



September 18, 2008

Senator Carl Levin
269 Russell Office Building
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510-2202

Dear Senator Levin:

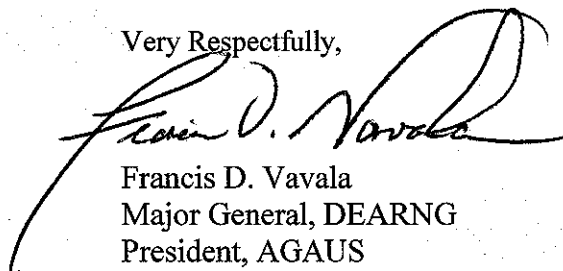
I write to you regarding two matters of deep concern to the National Guard as you conference the National Defense Authorization Act for 2009 and we are urgently seeking your assistance.

First, we ask that the Senate recede to the House on the language pertaining to the addition of full-time manning in the Army National Guard. While we are deeply grateful that both chambers have appreciated the wisdom of strengthening Army National Guard readiness by increasing the level of full-time staffing above that requested by the Administration, the language of the House provision would best serve the needs of the National Guard and our Nation. The Senate language makes the increases contingent upon Supplemental funding. This is problematic because the additional Army National Guard funds in the FY2009 Supplemental are already committed to be used to fund critical pre-mobilization training for our deploying units. Moreover, the Senate language is now less helpful in light of the fact that the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense has recommended funding for the full-time staffing increase in the base budget for FY2009.

Second, we ask that the Conference Committee insert into the conference report the DoD-requested increase in statutory limitations on grades within our full-time force. Without this update to the law, promotions of a significant number of our most deserving officers in the National Guard could be unfairly delayed. The Department sent this important provision to the Defense Committees late in the legislative year so it currently exists in neither bill. We understand the extraordinary nature of this request for the Conference Committee to insert in its report matter not committed to them by either chamber, but we are hopeful that the urgent, yet non-controversial, nature of this update to the old law would allow it to avoid a point of order in opposition.

We understand that you are under tremendous time constraints to generate a conference report and thus we are deeply grateful to you for your consideration of these two important measures. As always, I thank you for your staunch support of our National Guard.

Very Respectfully,



Francis D. Vavala
Major General, DEARNG
President, AGAUS