

Public Statement - Commission on the Future of the Army
August 25, 2015
Long Beach, CA
Paul Mock, National Chair, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve

Commission Members. Thank you for the opportunity to address you today. My background is that I served on the LAPD for 25 years and the Army Reserve for 36+ years. I am currently, the National Chair, ESGR.

I will focus my very brief comments today on the importance and impacts of employment for members of the National Guard and Reserve. ESGR is by charter a Department of Defense organization that addresses all members of the Reserve Component, all seven seals. We are the only organization within DOD that advocates for the employer, this makes us particularly unique. I am unaware of any other organization that has a similar mission.

Mission Statement

ESGR is a Department of Defense (DoD) office that develops and **promotes supportive work environments** for Service members in the Reserve Components **through outreach, recognition, and educational opportunities** that **increase awareness** of applicable laws, and **resolves employer conflicts** between the Service members and their employers.

End State

All employers **support and value** the employment of members of the National Guard and Reserve in the United States and Territories, thereby **enhancing the unit readiness** of Guard/Reserve Components.

In the time allotted, I will offer my perspective based on personal observation, discussion and experience dealing with the Nation's employers, and currently serving members of the National Guard and Reserve. What I have seen with members of the *Seven Seals* has applicability to this commission's task as pertaining to the Army Reserve and National Guard.

The 2013 Status of Forces Survey conducted by Defense Manpower Data Center, that 70% of employers are supportive of National Guard and Reserve Obligations. Not to dwell on personal stories and exceptions to this; i.e., horror stories of non-supportive employers, this is our best data set, that employees are supportive.

At this point in my public comment I will shift to the Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Awards. The Freedom Award is the most prestigious award given to employers for their support of the National Guard and Reserve. There were over 2900 nominations nationwide, and 15 received the award.

This information is as fresh I can get. I personally asked each of the 15 recipients in the Pentagon, Friday, August 21, 2015, just prior to Deputy Secretary of Defense, Mr. Robert Work presenting them with this highly coveted award.

The employers ranged from CVS Health with 200,000+ employees, to Dr. Joe Jackson, 4 employees.

I asked each of the 15 how would a reliable and predictable schedule of deployments, whether they deploy or not, affect them in their business planning and their support of their employees who are members of the National Guard and Reserve. In other words, is the Sustainable Readiness Model (SRM), helpful to you?

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For this public comment, I selected three samples. I might add that all 15 were exceptionally supportive of their employee's service to the Nation.

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CVS Health with 200,000+ employees. It is a pharmacy innovation company helping people on their path to better health. Through 7,800 retail pharmacies, more than 900 walk-in medical clinics, a leading pharmacy benefits manager with more than 65 million plan members.

- Mr. David Casey, VP, Workforce Strategies and Chief Diversity Officer said the 5 year notice is appreciated. Reliability and predictability enable advance planning. However, we do whatever we need to support our employees and military.
- Woonsocket, RI

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The Boise Fire Department (BFD) serves a population of nearly 250,000 residents in Idaho's Capital City. The department employs 300 full-time union and city employees. 30% of their employees are members of the National Guard, Reserve or Veterans.

- Chief Dennis Doan. They are so supportive they carried an employee for 8 years and paid the full salary. The 5 year advance notice is appreciated. However, they will drive on with support to their employees.

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The office of Dr. Joe A. Jackson specializes in Neurology and Pain Management. He has been in practice for over 25 years. Dr. Jackson is Board Certified in Neurology and Psychiatry, as well as Sleep Medicine. He is also certified in Pain Management and Acupuncture.

- Four employees. He is supportive regardless of the notice provided.
- Biloxi, MS

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One employer, the Mayor of Glendale, AZ informed me that the City of Glendale is supportive, however, as a small business owner; he just has to suck it up. He operates on a thin profit and loss margin.

Across the Nation, I speak with employers that want to hire members of the Guard and Reserve, and Veterans. The incredible attitudes are something of National pride. They recognize our military members as National Treasures.

I will close with this.

- The ESGR mission as executed by the 4600 volunteers in the 54 states and territories is indispensable.
- Recognize that employment is a significant factor in the individual readiness and family readiness of our members of the National Guard and Reserve.
- There is a nexus to re-enlistment.
- That ESGR's Ombudsman mission, assisting employers and members of the National Guard and Reserve is a force multiplier.
- That the unemployment rate of our Reserve Forces has dropped from 13.1% in FY 11 to 9% as of our latest survey in 2013. There is a connection between supportive employers and this number.

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- Our Reserve Forces members have demonstrated their worth and value in the Global War on Terror. Over 900,000 have been mobilized. Many have suffered the injuries as their active counterparts and many have lost lives. They are a valued element of the force. Their employment is important.
- And finally, employers will support the Operational Reserve.

Thank you.