



GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT

May 3, 2024

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden:

The Texas National Guard plays a crucial role in protecting over 30 million Texans. In recent years, members of the Texas National Guard have heroically responded to hurricanes, wildfires, and a variety of other disasters, including the one at the Texas–Mexico border. Most recently, the Texas National Guard responded to the largest wildfire in Texas history with aircraft to dump water and with an MQ-9 Reaper to assess the situation on the ground. During COVID-19, the Texas National Guard deployed over 4,600 troops to support 17 state agencies in all 254 counties in Texas and responded to 530 formal State of Texas Assistance Requests. As their governor and commander in chief, I am proud to have one of the largest National Guards in the country.

Legislative Proposal 480, put forth by the U.S. Department of the Air Force, poses an intolerable threat to the Texas National Guard. That proposal would give the Secretary of the Air Force unilateral authority to transfer Air National Guard units to the Space Force—without first obtaining gubernatorial consent. Although the Texas Air National Guard does not have these types of missions, I strongly oppose any attempt to sideline governors when it comes to their respective National Guards.

Congress has long required the consent of a governor before units can be transferred out of the National Guard he commands. *See* 32 U.S.C. § 104; 10 U.S.C. § 18238. By departing from this sensible arrangement, and allowing the Secretaries to dismantle National Guard units on a whim, Legislative Proposal 480 would set a dangerous precedent. Members of the Texas National Guard must always stand ready to respond to natural disasters, civil disturbances, and cartel activity that threaten our way of life.

The U.S. Department of the Air Force should retract Legislative Proposal 480. Instead of attempting such a power grab in Congress, the U.S. Department of the Air Force should work with the affected governors to build up the Space Force in a way that is consistent with federal law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg Abbott".

Greg Abbott  
Governor

GA:whm