

Remarks: National Commission on the Future of the Army
Rep. Ryan Costello

10/8/15 11:55pm
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- Major General Carpenter and members of the Commission, I appreciate the opportunity to address you today regarding my grave concerns about the Army's Aviation Restructure Initiative (ARI) and on our country and my state of Pennsylvania.
- Since 9/11, the National Guard has risen to the occasion - they have been tested and have proven they are a critical, operational force and provide the support and end-strength to the Total Army.
- The National Guard has met the demands of every request over the last 14 years - all 760,000 individuals mobilized for overseas operations, including 44,967 mobilized members of the Pennsylvania National Guard.
- Should the Aviation Restructure Initiative move forward in its current form, it will jeopardize our national security and cause near irreversible damage to the capabilities of our National Guard.
- A plan that will not provide cost-savings until an undefined time after an increased cost for implementation does not warrant actions with consequences as severe as these.

- In Pennsylvania alone, the 1-104th Attack Reconnaissance Battalion has already been inactivated and we risk losing the entire 55th Armored Brigade before your recommendations are reported.
- Those are capabilities crucial to our national security that will be lost when more than ever before, we face growing and unprecedented security threats.
- As the new Chief of Staff of the Army, General Mark Milley [MILL – EE] said, “we must rely more heavily on our National Guard to meet demand.”
- Therefore, we must maintain a sufficient force structure across all Army components – now is not the time to reduce our combat capabilities.

- I understand that the Commission visited the Pennsylvania National Guard in September where you were able to see the irreplaceable capabilities provided by the Pennsylvanian guardsmen.
- You saw the leadership, professionalism, and grit of the PA National Guard Soldiers and Airmen while visiting Fort Indiantown Gap just outside my district.
- They are trained, equipped, and ready to defend their hometowns and their country.

- Your decision, as members of this Commission, will have a profound impact on the National Guard and our military for decades to come.
- We are in a fiscally constrained environment that demands us to utilize fully the resources we have available to us today, especially when those resources have proven their abilities.
- It is my hope that your decision will take into account the National Guard's critical cost effective advantages, dual benefits as a ready, operational reserve, and the force capabilities they provide to the end strength of the Total Army.
- Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you all today.