

## **PRESS RELEASE**

**July 21, 2009**

### **Congress Urged to Adequately Fund, Equip and Make Ready Reserve Forces**

WASHINGTON – The members of the Reserve Officers Association of the United States passed 18 new legislative resolutions advocating for specific equipment funding, policy changes and improvements for readiness and retention of Citizen Warriors during their annual convention in Orlando July 11.

“Congress needs to not only properly fund an equipped military to fight today’s wars, but also prepare for tomorrow’s conflicts,” said Rear Adm. Paul T. Kayye, ROA President and retired Navy reservist.

This preparation includes the necessity to authorize and appropriate funds for continued production of F-22 Raptor aircraft.

“As potential adversary nations are committed to producing their own fifth-generation aircraft in the immediate future to combat and impede U.S. air dominance, the current cap of 187 aircraft is an inadequate number,” Kayye said.

Other equipment ROA advocates for includes additional funding of C-130J Hercules aircraft, funding the C-130 Aviation Modernization Program, and funding a radar upgrade for Navy and Marine Corps F-5s in their adversary program. Equipment for the U.S. Coast Guard to meet its homeland security responsibility of maritime security is also necessary.

With over 700,000 Guard and Reserve members having mobilized since September, 2001, fighting the first truly protracted conflict with an all-volunteer force that heavily relies on the Reserve components – members of ROA are concerned with a number of policy implications either now in effect or being proposed.

“First and foremost, Congress must fix the inequities of the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act which instituted an early retirement system, but did not recognize those Reservists who had been mobilized prior to 2008,” Kayye said. “While the original incentive to keep an all-volunteer force was a step in the right direction, it must, at a minimum, be corrected to Sept 11, 2001.”

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**(Congress Urged Continued)**

Other pay-parity issues exist that need to be fixed with regard to inequities in Hazardous Duty Incentive Pay and Aviation Career Incentive Pay. Currently, the amount of these additional compensations inappropriately hinge on a crew member's active or reserve pay status.

Service members' employers are also under compensated by their mandated willingness to accommodate Reserve employees.

"Congress should provide tax incentives to employers of Reservists, to include an enhanced tax credit for those employers who continue to provide regular compensation during employees' activation or annual training," Kayye said.

Despite such heavy use of the Reserves as an Operational Force, ROA has concerns over the proposed distinctions between the various types of Reservists.

Whereas the Commission on the National Guard and Reserve recommended that Reserve components be divided into operational and strategic forces, ROA takes issue with a one-size-fits-all model.

"Each service must have the authority and funding to manage the readiness of its own Reserve forces as best works for its own competencies, force generation models and necessary prescribed level of readiness for its distinct missions," Kayye said.

Along these lines, Congress should appropriate additional funds to train members of the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) who possess critical wartime specialties that will be needed to sustain the force during an extended conflict where the Strategic Reserve is required," he said.

Because Reservists and Guardsmen are asked to flow between various military and civilian statuses such as the IRR, continuity is an important factor in retention – particularly for health care. For this reason, ROA advocates for access to Tricare Reserve Select for members of the IRR. Further, ROA recommends DoD computerize patient records improving the seamless transition process through continuous electronic medical records availability.

"At a time of repeat deployments, individuals who want to serve should be permitted, especially when certain federal agencies, such as the FBI, want to suspend service of key federal employees," Kayye said.

Under a continuity of service, an operational force will cause Guard members and Reservists to change statuses in federal and state governments. Flexibility is needed in civilian as well as the military's retirement programs.



**(Congress Urged Continued)**

With the association's charter being focused on national security, ROA also has resolutions regarding protections against war crime prosecution, domestic energy development for defense, and alliance building.

This convention's resolutions build upon the five resolutions passed earlier in the year. In particular, Congress must ensure an adequate national defense budget, said Kayye. ROA members do not support reducing the defense budget during wartime, currently at 4.3 percent of the gross domestic product.

"While such a rate is adequate during peace time, such spending levels fall short during war and should be no less than 5 percent of the GDP," said Kayye.

Yet, many of the legacy structures and processes of the U.S. national security system are now more than 60 years old and are inadequate to help American leaders to formulate coherent national strategy, he said. ROA hopes that the Administration and Congress identify the series of systemic security problems and recognize that true national defense reform demands a new way of thinking and doing business. The Project on National Security Reform provides a variety of recommendations.

Lastly, ROA members want Congress to direct the Government Accountability Office to produce a report on the effectiveness of the Federal Voting Assistance Program's consequences on military absentee voting.

The Reserve Officers Association is the professional association for all uniformed services of the United States. Chartered by Congress and in existence since 1922, ROA advises and educates the Congress, the President and the American people on issues of national security, with unique expertise on Reserve issues. ROA advocates for adequate funding of equipment and training requirements, recruiting and retention incentives, and employment rights for all members of the Reserve.

Other active resolutions can be found at [www.roa.org/resolutions](http://www.roa.org/resolutions).