

To the state representative,

My name is Tyler Abel and I was in the Kansas Army National Guard from 2004-2018. I was first assigned to A Co 137 in Lawrence KS as an infantryman and transitioned to a Bradley crew. When I was promoted to E-5 I transferred to the 35 ID in Leavenworth KS. I was deployed twice, once to Camp Lemonnier in the Horn of Africa in 2010 with the 35th MP's and my last deployment was to Kuwait where I ended up rotating into Jordan.

I am writing today to ask for your support on the defend the guard legislation. During my time in the guard, I observed our involvement with foreign wars and became concerned with how we are utilizing our state forces and how it is different than what I originally signed up for. When I enlisted in the guard, just like a lot of young kids signing up, I needed a way to pay for college because I did not want to get myself into financial debt but had no other means to pay for school. The guard allowed me to go to school locally and train one weekend a month and two weeks during the year.

However the longer that I stayed in the; the longer that time commitment became. It was no longer coming in Saturday morning and leaving Sunday afternoon. It became four days a month and up to three weeks a year. Things may have changed now, but when I was in, it seemed that the state only had a certain amount of time or "MUTAS" that each service member was obligated to serve. This amount of time has been pushed to the brink and created hardship on civilian employment.

My time overseas has shown me that our National Guard would be better suited helping our neighbors here in the state instead of fighting overseas in endless conflicts that have been happening my entire adult life.

I have lost numerous friends fighting overseas in wars that we should not be involved in. With the withdrawal out of Afghanistan and Iraq I feel their sacrifice has been tarnished and will be overlooked since these conflicts were never voted by our representatives and lasted over 20 years. But we can do better by supporting the Defend the Guard legislation so the sacrifice that our neighbors may make in the future will have an end so our children will not have to stand watch while my generation ends theirs. I want our next generations to know a time when we are not engulfed in conflicts. As it stands right now, there will not be any further enlistment from my family to the National Guard, reserves, or active duty.