



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

9/18/19

The Honorable Asa Hutchinson
Co-Chair, Council of Governors
Governor, State of Arkansas
Little Rock, AR 72201

The Honorable David Ige
Co-Chair, Council of Governors
Governor, State of Hawaii
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Governor Hutchinson and Governor Ige:

Thank you for your August 8, 2019 letter of congratulations on my appointment as the Secretary of Defense. The Department of Defense (DoD) remains committed to its important strategic partnership with the Council of Governors, as established by Executive Order 13528, in accordance with section 1822 of the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2018.

The Department recognizes the importance of the transparent and sustained exchange of views, information, and advice between DoD and the Council on matters involving the National Guard, homeland defense, civil support, and synchronization and integration of State and Federal military activities in the U.S. Working together, our collective efforts have helped produce positive results, including the 2010 *Joint Action Plan for Developing Unity of Effort*, the 2011 change in law granting the Department greater access to the Reserves to provide assistance in response to major disasters and emergencies in the United States, the 2013 *State-Federal Consultative Process for Programming and Budgetary Proposals Affecting the National Guard*, the 2014 *Joint Action Plan for State-Federal Unity of Effort on Cybersecurity*, and the 2018 *State-Federal Catastrophic Disaster Working Group*.

The Council has established a full agenda going forward to address cyber security, Reserve Component duty status reform, resourcing disaster response, and disaster mitigation. These initiatives are congruent with the National Defense Strategy and its three lines of effort: building a more lethal force, strengthening our alliances and partnerships, and reforming the Department for greater performance and affordability. I have added a fourth line of effort as a personal challenge - taking care of Service members and their families - and I need your assistance in supporting them to the maximum extent possible, especially on issues that are primarily the responsibility of States, such as license portability for military spouses. More specifically, I urgently call on the Council of Governors to assist with ensuring that military spouses have access to special provisions from the States to support military spouse licensure; to implement policies that limit State-specific requirements for a wide-range of vocations that currently make it overly burdensome for military spouses and transitioning Service members to join the work force and be productive, contributing members of our State and local economies; and to approve occupational interstate compacts that allow licensure reciprocity for military spouses.

The Department looks forward to working with the Council of Governors and greatly appreciates your continued leadership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark T. Esper".