

Congress of the United States Washington, DC 20515

May 07, 2020

The Honorable Mark Esper
Secretary
Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Esper,

We thank you for your quick response to our last letter asking for Title 32, Section 502(f) activations of the Illinois National Guard for our state's COVID-19 response. Illinois received approval for up to 4,000 activations, and those men and women have been critical to our state's fight against the virus. Unfortunately, more must be done to address the ongoing pandemic. Therefore, we request you authorize Section 502(f) activations for up to 2,000 personnel until June 30, 2020.

In his May 3, 2020 letter to the President asking for this extension, Governor Pritzker highlighted some of the lifesaving work accomplished by the Illinois National Guard. We too are proud of what we have seen. Using their unique training, our Soldiers and Airmen stepped up to fill critical gaps, from expediting the delivery of medical equipment to supporting the rapid expansion of alternate testing sites.

We have made progress, in no small part due to the Illinois National Guard. Governor Pritzker, however, must continue to call on our neighbors in uniform: his plan to reopen the state relies on them to help combat the spread of COVID-19 in "hard hit areas such as prisons, nursing homes, and other congregate housing facilities." An extension of Section 502(f) activations would reaffirm the federal government's support to states in this public health battle and it would also provide standardized federal benefits like TRICARE health insurance to the National Guard personnel on the frontlines. This crisis is not yet over, and we cannot let up now. We are indebted to the sacrifices of the men and women of the Illinois National Guard, and grateful for their work yet to be done.

Sincerely,



Cheri Bustos
Member of Congress

List of Signatories

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