

# Command Inspector General Quarterly Newsletter

For the Soldiers, Airmen, and Civilians of the Virginia National Guard 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter – June 2024



**MISSION:** Serve as an extension of the eyes, ears, voice, and conscience of the commander, and to determine for the commander the state of economy, efficiency, discipline, morale, esprit de corps, and readiness throughout the Virginia National Guard.

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## Political Activities

**Reference:**  
DOD Directive 1344.10, "Political Activities by Members of the Armed Forces"  
AR 600-20 (Army Command Policy)  
Hatch Act of 1939  
Information Paper (Political Activities of Soldiers and Civilian Employees), 12 April 2022.

While the Department of Defense encourages Soldiers and DA Civilians to carry out their obligations of citizenship, there are several policies that provide left and right limits on participation in political activities, including DOD Directive 1344.10, AR 600-20, and the Hatch Act.

Soldiers may engage in the following activities: Register, vote, and express opinions on political candidates and issues, but not while on duty, in uniform, or by speaking on behalf of the armed forces; Write letters to the editor of a newspaper expressing personal views on political issues/concerns; Display a political bumper sticker on his/her private vehicle; Make monetary contributions to a political campaign or organization; and Attend political meetings, rallies, debates, conventions, or activities (only as a spectator, and never in uniform). Letters cannot be part of an organized letter-writing campaign or solicitation of votes for or against a political party, partisan cause, or candidate. Letters must clearly state that the views are those of the individual and not DOD/U.S. Army. Soldiers shall not speak before a partisan political gathering or serve in any official capacity with a partisan political club.

Army National Guard (ARNG) Soldiers (not on active duty) may run for political office and include or permit the inclusion of their current or former specific duty, title, or position, or photographs in uniform, when displayed with other non-military biographical details. Any information about their military affiliation must also include a disclaimer that the information/photographs do not imply DOD/Army endorsement.

## Whistleblower Reprisal

**Reference:**  
10 USC 1034

Title 10 USC 1034 defines WBR as the act of taking (or threatening to take) an unfavorable personnel action, or withholding (or threatening to withhold) a favorable personnel action because a Service member made, prepared to make, or was thought to have made or prepared to make, a protected communication (PC) (e.g., lawful communication reasonably believed to be true by the complainant) to: Members of Congress (MOCs); Inspectors general (IGs); DOD audit, inspection, investigation, or law enforcement organizations; Any person or organization in the chain of command; Any other person designated pursuant regulations or established administrative procedures to receive such communications (e.g., Equal Opportunity, Safety Office, etc.); or As part of a court-martial proceeding, specifically, complaints of sexual assault or sexual harassment.

Key to this definition is the term PC. A PC in terms of whistleblower reprisal is any lawful communication to an IG or MOC, no matter the topic. Communication with the other referenced individuals or agencies, is only protected when presenting information regarding what the complainant reasonably believes to be a violation of statute, regulation, fraud, waste, abuse, dangers, threats, etc.

## Suspension of Select/Train/Educate/Promote Policy

**Reference:**  
Army Directive 2022-06, Army Regulation (AR) 350-1, AR 600-8-19, AR 601-280, Memorandum, DAPE-ZA, Reinforcement of Select, Train, Educate, Promote (STEP) Policy for Noncommissioned Officer (NCO) Promotions and Limited Application of Temporary Promotions, 12 September 2023 and 14 December 2023.

Effective with the June 2024 promotion month, the Army will suspend the requirement for Soldiers to complete a previously established PME course to qualify for promotion to all non-commissioned officer (NCO) ranks (except for Sergeant Major).

The revised promotion eligibility rules regarding PME are as follows:

- Promotion to SGT: None.
- Promotion to SSG: BLC graduate for board appearance and promotion pin-on.
- Promotion to SFC: ALC graduate for promotion pin-on.
- Promotion to MSG: SLC graduate for promotion pin-on.
- Promotion to SGM: MLC graduate for Sergeants Major Course (SGM-A) selection and SGM-A graduation for promotion pin-on.