



WISCONSIN NATIONAL GUARD ASSOCIATION, INC.

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MEMORANDUM FOR WINGA Membership

4 April 2019

FROM WINGA Legislative Committee Chair

1. The committee is focused on Army, Air and Joint issues for the Wisconsin National Guard. Top issues include:

2. ***Preserve military readiness by expanding TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS) eligibility for dual-status Military National Guard Technicians:*** The over 1,000 Wisconsin National Guardsmen employed by the federal government in their full-time National Guard or civilian jobs are not eligible for enrollment in TRS because they are eligible for the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP). The result is that health insurance costs for these Guard members is as much as \$5,000 more per year than it would be under TRS.

UPDATE: In January 2019, Sen. Steve Daines (R-MT) and Rep. Trent Kelly (R-MS) introduced legislation that amends Title 10 United States Code to remove the prohibition on eligibility for TRS members of the reserve component of the Armed Forces who are eligible to enroll in a health benefits plan under chapter 83 of Title 5, United States Code. This would provide federal government employees the option to enroll in the MHS's TRS program.

3. ***Provide for military retirement equity for State Active Duty Service:*** National Guard members currently only receive credit towards military retirement for National Guard training and federal active duty, NOT when activated for State Active Duty (SAD). This fails to recognize the significance of this mandatory service and highlights a benefits disparity in the National Guard pension system.

UPDATE: This issue was introduced to the attention of Wisconsin's Congressional Delegation earlier this year. WINGA members can provide vital support by contacting their federal representatives.

4. ***Protect full-time National Guard (FTNG & AGR) benefits:*** Full-time National Guard members – AGR & FTNG – risk losing their federal benefits when the Governor orders them to State Active Duty (SAD) longer than 72 hours because their federal order must be terminated and a state order issued for them to continue their SAD mission. Alternatively, these full-time Guard members do not participate in the SAD mission and critical leadership roles that contribute to the cohesive and high-performing teams go unfilled and the deploying units are less capable.

UPDATE: This issue was introduced to the attention of Wisconsin's Congressional Delegation earlier this year. WINGA members can provide vital support by contacting their federal representatives.

5. *Secure F-35A Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) aircraft assignment to the 115th Fighter Wing (115 FW)*: The 115 FW at Truax is one of two bases selected by the Air Force in December 2017 to host the F-35A, with aircraft fielding expected in 2023. Truax (and Dannelly Field, Alabama) is now subject to an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process, for which a Record of Decision is anticipated in the fall of 2019.

UPDATE: The EIS process in Madison will occur over the summer of 2019. The process includes a public scoping meeting scheduled in August and a 60-day public comment period. Additionally, citizens and elected officials will also be able to submit comments in the hearing, as well as written comments to the USAF. A Record of Decision will occur after the conclusion of the EIS. WINGA membership can provide vital support during the public hearings as well as coordinated support of the local community council helping inform the public and gaining their support for the basing of the F35A at Truax.

**Col Erik Peterson
Co-Chair
WINGA Legislative Committee**

**LTC (Ret) Jackie Guthrie
Co-Chair
WINGA Legislative Committee**