



Legislative Report

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Enlisted Association of the National Guard of Kentucky

Prepared by SFC Michael Smith, President

Introduction

This report provides an overview of the legislative landscape affecting National Guard enlisted members at the federal level. It covers the 2026 EANGUS legislative initiatives that EANGKY supports, highlights two white papers submitted by Kentucky for national consideration, and outlines how our members can take action.

Legislation is one of three key priorities for EANGKY under the current administration. Every policy that affects our pay, benefits, training, and retirement starts with having a seat at the table. The strength of that voice depends on membership and engagement.

EANGUS 2026 Legislative Initiatives

The Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States (EANGUS) sets its legislative priorities through resolutions submitted by state associations and voted on at the annual conference. The following initiatives represent the primary focus areas for 2026.



Initiative	Description
Pay Our Troops Act (H.R. 5401)	Guarantees pay for Armed Forces and DoD civilians during government shutdowns. Joint letter sent with NGAUS, AGAUS, and ROA.
GI Bill Parity Act	Credits every day in federal duty status under Titles 10 or 32 toward Post-9/11 GI Bill eligibility, including drill, AT, schools, and disaster response.
Space National Guard Establishment Act	Establishes the Space National Guard as a reserve component of the Space Force. Designates 14 existing units across 7 states.
Air Guard STATUS Act	Requires the Secretary of the Air Force to provide tuition assistance to drill-status Air National Guard members, matching Army Guard benefits.
Major Richard Star Act	Provides concurrent receipt of VA disability compensation and retired pay for combat-related disability retirees.
Duty Status Reform	Addresses the gap where Guard members under Title 32 are excluded from pay protections and benefits afforded to Title 10 counterparts.
Fighter Aircraft Recapitalization	Preserves and recapitalizes fighter aircraft capabilities across Air Force reserve components, prioritizing 39 combat-coded squadrons.

Key Upcoming Event: The EANGUS Presidents and Legislative Workshop takes place March 22–24, 2026. This is where state association leaders coordinate messaging and meet with Congressional representatives. EANGKY will be represented at this event.



Kentucky White Papers

EANGKY has produced two white papers for submission at the national level. Both address gaps in benefits that directly affect our enlisted members and their families. These papers were authored by SFC Patricia Smith, EANGKY Treasurer, and represent Kentucky's direct contribution to the national legislative conversation.

White Paper	Summary	Author
MyCAA Title 32 AGR Eligibility	Extends My Career Advancement Account scholarship eligibility to spouses of Title 32 AGR members. AGR families face the same challenges as active-duty families but are excluded from this career development benefit.	SFC Patricia Smith, EANGKY Treasurer
TRICARE Fitness Benefit	Proposes a TRICARE gym membership reimbursement for National Guard members who lack access to military fitness facilities yet must meet the same physical fitness standards as active-duty counterparts.	SFC Patricia Smith, EANGKY Treasurer

White Paper 1: MyCAA Title 32 AGR Eligibility

The My Career Advancement Account (MyCAA) scholarship provides up to \$4,000 in tuition assistance to military spouses pursuing portable career credentials. The program currently excludes spouses of National Guard members serving full-time on Active Guard and Reserve (AGR) duty under Title 32.

This exclusion is the central issue. Title 32 AGR members serve full-time, receive the same pay and benefits as their Title 10 counterparts, and their families face identical employment challenges. The only difference is the statutory authority on their orders. That distinction has no bearing on the family's lived experience.

Key facts from the white paper:

- **Spouse unemployment:** Military spouse unemployment sits at 21–24%, roughly five times the national civilian rate.
- **Income gap:** Active-duty military spouses report a median income 42% lower than civilian counterparts.
- **Cost to DoD:** Military spouse unemployment costs an estimated \$710 million to \$1.07 billion annually in retention and lost productivity.
- **Precedent:** DoD expanded FSA eligibility to Title 32 AGR personnel in 2024 and expanded MyCAA pay grade eligibility in October 2024.

Recommended actions:



1. Amend MyCAA eligibility through DoD policy directive (no new legislation required).
2. Include MyCAA parity language in the annual NDAA.
3. Coordinate with sponsors of the Guard and Reserve GI Bill Parity Act to attach MyCAA provisions.

White Paper 2: TRICARE Fitness Benefit

TRICARE currently excludes coverage for gym memberships and exercise programs. This white paper proposes a reimbursement benefit specifically for National Guard members who lack access to military fitness facilities.

National Guard members are geographically dispersed across thousands of communities, often far from installations with fitness centers. They must meet the same physical fitness standards as active-duty personnel but carry the full cost of maintaining that readiness on their own.

Key facts from the white paper:

- **Obesity-related costs:** DoD spends approximately \$1.5 billion annually on obesity-related healthcare across the military.
- **Reserve component rates:** An estimated 68% of reserve component personnel are overweight or have obesity, the highest rate across all components.
- **Access gap:** Guard members drill 2–4 days per month and lack consistent access to installation gyms that active-duty personnel use daily.
- **Cost savings:** Preventive fitness investment costs far less than treating obesity-related conditions after they develop.

Recommended actions:

4. Establish a TRICARE fitness benefit through NDAA language or DoD policy change.
5. Model the program after existing federal employee fitness reimbursement programs.
6. Engage EANGUS and NGAUS to build coalition support at the national level.



How Members Can Take Action

Legislative advocacy works when members engage. Here are the ways EANGKY members can support these efforts.

- **EANGUS Legislative Action Center:** Visit eangus.org/legislative to contact your representatives directly. The system identifies your legislators and provides pre-drafted messages on current initiatives.
- **Contact Your Representatives:** Kentucky's Congressional delegation needs to hear from Guard members. Personal stories about how these issues affect your family carry more weight than any policy brief.
- **Attend the EANGUS Conference:** The annual EANGUS conference includes legislative sessions where resolutions are voted on and advocacy strategies are coordinated.
- **Share the White Papers:** Both Kentucky white papers are available for distribution. Share them with your chain of command, unit representatives, and fellow association members.
- **Stay Informed:** Follow EANGUS drill talking points published monthly. These provide current legislative updates you can share during drill weekends.

Closing Remarks

EANGKY exists to represent the enlisted force of the Kentucky National Guard. Legislation is how we turn that representation into action. The initiatives outlined in this report affect our pay, our benefits, our families, and our readiness. Kentucky is not sitting on the sideline. We have two white papers in the national conversation, and we have members who are willing to stand up and be heard.

I encourage every member to take at least one action from this report. Visit the Legislative Action Center. Call your representative. Share a white paper. Every voice matters.

SFC Michael Smith

President, Enlisted Association of the National Guard of Kentucky