



# STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR THE GUARD AND RESERVE



## WICHITA AREA TECHNICAL COLLEGE

**W**e recognize the Guard and Reserve are essential to the strength of our nation and the well-being of our communities.

**I**n the highest American tradition, the patriotic men and women of the Guard and Reserve serve voluntarily in an honorable and vital profession. They train to respond to their community and their country in time of need. They deserve the support of every segment of our society.

**I**f these volunteer forces are to continue to serve our nation, increased public understanding is required of the essential role of the Guard and Reserve in preserving our national security.

**T**herefore, we join other employers in pledging that:

- We fully recognize, honor and enforce the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).
- Our managers and supervisors will have the tools they need to effectively manage those employees who serve in the Guard and Reserve.
- We appreciate the values, leadership and unique skills service members bring to the workforce and will encourage opportunities to hire Guardsmen, Reservists, and Veterans.
- We will continually recognize and support our country's service members and their families in peace, in crisis, and in war.

*President Tony Kinkel*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Employer

*May 6, 2013*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*James G. Rebholz*  
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James G. Rebholz  
National Chair, ESGR

*Leon E. Panetta*  
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Leon E. Panetta  
Secretary of Defense



**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE**  
**KANSAS COMMITTEE FOR EMPLOYER SUPPORT OF THE GUARD AND RESERVE**  
2800 S.W. Topeka Blvd.  
Topeka, Kansas 66611

Re: Statement of Support for the Guard and Reserve

Dear Employer:

We are a Nation that faces many challenges and our National Guard and Reservists are an integral element of the military power being generated to combat these challenges. They serve not only to secure their families and personal interest, but in doing so, collectively secure your family, community, workplace, employees and very essence of our national character and society.

I am writing to ask you, as a Patriot employer, for your cooperation and support in signing and displaying the enclosed Statement of Support for the Guard and Reserve. It is extremely important that Service Members and their Families know that employment problems are not something they have to worry about while deployed. An employer who not only abides by the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) but also goes the extra step to assure Families are taken care of while their Spouse is deployed is extremely important and much appreciated.

Under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), a Service Member has the right to time off from their civilian job for military training or service. USERRA requires advance notice to the civilian employer, except in unusual circumstances, and the law provides that an appropriate officer of the uniformed service may give such notice.

In the Department of Defense, there is an "Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve" (ESGR) Committee. I invite you to check out the ESGR web site for a copy of USERRA and other important information about the Reserve components and employer support. You can find the web site at [www.esgr.mil](http://www.esgr.mil) and you can call the ESGR Committee, toll-free, at 1-800-336-4590.

If you ever have any questions about the Statement of Support, please feel free to contact me by telephone at 785-445-2334 or by e-mail at [mallen@eaglecom.net](mailto:mallen@eaglecom.net). On behalf of the Department of Defense, I thank you for your cooperation and support.

Sincerely,



Mick Allen

Kansas Chair

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve



# EMPLOYER SUPPORT OF THE GUARD AND RESERVE TIPS FOR EMPLOYERS

**The Guard and Reserve are an integral part of our military.** Almost half of the men and women serving in our Armed Forces are members of the Guard and Reserve.

As an employer, you are vital in enabling your employees who are members of the Guard and Reserve to serve our country. Moreover, your active support and encouragement are critical to their success.

**Here are some suggestions on how you can help:**

**Learn more about the role of the Guard and Reserve:** Attend open houses and public functions at local military units. Talk about the Guard and Reserve with military and civilian leaders in your community. Ask your employees what they do and how they fit into the “big picture” of national defense.

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**Get to know your employees' military commanders and supervisors:** Ask them to provide you with advance notice of your employee's annual military duty schedule.

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**Put your support in writing by signing a Statement of Support for the Guard and Reserve:** Display it prominently for all your employees and visitors to see. Request your Statement of Support online today at [www.ESGR.mil/SoS](http://www.ESGR.mil/SoS).

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**Examine your personnel policies to see how they accommodate and support participation in the Guard or Reserve:** Do policies include provisions for military leaves of absence? Do policies ensure job opportunities and benefits equivalent to those of other employees? Your local ESGR State Committee is available to answer questions or offer suggestions.

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**Encourage employee participation in the Guard and Reserve:** Recognize and publicize their dedication and commitment to your business and the Nation. Your employee's service in the Guard or Reserve enhances their job performance and adds value to your organization.

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**Seek assistance from ESGR:** Call 1-800-336-4590 to speak with an ombudsman. Ombudsmen serve as confidential, neutral liaisons for employers and employees who seek assistance or clarification regarding their rights and responsibilities as set forth in the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).





# EMPLOYER SUPPORT OF THE GUARD AND RESERVE

**Why is employer support important?** Almost half of our military force resides in the Reserve Component which is comprised of the Guard and Reserve. The men and women who serve in the Reserve Component are unique in that they also have civilian employers. Support of America's employers and the employees they share with the Nation ensures the viability of the all-volunteer force, and thus our national security.

**EMPLOYER SUPPORT OF THE GUARD AND RESERVE (ESGR)**, a Department of Defense agency, seeks to develop and promote a culture in which all American employers support and value the military service of their employees with ESGR as the principal advocate within DoD. ESGR does this by advocating relevant initiatives, recognizing outstanding support, increasing awareness of applicable laws and resolving conflict between employers and service members. *Paramount to ESGR's mission is encouraging employment of Guardsmen and Reservists who bring integrity, global perspective and proven leadership to the civilian workforce.*

## WHO WE HELP

ESGR works with all employers and all Guard and Reserve service members.

## WHAT WE DO

More than 4,700 volunteers and support staff are located in all 50 U.S. states, Guam-CNMI, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands and the District of Columbia to provide the following services:

### ADVOCATE

ESGR advocates relevant initiatives on behalf of employers, service members and their families. We promote the importance of employer support through regular communications to military leadership, and serve as a communication link between employers and the DoD.

### RECOGNIZE

ESGR recognizes employers who practice human resource personnel policies that support employee participation in the Guard and Reserve with a series of DoD employer awards.

### INFORM

ESGR informs and educates service members and their civilian employers regarding their rights and responsibilities under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). Statutory authority for USERRA resides with the Department of Labor, and ESGR serves as a neutral, free resource to employers and service members. Information on the many resources is available at [www.ESGR.mil](http://www.ESGR.mil).

### MEDIATE

Trained ombudsmen provide information and mediation concerning the USERRA law. ESGR has hundreds of trained volunteer ombudsmen throughout the country ready to provide free mediation. Many conflicts arise due to a misunderstanding rather than a purposeful violation of the law, and ESGR can assist in resolving these issues and more.





# EMPLOYER SUPPORT OF THE GUARD AND RESERVE UNIFORMED SERVICES EMPLOYMENT AND REEMPLOYMENT RIGHTS ACT

**The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA)** is the federal law that establishes rights and responsibilities for members of the Guard and Reserve and their civilian employers. USERRA affects employment, reemployment, employment benefits and retention in employment, when employees serve or have served in the uniformed services.

**ESGR and USERRA:** ESGR informs and educates service members and their civilian employers regarding their rights and responsibilities governed by USERRA. ESGR does not have statutory authority to enforce, but serves as a neutral, free resource to employers and service members. ESGR's trained ombudsmen provide mediation of employment and reemployment issues relating to compliance with USERRA.

**Statutory Authority:** Congress provided the statutory authority for investigating alleged violations of USERRA to the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). If DOL finds that an employer has likely violated USERRA and is unable to secure voluntary compliance, DOL may refer the case to the U.S. Department of Justice for legal action against the employer.

## Employers:

*The law applies to all public and private employers in the United States to include federal, state and local governments; regardless of size. Providing that the service member meets all criteria, USERRA requires employers to provide the following:*

- Allow employees to participate in military service
- Prompt reinstatement into a job following military service
- Accumulation of seniority, including pension plan benefits
- Reinstatement of health insurance
- Training or retraining of job skills, including accommodations for the disabled
- Protection against discrimination

## Service Members:

*In general, if the employee is absent from a position of civilian employment by reason of service in the uniformed services, he or she is eligible for reemployment under USERRA by meeting the following criteria:*

- The employer had advance notice of the employee's service
- The employee returns to work in accordance with USERRA guidelines
- The employee has not been separated from service with a disqualifying discharge, or under other than honorable conditions





# BECOME AN ESGR VOLUNTEER

**EMPLOYER SUPPORT OF THE GUARD AND RESERVE (ESGR)**, a Department of Defense agency, seeks to develop and promote a culture in which all American employers support and value the military service of their employees with ESGR as the principal advocate within DoD. ESGR does this by advocating relevant initiatives, recognizing outstanding support, increasing awareness of applicable laws and resolving conflict between employers and service members. *Paramount to ESGR's mission is encouraging employment of Guardsmen and Reservists who bring integrity, global perspective and proven leadership to the civilian workforce.* Established in 1972, ESGR operates via a network of volunteers and support staff in every U.S. state, territory and the District of Columbia. There is an ESGR State Committee in your area!

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**Who we help:** ESGR works with America's employers and Guard and Reserve service members.

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**Why is employer support important?** Almost half of our military force resides in the Guard and Reserve. The men and women who serve in the Guard and Reserve are unique in that they also have civilian employers. Support of America's employers and the employees they share with the Nation ensure the viability of the all-volunteer force, and our national security.

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**How you can join us:** ESGR's dedicated volunteers come from all walks of life. They are business executives, civic leaders and patriotic citizens. Some volunteer activities you can support include:

**Employer Outreach:** Develop relationships with employers to promote advocacy for employment of Guard and Reserve service members.

**Ombudsman:** Assist in preventing, reducing or resolving employer or service member misunderstandings regarding employment rights and responsibilities under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).

**Public Affairs:** Work with military and civilian media organizations to promote public understanding of the ESGR mission.

**Military Outreach:** Inform and educate members of the Guard and Reserve regarding their employment rights and responsibilities under USERRA.

Members of the Guard and Reserve and their civilian employers form an alliance that is essential to our national security. These brave men and women perform critical roles in disaster relief efforts at home and continue to serve around the world to ensure our freedom. They could not perform their critical mission without support from people like you.

