

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1309

May 15, 2020

VIA ELECTRONIC DELIVERY

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

As a follow-up to the letter we sent on April 3, 2020, we write to request a revision to your May 8, 2020 “Memorandum on Providing Continued Federal Support for Governors’ Use of the National Guard to Respond to COVID-19 and to Facilitate Economic Recovery.” We are concerned that this order precludes troops from qualifying for additional Federal benefits they would normally be permitted under extended Title 32 orders for 90 days or greater.

The Governors of several States – including Illinois, Connecticut and New Hampshire – requested to retain additional National Guard personnel in Title 32 statuses through June 30, 2020. These requests were made after careful consideration in light of the ongoing coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, with input from national and state experts, and in the best interest of front-line first responders. While we are pleased an extension was granted, the determination to issue an extension to June 24, 2020 only extended the authorization to 89 days thereby cutting off additional Federal benefits, including Post-9/11 G.I. Bill and early retirement benefits, troops responding to the COVID-19 operations would otherwise be eligible for at 90 days.

As the pandemic affects different parts of the country asymmetrically, the Federal Government must support individual Governors and their requests for Title 32 extensions of our National Guard. Activated troops serving on the front lines of this pandemic should be focused solely on the response to this national Public Health Emergency (PHE) and not on the status of their Federal benefits. The Federal Government should do more to ensure these public servants are properly taken care of and not exposed to unnecessary ambiguity.

We urge you to immediately rectify the strategic administrative decision you made on May 8, 2020 regarding the Title 32 extension to June 24, 2020 and approve requests to grant an extension to at least June 30, 2020 for the States of Illinois, Connecticut, New Hampshire and any other State where such action is warranted. Thank you in advance for consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator