a congressionally chartered military service organization, incorporated under Internal Revenue Service Code Section 501(c)(19). Its membership includes servicemembers of all ranks, veterans, and family members from across our nation’s eight uniformed services who were separated under honorable conditions. ROA is the only national military service organization dedicated solely and exclusively to supporting the Reserve Components.

Established in 1922 by General of the Armies John J. “Black Jack” Pershing during the significant post–World War I drawdown, ROA was founded to advocate for a strong national defense and to advance the creation of a trained corps of reserve officers capable of anchoring rapid military expansion in times of war. Under ROA’s congressional charter, granted in 1950, this purpose remains unchanged: to promote the development and execution of policies that ensure an adequate national defense. ROA fulfills this mandate by providing expertise on the organization, employment, and resourcing of America’s Reserve Components.

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DISCLOSURE OF FEDERAL GRANTS OR CONTRACTS

The Reserve Officers Association of the United States, now doing business as the Reserve Organization of America, has not received any grants, contracts, or subcontracts from the federal government in the past three years.

CURRICULUM VITAE

John B. Hashem is a retired United States Army major general with over 40 years of service in the Army Reserve, encompassing roles in infantry, psychological operations, civil affairs, and strategic planning. He currently serves as the Chief Executive Officer of the Reserve Organization of America, a position he assumed in September 2025, following his retirement from active service.

Hashem’s awards include the Distinguished Service Medal, Defense Superior Service Medal (with Oak Leaf Cluster), Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal (with Oak Leaf Cluster), Combat Infantryman Badge, Ranger Tab, Parachutist Badge, Air Assault Badge, Office of the Secretary of Defense Staff Badge, and the Army Staff Badge.

INTRODUCTION

Chairmen Calvert and McConnell, Ranking Members McCollum and Coons, and distinguished members of the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees on Defense, the Reserve Organization of America (ROA) thanks you for the opportunity to submit this statement regarding the Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 Defense Appropriations Act, and for your sustained leadership in supporting the Reserve Components as integral elements of the Total Force.

Recent operations have removed any doubt about the operational role of the Reserve Components. Operation Epic Fury has underscored—again and decisively—that the Reserve Components are neither a backstop nor a surge force of last resort, but a combat-engaged, forward-employed, and indispensable part of the nation’s warfighting posture. Reserve forces are mobilized early, integrated immediately, and exposed to the same risks as the Active Component. They are executing missions, sustaining operations, and absorbing casualties not as supplements, but as required forces.

This reality is not anomalous. It reflects a structural reliance built over decades and now embedded in every major war plan. Nearly half of total military end strength resides in the Reserve Components, which provide the majority of critical enabling capabilities—logistics, medical, engineering, airlift, aerial refueling, intelligence, and homeland defense—without which the Total Force cannot deploy, fight, or be sustained. Operation Epic Fury has simply made visible what has long been true: the Total Force does not function without the Reserve Components fully integrated from day one.

Yet the appropriations process has not fully kept pace with this operational truth. While the FY 2027 President’s Budget Request proposes a historic defense topline, topline growth alone does not guarantee proportional investment in the forces upon which the Department increasingly depends. Past defense buildups have too often left Reserve modernization, training, and mobilization readiness lagging behind operational demand—accepting near-term risk in the very force that delivers the greatest strategic return on investment.

The FY 2027 Defense Appropriations Act is therefore not merely a funding exercise. It is an opportunity to align resources with reality: to ensure that a force routinely called upon to deploy, deter, and fight is equipped concurrently, trained realistically, mobilized credibly, and protected adequately.

With that objective, ROA respectfully submits its FY 2027 priorities for the Subcommittees’ consideration. The items identified first represent ROA’s leading appropriations priorities for FY 2027. They are followed by additional priorities that, taken together, form a comprehensive framework for strengthening Reserve Component integration, restoring balance in Total Force investment, and reducing operational risk to the servicemembers executing the nation’s missions today.

LEADING FY 2027 PRIORITIES

Concurrent and Proportional Fielding of Reserve Component Equipment

ROA urges Congress to enforce concurrent and proportional fielding of equipment across the Total Force in accordance with DoD policy. The Reserve Components remain heavily reliant on cascading legacy systems, resulting in persistent capability gaps, interoperability challenges, and increased sustainment costs. Less than ten percent of procurement funding reaches the Reserve Components, despite their operational role. Aligning modernization timelines with force-flow requirements is both operationally necessary and fiscally prudent.

National Guard and Reserve Equipment Appropriation (NGREA)

ROA urges a proportional increase in NGREA commensurate with the historic growth of the FY 2027 defense topline. While the President's \$1 billion request represents an increase, it does not reflect documented equipment shortfalls or historical proportionality. ROA respectfully requests \$1.3 billion as an absolute floor for FY 2027—consistent with prior congressional funding levels and significantly below what proportional investment would otherwise require.

C-130J Recapitalization Across the Reserve Components

ROA strongly supports continued C-130J recapitalization for the Navy Reserve, Air Force Reserve, and Air National Guard. Aging legacy fleets present growing sustainment, interoperability, and readiness risks, while significant recapitalization gaps remain unfunded. Sustained congressional investment is essential to meeting operational demand, preserving the industrial base, and stabilizing the longest-running military production line in U.S. history. ROA urges full funding of the FY 2027 request and additional aircraft to address unfunded requirements.

HMMWV and Light Tactical Vehicle Modernization

ROA urges continued investment in HMMWV and JLTV modernization across the Reserve Components. The Army Reserve's light tactical vehicle fleet is aging rapidly, with increasing safety-related readiness failures and delayed replacement timelines. Despite affirmed long-term requirements, funding was omitted from the FY 2027 President's request. ROA urges \$200 million for Army National Guard HMMWV modernization and \$100 million for the Army Reserve to close a critical mobility and readiness gap.

Prohibition on Army Reserve MEDEVAC Divestiture

ROA urges the Subcommittee to prohibit the use of funds for any divestiture of dedicated Army Reserve MEDEVAC aviation capability. Past attempts to eliminate this organic capability degraded readiness and increased operational risk, requiring reversal. In contested environments

such as the Indo-Pacific, dedicated MEDEVAC assets are more—not less—critical to preserving combat effectiveness. Divestiture would represent a strategic contradiction that Congress should explicitly bar.

Large-Scale Mobilization Exercises

ROA urges renewed investment in recurring, Joint-level, large-scale mobilization exercises modeled on the historic Nifty Nugget series. The Department has not conducted a full-scale national mobilization test in decades, despite increasing reliance on Reserve forces and civilian infrastructure. Studies alone are insufficient substitutes for execution-level exercises involving live forces, logistics, and command relationships under contested conditions. Restoring mobilization realism is essential to reducing operational risk.

Travel Reimbursement for Drilling Reservists

ROA urges funding to implement Section 623 of the FY 2025 NDAA, addressing the longstanding inequity of drilling reservists bearing out-of-pocket travel costs to serve. The absence of dedicated FY 2027 funding risks noncompliance with statutory requirements. Fully reimbursing reservists for travel remains a modest investment relative to the substantial personnel cost savings the Reserve model provides. If full implementation is infeasible, ROA supports the *Reserve Forces Travel Fairness Act* as a targeted alternative.

ADDITIONAL FY 2027 PRIORITIES

Funding National Defense at 5 Percent of GDP with Reserve Integration

ROA supports funding national defense at no less than 5 percent of GDP and commends the Administration for a historic FY 2027 topline. However, topline growth must translate into proportional investment in the Reserve Components, which are required from the first days of any contingency. Combat operations such as Operation Epic Fury should be funded through supplemental appropriations to preserve the integrity of the base budget.

Implementation of the Duty Status Reform Act

ROA urges full implementation of the Duty Status Reform Act, one of the most consequential Reserve Component reforms in decades. The existing patchwork of duty statuses undermines readiness, creates inequitable benefits outcomes, and complicates command and personnel management. Appropriations must support timely implementation.

Statutory Availability of Appropriations During Government Shutdowns

ROA supports ensuring uninterrupted pay for servicemembers during funding lapses but emphasizes that pay alone does not preserve readiness. Government shutdowns routinely halt drills, training, and PME. ROA urges statutory authority to designate scheduled Reserve training as excepted activities and authorize associated orders and travel.

Sustaining the 442nd Fighter Wing and Other A-10 Reserve Units

ROA urges sustained funding for the 442nd Fighter Wing at Whiteman AFB and other Reserve Component A-10 units lacking an identified follow-on mission. If a suitable follow-on mission is not identified, ROA urges appropriations safeguards to preserve readiness and force regeneration capacity.

Counter-Unmanned Aircraft Systems (C-UAS) Investment

ROA urges dedicated investment in C-UAS capabilities across the Total Force. Recent Reserve Component casualties demonstrate that current defenses are insufficient against proliferating low-cost drone threats. Strengthening C-UAS capacity is a force-protection imperative.

TriService Nursing Research Program (TSNRP)

ROA urges appropriation of \$6 million for TSNRP through a dedicated budget line. TSNRP directly supports combat casualty care, prolonged casualty management, and expeditionary medical readiness, yet lacks funding stability.

Individual Ready Reserve and Inactive National Guard Readiness

ROA urges sufficient funding and support for the Individual Ready Reserve and Inactive National Guard as foundational mobilization assets. Dedicated staffing, funding, and infrastructure are required to conduct meaningful musters at scale and restore mobilization as an executable capability.

CONCLUSION

The Reserve Component has earned its place at the center of the Nation's defense. It provides nearly half of total military end strength, delivers many of the most critical warfighting enablers, and does so at a fraction of the cost of an equivalent Active-only force. Most importantly, it is no longer a force held in reserve.

As Operation Epic Fury makes clear, the Reserve Components are already mobilized, already deployed, already integrated, and already bearing the risks of combat and contingency operations.

A force asked to perform at this level must be resourced accordingly. The FY 2027 Defense Appropriations Act is an opportunity to align investment with operational reality.

The priorities outlined in this statement are deliberate, targeted, and proportionate. They reflect not aspirational growth, but the practical requirements of a force that delivers extraordinary strategic value while saving the Department hundreds of billions of dollars annually. Invested properly, the Reserve Components reduce risk, strengthen deterrence, and expand the Nation's capacity to respond decisively when strategy becomes execution.

ROA thanks the Subcommittees for their continued leadership, oversight, and commitment to the Reserve Components. We look forward to working with you to ensure that the FY 2027 Defense Appropriations Act reflects the indispensable role the Reserve Components play in the security of the United States and the success of the Total Force.

ADDENDUM AND FOR CONTACT

An addendum to this statement provides additional detail on these priorities for Members and staff seeking further information. Questions regarding this statement may be directed to:

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