

# ROA to testify on legislative priorities for the 119th Congress

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[/EINPresswire.com/](https://EINPresswire.com/) -- On Feb. 25, 2025, at 10 a.m. EST, the Reserve Organization of America will testify before a joint committee of Congress to outline its legislative [priorities](#)<sup>1</sup> for the 119th Congress.

This marks a key moment in ROA's advocacy efforts as it hosts its second-ever [Advocacy Day](#)<sup>3</sup>, providing members and mission partners a direct opportunity to engage with elected officials and congressional staff.



"As global tensions rise and national security challenges grow more complex, the need for a strong, ready military and a fully supported reserve component has never been more urgent," said Matthew Schwartzman, ROA's director of legislation and military policy, who will represent the organization at the hearing. "ROA is committed to meeting this moment with unwavering dedication to our policy priorities, maintaining a laser focus on ensuring the effective and vital integration of the reserve components within the Total Force."

The Commission on the National Defense Strategy (NDS), an independent body tasked with reviewing the 2022 NDS, affirmed the urgency of these concerns, revealing that:

- China has "largely negated the U.S. military advantage in the Western Pacific."
- The U.S. defense industrial base "is unable to meet the equipment, technology, and munitions needs of the United States and its allies and partners."
- The U.S. military "lacks both the capabilities and the capacity required to be confident it can deter and prevail in combat."

ROA was [founded](#)<sup>2</sup> more than a century ago by a group of World War I veterans, led by General of the Armies John "Black Jack" Pershing, who believed a strong military was necessary to ensure world peace and American prosperity. Today, the conditions that prompted ROA's founding remain, further reinforcing the need for the organization's influence in Washington, D.C., and across the nation.

As outlined in its congressional charter, which will celebrate its 75th anniversary in June, ROA's mission remains clear: to "support the development and execution of a strong military policy for an adequate national defense." This mission continues with a focus on the reserve components of the uniformed services, which play a crucial role in ensuring U.S. military success.

Throughout America's history, the reserves have played a vital role in every war. As demands on the reserve forces have grown, it is essential that their readiness is fully supported by legislation and policy. ROA is committed to advocating for the reserve components' needs, ensuring their voices are heard and their priorities addressed.

**As global tensions rise and national security challenges grow more complex, the need for a fully supported reserve component has never been more urgent."**

— *Matthew Schwartzman, Director, Legislation and Military Policy*

ROA's key defense priorities for the 119th Congress include:

- Implementing duty status reform.
- Increasing total defense spending to no less than 5 percent of Gross Domestic Product.
- Ensuring proper federal reserve representation within the Department of Defense, including the Joint Chiefs of Staff.
- Providing continuity of TRICARE medical and dental coverage to reserve component members, regardless of duty status.

- Budgeting for required and modernized equipment in the reserve components.
- Modernizing the Joint Travel Regulations.

ROA's key veterans' priorities for the 119th Congress include:

- Establishing a presumption of service connection to those service members who were in the Pentagon on 9/11 and were forced to return to work beginning as early as the very next day.
- Allowing all paid points to count towards the Post 9-11 GI Bill.
- Expanding the VA Home Loan Program to Reserve and National Guard service members who spend 30 or more days on Active Duty for Training.
- Building on critical Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act reforms codified by the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act.

ROA is proud to build upon its achievements from the 118th Congress, including:

- Extending TRICARE Reserve Select coverage for reserve component survivors from six months to three years.
- Securing parental leave parity across all branches of the Armed Forces, including the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve.

- Allocating approximately \$1 billion for the National Guard and Reserve Equipment Appropriation in consecutive years.
- Expanding the Secretary of Defense's authority to provide pay parity with the active component for all Special and Incentive Pays.
- Influencing the promotion of more than 400 general and flag officers across the services.
- Advocating for the grounding of the CV-22 Osprey following fatal crashes, prioritizing safety improvements.
- Doubling the accession bonus for reserve component nurses to address critical workforce shortages in the medical field.
- Extending dual Basic Allowance for Housing for single reserve component members on Active Duty for Training from 140 days to fewer than 365.
- Establishing a reserve component curriculum track within the Transition Assistance Program.
- Prohibiting the retirement of F-15E aircraft and the reduction of KC-135 aircraft in the U.S. Air Force Reserve.
- Advocating for the recapitalization of tactical fighter aircraft in the U.S. Navy Reserve.
- Expanding access to injunctive relief by prohibiting courts from denying a motion for injunctive relief on the basis that an employee may be awarded "wages unearned" following an unlawful termination of employment.
- Enabling courts to increase the liquidated damages awarded to plaintiffs with the greater of \$50,000 or the amount of the actual damages.
- Incentivizing legitimate legal representation for claimants with cases pending before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit by awarding attorney fees for USERRA cases heard by the Federal circuit.

The challenges ahead are significant, but ROA's commitment to supporting the reserve components ensures that the nation's military readiness remains strong.

As ROA testifies before Congress, it will continue to push for the policies and resources necessary to secure a better future for the reserve forces and the nation.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.roa.org/resource/resmgr/legislation/roa\\_119th\\_congress\\_defense\\_p.pdf](https://www.roa.org/resource/resmgr/legislation/roa_119th_congress_defense_p.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.roa.org/page/historyofroa>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.roa.org/resource/resmgr/legislation/roa\\_february\\_25\\_advocacy\\_day.pdf](https://www.roa.org/resource/resmgr/legislation/roa_february_25_advocacy_day.pdf)

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