

**STATE OF OHIO  
ADJUTANT GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT  
2825 West Dublin Granville Road  
Columbus, OH 43235-2789**

**Testimony before the Senate Finance Committee, May 16, 2011  
House Bill 153: The FY 2012-2013 Operating Budget**

Chairman Widener, ranking member Skindell, and members of the Senate Finance Committee, I am Major General Deborah Ashenhurst, the Adjutant General for the State of Ohio. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on The Adjutant General's Department's Fiscal years 2012-2013 Biennial Operating Budget. The appropriations contained in these budget line items will improve the quality of life for the men and women of the Ohio National Guard and will support the readiness of the Ohio National Guard and its ability to respond when called.

The National Guard is the only branch of the military that has both a state and federal mission. In our federal mission, we support the war on terror, guard our nation's skies and patrol our nation's borders. In our state mission, we are prepared to respond to man-made or natural disasters anywhere in the state of Ohio. Through an instrument known as the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, or EMAC, the Ohio National Guard may also provide support to other states, and other states may assist Ohio should the need ever arise.

Ohio has the fifth largest National Guard in the nation with over 16,000 members. Since 9/11, over 13,000 Soldiers and 4,000 Airmen of the Ohio National Guard have been deployed to somewhere in the world. At the same time, we have also been ready at home. Even during the height of our overseas deployments, 70% of the National Guard remained at home and was ready to serve. Today over 90% of the Ohio National Guard is at home.

The Ohio National Guard has three critical priorities:

- Recruit, Train and Retain Soldiers and Airmen. That provides a ready response capability to meet national and state mission requirements.
- Construct and Maintain Facilities for the Ohio National Guard. That supports the training and equipping needs of the National Guard to ensure a response-capable force.
- Maintain and Sustain a Relevant Department of Defense Force Structure in Ohio. That helps ensure that the units and capabilities placed in Ohio by the Department of Defense will remain in Ohio.

The budget before you will enable us to continue to meet those critical priorities. Each one of the goals above has been met and exceeded and we will continue to exceed these goals in the coming biennium.

Your Ohio National Guard continues to excel at recruiting. Both the Ohio Air National Guard and the Ohio Army National Guard reached 100% of their assigned strength. Assigned strength

is the number of Soldiers or Airmen a unit requires to perform its mission set, but being at 100 percent of assigned strength is the minimum we need. With unit members still completing training or having health problems or for other reason being non-deployable, having 100% strength may leave a unit with critical gaps. Being above 100% makes our units more robust, and more able to respond quickly to the call of the President or the Governor. No other state can boast the success in building strength and readiness as can Ohio.

We are currently working to improve our facilities across the state. Part of that initiative involves the construction of modern Readiness Centers, or what we formerly called Armories. These Readiness Centers are funded by the federal government, the State of Ohio and the local community. These new combined training and community centers are part of an Ohio National Guard initiative to better integrate into the local communities.

In addition to providing our Soldiers with modern training facilities, these new facilities also represent part of a statewide initiative to reduce our utility costs. Over 30% of our budget is spent on utilities. We are reducing this amount through several initiatives. First, we continue to work with the General Assembly to dispose of outdated and inefficient Readiness Centers. We have reduced our number of Army Readiness Centers from 72 in 2005 to 50 in 2011.

In order to save General Revenue Fund monies, we are also increasing our renewable energy facilities. We have constructed solar facilities at Toledo, Camp Ravenna, Camp Perry and state headquarters in Columbus. Ohio National Guard solar panels cover nearly 11 acres throughout the state. These renewable energy projects will save the state approximately 1,933,000 kilowatt hours each year.

The money we save on utilities allows us to dedicate those funds to our core missions. The Ohio National Guard is working in close coordination with the Department of Public Safety, the Emergency Management Agency and the Ohio Department of Health to ensure that Ohio is prepared on the Homeland Defense/Homeland Security front. There are numerous initiatives in which the Ohio National Guard is a key player. The National Guard possesses significant engineering, security, communications, medical, and aviation and ground transport capabilities, and plans are in place to employ those capabilities, on the order of the Governor, in support of civilian first responders in homeland security/homeland defense events.

We have developed a Ready Reaction Force of 125 Soldiers that is available to deploy within 4 to 6 hours of being called. There is an additional 375 Soldier-unit tasked to follow on within 12 hours. We have a Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Team that works with first responders to identify any suspicious agents related to any homeland defense events. And we have Search and Rescue capability with built in medical and decontamination assets to respond to any man-made or natural disaster.

In the last year, we have been authorized to field a Homeland Response Force (HRF) by the U.S. Department of Defense and the National Guard Bureau. To stand up the HRF, we received more than \$4.3 million in federal funds to create new full-time jobs for the Ohio National Guard. The HRF consists of approximately 570 Soldiers and Airmen, trained and equipped to identify, respond to and mitigate the effects of a Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear or high-

yield Explosive (CBRNE) event. HRFs are designed to respond rapidly to various contingencies within Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) regions or support adjacent FEMA regions within six to 12 hours of receiving an activation order from the governor and the adjutant general.

We have also been successful in keeping jobs in Ohio by pursuing new missions at the Ohio Air National Guard Base located in Springfield, OH. Due to the efforts of our National Guard leadership and our state and federal legislators, the U.S. Department of Defense has assigned an MQ-1 Predator mission and expanded the National Air and Space Intelligence Center (NASIC) mission on our Springfield Base. Had it not been for these efforts, the Department of Defense would have closed these bases. Now, we are establishing cutting-edge missions and jobs that will support the community long into the future.

Since this Department last testified before this committee we have deployed thousands of Soldiers and Airmen around the globe in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation New Dawn, and Operation Enduring Freedom. We continue to average about 2,000 deployed Soldiers and 500 Airmen each year. Our members also conducted peacekeeping operations in the Sinai and continued our joint deployments with Hungary, one of our partner countries through the State Partnership Program, to train the Afghan National Army.

For our domestic mission we stand ready to respond to any domestic emergency. In the past, we have deployed thousand of Guardmembers to support recovery operations for Hurricanes Gustav and Ike, and in 2008, we deployed Soldiers and equipment to Northwest Ohio to assist with flood relief. We continue to stand ready to respond to any event in the state of Ohio.

In addition, I would like to take a moment to recognize the outstanding efforts of my staff that support the families of our Soldiers and Airmen. Our Family Readiness program is the benchmark of the nation and we completed over 70 statewide events in 2011. Our Families make great sacrifices and last year I conducted town hall meetings throughout Ohio to continue to generate support for our Families. Our employers are making great sacrifices as well. In recognition of the critical role of our employers, I have recently authorized the establishment of a community outreach program to build relations with our employers and other critical members of our communities.

Our operating budget essentially supports 3 functions: personnel, utilities and maintenance. Past budgets have required us to reduce maintenance of facilities to cover personnel and utilities. This budget will permit us to operate a sufficient facilities maintenance program while maintaining personnel and utilities support. More importantly, the state commitment preserves millions of federal dollars coming into the state. Commitment of federal dollars is based on the ability of the State to meet its share of the collaborative obligations. The Federal government determines how many troops to place in a state based in part on the willingness of the state to meet its obligations in support of the National Guard.

Our proposed state GRF budget is \$8.6 million, and there are many more millions in Federal funds that flow through the state budget through cooperative agreements. Most of those Federal dollars require specific state dollar matches. If the state money were not there, we would lose

federal dollars at the rate of 3 federal dollars for each state dollar not provided. But that is just the tip of the iceberg. The relatively small number of state dollars supports an overall Ohio National Guard federal budget of \$836 million. That includes over \$371 million in Federal salaries between our full time military personnel and our traditional Guard members. It pays for military construction, skill training, weapons systems, supplies, fuel and spare parts.

We like to say that the Ohio National Guard pays for itself. The state taxes paid on the \$371 million in federal salaries paid to members of the National Guard exceeds the full state GRF portion of our budget.

This budget also maintains benefits for Ohio's Soldiers and Airmen. It sustains \$400,000 over the biennium for troops' life insurance premiums and a \$100,000 death gratuity for the Family of any Soldier who dies in the line of duty.

This budget also includes money in the Board of Regents budget for the Ohio National Guard Scholarship Program, the National Guard's most critical recruiting tool. By the end of the 2010-2011 biennium, Ohio will have provided over 13,000 scholarships to Ohio National Guard members, many of them veterans. That program provides 100% tuition for Ohio National Guard members to attend state schools. If the Guardmember chooses to attend a state private institution, we pay the institution at the rate of the average tuition at state schools.

Under funding levels in the proposed 2012-2013 budget, we anticipate being able to provide approximately 11,500 scholarships in the upcoming biennium.

The men and women of the Ohio National Guard answer the call to duty because they believe in something greater than themselves. The proposed fiscal year 2012-2013 budget for the Adjutant General's Department recognizes the value and service these men and women bring to the citizens of Ohio, the United States, and the world.

The executive recommendations will:

- Support the three critical priorities that I outlined at the beginning of my testimony; recruit Soldiers and Airmen; maintain facilities, and preserve relevant force structure.
- Ensure sufficient state GRF dollars are available to match federal dollars for cooperative agreements.
- Preserve \$836 million of the federal budget that supports the readiness of the Ohio National Guard.

Your Ohio National Guard is supporting the Global War on Terrorism, conducting homeland defense operations, supporting the Governor's homeland security requirements, and prepared to conduct domestic missions. The Ohio National Guard is prepared to respond when called anytime, anywhere.

I ask for your support of the executive budget recommendation for the Ohio National Guard and the Adjutant General's Department. Thank you for your attention and I am now available to answer any questions you may have.