

April 13, 2020

The Honorable Mark Esper  
Secretary of Defense  
U.S. Department of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Esper:

I write to you concerning the current COVID-19 pandemic and the National Guard's mission to support the national emergency declaration. I urge you to ensure any National Guard member who is activated to support fighting the pandemic receive Hazardous Duty Incentive Pay (HDIP) for their service.

As you are aware, COVID-19 is an ongoing pandemic that has the ability to spread rapidly with a concerning mortality rate. Every day, our National Guard personnel are asked to support the national effort to address this crisis. As of today, 127 members of the Montana National Guard are on duty screening and testing people who could potentially carry COVID-19. They are currently supporting missions all across the state to screen people coming into Montana through train stations and airports. These citizen-soldiers are jeopardizing their own health and safety to keep us safe.

HDPI exists to provide additional compensation for DOD members who are placed in exceptionally dangerous situations in service to our country. The COVID-19 pandemic is currently our nation's greatest challenge and our National Guard is being asked to interact with this dangerous virus on a daily basis. DOD currently designates those who perform dangerous virus lab duty as eligible for HDIP. Personnel whose duty involves working directly with microorganisms that cause diseases with a high potential for mortality; for which effective therapeutic procedures are not available; and for which no effective prophylactic immunization exists are eligible for HDIP, and National Guard members activated in response to COVID-19 certainly fit those criteria. Additionally, many National Guard members may have been laid off from their civilian jobs due to the economic downturn that this virus has caused. Providing hazardous duty incentive pay for the work they are doing as part of the response will go a long way to improve their situations.

**STEVE DAINES**  
MONTANA


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I hope you will support my request to ensure the men and women on the front lines get the Hazardous Duty Incentive Pay they deserve. I look forward to working with you to protect our guardsmen and women during this emergency.

Sincerely,



STEVE DAINES  
United States Senator