

United States Senate

April 1, 2016

The Honorable John McCain
Chairman
U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee
Russell Senate Building, Room 228
Washington, D.C. 20510-6050

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee
Russell Senate Building, Room 228
Washington, D.C. 20510-6050

Dear Chairman McCain and Ranking Member Reed:

I'm writing to request that the fiscal year (FY) 2017 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) include a provision delaying the mandatory conversion of certain dual status technicians until October 1, 2017. Section 1053 of FY2016 NDAA requires the National Guard to convert 20% of the Title 32 Dual Status Technicians to Title 5 federal civilian employees beginning January 1, 2017. The Department of Defense, however, failed to uphold their congressionally directed timeline for providing a plan for this conversion, and I continue to hear about the impact it will have on National Guard mission readiness.

The changes required by the FY2016 create a significant shift in authority from Governors and State Adjutant Generals to the federal government, representing a serious federal overreach into states like Montana that have a National Guard with proven mission success on and off the battlefield. The Secretary of Defense was directed in the FY2016 NDAA to provide a plan for this conversion by February 1st of this year, yet he did not do so. By failing to provide the National Guard with a well thought out plan and adequate time to carry out this change, I feel we are not doing our due diligence to ensure mission success. This is not a decision that should be rushed or taken lightly.

Given the concerns it is clear moving forward with the current timeline would set our National Guard units up for failure. As the Senate Armed Services Committee drafts the FY2017 NDAA, I request a provision be included that delays the mandatory conversion of certain Dual Status Technicians from Title 32 to Title 5 civilians to October 1, 2017.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



STEVE DAINES
United States Senator