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## United States Senate

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June 8, 2006

The Honorable Christopher Bond  
Co-Chair, Senate National Guard Caucus  
Senate Russell Office Building, Room 274  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Co-Chair, Senate National Guard Caucus  
Senate Russell Office Building, Room 433  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Bond and Senator Leahy,

I am writing to inform you of my intent to cosponsor S.2658, the National Defense Enhancement and National Guard Empowerment Act of 2006. I appreciate your leadership in introducing this legislation.

The National Guard continues to answer the nation's call across the globe. As of today, more than 50,000 members of the Guard are mobilized in support of Operations Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom, and Iraqi Freedom. More than 290,000 Guardsmen have been mobilized to date in support of these operations. These citizen soldiers deserve to have their voices heard at the highest decision making levels in the Pentagon.

Although I am happy to join you in cosponsoring this bill, I do have some concerns about the provision relating to the NORTHCOM deputy. I agree that NORTHCOM must work closely with the National Guard, but I am not certain that Congress should be involved in regulating command structure at that level of detail in this case. I hope there may be an opportunity to re-examine this issue as we move forward.

I look forward to working with you on this and other issues important to the National Guard in the future.

Sincerely,

KEN SALAZAR  
United States Senator