



May 21, 2020

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the Reserve Organization of America (ROA) and the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), representing members and veterans of the Reserve Components, we greatly appreciate your efforts to ensure Reserve and National Guard members receive the support they need while activated for the COVID-19 national emergency.

Although we understand that during these unprecedented times all efforts and decisions are made for the good of the country, we adamantly object to removing servicemembers from orders short of the 90 days required for certain important benefits. ROA has learned that the Pentagon is considering this strategy; we know it has the potential to affect more than 53,000 Reserve and National Guard servicemembers supporting the nation's pandemic response.

Retention is key to building a strong reserve force that is experienced and ready to tackle any mission. Activated servicemembers put their lives on hold, leaving families and jobs, to serve the nation at their own risk. When servicemembers leave their civilian jobs for long periods, they run into employment problems and often lose opportunities for promotion and retirement in their civilian career.

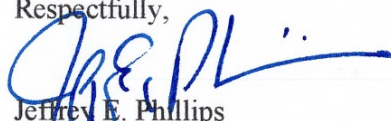
Congress recognized the significance of how benefits affect retention. Two major benefits were put in place specifically for retention; they take effect after 90 days on orders. Post 9/11 GI bill and early retirement credit have proven to increase retention and volunteerism for activation.

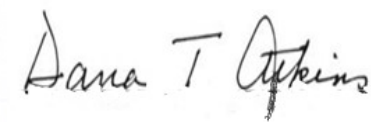
The support of employers is critical to Reserve Component readiness. That is why ROA supports H.R. 801, the Reserve Component Employer Incentive, Compensation, and Relief Act of 2019. This legislation provides an employer tax credit indexed to the number of days the reservist serves on orders. This bipartisan bill would help businesses cope with financial losses due to the pandemic.

ROA and MOAA believe that curtailment of orders to 89 days – “one day shy” – would be damaging to states that depend on the aid our reserve forces, and to our military readiness generally. We appreciate your previous extension of National Guard orders to 31 days, making things right for these young citizen-warriors. We now ask you to step in once again to right a wrong.

Mr. President, ROA and MOAA urge you to reconsider when Reserve and National Guard orders are terminated. We appreciate your consideration of this important issue and ask you to continue Reserve Component orders for the entire period of the pandemic before making a final decision.

Respectfully,


Jeffrey E. Phillips
Maj. Gen., U.S. Army (Ret.)
Executive Director


Dana T. Atkins
Lt. Gen., U.S. Air Force (Ret.)
President and CEO