



The Adjutant General's Department

Testimony of Major General John Harris, Adjutant General for Ohio

Senate Higher Education Committee

April 30, 2019

Chair Kunze, Vice-Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Williams and members of the Senate Higher Education Committee, I am Major General John Harris, and I have the distinct honor of presenting to you on behalf of the more than 16,000 Soldiers, Airmen and civilians who are your Ohio National Guard.

My testimony today includes comments supporting the budget submission before you, some comments on the accomplishments of the past year, and a brief look ahead.

Budget

The budget before you will enable us to continue to meet our state and federal missions. Taking a fiscally-conservative approach, we will be able to recruit and retain Soldiers and Airmen, and to maintain the facilities that support the critical needs of a modern National Guard. Additionally, the state operating budget is a necessary complement to federal grants for the operation of the Ohio Army and Air National Guard.

Our proposed General Revenue Fund (GRF) appropriation is \$11 million per fiscal year, which represents 27% growth from fiscal year 2019, and will permit us to operate a sufficient maintenance program at facilities encompassing more than 25,000 acres in 37 Ohio counties. The GRF supports our core functions of administration, management, command-control and cyber security. Primarily, \$3 million goes to directly support the

Ohio Army National Guard, \$1.8 million to support the Ohio Air National Guard, and \$5.1 million for central support of both the Army and Air National Guard.

The GRF funding is essential in order to match federal cooperative agreement funding in the amount of \$42.6 million to support personnel, utilities, and maintenance. In addition to state appropriations made to the department in this budget, including those supported by federal cooperative agreement funding, we also receive another \$676.6 million in direct federal funding.

Commitment of federal dollars is based on the ability of the state to meet its share of the collaborative obligations. If our state funding was not available, we would lose financial support at the rate of three federal dollars for each state dollar. The GRF funding is also important as 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.

In this budget there are line items for dedicated purpose funds that are primarily self-sufficient and self-sustaining activities, including lodging programs at the Camp Perry Joint Training Center. These funds are a necessary part of our total budget.

We like to say that the Ohio National Guard pays for itself. An estimated \$11 million dollars in state payroll taxes are generated each year by Ohio National Guard employment.

With a solid funding base from the State, the dedicated men and women of your National Guard have successfully supported our communities and completed missions in Ohio and around the world. I would like to call your attention to just a few of their recent accomplishments.

Accomplishments

In conjunction with the Ohio Department of Public Safety, the Ohio National Guard talked to more than 20,000 students about the dangers of drug abuse as part of the Start Talking! program.

Members of the Ohio National Guard Counterdrug Task Force assisted local law enforcement agencies last year in drug seizures and disrupting drug trafficking organizations with more than \$122.9 million in illicit drugs, weapons, property and currency taken off our streets.

Through the GuardCare program, the Ohio National Guard partners with local and state health departments to provide free health screenings, basic lab work and immunizations to medically underserved residents, most recently in Union and Madison counties. In the more than two decades since the program began, GuardCare has provided services for more than 13,000 Ohioans in 20 counties.

As a combat reserve for the U.S. Army and Air Force, the Ohio National Guard deployed more than 800 Soldiers and Airmen in 2018. Locations included the Washington D.C. area, Estonia and Kuwait. For the second year in a row, the Ohio National Guard supported hurricane recovery efforts. After hurricanes in North Carolina and Florida, Ohio Guard members helped with imagery analysis, command support, and damage assessment and repair; provided a safe haven for Air Force aircraft from the affected states; and flew-in supplies and personnel to the affected areas.

The Ohio National Guard State Partnership Program (SPP) celebrated the 25th anniversary of its pairing with Hungary. There were 50 events with SPP partners Serbia and Hungary during the year, including the visit of the Serbian Prime Minister Ana Brnabić. The delegation met with political, academic and business leaders to promote mutual relations and discuss areas of potential economic cooperation.

Throughout the year, we have remained at a high state of readiness to support our local communities in response to natural or man-made disasters. One such example, Citizen-

Soldiers deployed twice to help erect floodgates in Portsmouth last February when the rising Ohio River threatened homes and businesses.

We also supported local communities by responding to emergencies. Ohio Air National Guard fire and emergency services in Toledo, Columbus and Mansfield assist civilian fire departments with medical and fire emergency response through mutual aid agreements -- at no cost to the local communities. There were nearly 500 mutual aid calls from Oct. 1, 2016, to Sept. 30, 2017.

As we prepare for the future, we look to new missions, new technologies and innovative approaches to create a stronger, better Ohio.

Cyber

To that end, the Ohio National Guard has brought together more than 50 public, private, military, and educational organizations to form the Ohio Cyber Collaboration Committee (OC3). The OC3 mission is to provide a collaborative environment to develop a stronger cyber security infrastructure and workforce. In 2018 the Adjutant General's Department, the Ohio Department of Higher Education and the OC3 committee established the cyber range, a virtual environment used for cybersecurity training and technology development, at the University of Cincinnati and the University of Akron.

Ohio still needs a way to tap into the wealth of cyber talent that exists throughout the state and connect that talent to the needs of Ohio, but in a way that is sustainable from a budget perspective, and provides proper command and control of the response. This is why I have been working with Secretary of State Frank LaRose and State Senator Theresa Gavarone on the passage of SB 52. Under the framework of the Ohio National Guard, this bill seeks to establish the Ohio Cyber Reserve, a volunteer civilian force drawn from private sector cyber security experts, organized and nested under the Ohio National Guard, whose mission is to deter, mitigate, and protect critical infrastructure across the State of Ohio from cyber threats.

In addition to providing a platform for sharing best practices and emerging threats, the Ohio Cyber Reserve will fill three important requirements for Ohio: assist, respond and educate.

First, the members will assist the Ohio National Guard conduct vulnerability assessments on Ohio's critical infrastructure. Specifically, these geographically dispersed teams will be ideally suited to help small municipalities, towns and villages determine vulnerabilities and provide recommendations for improving cyber operations.

Second, the OCR will augment the Ohio National Guard response in the event of a cyber attack. While Cyber Reserve members are in training status, they will not be paid. When activated, they will be paid as state civilian employees and will respond to cyber incidents side-by-side with National Guard Cyber Response Teams. Guard cyber defense assets are limited. The highly trained and vetted members of the OCR will help us ensure that our ability to provide rapid and robust response in the event of a complex cyber event.

Third, the OCR will help us educate and develop the cyber talent of the future. In addition to teaching cyber hygiene and cyber responsibility in schools, team members will also help STEM teachers mentor local high school cyber clubs. Additionally, these individuals will engage in community outreach to local civic leaders to establish organizations such as Cyber Explorer Clubs.

The Ohio Cyber Reserve is a unique approach that has already received interest from other states around the country. I believe once implemented, it will be the national model for solving a problem that is vexing our nation.

Operations

State GRF levels in the past ten years have not allowed us to keep up with increases in operating costs. Reductions since FY 2009 have resulted in total loss of \$3.1 million in federal matching funds, resulting in a total annual loss of \$4.9 million to support and maintain our aging Guard facilities. The armories where our

women and men prepare for their state and federal missions are aging and outdated, with the majority of the facilities built more than 40 years ago. Our state staffing levels have decreased by 22 percent, with security, firefighting and maintenance positions eliminated.

While the state funding and staffing levels have been reduced, the tempo of our missions has only increased. In 2012 the National Guard became an operational reserve of the active duty. At that time, Guardsman across the state were already cumulatively performing about 21,000 days more than their required statutory minimum 39 training days a year. Since then, the Ohio National Guard has experienced a 146% increase in cumulative days over the statutory minimum and last year our Citizen-Soldiers conducted more than 50,000 additional training days.

The Ohio National Guard is a cost-effective force, and we will continue to be fiscally responsible stewards of finances, facilities, equipment and property. However, we can only stretch our funding so far in order to be ready for the next call from the citizens of this great state.

Conclusion

Chair Kunze, Vice-Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Williams and esteemed committee members, thank you for your continued support of our Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen. Gov. DeWine's proposed budget will provide the state funding to maintain the high levels of readiness necessary to respond to disasters, whether natural or manmade, on short notice. State General Revenue Funds are a vital part of attracting and sustaining a top-notch military force for land, air, cyber, and space operations.

Respectfully submitted,

Major General John Harris
The Adjutant General