



DEPARTMENTS OF THE ARMY AND THE AIR FORCE

JOINT FORCE HEADQUARTERS MINNESOTA
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
20 12TH STREET WEST
SAINT PAUL, MN 55155-2004

April 7th, 2017

Subject: Concerns Regarding Senate File 605 as Amended by the House reflecting House File 691 (1st Unofficial Engrossment of SF 605, as amended)

Honorable Sarah Anderson
583 State Office Building
St Paul, Minnesota 55155

Dear Representative Anderson;

I am writing to express my concerns as the Adjutant General of Minnesota with the proposed omnibus State Government Finance bills.

The bill provides \$11,714, 000 less than the funding level recommended by the Governor. My specific concerns with the bill follow:

While the steady-state funding for our other appropriations supports funding that is required for the long-term maintenance needs of the agency, it does nothing to address the forecasted shortfall in the Enlistment Incentives Appropriation. This will result in restriction of enlistment and re-enlistment incentives and will reduce the level of tuition reimbursement for our service members. Though the Adjutant General has the authority to reduce the amount of Tuition Reimbursement, and contracts clearly state this possibility, it will be seen by the participants in the program as a breach of trust, and will damage morale in the Minnesota National Guard. This under-funding will:

- Reduce higher education funding availability to more than 848 newly enlisted members from diverse communities. This is the number of those service members who enlisted only in the past two years.
- Significantly reduce service members' incentive programs:
- Affect approximately 1,900 members by reduction of Tuition Reimbursement
- Affect approximately 1,523 Service members who will not be eligible for incentives
- Adversely affect retention

The bill does not address the needed FY2017 funds transfer that is addressed in the Senate version of the bill. This will cause great difficulty for the agency to close out the current year in a responsible fashion.

(2)

I strongly urge you to reconsider the current path, and fund the Department of Military Affairs at the level and in the fashion recommended by the Governor.

Questions may be directed to the Executive Director of the Department of Military Affairs, Don Kerr at donald.j.kerr2.nfg@mail.mil or at 651 268 8913.

Sincerely;

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard C. Nash", with a large, stylized flourish extending to the right.

Richard C. Nash
Major General, Minnesota Army National Guard
The Adjutant General