

H.R. XXXX, The Duty Status Reform Act

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Organizations in Support: National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS), Reserve Organization of America (ROA), Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States (EANGUS), Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)

Summary:

The Reserve Component (RC), encompassing both the National Guard and the Reserves, currently operates with roughly 30 separate duty statuses, which is a result of patch fixes done by Congress spanning from WWII to the Global War on Terror. Duty statuses define the parameters of service for the RC, including the authorities under which servicemembers perform their missions.

The current framework is confusing, difficult to administer, and results in unnecessary administrative burdens. Most importantly, it fails to provide equitable benefits and does not align with the needs of our Guard and Reserve units.

The Duty Status Reform Act would clarify the system by reducing the number of duty statuses from roughly 30 to four, creating a coherent and equitable structure to ensure our national security needs are met. Under the new duty status construct, servicemembers carrying out assignments within the same category will receive the same pay and benefits package.

Current Problem:

The existing system for calling RC members to duty is complex and creates several problems:

- **Unequal Pay and Benefits:** Depending on the specific duty status, servicemembers receive different pay, allowances, and benefits. This leads to disparities among servicemembers doing similar work.
- **Disruption in Benefits:** Servicemembers may experience interruptions or changes in their pay and benefits when they move from one duty status to another.
- **Budgeting Difficulties:** The budget process is tied to the outdated duty status categories, which makes it harder to correctly allocate resources and understand exactly what work the RC is doing.
- **Command Challenges:** The rules for defining duty statuses can be complicated, making it difficult for commanders to quickly and easily call RC members to duty when they are needed.

Solution:

The Duty Status Reform Act would replace the complicated current system of about 30 duty statuses with a new framework of four broad categories for activating and compensating RC members:

contingency duty, training and support, reserve component duty, and remote assignments. The new construct would yield the following benefits:

- **Equity and Fairness:** By linking compensation to the category of duty, this legislation ensures members doing similar work are treated equally, simplifying the issue of pay and benefit differences.
- **Continuity of Benefits:** Members maintain a consistent pay and benefits package when they stay within the same duty category, reducing disruptions.
- **Greater Command Flexibility:** The simpler categories make it easier for commanders to call members to duty.

New Construct:

Category I: Contingency Duty. Active service in which the member is involved in contingency operations such as military action or operations; responding to a national emergency or natural disaster; or similar missions. This covers post-deployment activities.

Category II: Training and Support. Active service that does not involve a contingency operation. This may include required training, administrative assignments, support to reserve units, and members reported missing.

Category III: Reserve Component Duty. Blocks of time – partial-day duty – dedicated to readiness training and support to prepare individuals and units to be ready for future use and mobilization. Includes training periods, flight training, administrative activities, and support activities such as funeral honors support.

Category IV: Remote Assignments. Online learning and individually assigned duties that are completed virtually.