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Congress of the United States
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SUBCOMMITTEE ON RESEARCH AND SCIENCE EDUCATION

May 20, 2013

Barack Obama
President, United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama,

As an active member of the National Guard and a proponent of a strong and capable military, I feel it is necessary to make changes to the way sequestration has been implemented for a specific section of our military. Dual-status National Guard and Reserve technicians continue to face furlough despite their vital role as a uniformed component of our military.

As you know, military technicians (MILTECHs) are one of our nation's greatest forces, performing the day to day maintenance on the equipment that our service members rely on every day while in theater and here at home. Unfortunately, because of their dual status as both civilian and military they were not considered to be a part of the Military Personnel accounts exempted on July 31, 2011. I believe this was purely an oversight.

MILTECHs are required to serve in the National Guard or Reserve just to have their job, and are also required to meet all height, weight, and appearance standards including wearing their military uniforms to work every day. They are deployable personnel just like any other reserve component member; however, they are facing the same furlough as non-uniformed civilian DOD personnel.

After receiving the most recent guidance from the Department of Defense regarding furlough exemptions and implementation, I was deeply disappointed to see that only a very small portion of our nation's MILTECHs were exempted; specifically, firefighting and search and rescue personnel. These individuals perform a great service to our nation, but are those who are supporting our firefighting and search and rescue units more important than those who are supporting our activated reserve components in theater? While I realize that any exemptions made result in further cuts to other areas, I believe that this is a matter that simply cannot be overlooked. Uniformed, deployable military personnel should not be furloughed under any circumstance.

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I think we all can agree that sequestration is an irresponsible mechanism never intended to become law. We must continue to look for solutions to resolve the dangers that sequestration poses without taking a piecemeal approach, exempting key constituencies. That said, this is not a political game, this is truly a matter of military readiness and fairness for those who wear the uniform.

Accordingly, I respectfully ask that you instruct the Secretary of Defense to further alter the guidance for furloughs to exempt National Guard and Reserve military technicians as a matter of both national security and respect for reserve component personnel who have played such a vital role in our military over the past decade.

Sincerely,

Steven M. Palazzo
Member of Congress