

**Military Personnel Subcommittee Chairwoman Jackie Speier –  
Opening Statement  
Hearing on Reserve Component Duty Status Reform  
March 27, 2019**

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*Video link to hearing here: <https://armedservices.house.gov/hearings?ID=0AB84F83-039C-4903-AE11-E1B27FF71738>*

I would like to welcome everyone to this afternoon’s Military Personnel Subcommittee hearing. Today we will hear from a panel of those who lead the reserve components—the service members that will be most personally affected by the proposed changes to the reserve component call up authorities. The patchwork of thirty duty statuses and accompanying benefits have needed modernization and streamlining for the past decade, and these necessary changes are a long time coming. I want to thank our witnesses for sharing their views on how these changes will improve and streamline reserve component activations. They should make orders and benefits more consistent and predictable for our reserve component members and their families. I worry that the confusion generated by having so many duty statuses is having an effect on retention in the reserve components.

The reform of these authorities and benefits has been addressed by multiple commissions over the years, including the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves in 2008 and the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission in 2015 to no avail. Finally, Congress directed the Department to come up with a plan to address duty status reform in the 2016 NDAA. The reform concept before us today is the result of that direction.

For too many years, activation authorities were added piecemeal for any number of reasons, without thought for maintaining a coherent, usable system. Some tweaks have responded to the changing way the reserve component has been employed over the last 18 years of conflict. Due to these changes’ partial, reactive nature, the activation of any portion of the reserve component has turned into jumble of statutes and pre and post mobilization benefits that are not easily understandable by our service members and their families. The reforms presented today must simplify this system of 30 different call up authorities. I believe that reducing the call up authorities to 4 categories, as you propose, would accomplish that. But benefits must not be lost and must maintain parity with those for service members doing the same jobs. I am interested to hear from you about how this reform addresses the inequities and disruptions in pay, benefits, and medical care that have impacted the reserve component as well as your thoughts on benefits parity in the proposed system.