Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 23, 2020

The Honorable Peter T. Gaynor
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street SW
Washington, DC 20472

The Honorable Christopher C. Miller
Acting Secretary of Defense
Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

The Honorable Russell Vought
Director
The Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Administrator Gaynor, Director Vought, and Acting Secretary Miller:

The Ohio National Guard has been instrumental in supporting the State of Ohio's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We, as a bipartisan, bicameral Ohio delegation, write to express our support for the request made by Ohio Governor Mike DeWine to restore and extend full federal funding for up to 1,800 members of the Ohio National Guard through March 31, 2021.

On March 13, the President declared a nationwide emergency for the COVID-19 pandemic, and, on March 22, authorized full federal reimbursement for states' use of their National Guard under Title 32 for COVID-19 response activities, which was extended through August 21. The federal government is currently funding 75 percent of the Ohio National Guard's Title 32 response activities through December 31, 2020.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has created unprecedented health and economic challenges in Ohio. Since April, approximately 2,000 men and women of the Ohio National Guard have answered the call to serve their communities and help keep their fellow citizens safe. Ohio Guardsmen have significantly increased the response capacity in Ohio by maintaining testing sites, staging and distributing personal protective equipment, and assisting foodbanks in distributing more than 33 million pounds of food to Ohioans in need.

In particular, National Guard support has been critical to Ohio's testing operations for nursing homes. Nursing homes are required to conduct weekly testing for both staff and residents to help prevent an outbreak of the virus within a facility. When PCR tests are administered, the National Guard provides logistical and operational support, collecting the swabs for COVID-19 testing and returning the results.

We are encouraged by the recent, promising progress made in the development of vaccines against COVID-19, but the threat of the virus still remains. Transmission rates are already increasing in Ohio as we enter into the winter months, and the Ohio National Guard will continue to be an essential part of the State's ongoing response to the health crisis.

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

We fully support Governor DeWine's request and urge its immediate consideration. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Thank you,

Rob Portman
United States Senator

Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

Robert E. Latta
Member of Congress

Troy Balderson
Member of Congress

Michael R. Turner
Member of Congress

Steve Stivers
Member of Congress

Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress

Anthony Gonzalez
Member of Congress

Marcia L. Fudge
Member of Congress

Bob Gibbs
Member of Congress

Bill Johnson
Member of Congress

Steve Chabot
Member of Congress

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

Tim Ryan
Member of Congress

Joyce Beatty
Member of Congress

David P. Joyce
Member of Congress

Brad R. Wenstrup, D.P.M.
Member of Congress

Warren Davidson
Member of Congress

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER