

RECORD VERSION

STATEMENT BY

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BEFORE THE

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

FIRST SESSION, 116TH CONGRESS

ON PROTECTING BENEFITS FOR ALL SERVICEMEMBERS

OCTOBER 23, 2019

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY THE
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS**

THE CHANGING NATURE OF WARFARE AND RAPID ADVANCE OF TECHNOLOGY DEMANDS increased readiness and capability to deter and, if necessary, defeat aggression. As the sole, dedicated federal reserve of the Army, Army Reserve Soldiers, comprising ready units-of-action from across the Nation and beyond, must be able to quickly mobilize, deploy, fight and win as part of the Total Force anywhere in the world.

The Army Reserve comprises nearly twenty percent of the Army's organized units, half its total maneuver support and sustainment capabilities, and a quarter of its mobilization base-expansion capacity. With more than 200,000 Soldiers and civilian employees, and 2,000 units spread across 20 Time Zones, America's Army Reserve is poised, positioned and ready to support the warfighter anywhere on earth.

In response to the changing global security environment, the Army Reserve has pushed into a new state of operational readiness, improving the posture and capabilities of its forces to respond quickly to evolving threats from multiple sources. Under this construct, key early-deploying force capabilities are postured to aggregate and deploy rapidly with the requisite mobility, survivability, lethality and netted mission command architecture to fight and win on the battlefield.

Meeting the challenge of fielding a sufficiently robust, capable, ready and lethal array of forces from the ranks of a part-time force is no small task, particularly in today's evolving and increasingly dynamic global security environment. But that part-time force is also our strength, for it encompasses a new generation of Army Reserve Soldiers and leaders, highly-skilled and educated in 148 career fields that correspond to the capabilities our forces require to conduct, sustain and prevail in combat operations.

As we continue to build and sustain the readiness that is our first and most important priority, we are grateful for the steadfast support of the families who sustain our Soldiers and the employers who enable them to serve the Army and the Nation.

Our challenge remains straightforward and dynamic, but also tough: this team needs to be ready enough to be relevant, but not so ready that our Soldiers cannot maintain good, meaningful civilian jobs and healthy, sustaining family lives.

This challenge is exacerbated by the simple fact that we must recruit and retain our ranks where Soldiers live and work, and anticipate emerging demographics by moving force structure to not only where talent resides today, but where it will be tomorrow. This process demands agility, synchronization and integrated planning.

Troops with the same level of experience, serving side-by-side, and conducting the same mission, should receive the same pay and benefits—regardless of the uniform they wear or component they serve. We request your support for the Administration's Reserve Duty Status authorization proposal that would streamline duty statuses and align most benefits reserve component members receive when they are conducting the same mission. Parity efforts are an important part of overall readiness and morale.

We appreciate Congress's continued support, engagement and counsel. As a result, your Army Reserve is postured to meet modern day challenges and future requirements. In these dynamic and challenging times, we will stay steady in the saddle as we continue to build the most capable, combat-ready, and lethal federal reserve in the history of the Nation.