



Adopted 11/10/2018 (updated 3/20/19)

2019 Legislative Agenda

The Pennsylvania National Guard Associations (PNGAS)

The Pennsylvania National Guard Associations (“PNGAS”) is the only organization solely dedicated to the 19,438 members and more than 67,000 veterans of the Pennsylvania National Guard and their families. The PNGAS mission is to help ensure the Pennsylvania National Guard is fully funded, manned, equipped, and trained to perform their federal and state mission and that members and veterans have the benefits they have earned.

Over the next 12 months, the Pennsylvania National Guard must recruit more than 2,300 new members to replace Guard members that have completed their commitments and/or retired. Accordingly, PNGAS legislative, budget and mission priorities reflect the critical need to attract, train and retain quality women and men in the Guard and recognize institutions that help optimize recruitment and retention strategies of the Pennsylvania National Guard.

To strengthen the Guard, PNGAS adopts this 2019 Legislative Agenda and directs its energies, resources and talents be specifically focused to secure swift passage of the same:

1. **The Educational Assistance Program (“EAP”)** is the #1 recruiting and retention tool for the Pennsylvania National Guard and the top legislative priority of PNGAS. Last year with PNGAS support, EAP funding was increased to \$13 million! **Now, PNGAS supports and urges advocacy for the Governor’s proposed FY 2019-2020 state budget EAP allocation increase of \$265,000 from \$13 million to \$13,265,000.**

2. After investing billions to create the best National Guard in the United States, increasing retention rates of well-trained Guard members is cost-effective, strategic, and wise. Recognizing this, the **Military Family Education Program (MFEP)** was introduced by Governor Wolf in the February 2019 Budget Address to create a new non-lapsing Fund providing EAP-like tuition benefits to spouses and children of members of the Pennsylvania National Guard when the member re-enlists for another 6-year term. First-year funding requires \$2.7 Million in the FY 2019-2020 state budget. To make immediate impacts, the MFEP requires legislative passage on or before June 30, 2019.

The EAP and MFEP, and their budget requests, are the #1 priorities of PNGAS.

3. A 2017-2018 legislative priority of PNGAS, **Act 51 of 2018 created the National Guard Youth Challenge Program in Pennsylvania.** Now in law, PNGAS supports a \$2 million allocation in any Supplemental Budget or in the Governor’s proposed FY 2019-2020 state budget to start the planning, official-submissions, and site development plans for the Youth Challenge Center. 29 states use the National Guard Youth Challenge Program to help high school dropouts and at-risk adolescents become productive and responsible citizens. Chairman Steve Barrar is circulating a [co-sponsorship memo](#) to establish the **Keystone State Challenge Academy Special Fund. This is a legislative priority of PNGAS.**

4. An on-time state budget with full or greater funding of the Governor’s proposed FY 2019-2020 DMVA budget is a legislative priority of PNGAS.

PNGAS supports the following legislation:

[HB 229](#), sponsored by Rep. Deasy, Combat to College Program, Title 51 (Military Affairs) promotes a veteran-friendly

educational environment to assist veterans and returning deployed military in attaining a degree from a higher educational institution. **STATUS: Introduced and referred to the Veterans Affairs & Emergency Preparedness Committee, January 28, 2019.**

HB 89 sponsored by Rep. Rothman - Establishes the Veterans and Reservists Entrepreneurial Training and Support Program within DCED (Previously HB 907). **STATUS: Introduced and referred to the House Veterans Affairs & Emergency Preparedness Committee, January 28, 2019.**

SB 128 sponsored by Senator Regan and **HB 529** sponsored by Rep. Jozwiak - Amends Titles 51 and 74 providing for additional duties of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) relating to the Civil Air Patrol (CAP). **STATUS: SB 128 was received in the House and referred to the Veterans Affairs & Emergency Preparedness Committee, March 20, 2019, and HB 529 was reported as committed from the House Veterans Affairs & Emergency Preparedness Committee and received first consideration, March 20, 2019.**

HB 630 sponsored by Rep. Day - Amends Title 51 (Military Affairs) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in military leave of absence, further providing for employment discrimination for military membership or duty. **STATUS: Introduced and referred to the House Veterans Affairs & Emergency Preparedness Committee, Feb. 28, 2019.**

Former HB 2696 sponsored by Rep. T. O'Neal – Extends Educational Assistance Grants to the Dependents of National Guard Members. **STATUS: Rep. O'Neal is circulating a [co-sponsorship memo](#) to reintroduce this legislation in 2019.**

Former SB 1041 sponsored by Senator Bartolotta – Creates Veteran and Disabled Veteran Business Logo Designations. **STATUS: Sen. Bartolotta is circulating a [co-sponsorship memo](#) to reintroduce this legislation in 2019.**

SB 347 sponsored by Senator Baker and **Former HB 697** sponsored by Rep. Sainato - A Joint Resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, providing for exemptions and special provisions for the surviving spouse of any member of the armed forces of the United States who was killed in action as determined by the United States Department of Defense, or who died as a result of injuries received while in active service. **STATUS: SB 347 was introduced and referred to the Senate Finance Committee, February 27, 2019.**

Former SB 939 sponsored by Senator Sabatina - Legislation Providing Job Training Preference for Active Duty Service Members (adds National Guard to the list). **STATUS: Introduced and referred to the Senate Labor and Industry Committee, November 1, 2017. Senator Sabatina is circulating a [co-sponsorship memo](#) to reintroduce this legislation in 2019.**

HB 807 sponsored by Rep. Ryan (Previously **HB 819** sponsored by Rep. Barrar) - Compensation of Uniformed Military Service to the Commonwealth legislation. **STATUS: HB 807 was reported as committed from the House Veterans Affairs & Emergency Preparedness Committee and received first consideration, March 20, 2019.**

Former SB 1280 originally sponsored by Senator Vulakovich - Amends the Tax Reform Code providing for a National Guard service tax credit. **STATUS: Sen. Brooks is circulating a [co-sponsorship memo](#) to reintroduce this legislation.**

Our Federal Legislative Priorities Include:

S.164 (Daines) / H.R. 613 (Kelly) Expand TRICARE Reserve Select Coverage. Remove the prohibition on eligibility for TRS of members of the reserve components who are eligible to enroll in a health benefits plan under chapter 89, Title 5, U.S.C. **STATUS: S. 164 Read twice and referred to the Committee on Armed Services on January 16, 2019 / H.R. 613 Referred to the Subcommittee on Military Personnel on January 24, 2019.**

Awaiting reintroduction: Former **S. 2416 (Wicker/Coons) / Former H.R. 5038 (Palazzo/Walz)** Reserve Component Benefits Parity Act of 2018. Amends titles 5, 10, and 37, United States Code, to ensure that an order to serve on active duty under section 12304b of title 10, United States Code, is treated the same as other orders to serve on active duty for determining the eligibility of members of the uniformed services for certain benefits. **STATUS: S. 2416 Read twice and referred to the Committee on Armed Services on Feb 12, 2018, H.R. 5038 Referred to the Subcommittee on Military Personnel on Feb 16, 2018.**