



FY2027 NDAA: National Guard Military Technician Phaseout

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National Guard Military Technician Phaseout Provision in an FY2027 NDAA

Section 1105 of the House-passed version of a FY2027 NDAA (H.R. 8800) would amend 32 U.S.C. §709 to replace National Guard military technicians (MTs) with a mix of Active Guard and Reserve (AGR) and civilian personnel over a ten-year period. It would do so by:

- Instituting a hiring freeze on MTs starting in FY2028;
- Authorizing the Secretary of Defense, who is using “Secretary of War” as a “secondary title” under Executive Order 14347 dated September 5, 2025, to convert MTs to AGR or civilian positions with the consent of the affected employee;
- Authorizing the Secretary to provide states with funding to rehire MTs as state employees; and
- Implicitly allowing MTs who do not accept these options to retire or seek other employment.

This provision would also repeal 32 U.S.C. §709 at the beginning of FY2039.

Section 513 of the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC)-reported version of an FY2027 NDAA (S. 4784) would authorize a similar phaseout. The report accompanying the SASC version of an NDAA requires the Secretary of Defense to submit a report to Congress analyzing the potential impact of the MT phaseout on “readiness, workload, military force structure, lethality, operational effectiveness, stress on the military force, State disaster relief capabilities, and the fully burdened costs associated with such conversions or transfers.”

Full-Time Support to Reserve Components

The reserve components of the Armed Forces consist of the Army National Guard, Army Reserve, Navy Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve, and Coast Guard Reserve. These components are primarily staffed by *traditional* reservists: personnel who are required to serve one weekend a month and two weeks a year, but who may be called to active service for sustained periods.

The reserve components also include full-time military and/or civilian employees. Per Department of Defense (DOD) policy, these employees, known as full-time support (FTS) personnel, are “assigned to organize; administer; instruct; recruit and train; maintain supplies, equipment and aircraft; and perform other functions required on a daily basis in the execution of operational missions and readiness preparation.” (DOD is “using a secondary Department of War designation,” under Executive Order 14347, dated September 5, 2025.)

The FTS personnel categories relevant to this In Focus are:

- **Military technicians** (MTs), referred to *in statute* as “military technicians (dual status),” are federal civilian employees who provide a range of support to reserve units. MTs are required to maintain membership in the reserves as a condition of their employment and may be involuntarily ordered to active duty. National Guard military technicians are generally employed under the authority of Section 709 of Title 32 of the *U.S. Code*.
- **Active Guard and Reserve** (AGR) personnel, who are members of the reserve component activated for at least 180 days to train and / or support the reserve component. AGR duty is defined in statute at 10 U.S.C. §101(d)(6). National Guard AGRs generally serve under the authority of 32 U.S.C. §502(f).
- **Civilians** are federal employees who train and support the reserves, but who are not required to maintain membership in the reserves. They are generally employed under authorities in Title 5 of the *U.S. Code*.

Background on Proposed Changes

The current MT program was established in 1968, when the National Guard primarily functioned as a *strategic reserve*, meant to be mobilized for low-probability, high-intensity operations such as a war with the Soviet Union. Since the end of the Cold War, the National Guard has also functioned as an *operational reserve*, taking part in standard force generation cycles and conducting overseas contingency operations alongside its Active-Component counterparts.

On May 11, 2026, DOD sent a legislative proposal to Congress, which would phase out National Guard technicians over a ten-year period. DOD stated this proposal would allow the National Guard to “best shape the workforce to ensure the right personnel are available for the National Guard’s critical, no-fail missions.” The proposal indicates MTs would be eventually replaced by a workforce composed of 89% AGRs and 11% civilians.

The proposal discussed potential issues with MT personnel management:

The DST [dual-status technician] program...can lead to difficulties in maintaining military proficiency while fulfilling civilian duties often placing a significant burden on the technician, potentially impacting job performance in both roles. Furthermore, the DST program suffers from rigid career progression and a perceived lack of opportunities compared to either Active Guard and Reserve (AGR) or Title 5 civilian career paths.

A separate document, which appears to originate with the National Guard Bureau (NGB), argues that MTs are not aligned to the operational role of the National Guard and the frequent activations this mission set entails. It argued that the military technicians’ dual civilian / military status

creates a slow, cumbersome organization with limited response capability in times of crisis. The program is burdened by bureaucratic HR policies that hinder the Guard’s agility and operational effectiveness...Unlike AGRs who can be mobilized immediately, DSTs [dual-status technicians] operate under civilian employment rules that delay deployment during natural disasters, domestic operations, or other crises.

The DOD proposal also contains a “best estimate of resources requested within the Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 President’s Budget that are impacted by this proposal.” A summary of these estimates is found in [Table 1](#).

Table 1. Estimated Budgetary Implications of National Guard MT Phaseout Proposal (all dollar amounts in millions).

	FY2028	FY2029	FY2030	FY2031	FY2032
ARNG	+\$20	-\$45	+\$74	+\$105	+\$140
ANG	-\$10	-\$20	-\$28	-\$36	-\$42
Total	+\$10	+\$25	+\$46	+\$69	+\$98

Source: DOD [Legislative Proposal](#), May 11, 2026. For more detailed cost estimate see table on linked page of the proposal.
Notes: ARNG is Army National Guard, ANG is Air National Guard. Plus sign represents an increase in spending, minus sign represents a decrease in spending.

The NGB document [outlines](#) several **potential implementation challenges**, which include:

- Loss of institutional knowledge and “structural misalignment.”
- Net cost increases (see [Table 1](#)).
- Career limitations for AGR personnel.
- Difficulties transitioning personnel between health plans.

Per the National Guard Bureau document, the proposal has been [endorsed](#) by several stakeholders. The “Adjutants General [i.e. the uniformed chiefs of each state and territorial National Guard organization] have expressed strong support for the initiative, recognizing its potential to stabilize workforce [sic], increase readiness and improve operational flexibility.”

The National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS) broadly [endorsed](#) the proposal, albeit with reservations over “control grades, retirement implications and funding to meet the increased end strength.”

The Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States also [endorsed](#) the proposal, stating that it “represents a

practical workforce modernization initiative that will help the National Guard recruit and retain highly qualified personnel in critical fields...”

Potential Issues for Congress

Congress may consider whether to enact Section 1105 in an FY2027 NDAA. In these considerations, Congress may weigh the proposal’s potential operational and efficiency benefits against potential cost increases and implementation challenges.

Congress may also consider modifying this measure. For instance, Congress may decide to lengthen or shorten the implementation period, which is currently set at ten years. Congress may also opt for a reduction, rather than a phaseout, of military technicians. Congress may determine that certain full-time support activities are better suited to military technicians than to AGR or civilian personnel. Congress may consequently decide to maintain some military technicians to fulfil those roles. Congress could also decide against enacting this measure.

When deliberating this measure, Congress may also consider possible oversight issues. Transitioning MTs to civilian, AGR, and state-employee status could cause unintended administrative disruptions that may impact individual personnel and the National Guard as a whole. Congress may consider whether and how it might anticipate and prevent such disruptions, and should disruptions occur, whether and how they might be monitored and mitigated.

Congress may additionally evaluate DOD plans for funding the re-employment of MTs as state employees. Finally, Congress may consider the replicability of MT phaseouts to the reserve components in solely federal service.

Additional Resources

[Title 32, U.S. Code \(National Guard\)](#)

[DOD Instruction 1205.18: Full-Time Support \(FTS\) to the Reserve Components](#)

[CRS Report RL30802, Reserve Component Personnel Issues: Questions and Answers](#)

[CRS In Focus IF10540, Defense Primer: Reserve Forces](#)

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