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Executive Director

August 6, 2006

The Honorable Bill First
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable J. Dennis Hastert
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator Frist, Senator Reid, Speaker Hastert and Representative Pelosi:

The nation's governors strongly oppose legislation to allow the President to federalize the National Guard in a state without the consent of the governor. The House-passed version of the National Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 5122) would authorize the President to take control of the Guard in case of "a serious natural or manmade disaster, accident, or catastrophe that occurs in the United States, its territories and possessions, or Puerto Rico." This provision was drafted without consultation or input from governors and represents an unprecedented shift in authority from governors as Commanders and Chief of the Guard to the federal government.

We take very seriously our constitutional duty to protect our citizens and lead our Guard. We are responsible for the safety and welfare of our citizens and are in the best position to coordinate all resources to prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters. The current process by which we use our National Guard in emergencies and request federal assistance when necessary works well and should not be changed.

We urge you to drop provisions that would usurp governor's authority over the National Guard during emergencies from the conference agreement on the National Defense Authorization Act.

Sincerely,

Governor Mike Huckabee

Governor Janet Napolitano

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