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# Congress of the United States
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National Commission on the Future of the Army
2530 Crystal Dr., Suite #5000
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Commissioners Ham, Lamont, Chandler, Ellis, Hale, Hicks, Stultz, and Thurman:

Thank you for coming to Capitol Hill today to hear first-hand from myself and my colleagues. While my schedule unfortunately does not permit me to be there in person today, I truly appreciate you giving me the opportunity to submit written testimony to your Commission on this imperative endeavor that will ultimately determine the future of our Army's Active Duty, Reserves, and National Guard.

For the past 14 years since the events of 9/11, our nation's military has been called upon to engage in multiple campaigns, performing numerous missions against a variety of deadly threats. Under such trying circumstances, they have served with distinction, proving our ability to perform in more than two theaters of war simultaneously.

I will forever be grateful and humbled by the sacrifices our military members and their families have made to protect our liberties both at home and abroad. In a time of uncertain budgets, I fully understand and appreciate the tasks that your Commission has undertaken to ensure our current and future Active, Reserve, and National Guard forces remain as trained, ready, and as lethal as possible. As you move forward on determining the future of our Army and our nation's finest soldiers, I implore you to remember the contributions of our Army National Guard and the significant contributions they offer to our national security.

Our state values the support it receives from Jackson Barracks, Camp Minden, Camp Beauregard, the 1/244$^{th}$ AHB at Hammond, the 141$^{st}$ Artillery Regiment in New Orleans, and all of the other stellar National Guard forces we have. I represent Southwest Louisiana, where we lack active-duty military installations, but have three National Guard infantry battalions, a combat support battalion, military intelligence and military police companies, and the many staff that support them. I have often seen the contributions that the Louisiana National Guard soldiers and civilians within my own district have made to our state, our homeland, and internationally.

The Louisiana National Guard serves a vital emergency response role including search and rescue, law and order, evacuation support, and critical infrastructure security. Never was that more evident than with the numerous natural disasters we have faced such as devastating hurricanes like Katrina, Rita, Gustav, and Ike, or winter storms and Mississippi river floodings. The Louisiana National

Guard's 256th Brigade Combat Team (BCT), located in my hometown of Lafayette, played an integral part in responding to each and every one of those events. Without them, my district would never have recovered as quickly.

Not only does the Army National Guard serve as the Army's primary combat reserve and first military responder in the Homeland, but internationally they continue to play a huge role in support for the Global War on Terrorism. Since 9/11, Louisiana has mobilized over 16,200 soldiers and airmen under Operations NOBLE EAGLE, ENDURING FREEDOM, and IRAQI FREEDOM. Over 2,000 of those soldiers called Louisiana's 3rd District, my district, home. Additionally, since 2005, this brave group of Guardsmen from my own constituency has experienced 30 unit deployments in support of Operations IRAQI FREEDOM and ENDURING FREEDOM.

Moreover, in a time of constrained defense budgets, the Army National Guard provides strategic depth and operational reserve at a fraction of the cost of an Active component. A Guard BCT when not deployed costs approximately ¼ of an Active component BCT. When deployed, these National Guardsmen and women are as effective and interchangeable with their active duty counterparts.

Furthermore, we ask that you reevaluate the impact of the Army's proposed Aviation Restructuring Initiative (ARI). I believe there is still time to assess the direct impact that this proposal will have on not only the National Guard's operational firepower for those units standing to lose AH-64 Apaches, but also the loss of utility helicopters that other National Guard outfits will face in the redistribution. Under the current ARI, the Louisiana National Guard stands to lose up to three of its UH-60 Blackhawks or three of its LUH-72 Lakotas, greatly diminishing Louisiana's capability to address its own critical disaster-response needs.

I do not ask for the Army National Guard to be favored over any other Army component and understand that your Commission must balance all three Army components to ensure we continue to have the most ready and capable force in the world. For example, I also believe that our Active-duty personnel end strength must not go any lower if we are to continue to face the large number of global threats wishing to harm our nation and its interests overseas. We have the "Patriots," the 3/10 BCT at Fort Polk, LA that has also proven time and again its operational successes.

I urge you, however, as you continue to meet with and hear from various stakeholders throughout this process to keep our National Guard equipped and strong in order to continue serving as the necessary and operational reserve component they have come to demonstrate not only in my district and state, but all states, U.S. territories, and the District of Columbia.

I thank the Commission again for considering my requests and concerns and would be more than willing to discuss my thoughts with you further should you wish to.

Sincerely,

C.W. Boustany

Charles W. Boustany, Jr., MD
Member of Congress