



October 17, 2007

Honorable Ike Skelton
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee
Room 2120 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Skelton:

The Adjutants General Association is most appreciative of your efforts and those of the House conferees while considering the National Guard Empowerment Act. The deliberations and dialogue between the several states and the Congress on the critical role of the National Guard in the defense of the homeland have been informative and productive.

The elimination of the language in both the House and Senate version calling for a seat on the JCS for the Chief of National Guard Bureau hopefully will enable you and the conferees to move adoption of the National Guard Empowerment Act.

We respectfully request the House recede to the Senate version. Of paramount importance to the several states is Section 10503a. and Section 10544 of the Senate version. These sections expand the responsibility of the Chief of the National Guard Bureau to include validation and acquiring equipment, and assisting the Secretary of Defense in the preparing portion of the Presidents budget; and requiring the President's budget to include specific amounts for NG Training and equipment for Military Assistance to Civilian Authorities.

Assigning these responsibilities to Chief National Guard Bureau are additive and do not negatively impact the Service Chiefs ability to structure and equip the National Guard for Title 10 missions. In no way does this recommendation usurp Army or Air force command of National Guard soldiers and airman in federal status. It does allow the National Guard Bureau, in its role of chief communicator between the states and the federal government, to present the state point of view to the Department of Defense and the President in a clear and comprehensive way. AGAUS believes the National Guard Empowerment Act is in the best interest for the U.S. national security.

We believe that the adoption of Section 10503a. and Section 10544 are paramount to the collective effort to cover the current DOD homeland security gaps and so called "orphan" requirements for which no Military Department, Service or combatant command now is accountable. Adoption of these provisions provides the Department of Defense, Northern Command and the Congress a process to for resource allocation and oversight of DOD homeland security spending.

We thank you for your support of the National Guard.

Sincerely,

Frank D Vavala

ADJUTANTS GENERAL ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES
1 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001