

Testimony of U.S. Rep. Jeff Van Drew

- Chairwoman Roybal-Allard, Ranking Member Fleischmann, and Members of the Homeland Security Subcommittee, I thank you for the opportunity you have given me today to speak on behalf of the over 42,000 men and women, including over fifteen-hundred throughout New Jersey, who keep our country and our citizens safe from danger and who I am deeply proud to represent in congress.
- I represent New Jersey's 2nd congressional district which encompasses over 40 percent of the state's land mass and is home to the U.S. Coast Guard Training Center in Cape May, the birthplace of the enlisted corps, and the Air Station in Atlantic City.

- Training Center Cape May is the Nation's only Coast Guard Recruit Training Center, and the 5th largest base in the Coast Guard.
- Its mission is to develop the enlisted workforce for the U.S. Coast Guard.
- Training Center Cape May is attached to more than 350 military and civilian personnel and more than 4,000 of America's finest young men and women arrive for boot camp here, the first chapter of their Coast Guard career.
- Air Station Atlantic City opened in 1998 and is the newest and largest single airframe unit of the Coast Guard's air stations.
- It is located in Atlantic City International Airport in Egg Harbor Township along with another of South Jersey's crown jewels, the William Hughes Technical Center.

- Air Station Atlantic City is comprised of 10 MH-65D Dolphin Helicopters and supports a wide range of Coast Guard operations such as: search and rescue, law enforcement, port security, and marine environmental protection.
- The Air Station also provides multiple aircraft and crews to protect our Nation's capital, 24 hours a day and 7 days a week, at the National Capital Region Air Defense Facility under the operational control of the North American Aerospace Defense Command.
- At a minimum, I hope that the Subcommittee provides \$10 billion in discretionary funding to the U.S. Coast Guard which would be equal to the fiscal year 2019 enacted level.
- This funding would allow the Coast Guard to secure our borders and disrupt drug and human trafficking and to continue to save lives at sea.

- In particular, I request that the Subcommittee fund the first phase of the Barracks Renovation at Training Center Cape May at \$30 million dollars to recapitalize the barracks for three recruit companies to accommodate both genders, including providing classrooms and administrative support.
- I also request that the Subcommittee provide \$2.6 million dollars to recapitalize Travel Lift Piers to meet sufficient load capacity and support boat maintenance at Training Center Cape May.
- Furthermore, I ask that the Subcommittee provide the necessary funding for a 3.1 percent military pay raise in 2020 to maintain parity with the Department of Defense for military pay.
- Finally, I would just like to comment on the recent impacts of the 35-day government shutdown.

- I don't think we should ever ask our dedicated federal employees to work without pay, but it was especially shameful that all of the armed forces were paid except the U.S. Coast Guard, simply because it resides in a different department.
- The shutdown caused enormous hardship on Coast Guard families throughout South Jersey.
- We were fortunate enough that the South Jersey VFW, American Legion, Seaville Fire and Rescue Company, churches and the community at large stepped up to help out Coast Guard families with food, diapers, monetary donations and other essentials.
- This tragic and preventable situation showed why Cape May is designated as a Coast Guard Community.

- In addition to hurting morale, the shutdown had real-life consequences that could hurt our long-term national security posture.
- It has been reported that the Coast Guard's ship maintenance command lost at least 28 years worth of workdays which poses a risk to operational availability of cutters and boats.
- The shutdown also contributed to a domino effect that has caused delays in repairs and maintenance on the Coast Guard's 200 aircraft, which could keep them from being immediately available.
- The delays could limit the number of ships and aircraft available for Coast Guard operations like drug interdiction, search and rescue, maritime safety missions, and training of both the uniformed and civilian force.
- I hope that we do not repeat the same mistake of needlessly shutting down the government and

that our Nation's leaders, regardless of their views on immigration and border security, are able to do right by America's Maritime Guardians.

- I thank the Subcommittee for its time and look forward to with all of you.