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Congressman Andy Barr's Testimony Before the National Commission on the Future of the Army

October 8, 2015

Good morning. As a member of the National Guard and Reserve Components Caucus, I would like to thank my colleagues, Congressman Pallazo and Congressman Walz for organizing today's hearing.

I also appreciate members of the Commission on the Future of the Army for taking the time to hear our concerns.

I continue to stand with our proud men and women who faithfully serve their respective states and this country as members of this nation's National Guard and Reserve components. Since 1636, state militias have been called to suppress insurrections, shield against natural disasters, and defend our shores against foreign invasions. Today, the National Guard continues these missions to include, anti-drug operations, border patrol, and peace keeping missions. The National Guard has engaged in every major military conflict since its creation and has proven themselves extremely necessary and effective ever since.

Fondly, referred to as citizen soldiers, these men and women are ready at a moment's notice. Prepared to leave the arms of their loved ones, and the comforts of their homes, offices, schools, factories, and plows to take up arms and defend their families where ever duty calls. Nearly all National Guard Units are fully mission capable and are ready to mobilize within 72 hours.

While I believe it is necessary to maintain a fully capable standing army, I also believe it is equally as important to ensure that National Guard and Reserve Components remain fully funded and efficiently staffed in order to carry-out the many functions and duties set forth by Article I, Section 8, Clause 15, within the United States Constitution.

During the height of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the National Guard and Reserve Components made up nearly 40 percent of the total fighting force and can operate at one third the cost of their Active Duty counterpart when inactive. The significant cost difference lies in the fact that the National Guard is paid as they are used, and does not acquire continuous benefits such as family housing, commissaries, and health services. This is vitally important in a time of fiscal uncertainty and geopolitical environment around the globe.

Let me be clear, I am not pitting National Guard and Reserve Components between Active Duty branches nor am I choosing between the two, both are equally important in my opinion and serve a critical role in protecting our freedoms. I am simply saying that determining the proper troop reduction level is extremely important and could have a far reaching impact on this nation's national security if Congress does not get this right. This is why I stand behind Kentucky's Adjutant General, Major General Edward Tonini, the most recent past President of the Adjutant Generals Association of the United States, by supporting an independent study to be conducted by the National Commission on the Future of the Army.

As it has been mentioned before, this Commission will be responsible for conducting a comprehensive study on the structure of the Army, related to its size and force mixture in order to provide recommendations about the size and make-up of the future Army. The Commission will also study probable missions, as well as current and future budgetary realities the Pentagon will face.

I urge the Commission on the Future of the Army to help ensure that our nation's armed forces remain strong, fully mission capable, and to utilize vital assets only found within our country's National Guard and Reserve components.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Andy Barr
Member of Congress