



March 13, 2008

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

Dear Senator Leahy:

The Adjutant's General Association of the United States commends you, your colleagues and your staff on your foresight in introducing the "National Guard Empowerment and State-National Defense Integration Act of 2008." This legislation will take the next logical step in advancing the gains of the National Guard Empowerment Act and ensuring the intent of that legislation is met.

We understand and appreciate just how hard you and the entire Guard Caucus worked to gain passage of the National Defense Authorization Act for 2008, which gave birth to "empowerment" for the National Guard. However, the realization of empowerment has been slow to materialize. With the introduction of this legislation, we are hopeful that the Department of Defense will act in accordance with the wishes of the Congress.

Again, we thank you for your new bill which will serve to complete the vision of the empowerment concept, which had its genesis two years ago with the original National Guard Empowerment Act. It is clear that empowerment for the National Guard remains a priority of the Congress.

We thank you for your continuing efforts on the National Guard's behalf.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Francis D. Vavala". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Francis D. Vavala
Major General, DEARNG
President AGAUS

Cc: Honorable Christopher S. Bond
United States Senate
274 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510