



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES

www.vfw.org | info@vfw.org

August 15, 2011

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy  
United States Senate  
437 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Leahy:

On behalf of the more than 2 million members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) and our Auxiliaries, I am pleased to offer our support for S. 1025, National Guard Empowerment and State-National Defense Integration Act of 2011.

This legislation takes positive steps to address critical challenges in Title 10 of United States Code. The bill will strengthen our national defense through the empowerment of the National Guard Bureau, the only component of the U.S. military with a state and federal mission. It will also offer greater coordination between federal and state military personnel in domestic emergency response. It will make the National Guard Bureau Chief a statutory member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, a much-needed change reflecting the realities of rotational deployments overseas in our post-9/11 world, and ensuring that Title 32 forces so often involved in homeland defense and disaster relief missions have an appropriate role in the Pentagon's policy-making process.

The men and women serving in our National Guard deserve the changes offered through this legislation; changes that we believe will not in any way harm or interfere with the unity of the military services, but rather foster greater cooperation at a time when joint interoperability is so critical to mission success. Thank you for taking the lead on this initiative and for your continued support of our armed forces and veterans. I look forward to working with you to ensure this legislation is enacted.

Sincerely,

Raymond C. Kelley, Director  
VFW National Legislative Service

# The American Legion



OFFICE OF THE  
NATIONAL COMMANDER

★ WASHINGTON OFFICE ★ 1808 "K" STREET, N.W. ★ WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006 ★  
(202) 263-2986 ★

September 28, 2011

Honorable Patrick Leahy  
United States Senate  
SR-433 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Leahy:

On behalf of the 2.4 million members of The American Legion I would like to express overwhelming support for the provisions you have included in S. 1025, the National Guard and State - National Defense Integration Act of 2011.

Historically, the Strategic Reserve has been under-funded and poorly equipped. Members of the Strategic Reserve were derisively called "weekend warriors." But in the last 10 years, the reserve component has proved itself to be a full partner in our wars overseas, in homeland defense operations, and in disaster relief. In fact, the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff have both stated that today's military cannot function without mobilized reserve component assistance.

The American Legion believes a fully operational reserve component is essential for a strong national defense. DoD must complete the transition from yesterday's Strategic Reserve to tomorrow's Operational Reserve. Many of the provisions of your bill will help accomplish that transition.

Reinstating and increasing the rank of the Vice Chief of the National Guard Bureau; increasing the profile of the National Guard Bureau in its relationship with U.S. Northern Command and U.S. Pacific Command; studying the cost effectiveness of the National Guard and highlighting the Army and Air Guard budget requests will all strengthen the Operational Reserve in key ways in the years to come.

Thank you, Senator, for your support of our men and women in uniform. We join you in calling for the Senate to pass the provisions of S. 1025 into law.

Sincerely,

FANG A. WONG  
National Commander  
The American Legion



Dave Heineman  
Governor of Nebraska  
Chair

Jack Markell  
Governor of Delaware  
Vice Chair

Dan Crippen  
Executive Director

August 22, 2011

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Lindsey O. Graham  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Leahy and Senator Graham:

The nation's governors appreciate your work to support the National Guard and thank you for introducing the *National Guard Empowerment and State-National Defense Integration Act of 2011*. This legislation represents an important step forward in ensuring that our National Guard is properly trained, equipped, and resourced to fulfill its federal and state missions and that the Guard is properly represented within the Department of Defense.

The National Guard serves as a unique resource in the nation's defense by supporting overseas missions and protecting the homeland. Since September 11, 2001, hundreds of thousands of National Guard members have served in federal combat missions in Iraq and Afghanistan. At the same time, the men and women of our National Guard have helped protect the safety and security of citizens during the response to domestic emergencies. The National Guard's presence in our communities is a cornerstone of state preparedness and response capabilities and helps reduce the need for federal assistance during times of crisis.

The *National Guard Empowerment and State-National Defense Integration Act* recognizes the importance of the Guard's overseas and homeland defense missions. Governors agree with the legislation's objectives of further clarifying and strengthening the role of the National Guard within the Department of Defense and ensuring the National Guard is able to carry out domestic operations in support of civilian authorities. These initiatives reflect and support the important role of the National Guard. We look forward to working with you to further these efforts.

Sincerely,

Governor Martin O'Malley  
Co-Chair  
Special Committee on Homeland Security  
and Public Safety

Governor Matthew H. Mead  
Co-Chair  
Special Committee on Homeland Security  
and Public Safety



## National Guard Coalition

---

May 16, 2011

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
United States Senate  
437 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lindsey Graham  
United States Senate  
290 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Leahy and Senator Graham:

We are writing to express our strong support and utmost appreciation for the **National Guard Empowerment and State-National Defense Integration Act of 2011**. The National Guard Coalition, consisting of the National Guard Association of the United States, the Adjutants Generals Association of the United States, and Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States, represents over 460,000 members of the National Guard, their families and employers.

This strategic legislation will further enhance the ability of the National Guard to perform both its state and federal missions, as well as ensure that the Chief of the National Guard Bureau is at the table when important homeland defense and disaster response issues are being dealt with at the Joint Chiefs of Staff level.

As you know, previous Empowerment legislation has helped ensure that the National Guard is better prepared to perform both its federal and state missions. The last ten years of war in Iraq and Afghanistan plus disasters such as Hurricane Katrina have demonstrated to our country that the National Guard is an indispensable member of our national defense and disaster response forces.

To help ensure that the National Guard builds on the enhanced readiness progress it has achieved with the help of Congress in recent years, we look forward to working with you to ensure the passage of the National Guard Empowerment and State-National Defense Integration Act of 2011. Nothing less than the defense of our homeland and protection of the property and lives of our fellow citizens are at stake.

Sincerely,

Michael Dubie  
Major General  
President, AGAUS

Frank Vavala  
Major General  
Chairman, NGAUS

Roger A. Hagan  
CMSgt (Ret), USAF  
President, EANGUS