



Gary R. Herbert  
Governor of Utah  
Chair

Terry McAuliffe  
Governor of Virginia  
Vice Chair

Scott D. Pattison  
Executive Director/CEO

March 4, 2016

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
Speaker of the House  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Minority Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Ryan, Leader Pelosi, Leader McConnell and Leader Reid:

The nation's governors call on Congress to repeal Section 1053 of the fiscal year (FY) 2016 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which requires the conversion of certain Title 32 National Guard military technicians into non-uniformed Title 5 federal civilian employees. We are gravely concerned about how this provision will affect overall National Guard readiness and our ability to use the Guard to respond to emergencies.

In a January 7 letter to Armed Services Committee leadership, the Council of Governors (Council) co-chairs emphasized the changes required by Section 1053 represent a serious shift in authority from governors, whose constitutional duty is to protect our citizens and lead our National Guard. We are responsible for the safety and welfare of our citizens and are in the best position to manage our full-time military technicians.

For years governors have raised concerns about reductions to full-time National Guard personnel as cuts have been made to end strength in the face of ongoing budget challenges. These conversions would exacerbate two consecutive years of reductions in National Guard uniformed end strength and deny governors' access to thousands of dual-status technicians available for immediate military response to domestic emergencies. The Council discussed this issue at its recent plenary meeting on February 19, and senior leadership from the Department of Defense voiced equally grave concerns about the impact this conversion will have on National Guard readiness.

Governors appreciate the commitment to collaboration expressed by Senate Armed Services Committee leadership in their February 26 letter. We are committed to working with Congress and the Department of Defense on collective solutions to address technical adjustments, if any, that may be warranted in a military technician program. Unfortunately, the deadlines provided in the FY 2016 NDAA provide little time for our input into the process before implementation is set to begin in January 2017. Consequently, we call on Congress to repeal Section 1053 as part of this year's defense authorization bill.

Sincerely,



Governor Gary R. Herbert, Chair  
Utah



Governor Terry McAuliffe, Vice Chair  
Virginia



Governor Robert Bentley  
Alabama



Governor Bill Walker  
Alaska



Governor Douglas A. Ducey  
Arizona



Governor Asa Hutchinson  
Arkansas



Governor John Hickenlooper  
Colorado



Governor Dannel P. Malloy  
Connecticut



Governor Jack Markell  
Delaware



Governor Eddie Calvo  
Guam



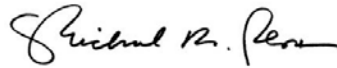
Governor David Y. Ige  
Hawaii



Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter  
Idaho



Governor Bruce Rauner  
Illinois



Governor Michael R. Pence  
Indiana



Governor Terry E. Branstad  
Iowa



Governor Sam Brownback  
Kansas



Governor Matt Bevin  
Kentucky



Governor John Bel Edwards  
Louisiana



Governor Paul R. LePage  
Maine



Governor Charles Baker  
Massachusetts



Governor Rick Snyder  
Michigan



Governor Mark Dayton  
Minnesota



Governor Phil Bryant  
Mississippi



Governor Jay Nixon  
Missouri



Governor Steve Bullock  
Montana



Governor Pete Ricketts  
Nebraska



Governor Brian Sandoval  
Nevada



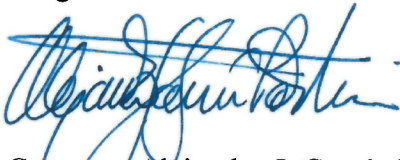
Governor Susana Martinez  
New Mexico



Governor Jack Dalrymple  
North Dakota



Governor Kate Brown  
Oregon



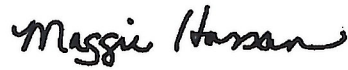
Governor Alejandro J. García-Padilla  
Puerto Rico



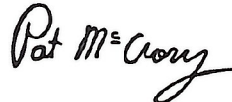
Governor Dennis Daugaard  
South Dakota



Governor Greg Abbott  
Texas




Governor Maggie Hassan  
New Hampshire



Governor Pat McCrory  
North Carolina



Governor Mary Fallin  
Oklahoma




Governor Tom Wolf  
Pennsylvania



Governor Nikki R. Haley  
South Carolina



Governor Bill Haslam  
Tennessee



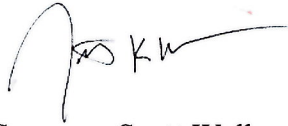
Governor Peter Shumlin  
Vermont



Governor Jay Inslee  
Washington



Governor Earl Ray Tomblin  
West Virginia



Governor Scott Walker  
Wisconsin



Governor Matthew H. Mead  
Wyoming

CC:

The White House

Senate Armed Services Committee

House Armed Services Committee