Dear Mr. President, Secretary Esper, and Administrator Gaynor:

We write today to raise a number of issues impacting the National Guard personnel deployed in support of the fight against Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

The National Guard has been critical in executing the nation’s pandemic response efforts. Thousands of National Guard servicemembers have been providing invaluable support for testing civilians and Guard personnel, logistics and warehouse distribution, planning for Emergency Operations Centers, homelessness outreach, and much more. We also recognize that National Guard servicemembers have been supporting state efforts in high threat and high risk areas, namely, medical support to prisons; frontline testing at hot spots and critical infrastructure locations; supporting tracing operations; and providing direct care to COVID-19 positive citizens, including at care facilities like Veterans Living Centers and homeless populations.

Our national success in flattening the curve will not be possible without the contributions of the National Guard. We believe it is critical to ensure that all National Guard personnel are taken care of during this crisis and after, recognizing that the threat of COVID-19 will not immediately go away and the National Guard is likely to be called on again in the future.

Therefore, we urge you to consider our recommendations for addressing the following concerns immediately.

- **Federal Status:** We ask that you consider keeping all National Guard servicemembers supporting the COVID-19 mission on 502(f)(2) status rather than transitioning to State Active Duty (SAD) orders regardless of future FEMA reimbursement. This will ensure healthcare commensurate with the work they are performing is available. This will also ensure they are able to continue support to the nation’s effort without uncertainty of status. If orders are to be extended on a month-to-month basis, we ask that all orders are 31 days or longer in duration and that the announcement of extensions be made early in the month in order to allow for preparation by each state’s leadership teams.

- **Leave:** We are encouraged by the recent change that will allow National Guard members to sell back unused leave without penalty or roll over accrued leave to another activated status. We ask that you continue to provide National Guard members with flexibility in how they may utilize leave accrued during the COVID-19 response, and ensure necessary federal funding to support the different leave usage options.
• **Healthcare**: We ask that you ensure the National Guard members activated in support of COVID-19 are provided Transition Assistance Management Program (TAMP) benefits for 180 days after coming off orders, similar to their Reserve counterparts.

• **GI Bill and Retirement Benefits**: We believe that the service of National Guard members during this unprecedented emergency is deserving of the recognition intended by educational and retirement benefit programs in the spirit in which they were created. We encourage you to be inclusive of pandemic response affiliated military service to ensure that National Guard personnel are not being inappropriately prevented from accessing the benefits earned by their service.

We are proud of the incredible contributions of the National Guard. They have been a critical team member in the nation’s fight against COVID-19. We welcome your support in ensuring they are kept safe, healthy, and receive the benefits they deserve.

Sincerely,

/s/ Michael F. Bennet
Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator

/s/ Cory Gardner
Cory Gardner
United States Senator

/s/ Jason Crow
Jason Crow
United States Representative

/s/ Doug Lamborn
Doug Lamborn
United States Representative

/s/ Richard Blumenthal
Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

/s/ Terri A. Sewell
Terri A. Sewell
United States Representative

/s/ Robert P. Casey, Jr.
Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator

/s/ Brian Fitzpatrick
Brian Fitzpatrick
United States Representative

/s/ Kyrsten Sinema
Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator

/s/ Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.
Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.
United States Representative

/s/ Brian Schatz
Brian Schatz
United States Senator

/s/ Austin Scott
Austin Scott
United States Representative
/s/ Gary C. Peters
Gary C. Peters
United States Senator

/s/ Christopher A. Coons
Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator

/s/ Ron Wyden
Ron Wyden
United States Senator

/s/ Tammy Baldwin
Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

/s/ Thom Tillis
Thom Tillis
United States Senator

/s/ Richard Burr
Richard Burr
United States Senator

/s/ Mark R. Warner
Mark R. Warner
United States Senator

/s/ Tim Kaine
Tim Kaine
United States Senator

/s/ Doug Jones
Doug Jones
United States Senator

/s/ James P. McGovern
James P. McGovern
United States Representative

/s/ Cheri Bustos
Cheri Bustos
United States Representative

/s/ Ed Perlmutter
Ed Perlmutter
United States Representative

/s/ Ed Case
Ed Case
United States Representative

/s/ Jimmy Panetta
Jimmy Panetta
United States Representative

/s/ Deb Haaland
Deb Haaland
United States Representative

/s/ Cindy Axne
Cindy Axne
United States Representative

/s/ Filemon Vela
Filemon Vela
United States Representative

/s/ Tulsi Gabbard
Tulsi Gabbard
United States Representative
Patrick Leahy  
United States Senator  

Brian Higgins  
United States Representative  

Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator  

Scott DesJarlais, M.D.  
United States Representative  

Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator  

Ruben Gallego  
United States Representative  

Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator  

Andy Kim  
United States Representative  

Catherine Cortez Masto  
United States Senator  

Elissa Slotkin  
United States Representative  

Shelley Moore Capito  
United States Senator  

Chrissy Houlahan  
United States Representative  

Steve Daines  
United States Senator  

Lori Trahan  
United States Representative  

Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator  

Richard E. Neal  
United States Representative  

Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator  

Eleanor Holmes Norton  
United States Representative
/s/ Mike Crapo
Mike Crapo
United States Senator

/s/ Anthony G. Brown
Anthony G. Brown
United States Representative

/s/ John Hoeven
John Hoeven
United States Senator

/s/ Jim Cooper
Jim Cooper
United States Representative

/s/ Ted Cruz
Ted Cruz
United States Senator

/s/ Michael Waltz
Michael Waltz
United States Representative

/s/ Tina Smith
Tina Smith
United States Senator

/s/ Jared Golden
Jared Golden
United States Representative

/s/ Jacky Rosen
Jacky Rosen
United States Senator

/s/ Seth Moulton
Seth Moulton
United States Representative

/s/ Joe Manchin III
Joe Manchin III
United States Senator

/s/ Donald S. Beyer, Jr.
Donald S. Beyer, Jr.
United States Representative

/s/ Roger F. Wicker
Roger F. Wicker
United States Senator

/s/ Val Demings
Val Demings
United States Representative

/s/ Cindy Hyde-Smith
Cindy Hyde-Smith
United States Senator

/s/ Conor Lamb
Conor Lamb
United States Representative

/s/ Susan M. Collins
Susan M. Collins
United States Senator

/s/ Sheila Jackson Lee
Sheila Jackson Lee
United States Representative
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/s/ Robert J. Wittman
Robert J. Wittman
United States Representative

/s/ Cedric L. Richmond
Cedric L. Richmond
United States Representative

/s/ Tom Cole
Tom Cole
United States Representative

/s/ Anna G. Eshoo
Anna G. Eshoo
United States Representative

/s/ Vicky Hartzler
Vicky Hartzler
United States Representative