



September 20, 2008

The Honorable Carl Levin  
Chairman  
Committee on Armed Services  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ike Skelton  
Chairman  
Committee on Armed Services  
U.S. House Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John McCain  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Armed Services  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Duncan Hunter  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Armed Services  
U.S. House Representative  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Levin, Senator McCain, Representative Skelton and Representative Hunter:

The Adjutants General Association requests your support on several provisions that affect the National Guard. We are most appreciative of your support of the National Guard as expressed in the FY2009 Defense Authorization Bill. The National Governors Association and the U.S. Senate National Guard Caucus Co-Chairs requested the committee address the provisions 591 and 594 that will modify the Insurrection Act and ease activation of Reserve forces for natural disaster response. The Governors and the Adjutants General who are responsible for emergency response in their home states oppose this provision. As we stated the Insurrection Act should not be modified quickly without hearings and deliberation. After repeal of the changes made to the Act in FY 2007 Defense Authorization Bill, it makes no sense to us to make these changes.

Request that the combined committee consider retaining provisions of section 526 of the House bill, which would, among other actions, provide Joint Credit for the Adjutants General and a detailed Memorandum of Understanding between U.S. Northern Command and the National Guard. As the senior military officers in each state, the Adjutants General are responsible to citizens; leading Joint Force Headquarters and work to ensure the readiness do both Army and Air Force units. The National Guard also works in an interagency, multi-jurisdictional environment that is more intense than almost all other defense agencies. Joint Credit is essential for promotions to higher ranks. A fact that becomes all the more important with the recent elevation of the Chief, National Guard Bureau to General. The MOU is a basic document, that details how the Guard – the nation's first military responders serving under the Governor will work with U.S. Northern Command. As the military first responder – this is urgently needed. It is our view that this memorandum of understanding is long overdue.

We appreciate your support of this request.

Sincerely,

Francis D. Vavala  
Major General  
President

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