

ORAL ARGUMENT NOT YET SCHEDULED

No. 25-5418

**IN THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CIRCUIT**

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA,
Plaintiff-Appellee,

v.

DONALD J. TRUMP, *in his official capacity as President of the United
States, et al.,*
*Defendants-Appellants.***On Appeal from the United States District Court
for the District of Columbia**

No. 1:25-cv-03005

The Honorable Jia M. Cobb

**BRIEF OF *AMICI CURIAE* FORMER SERVICE SECRETARIES,
RETIRED SENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS, AND VET VOICE
FOUNDATION IN SUPPORT OF PLAINTIFF-APPELLEE**

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CERTIFICATE AS TO PARTIES, RULINGS, AND RELATED CASES

Except for the additional *amici* represented in this brief, all parties, intervenors, and *amici* appearing before the district court and in this Court are listed in Plaintiff-Appellee's D.C. Circuit Rule 28(a)(1) certificate included in their brief filed on May 18, 2026.

The ruling under review is an order and memorandum opinion granting a preliminary injunction and Section 705 stay. The opinion and order are included in the Joint Appendix filed on April 1, 2026. Dkt. 2166644. *See* JA808, JA869.

Undersigned counsel is unaware of any related cases within the meaning of D.C. Circuit Rule 28(a)(1)(C).

/s/ J. Andrew Boyle
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CORPORATE DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Pursuant to Fed. R. App. P. 26.1, *amicus curiae* Vet Voice Foundation is a nonprofit corporation. It has no parent corporation, and no publicly held corporation owns 10 percent or more of its stock. The *amici* Former Service Secretaries and Retired Senior Military Officers are individuals.

/s/ J. Andrew Boyle
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CERTIFICATE OF SEPARATE BRIEF

Pursuant to D.C. Circuit Rule 29(d), counsel states the following as to why a separate *amicus* brief for *amici* Former Service Secretaries, Retired Senior Military Officers, and Vet Voice Foundation is necessary. *Amici* Former Service Secretaries, Retired Senior Military Officers, and Vet Voice Foundation offer a unique, coherent perspective on issues in this case drawn from their experience working in or with the U.S. military. Those views, and the weight they should be afforded given their source, do not overlap with legal perspectives that might be offered by other *amici* in this case, nor do they overlap with the views of persons or organizations that do not have similar deep military experience. A separate *amicus* brief allows *amici* to present their views in as clear and concise a fashion as possible. As a result, *amici* believe that a separate brief is justified, and also serves the Court.

/s/ J. Andrew Boyle
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GLOSSARY

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IDENTITY AND INTEREST OF AMICI CURIAE¹

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- Former Secretary of the Navy Sean C. O’Keefe
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- Admiral Thad W. Allen, U.S. Coast Guard (Ret.)
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¹ All parties have consented to the filing of this brief. *See* Fed. R. App. P. 29(a)(2). As required by Federal Rule of Appellate Procedure 29(a)(4)(E), *amici* provide this statement: no counsel for a party authored this brief in whole or in part. No person other than *amici* or their counsel made a monetary contribution to this brief’s preparation or submission.

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- Brigadier General Paul G. Smith, U.S. Army (Ret.)
- Brigadier General Robin B. Umberg, U.S. Army (Ret.).

Brief biographies are in the Appendix.

Amicus curiae, Vet Voice Foundation (“VVF”), is a veteran-led, non-partisan non-profit representing almost two million veterans, military family members, and their supporters. VVF represents veterans and military families across the political spectrum and across the country. It strives to support them and their interests, including by championing policies and actions that protect our freedoms and advance our national security.

Amici have a strong interest in this case because deploying the National Guard under presidential control to aid civilian law enforcement poses substantial risk to the military. This risk is heightened when the National Guard is deployed against the will of local authorities and when the deployment is highly politicized, as done here. *Amici* submit this brief to ensure that the perspective of former high-ranking civilian and military leaders, veterans, and military families—based on their knowledge of and service in the military and their strong interest in its integrity and reputation—is represented before this Court.

SUMMARY OF ARGUMENT

President Trump’s deployment of the Washington, D.C. National Guard for domestic crime control—without a clearly demonstrated need and over the objection of local leaders—should deeply concern anyone who supports the military and its service members. So too should the deployment, at the President’s request, of National Guard forces from outside Washington, D.C. over the objection of the highest locally elected official. These events confirm the wisdom of our nation’s longstanding restrictions on the use of military personnel in civilian affairs—and in law enforcement, in particular.

This deployment threatens to undermine the military’s apolitical reputation, places service members in situations for which they are not specifically trained, and pulls the Guard away from its critical missions—thereby undermining morale, harming military readiness, and compromising public safety and national security.

ARGUMENT

As the Supreme Court has correctly recognized, “a traditional and strong resistance of Americans to any military intrusion into civilian affairs . . . has deep roots in our history.” *Laird v. Tatum*, 408 U.S. 1, 15 (1972). The laws restricting domestic use of the military, and the infrequent use of their exceptions, confirm that domestic military deployments should be a last resort, reserved for urgent needs beyond civilian law enforcement’s capacity. This is for good reason, as

deploying the military on U.S. soil, especially in highly politicized contexts, violates core American values and harms the military's reputation, integrity, and morale.

A. The Politicized Nature of the Deployment Harms the Military

i. The Armed Forces Must Remain Nonpartisan

A foundational precept of the U.S. military is that it is apolitical. Indeed, “the widely held view is that a military that is nonpartisan is able to serve the sovereign American people regardless of party and to defend all Americans regardless of their affiliation. This, in turn, protects and enables the process of American democracy to occur without fear of military intervention to shape or mandate a particular political outcome.”² The U.S. Supreme Court has observed that the

military as such is insulated from both the reality and appearance of acting as a handmaiden for partisan political causes or candidates. Such a policy is wholly consistent with the American constitutional tradition of a politically neutral military establishment under civilian control. It is a policy that has been reflected in numerous laws and military regulations throughout our history.

Greer v. Spock, 424 U.S. 828, 839 (1976).

² Kathleen J. McInnis, Cong. Rsch. Serv., IF 11566, *Congress, Civilian Control of the Military, and Nonpartisanship* (June 10, 2020), https://www.congress.gov/crs_external_products/IF/PDF/IF11566/IF11566.1.pdf.

Military institutions and experts have repeatedly emphasized that the military must stand as a nonpartisan institution within American society. Each service branch has policies and directives explaining the importance of political nonpartisanship. For example, an Army primer states: “Nonpartisanship assures the public that our Army will always serve the Constitution and our people loyally and responsively.”³ The Air Force instructs that “members are prohibited from engaging in certain political activities in order to maintain good order and discipline, and to avoid conflicts of interest and the appearance of improper endorsement in political matters.”⁴ These prohibitions apply to the National Guard as well.⁵

Respected and high-ranking military leaders agree on the imperative that the military must not be politicized. In 2008, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff wrote a letter to all service members stating: “A professional armed force that stays out of the politics that drive the policies it is sworn to enforce is vital to the

³ U.S. Dep’t of Army, *The Army: A Primer to Our Profession of Arms* at 12 (May 1, 2025),

<https://apply.westpoint.edu/www/documents/FM%201%20The%20Army.pdf>.

⁴ U.S. Dep’t of Air Force, Instr. 51-508, Political Activities, Free Speech and Freedom of Assembly, para. 1.1.2 (Mar. 24, 2023).

⁵ U.S. Dep’t of Def., Dir. 1344.10, Political Activities by Members of the Armed Forces (Feb. 19, 2008),

<https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodd/134410p.pdf>.

preservation of the union and to our way of life.”⁶ Echoing this sentiment, then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs General Joe Dunford stated that the American people need to see the military “as an apolitical organization that swears an oath to the Constitution of the United States—not an individual, not a party, not a branch of government—the Constitution of the United States.”⁷ And in 2020, 612 former officials, including those with diplomatic and military backgrounds, wrote: “Misuse of the military for political purposes would weaken the fabric of our democracy, denigrate those who serve in uniform to protect and defend the Constitution, and undermine our nation’s strength abroad.”⁸

Moreover, as the commander of U.S. Central Command from 2016 to 2019 explained, an apolitical military is especially important when it comes to domestic deployments such as the one at issue in this case: “[T]he actual employment of military personnel in support of civilian law enforcement is an extremely delicate

⁶ Admiral Michael G. Mullen, *From the Chairman: Military Must Stay Apolitical* at 2, No. 50, Joint Force Quarterly (2008).

⁷ Jim Garamone, *Active-Duty Personnel Must Remain Apolitical, Nonpartisan, Dunford Says*, U.S. Dep’t of Def. News (Aug. 1, 2016), <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/881624/active-duty-personnel-must-remain-apolitical-nonpartisan-dunford-says>.

⁸ Amb. Douglas A. Silliman et al., *The Strength of America’s Apolitical Military*, Just Security (June 15, 2020), <https://www.justsecurity.org/70608/the-strength-of-americas-apolitical-military/>.

matter and one fraught with tremendous peril. When not done thoughtfully, it endangers the apolitical reputation of the military.”⁹

ii. The National Guard is Being Deployed Here in a Deeply Political Context

Unfortunately, the current deployment arises in a highly politicized context, placing the National Guard in an untenable position. Senior administration officials have repeatedly charged the situation with political invective through social media posts, speeches, and press releases levying partisan attacks against Washington, D.C.’s mayor, Muriel Bowser, a Democrat who opposes the deployment.¹⁰ More broadly, administration officials have castigated Democratic officials across the country,¹¹ blaming them for unsafe cities that must be “straighten[ed] [] out”

⁹ Ret. Army Gen. Joseph Votel, *An Apolitical Military Is Essential to Maintaining Balance Among American Institutions*, Army Times (June 8, 2020), <https://www.armytimes.com/opinion/commentary/2020/06/08/an-apolitical-military-is-essential-to-maintaining-balance-among-american-institutions/>.

¹⁰ See, e.g., Donald Trump (@realDonaldTrump), Truth Social (Aug. 22, 2025, at 1:57 ET), <https://truthsocial.com/@realDonaldTrump/posts/115070876988527695> (“Mayor Muriel Bowser must immediately stop giving false and highly inaccurate crime figures, or bad things will happen, including a complete and total Federal takeover of the City! Washington D.C. will soon be great again!!!”); Donald Trump (@realDonaldTrump), Truth Social (Sept. 15, 2025, at 1:06 ET), <https://truthsocial.com/@realDonaldTrump/posts/115206570863756188> (stating Mayor Bowser is “under pressure from the Radical Left Democrats,” and “has presided over this violent criminal takeover of our Capital for years”).

¹¹ See, e.g., Donald Trump (@realDonaldTrump), Truth Social (June 15, 2025, at 8:43 ET), <https://truthsocial.com/@realDonaldTrump/posts/114690267066155731> (“Every day, the Brave Men and Women of ICE are subjected to violence, harassment, and even threats from Radical Democrat Politicians . . .”).

through military deployment.¹² President Trump has also drawn a stark contrast between cities led by Democrats and those that are “red,” or Republican-leaning,¹³ and has branded state and local Democrat officials as enemies who “are sick of mind, hate our Country, and actually want to destroy our Inner Cities.”¹⁴

Senior administration officials have also linked partisan statements to threatened deployments of the military. For example, in fall 2025, President Trump and Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth addressed a mandatory gathering of high-

¹² See The White House, *President Trump Delivers Remarks to the Department of War*, at 43:00 (YouTube, Sept. 30, 2025) (hereinafter “Quantico Speech”), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gKxWz8dyKfU>.

¹³ Rapid Response 47 (@RapidResponse47), X (Aug. 25, 2025, at 1:21 ET), <https://x.com/RapidResponse47/status/1960029828310352355> (“REPORTER: Would you consider sending the National Guard into ‘red’ cities that are also seeing high crime? @POTUS: Sure — but that [sic] aren't that many of them. If you look at the top 25 cities for crime, just about every one of those cities is run by Democrats.”); Donald Trump, YouTube (Aug. 30, 2025), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QxhCvpbrmgg> (“The top ten cities in terms of crime and violence are Democrat-run cities and it’s including Washington, D.C., by the way. . . . These are all Democrats and, in some cases, radical left Democrats. . . . So, look the Republicans have done a great job, we have great cities and we have very low crime rates.”)

¹⁴ Donald Trump (@realDonaldTrump), Truth Social (June 15, 2025, at 8:43 ET), <https://truthsocial.com/@realDonaldTrump/posts/114690267066155731> (“These, and other such Cities, are the core of the Democrat Power Center, where they use Illegal Aliens to expand their Voter Base, cheat in Elections, and grow the Welfare State, robbing good paying Jobs and Benefits from Hardworking American Citizens. These Radical Left Democrats are sick of mind, hate our Country, and actually want to destroy our Inner Cities”); see also Aaron Rugar (@atrugar), X (Oct. 5, 2025, 4:51 ET), <https://x.com/atrugar/status/1974940532410310821> (“Trump to the Navy: ‘We have to take care of this little gnat that’s on our shoulder called the Democrats.’”).

ranking U.S. military officers flown in from around the world. The President described cities with leadership of the opposing political party as “very unsafe” and suggested that Secretary Hegseth “should use some of these dangerous cities as training grounds for our military.”¹⁵

Moreover, in summer 2025, President Trump gave a speech in front of military members in Fort Bragg, North Carolina, which included remarks regarding the federalization of the National Guard in California. During the speech, he derided California’s Democratic leaders, “gloating jeers from a crowd of soldiers positioned behind his podium—blurring the long-standing and sacrosanct line between the military and partisan politics.”¹⁶ The soldiers selected to be behind the President and visible to cameras were reportedly chosen based on, *inter alia*, political leanings.¹⁷ One military commander called the situation “shameful,” and stated, “[t]his has been a bad week for the Army for anyone who cares about us being a neutral institution.”¹⁸ President Trump returned to Fort Bragg in February 2026, again holding a campaign-style rally before an audience of soldiers

¹⁵ Quantico Speech, *supra* note 12, at 43:11, 44:30.

¹⁶ Konstantin Toropin & Steve Beynon, *Bragg Soldiers Who Cheered Trump’s Political Attacks While in Uniform Were Checked for Allegiance, Appearance*, Military.com (June 11, 2025), <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2025/06/11/bragg-soldiers-who-cheered-trumps-political-attacks-while-uniform-were-checked-allegiance-appearance.html>.

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ *Id.*

and telling them, “[y]ou have to vote for us” and Fort Bragg would be renamed “[i]f we don’t win the midterms . . . You can’t let that happen.”¹⁹

While presidential disagreement with, and criticism of, political opponents is unexceptional, making such comments in rally speeches before uniformed military members, and linking such comments to the actual and threatened domestic deployment of the U.S. military is highly unusual—and profoundly concerning.

B. The National Guard is Not Trained for Law Enforcement

Most National Guard have only limited law enforcement training, which hinders their ability to carry out a domestic law enforcement mission. The minimal training Guard members receive for this type of deployment pales in comparison to the in-depth and ongoing education provided to civilian law enforcement officers. Deploying Guardsmen into fraught law enforcement contexts with insufficient training puts service members, law enforcement officers, and civilians at unnecessary risk of physical harm, and strains civil-military relations.

Domestic law enforcement—particularly in emotionally charged situations and instances of civil unrest—requires a specific skill set for which law enforcement officers train extensively and continually, including training in de-escalation and in respecting civilians’ constitutional rights on U.S. soil. Military

¹⁹ Nandika Chatterjee, *Trump Is Giving Campaign-Style Speeches to Troops in His Second Term*, TIME (Feb. 15, 2026), <https://time.com/7378785/trump-military-speech-fort-bragg/>.

personnel do not receive that specific training. *See Bissonette v. Haig*, 776 F.2d 1384, 1387 (8th Cir. 1985) (“[M]ilitary enforcement of the civil law leaves the protection of vital Fourth and Fifth Amendment rights in the hands of persons who are not trained to uphold these rights.”), *aff’d on reh’g en banc*, 800 F.2d 812 (8th Cir. 1986); *United States v. McArthur*, 419 F. Supp. 186, 193–94 (D.N.D. 1975) (“It is the nature of their primary mission that military personnel must be trained to operate under circumstances where the protection of constitutional freedoms cannot receive the consideration needed in order to assure their preservation. The posse comitatus statute is intended to meet that danger.”), *aff’d sub nom. United States v. Casper*, 541 F.2d 1275 (8th Cir. 1976). Our longstanding tradition of entrusting domestic law enforcement to local, state, and federal police has allowed the U.S. military to remain focused on its core mission.

Indeed, most of the Guard members deployed to D.C. reportedly lack law enforcement training,²⁰ inviting confusion and disagreement over what constitutes appropriate conduct in contentious civilian situations and risking miscalculations in the heat of the moment. As just one example, General Gregory M. Guillot, Commander, U.S. Northern Command recently admitted during Senate testimony that the National Guard do not receive training in how to interact with persons

²⁰ Greg Jaffe, *Hegseth Authorizes Troops in D.C. to Carry Weapons*, N.Y. Times (Aug. 22, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/08/22/us/politics/national-guard-weapons.html>.

having mental health crises—an issue on which Washington, D.C. police receive significant training.²¹

Nonetheless, Secretary Hegseth signed an order authorizing Guard members deployed to Washington, D.C. to carry weapons as part of their mission,²² putting both service members and the public they are sworn to protect at risk. The weapons training received by the Guard is ill-suited to patrolling American streets in peacetime, and these differences could lead to deadly consequences. Indeed, this has happened before. In a joint operation between the Los Angeles Police Department and the Marines during the 1992 Los Angeles riots, a police officer asked Marines to “cover me,” intending for the Marines to be prepared to fire to protect him only if necessary. The Marines, however, understood the request in their own parlance and laid down covering fire of over 200 rounds into a civilian’s house.²³ These seemingly small details can be the difference between life and death for service members, law enforcement officers, and civilians.

²¹ Senate Comm. on Armed Servs., *Hearing on the Administration’s Deployment of the National Guard Across the United States* (Dec. 11, 2025), at approximately 58:00, <https://www.c-span.org/program/senate-committee/senate-hearing-on-president-trumps-national-guard-deployment-across-us/670106>.

²² Steven Beynon, *National Guard to Remain in Nation’s Capital Through 2026*, ABC News (Jan. 16, 2026), <https://abcnews.com/Politics/national-guard-remain-nations-capital-2026/story?id=129295281>.

²³ *E.g.*, Andrew Gumbel, *Troops and Marines Deeply Troubled by LA Deployment: ‘Morale Is Not Great,’* The Guardian (June 12, 2025), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/jun/12/los-angeles-national-guard-troops-marines-morale>.

C. This Deployment Harms the Guard's Readiness

This deployment diverts the National Guard from their primary missions and harms their readiness in the event of actual need at home or abroad. In the United States, the Guard primarily provides domestic civil support, natural disaster relief, border security, and other support as requested by governors and/or the President. According to the National Guard Association of the United States, “[t]he National Guard are a critical component of disaster response across the nation, with members trained to use military expertise and equipment [to] provide fast and effective emergency support in severe weather events such as hurricanes and wildfires, and to conduct search and rescue operations.”²⁴ The D.C. National Guard, along with the National Guards of other states including Georgia, Indiana, South Carolina, Mississippi, Alabama, West Virginia, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Ohio, Arkansas, Florida, Idaho, North Dakota, Nebraska, and Tennessee²⁵—the states that have sent hundreds of additional Guard troops to the capital—are vital to local disaster preparedness and emergency response needs, and their absence risks degrading those states’ emergency preparedness. Indeed, South Carolina’s

²⁴ See, e.g., *Texas Guardsmen Rescue Over 520 Flood Victims*, Nat’l Guard Assoc. of the U.S. (Jul. 8, 2025), <https://www.ngaus.org/newsroom/texas-guardsmen-rescue-over-520-flood-victims>.

²⁵ See *Joint Task Force (JTF)-DC*, D.C. Nat’l Guard (Apr. 17, 2026), <https://dc.ng.mil/Domestic-Operations/Joint-Task-Force-JTF-District-of-Columbia-DC/>.

governor seemed to acknowledge the risks of sending National Guard troops away to Washington, D.C. during the state's hurricane season, stating that "should a hurricane or natural disaster threaten our state, these men and women can and will be immediately recalled home to respond."²⁶ But the governor's statement elides the likely operational difficulties of recalling hundreds of deployed troops and diverting them to a disaster zone, not to mention the risk of burnout among service members immediately recalled from one mission to another.

Recent reports indicate that 3,500 National Guard members are deployed in Washington, D.C., and the administration has requested the deployment of 1,500 more. They are expected to remain at least through the end of 2026, with some reports that they will remain through 2029.²⁷ This, despite the administration withdrawing the use of the National Guard from Illinois, Oregon, and California

²⁶ *Gov. Henry McMaster Authorizes Deployment of National Guard to Washington, D.C.*, S.C. Office of the Governor (Aug. 16, 2025), <https://governor.sc.gov/news/2025-08/gov-henry-mcmaster-authorizes-deployment-national-guard-washington-dc>.

²⁷ *See, e.g.*, Steven Beynon, *National Guard to Remain in Nation's Capital Through 2026*, ABC News (Jan. 16, 2026), <https://abcnews.com/Politics/national-guard-remain-nations-capital-2026/story?id=129295281>; Gary Fields, *With No End in Sight to Their Deployment, National Guard Troops Still Roam DC*, NBC Washington, (Apr. 20, 2026), <https://www.nbcwashington.com/news/local/with-no-end-in-sight-to-their-deployment-national-guard-troops-still-roam-dc/4093083/>; Steven Beynon, *Pentagon Plans to Keep National Guard in DC into 2029, 2 US Officials Say*, ABC News (Mar. 19, 2026), <https://abcnews.com/Politics/pentagon-plans-national-guard-dc-2029-2-us/story?id=131234530>; Mark Segraves (@SegravesNBC4), X, (May 15, 2026 at 12:04 pm), <https://x.com/SegravesNBC4/status/2055318455885103266>.

due at least in part to the widespread negative public reaction to those deployments, which reflects the concerns expressed in this brief.²⁸ In part due to the cost of the deployment of National Guard in DC—estimated at \$1 billion this year by the Congressional Budget Office—the Army is cutting training “from elite schools to unit-level training.”²⁹ The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that \$496 million was spent on federal troop deployments to U.S. cities in 2025 alone, and that on average 1,000 Guard deployed to a city costs at least \$18 million per month.³⁰ These considerable sums could be far better used preparing the National Guard, and the Army as a whole, for their primary missions.

The proliferation of domestic deployments of the National Guard for missions outside their core duties also threatens long-term military readiness. The National Guard is the primary combat reserve of the U.S. Army and Air Force. Non-emergency deployments—especially lengthy or back-to-back deployments—reduce combat preparedness by cutting into training time and contributing to

²⁸ While those deployments were under different legal authority than that at issue here, it is notable that the Supreme Court concluded that such domestic deployment of the military was unfounded. *See Trump v. Illinois*, 146 S. Ct. 432 (2025).

²⁹ Steve Beynon, *Army Cuts Training as Service is Short Billions of Dollars*, ABC News (May 13, 2026), <https://abcnews.com/Politics/army-cuts-training-service-short-billions-dollars/story?id=132898323>.

³⁰ Cong. Budget Office, *Estimating the Costs of Troop Deployments to U.S. Cities* (Jan. 28, 2026), <https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/2026-01/61943-Troop-Deployments.pdf>.

fatigue and burnout. This concern is especially important given that states like Ohio, Mississippi, and Tennessee—which deployed their Guard members to Washington, D.C.—have also deployed their guard members in support of combat operations against Iran, adding further strain to military readiness.³¹ And amidst this international turmoil, key experts—including the chief of the Justice Department’s counterterrorism section—are being diverted from their critical primary duties to staff these D.C. National Guard operations.³² Additionally, most Guard members have families and civilian lives that they put on hold when deployed, as well as employers who may grow frustrated by frequent, months-long absences on politically controversial missions.

D. This Deployment Harms the Military’s Reputation and Morale

The overtly political context of the current deployment, the misalignment between the Guard’s mission and these orders, and the strain on overall readiness can cause significant harm to the military’s cohesiveness and reputation, as well as

³¹ Adam Friedman & Sam Stockard, *Tennessee Air National Guard Deployed to Middle East as Part of War in Iran*, Tenn. Lookout (Mar. 10, 2026), <https://tennesseelookout.com/briefs/tennessee-air-national-guard-deployed-to-middle-east-as-part-of-war-in-iran/>; Bonnie Bolden, *Mississippi National Guard Troops Deployed in Iran War. What We Know*, Clarion Ledger (Mar. 13, 2026), <https://www.clarionledger.com/story/news/2026/03/13/national-guard-sends-mississippi-soldiers-to-support-operation-epic-fury-war-iran/89133968007/>.

³² Perry Stein, *Mass Firings Leave National Security Ranks Thinned as War Raises Threats*, Washington Post (Mar. 6, 2026), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2026/03/06/justice-department-fbi-iran-weakness/>.

to the morale of the service members being deployed. Gallup polling shows that the U.S. military is one of the most trusted out of an array of American institutions.³³ But a military that is thrust into adversarial interactions with civilians in a politicized context will, over time, inevitably lose the respect and trust that it has rightly earned. As a former Acting Vice Chief of the National Guard Bureau stated, deploying the military domestically to police citizens “is the beginning of a divide between our military and our citizens, and that is absolutely detestable.”³⁴

Recent polling shows that Americans do not generally support the use of the military to police civil disturbances and enforce laws in the way the D.C. National Guard and State Guard in D.C. are being called to do, which can increase tensions between the public and the military. Majorities of Americans oppose deploying National Guard to Washington, D.C., and think that the president should only send armed troops to face external threats.³⁵ Seventy percent of those queried in one poll

³³ *Confidence in Institutions*, Gallup, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/1597/confidence-institutions.aspx> (last visited May 11, 2026).

³⁴ Chris Hippensteel, *Trump is Expanding the National Guard’s Role. Some Former Generals Worry*, N.Y. Times (Sept. 21, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/09/21/us/national-guard-crime-washington-cities.html>.

³⁵ *Majority of Voters Oppose Deploying National Guard to D.C., Quinnipiac University Poll Finds*, Quinnipiac Univ. Poll (Aug. 27, 2025), <https://poll.qu.edu/poll-release?releaseid=3929>; Jason Lange, *Most Americans Don’t Want Troops Deployed Without an External Threat, Reuters/Ipsos Poll Finds*, Reuters (Oct. 8, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/most-americans-dont-want-troops-deployed-without-an-external-threat-reutersipsos-2025-10-08/>.

said local law enforcement is best suited to handle crime in their communities, and only one percent say another state's Guard is the best fit for the job.³⁶ This disapproval from fellow Americans can only exacerbate feelings of isolation and low morale for the National Guard deployed.

Unsurprisingly, service members deployed to Washington, D.C. and other cities have expressed confusion and low morale over their assignments.³⁷ Internal documents show veterans and active duty troops view the domestic deployments “with shame and alarm.”³⁸ The administration has characterized recent domestic deployments as confronting an “enemy from within,”³⁹ situating the Guard's mission *against* the American people. Yet, our brave men and women in uniform have chosen this path to serve and protect their fellow citizens, not to be turned against them. This fundamental tension could undermine the effectiveness of any military, even one as professional as the U.S. armed forces. In one report, six

³⁶ *Survey: Americans Say Local Law Enforcement Should Handle Crime—Not the National Guard*, States United Democracy Center (Oct. 7, 2025), <https://statesunited.org/resources/survey-local-law-enforcement/>.

³⁷ *See, e.g.*, Shawn Hubler, *Trump's National Guard Troops Are Questioning Their Mission in L.A.*, N.Y. Times (Jul. 16, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/07/16/us/trump-national-guard-california.html>.

³⁸ Alex Horton, *National Guard Documents Show Public 'Fear,' Veterans' 'Shame' Over D.C. Presence*, Washington Post (Sept. 10, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2025/09/10/national-guard-trump-dc/>.

³⁹ Quantico Speech, *supra* note 12, at 43:25, 50:08.

members of the California National Guard “including infantrymen, officers and two officials in leadership roles — spoke of low morale and deep concern that the deployment may hurt recruitment for the state-based military force for years to come.”⁴⁰ One DC National Guard member described the deployment to D.C. as “objectively unnecessary and almost wicked” and “not what [he] signed up to do.”⁴¹

A former adjutant general of Illinois discussed the harm stemming from the politicization of the deployment: “These are all really disincentives for retention, for morale, for recruiting It’s one thing when you’re out there sandbagging to prevent the Mississippi River from washing the town away. It’s another thing when you’re fulfilling a president’s political desires.”⁴² A National Guard member deployed in California touched upon the idea of moral injury: “The moral injuries of this operation, I think, will be enduring . . . This is not what the military of our country was designed to do, at all.”⁴³

⁴⁰ Shawn Hubler, *Trump’s National Guard Troops Are Questioning Their Mission in L.A.*, N.Y. Times (Jul. 16, 2025),

<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/07/16/us/trump-national-guard-california.html>.

⁴¹ Sylvie McNamara, *An Anonymous DC National Guardsman Tells All*, Washingtonian (Jan. 21, 2026), <https://washingtonian.com/2026/01/21/an-anonymous-dc-national-guardsman-tells-all/>.

⁴² Hippensteel, *supra* note 34.

⁴³ Hubler, *supra* note 40.

Beyond morale issues, a politicized military will also struggle to recruit and retain the best talent, regardless of political views. Patriotic individuals eager to serve their country may hesitate to swear an oath that compels them to follow orders driven by political motivations. Others will no doubt worry that their own political views could be a hindrance to their professional success in the military. These challenges could be crippling for our all-volunteer force. Potential recruits will feel that they may be forced into actions for political motivations, or that their own political views could be a hindrance to their professional success in the military. A professor of civil-military relations at the U.S. Naval War College warned of this very dynamic, noting that politicized deployments risk a self-reinforcing cycle in which certain groups feel unwelcome in the military, undermining the democratic principle that the armed forces belong to all of American society.⁴⁴

As an organization that supports military members and families, and former senior military leaders, *amici* recognize that those who choose to join the National Guard or regular military are primarily driven out of a desire to serve America and their fellow citizens, not to be turned against them. Having to do so harms military

⁴⁴ Daniel Byman, Lindsay P. Cohn & Jen Patja, *Lawfare Daily: Civil Military Relations in the Trump Administration*, at 39:00 to 41:30, Lawfare (Jul. 2, 2025) (conversation with Lindsay P. Cohn), <https://www.lawfaremedia.org/article/lawfare-daily--civil-military-relations-in-the-trump-administration-july-2>.

morale, which is an essential part of the effectiveness of any military. As General George Marshall once said, “It is not enough to fight. It is the spirit which we bring to the fight that decides the issue. It is morale that wins the victory.”⁴⁵

E. Courts Have an Essential Role to Play in Ensuring that the Military Operates within the Law

Congress—which has regulated the proper uses of the National Guard at issue here⁴⁶—has given no indication that it intends for the Guard to be used as an auxiliary police force to score political points, and has clearly stated its aversion to the use of the military in domestic civilian contexts as anything other than a last resort. It is “emphatically the province and duty” of the courts to determine the proper use of the National Guard. *See Perpich v. Dep’t of Def.*, 496 U.S. 334 (1990); *Marbury v. Madison*, 5 U.S. 137, 177 (1803).

The deployment of the National Guard in Washington, D.C. is, of course, not happening in a vacuum. President Trump has also deployed or sought to deploy federalized Guard (and in one case active-duty Marines) to California, Illinois, and Oregon, and he has approved deployment of the Guard under U.S. Code Title 32 in Tennessee and Louisiana. President Trump and those in his administration have

⁴⁵ George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, Speech at Trinity College (June 15, 1941), in *The Papers of George Catlett Marshall: We Cannot Delay* (1941), at 2-484, <https://library.marshallfoundation.org/portal/Default/en-US/RecordView/Index/13052>.

⁴⁶ *See generally* 32 U.S.C. § 502; D.C. Code §§ 49-401 to 49-409.

also repeatedly threatened to deploy troops to other locations, all of them controlled by Democratic politicians, including New York City, Baltimore, Minneapolis, and Oakland.⁴⁷ Indeed, he has stated: “We’re gonna have troops everywhere.”⁴⁸

Deploying the military into a peaceful domestic environment, despite the adequacy of civilian law enforcement and the protests of local leadership, constitutes a dangerous escalation. Such executive action inflicts profound harm on service members and their families, requiring rigorous judicial review. In a nation of laws, not military rule, setting a precedent that allows the executive to deploy the National Guard unnecessarily will severely harm the military as a trusted and nonpartisan institution.

⁴⁷ See Joey Garrison, *President Trump Says Other US Cities Could Be Next as He Deploys National Guard to DC*, USA Today (Aug. 11, 2025), <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2025/08/11/trump-national-guard-deployment-us-cities-dc/85610923007/>; *Trump Says He May Send US Troops to New Orleans, Louisiana to Fight Crime*, Reuters (Sept. 3, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/trump-says-he-may-send-us-troops-new-orleans-louisiana-fight-crime-2025-09-03/>; Steve Karnowski, *Trump Threatens to Use Insurrection Act to Put Down Protests in Minneapolis*, PBS News (Jan. 15, 2026), <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/trump-threatens-to-use-insurrection-act-to-put-down-protests-in-minneapolis>.

⁴⁸ Ed Pilkington, *Trump LA Protest Response Risks Turning US Military into Political Force, Veterans Warn*, The Guardian (June 9, 2025), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/jun/09/veterans-trump-national-guard-la-protests>.

This Court should affirm the common sense preliminary injunction imposed by the district court. While this deployment of the National Guard is unsound on its own terms, the Court also cannot ignore the totality of the surrounding circumstances. These deployments do not represent the use of the military domestically only when strictly necessary. Instead, the President is using the military as a cudgel against political opponents. The harm that does—to American principles, values, and traditions, as well as to the military itself—must be prevented.

CONCLUSION

Throughout our nation's history, domestic deployment of the military has been a last resort. The strict limitations on the use of troops on U.S. soil remain as important today as when they were enacted into law. *Amici* respectfully request that the Court deny the stay.

Dated: May 26, 2026

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE

This amicus curiae brief complies with the word limit of Fed. R. App. P. 29(a)(5) because it contains 5,242 words, excluding the parts of the brief exempted by Fed. R. App. P. 32(f) and Circuit Rule 32(e)(1). This filing complies with the typeface requirements of Fed. R. App. P. 32(a)(5) and the type-style requirements of Fed. R. App. P. 32(a)(6) because this brief has been prepared using Microsoft Office Word in Times New Roman 14-point font.

Dated: May 26, 2026

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, J. Andrew Boyle, hereby certify that on May 26, 2026, I electronically filed the foregoing Brief of *Amici Curiae* Former Service Secretaries, Retired Senior Military Officers, and VVF with the Clerk of the Court for the United States Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit by using the appellate CM/ECF system. A true and correct copy of this brief has been served via the Court's CM/ECF system on all counsel of record.

Dated: May 26, 2026

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Appendix: List of *Amici*

Former Secretary of the Army Louis E. Caldera graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1978 and served in the Army on active duty from 1978 to 1983. He served in two Senate-confirmed positions in the Clinton Administration, including Secretary of the Army, and as an Assistant to the President and Director of the White House Military Office in the Obama Administration.

Former Secretary of the Navy Sean C. O’Keefe began his public service career in 1978 at the Department of Defense and as U.S. Senate staff until his appointment as the Department of Defense Comptroller and Chief Finance Officer in 1989. President George H.W. Bush later named him the 69th Secretary of the Navy. Secretary O’Keefe also served in President George W. Bush’s Administration as Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget and the 10th Administrator of NASA.

Admiral C. Steve Abbot, U.S. Navy (Ret.), graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1966, after which he was deployed to Vietnam and began a 34-year career with the U.S. Navy. His final active-duty tour was as Deputy Commander-in-Chief, U.S. European Command from 1998 to 2000. Following his retirement, Admiral Abbot served as Deputy Homeland Security Advisor to President George W. Bush from 2001 to 2003.

Admiral Thad W. Allen, U.S. Coast Guard (Ret.), retired in 2010 as the 23rd Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard. Admiral Allen led the federal responses to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. He led Atlantic Coast Guard forces in response to the 9/11 attacks and coordinated the Coast Guard response to the Haitian earthquake of 2010.

General Michael V. Hayden, U.S. Air Force (Ret.), entered active military service in 1969. During his career, he rose to the rank of four-star general and served as Director of the Central Intelligence Agency and the National Security Agency. General Hayden also served as Commander of the Air Intelligence Agency and held senior staff positions at the Pentagon, Headquarters U.S. European Command, and the National Security Council.

Admiral Samuel Jones Locklear, III, U.S. Navy (Ret.), graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1977. He served for 39 years and retired as commander of U.S.

Pacific Command. His prior commands include Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Europe, U.S. Naval Forces Africa, and Allied Joint Force Command Naples; Commander, U.S. 3rd Fleet; and Commander, Nimitz Strike Group.

Admiral William A. Owens, U.S. Navy (Ret.), retired in 1996 as the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He began his career as a nuclear submariner, spending a total of 4,000 days aboard submarines, including duty in Vietnam. Admiral Owens was a senior military assistant to two Secretaries of Defense and served as commander of the U.S. 6th Fleet during Operation Desert Storm.

Vice Admiral Donald C. Arthur, U.S. Navy (Ret.), served as 35th Surgeon General of the Navy. He was Commander of the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland, and the Naval Hospital in Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. He deployed and served with the hospital ship USNS Mercy.

Lieutenant General Charles P. Otsott, U.S. Army (Ret.), is a graduate of West Point and the National War College. He is a former Deputy Chairman of the NATO Military Committee. He commanded the 25th Infantry Division and was awarded the Silver Star for service in Vietnam.

Rear Admiral (Upper Half) William D. Baumgartner, U.S. Coast Guard (Ret.), had a variety of operational and legal assignments during his 33 year career. As a flag officer, he served as the Judge Advocate General (TJAG)/Chief Counsel of the Coast Guard and then as the Commander of the Seventh (Southeast) Coast Guard District. He is a graduate of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy and Harvard Law School.

Major General Richard T. Devereaux, U.S. Air Force (Ret.), graduated from the U.S. Air Force Academy in 1978 and went on to serve 34 years in the Air Force. During his career he logged more than 3,500 hours piloting the C-5 Galaxy, KC-135 Stratotanker, and several other aircraft, and commanded five organizations from the squadron level to the USAF Expeditionary Center. After retiring from the Air Force in 2012, General Devereaux worked as a defense industry consultant and served on several non-profit boards including Chairman of the National D-Day Memorial, Chairman of the Salvation Army of Asheville, President of the Rotary Club of Asheville, and Chairman of Blue Ridge Public Radio.

Major General Paul D. Eaton, U.S. Army (Ret.), served over thirty years as an Infantry officer, including combat and post-combat tours in Somalia, Bosnia and Iraq. He commanded the force to recreate the Iraqi Armed Forces after the fall of

Saddam, served as Chief of Infantry for the American Army and helped create the Stryker-based Infantry divisions.

Rear Admiral (Upper Half) Donald J. Guter, U.S. Navy (Ret.), served on active duty in the Navy for 29 years, first as a surface warfare officer and then in the Judge Advocate General Corps, ultimately serving as the Judge Advocate General of the Navy from 2000-2002. After retiring from active duty, he served as Dean of Duquesne Law School and subsequently Dean of South Texas College of Law Houston.

Major General Richard S. Haddad, U.S. Air Force (Ret.), was the Vice Commander of the Air Force Reserve Command, responsible for the daily operations of approximately 70,000 citizen Airmen and 300 aircraft among three numbered air forces, 33 flying wings, 10 flying groups and one space wing.

Major General Irving L. Halter, Jr., U.S. Air Force (Ret.), is an Air Force Academy graduate and former fighter pilot, serving in Iraq, Afghanistan, in the Pentagon with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and as Vice Superintendent of the Air Force Academy. He is the recipient of two Bronze Stars.

Rear Admiral (Upper Half) John D. Hutson, U.S. Navy (Ret.), served in the U.S. Navy for thirty years, including time as the Judge Advocate General of the Navy. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal, the Legion of Merit (with three gold stars), Meritorious Service Medal (with two gold stars), Navy Commendation Medal, and Navy Achievement Medal.

Major General Steven J. Lepper, U.S. Air Force (Ret.), served for 35 years in the United States Air Force as a judge advocate in a variety of roles including Deputy Legal Counsel to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, commander, and military judge. He culminated his service as Deputy Judge Advocate General of the Air Force.

Major General Randy E. Manner, U.S. Army (Ret.), served over 36 years in the U.S. Army in positions such as the Acting Vice Chief of the National Guard Bureau overseeing the readiness and deployment of over 450,000 Guardsmen, the Deputy Commanding General of the U.S. Third Army, responsible for all Army forces in combat in the Middle East, and as the Acting and Deputy Director of the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, responsible for overseeing the safety of all U.S. nuclear and chemical weapons and developing DoD procedures to respond to pandemics.

Major General Gale S. Pollock, U.S. Army (Ret.), served as the Commander of the U.S. Army Medical Command and the Acting Surgeon General of the Army (the first woman, non-physician to have this role in any of the military services). General Pollock was the 22nd Chief of the Army Nurse Corps.

Major General Patricia S. Rose, U.S. Air Force (Ret.), served more than three decades in the U.S. Air Force, where she held key leadership roles in logistics, engineering, and security across the Air Force and joint commands. Commissioned in 1984, she began her career as an aircraft maintenance officer and went on to command the 36th Aerial Port Squadron at McChord Air Force Base. She later directed joint logistics in Southwest Asia in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom and served as a senior logistics leader for U.S. Pacific Command and Air Force Materiel Command. Rising to the rank of Major General in 2013, her career was marked by extensive operational experience, global deployments, and contributions to sustainment, readiness, and force protection. She is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Defense Superior Service Medal and the Legion of Merit.

Major General Tammy S. Smith, U.S. Army (Ret.), served 35 years in the United States Army, culminating her career at the Pentagon as Military Advisor to the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower and Reserve Affairs), where she oversaw quality-of-life programs for more than one million soldiers and families across the Active, Guard, and Reserve force. A logistics officer by training, she held command and staff positions worldwide, including deployments in Panama, Costa Rica, Afghanistan, and South Korea, and served as Deputy Commanding General of the Eighth Army. In 2012 she became the military's first openly LGBT general officer, using her platform to advance inclusion and diversity across the force, earning the Secretary of the Army Diversity in Leadership Award. A decorated combat veteran, her honors include the Distinguished Service Medal, Bronze Star Medal, Legion of Merit, and Combat Action Badge, and she was inducted into the Army ROTC Hall of Fame in 2016.

Major General Antonio M. Taguba, U.S. Army (Ret.), served in the U.S. Army for more than 34 years, including time as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for readiness, training and mobilization in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs and as acting director of the Army Staff, Headquarters, Department of the Army.

Major General F. Andrew Turley, U.S. Air Force (Ret.), served in the U.S. Air Force for more than 27 years, in a wide variety of active duty, Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard judge advocate positions at the wing, major command and Air Staff levels, culminating in his appointment as the Ninth Air National Guard Assistant to The Judge Advocate General. As a federal civilian lawyer, he held senior level legal positions with several federal agencies, including the Department of Justice, the White House, and Department of the Air Force, and served as the general counsel of a small DoD agency. He is a retired member of the Senior Executive Service.

Rear Admiral (Lower Half) Sandra E. Adams, U.S. Navy (Ret.), served for 34 years on active and reserve duty as a Surface Warfare Officer, retiring in 2015. Adams held command at several levels, served in multiple theaters, and supported three 4-star level commands. She has a Masters Degree from the Naval War College.

Brigadier General Steven M. Anderson, U.S. Army (Ret.), served a 31-year career in the U.S. Army, specializing in logistics across key command and staff assignments in Korea, Iraq, Kuwait, Afghanistan, Germany, Hawaii, and the Pentagon. His most significant role was as Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics to General David H. Petraeus during the Multi-National Force in Iraq from 2006 to 2007, where he oversaw critical sustainment operations during the height of the conflict. A 1978 graduate of West Point with a master's degree from the Naval Postgraduate School, Anderson retired in 2010 and was recognized with numerous awards, including the Distinguished Service Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster and the Bronze Star.

Rear Admiral (Lower Half) Michael S. Baker, M.D., F.A.C.S., U.S. Navy (Ret.), is a retired admiral and trauma surgeon with a distinguished dual career in medicine and military service. Board certified in General Surgery with fellowship training in cardiovascular surgery, he served as a surgery department chair for more than 20 years and was on the clinical faculty at two medical schools. He has published over 100 peer-reviewed articles, lectured widely at national and international conferences, and taught at U.S. military bases around the world. Dr. Baker has completed 5 tours in Ukraine during the current war to teach Advanced Trauma Life Support to doctors and nurses with the International Medical Corps. In the Navy, he specialized in combat casualty care, triage, trauma, operational medicine, and disaster response, retiring after 30 years with three Legions of Merit, the Marine Corps Combat Action Ribbon, and the Combat Craft River Warfare pin.

Rear Admiral (Lower Half) James A. Barnett, Jr., U.S. Navy (Ret.), was a Surface Warfare Officer and attorney. He served as Deputy Commander of the Naval Expeditionary Warfare Command during the height of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. He later served as Chief of the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau of the Federal Communications Commission.

Brigadier General Stephen A. Cheney, U.S. Marine Corps (Ret.), was the Inspector General of the Marine Corps ('97-'99), and then became the Commanding General of recruiting and recruit training for the Marines at their Recruit Depot at Parris Island, SC ('99-'01). He later was President of the Marine Military Academy in Texas, and Chief Executive Officer of the American Security Project (a non-profit DC think tank).

Rear Admiral (Lower Half) Jay A. DeLoach, U.S. Navy (Ret.), graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1978, served on submarines, and retired as a rear admiral. He earned three master's degrees (Management; Nuclear Engineering; and National Security & Strategic Studies) and was an adjunct professor for the Naval War College. As a member of the Senior Executive Service, he served as the 12th Director of the Naval History & Heritage Command.

Brigadier General Robert J. Felderman, U.S. Army (Ret.), served as the United States Deputy Director and Principal Advisor to the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) and as the Deputy Director of Plans, Policy, and Strategy Directorate (DJ5) at the U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM).

Brigadier General David R. Irvine, U.S. Army (Ret.), is an attorney in private practice. He previously served four terms as a Republican member of the Utah House of Representatives. He enlisted as a private in the 96th Infantry Division in 1962. He received a direct commission as a strategic intelligence officer in 1967. He retired in 2002 as a Brigadier General, and his last assignment was Deputy Commander of the 96th Regional Support Command, U.S. Army Reserve.

Brigadier General Joseph V. Medina, U.S. Marine Corps (Ret.), graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1976 and served for three decades. His command assignments included Commander of Expeditionary Strike Group THREE, Commander of the Marine Corps' installations in Asia, and Commanding General of 3rd Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB)/Deputy Commanding General III Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) in Okinawa, Japan.

Brigadier General Paul G. Smith, U.S. Army (Ret.), is a retired Massachusetts National Guard officer whose more than three-decade career included command at the company, battalion, and brigade levels, culminating as Assistant Adjutant General – Army. He also served as Commander of the Land Component Command and as a Dual-Status Commander, where he led Army force development initiatives in suicide prevention, drug abuse reduction, sexual assault prevention, resiliency, and diversity. General Smith directed the State Partnership Program with the Republic of Paraguay, supporting the development of United Nations peacekeeping forces, and represented Massachusetts on the Military Interstate Children’s Compact Commission as well as the National Guard Bureau Joint Diversity Executive Council. As Commander of Joint Task Force – Massachusetts, he oversaw emergency responses to the Western Massachusetts tornado, Hurricanes Irene and Sandy, severe winter storms, and the Boston Marathon Bombings. A graduate of Fitchburg State College, Anna Maria College, and the U.S. Army War College, his service is recognized with numerous awards, including the Meritorious Service Medal with four oak leaf clusters and the Army Commendation Medal with four oak leaf clusters.

Brigadier General Robin B. Umberg, U.S. Army (Ret.), began her Army career at 18 and was commissioned in 1977 after earning a nursing scholarship at Walter Reed. Over 36 years of active and reserve service, she held command and staff roles across the U.S. and overseas, including deployments during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, and earned high honors such as the Legion of Merit and the Civilian Humanitarian Service Medal. As Chief of Professional Services for the 3rd Medical Command, she advised on readiness and career management for more than 27,000 medical personnel, and in 2006 was inducted into the Military Order of Medical Merit. Following her military retirement in 2010, she continued serving veterans as Undersecretary of California Department of Veteran Affairs, where she modernized long-term care for aging, disabled, and homeless veterans. Appointed to the board of visitors at West Point, Umberg has dedicated her career to service, leadership, and advocacy for veterans. She earned the Lifetime Achievement Award for her service to veterans.