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### **Informational Testimony before the Veterans Affairs & Emergency Preparedness Committee**

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May, 17 2016

Good morning, Chairman Vulakovich, Chairman Barrar, Chairman Costa, Chairman Sainato and distinguished members of the committees, I am honored to have this opportunity to speak to you about the 1900 members of the Pennsylvania Wing, Civil Air Patrol, some of whom are here with me today; it is my privilege to serve with them and our brothers and sisters in the Civil Air Patrol across the Commonwealth. I truly appreciate the time you've given me to tell you the story of their innumerable hours of volunteer service and dedication to duty.

The Wing and its dedicated volunteer membership stands on the threshold of our 75th Anniversary of service to the Commonwealth, our communities and the nation! We have a rich history that started with members of local communities answering a call to serve their nation, and their neighbors, in a time of national need. Pennsylvania Wing, one of the original 48 Civil Air Patrol Wings, has enabled everyday people to become hometown heroes for nearly three-quarters of a century!

Today, our missions and principles are essentially the same as they were on December first 1941, the day CAP was founded, coastal and border patrol, search and rescue, natural disaster relief, air defense support and joint training with our military are still important parts of our mission portfolio. The biggest differences between today's missions and those of early years are the resources at hand, the partners who request and support our service, and the rapidity with which decision makers require our response and the "products" we provide. Pennsylvania Wing's volunteer members train to national standards, maintain aircraft, vehicles, communications and personal equipment, and stand ready to serve in traditional CAP roles and exciting new and valuable emerging missions.

Today, Pennsylvania Wing is among the largest Wings in a national organization charged by Congress to serve our Nation, State, and communities; Pennsylvania Wing leadership shares the strategic vision of our National Headquarters and those of our mission partners. This strategic

plan serves to guide our leadership and members in shaping who we are as an organization today and how we'll meet the demands of future programs and missions. The strategic vision and its priorities and goals, guide decisions aimed at making the most of our resources: funding, mission assets and hundreds of thousands of hours of Pennsylvania Wing members' volunteer time.

**Our members adhere to the Civil Air Patrol Core Values of Integrity – Respect – Excellence and Volunteer Service**

This keeps **our motto** as meaningful today, as it was when CAP was first founded: **Semper Vigilans; Always Vigilant!**

Nearly 1900 volunteer members, about 900 cadets and 1000 adults serve Pennsylvania Wing Civil Air Patrol in 51 Squadrons and six Groups across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Most serve in all three CAP missions: Cadet Programs, Aerospace Education and Emergency Services.

In addition to our volunteers' dedication, the diversity of our membership contributes greatly to our success. From the youngest 12-year-old cadet members through adults in their eighth and ninth decades, all may serve effectively in the Civil Air Patrol!

Cadets perform their duty by keeping their oath; it's one long sentence that defines their duty, goals, and a commitment to self-betterment and service to others: Cadets please come to attention and recite your cadet oath:

*I pledge that I will serve faithfully in the Civil Air Patrol Cadet Program, and that I will attend meetings regularly, participate actively in unit activities, obey my officers, wear my uniform properly, and advance my education and training rapidly to prepare myself to be of service to my community, state, and nation.*

Senior, or adult members, serve in similar and more diverse ways; they enroll in duty-related specialty tracks, attain specialty qualification ratings for Emergency Services and also 'advance their training and education' through the Civil Air Patrol Senior member Professional Development program.

This diverse group of individuals: students and teachers, laborers and professionals, children, parents, grandparents, civilians, Guardsman, active duty military AND MORE come together as a highly-focused, highly-trained group of "professional" volunteers to serve our three missions within the Commonwealth, for the benefit of its citizens!

The Civil Air Patrol is now included in the US Air Force definition of its **Total Force!** We were all humbled and honored to have such recognition and realize this brings with it a challenge: to maintain excellence in all our missions. The Air Force now regards our members as Airmen, with a capital A, when performing their official CAP duties. And Air Force leaders must now consider the Civil Air Patrol, along with the other parts of the Total Force, when planning the best way to complete their missions.

The Pennsylvania Wing itself provides an on demand volunteer force dedicated, skilled and equipped for a wide variety of programmatic and operational needs. Our volunteer members provide life-changing and life-saving services at little or no cost to the Commonwealth.

Pennsylvania Wing provides essential services to our communities and the state that are evident in the lives we touch and change in very positive ways:

- kids become cadets and learn to be responsible citizens who become our future leaders
- members provide protective services such as port patrols and fighter intercept training missions
- emergency services such as search and rescue, aerial imaging, communications and transport
- We are a force multiplier for disaster relief capable of fielding trained and members capable of supporting air and ground operations along with corresponding mission assets
- And PA Wing provides passive assistance to law enforcement during our annual, record-setting counterdrug flying missions that support the Pennsylvania State Police, County Drug Task Forces and related PA Guard helicopter operations.

That all these things have been very successful for years is strong testimony to the dedication of our volunteers. Our ongoing success, in spite of being often underfunded, is a powerful testimony to the commitment and resourcefulness of those volunteer members! Members often joke that C-A-P also stands for “Come And Pay”; many members pay expenses associated with their volunteer services out-of-pocket, a true measure of their devotion to the spirit of volunteerism and service.

Imagine how much more these wonderful volunteers might accomplish if not hampered by a lack of funding or being taken off mission by a need for fundraising activities.

### **A few words about our three missions:**

#### **Cadet Programs**

CAP Cadet Programs are year-round activities through which Cadets are always challenged to push themselves beyond traditional limits to experience new and greater achievements. Through its Cadet Program, Civil Air Patrol transforms youth aged 12 to 20 into responsible citizens. CAP’s Cadet Program is the ideal place for American youth to set a firm foundation for their future and gain the skills and experience needed to become productive citizens and America’s next generation of leaders!

Cadets who progress through the program have the opportunity to lead their peers in a military style setting unique to CAP; they often apply what they’ve learned in real life Air Force Assigned and PEMA operational missions, where cadets are a valuable part of our Search & Rescue and Disaster Relief teams. CAP cadets have exclusive access to a range of special activities that include exciting opportunities like flight academies, civics academies, and specialized Air Force training at Space Command and Para-rescue to name a few.

Many current and former Pennsylvania Wing cadets are accepted to the United States Military Academies and enroll in ROTC Programs at colleges and universities in the commonwealth and throughout the country. Many others enlist in active duty military, the reserves and our Pennsylvania National Guard. Many other cadets seek their careers in civilian life. No matter what course they choose after their cadet careers, CAP Cadets go forward with knowledge, confidence and experience; key elements in the formula for their future success!

## **Aerospace Education**

Since 1946, CAP has been congressionally chartered to provide “aviation education and training”, or aerospace education, to its cadet and senior members and the general public. The Cooperative Agreement and Statement of Work between CAP and the USAF authorizes and encourages CAP to pursue the promotion of aerospace to its members and the general public. Now, as a member of the USAF Total Force, CAP performs this mission as a fully integrated member of the world’s greatest Air Force!

## **Emergency Services**

Pennsylvania Wing CAP executed nearly 200 air and ground sorties in support of Disaster Relief, Missing Persons and Search and Rescue missions within the Commonwealth Since 2013. PA Wing aircrews flew nearly 2,300 counterdrug missions during that same time. In 2015 alone, PA Wing CAP was credited with 7 distress beacon finds and a missing person save. Last year, we flew a record setting 1200 hours for our counter drug mission in the Commonwealth; CAP aircrews spotted suspicious agricultural growth during aerial searches throughout the Commonwealth, marked locations and relayed that to law enforcement authorities. This facilitated the destruction of marijuana plants with a street value estimated to exceed five million dollars!

CAP brings a wealth of resources and experience nearly free of charge to augment state and local capabilities and serves as the most economical air component to the state in all hazards response. Currently, about 1200 PA Wing members are qualified in General Emergency Services with specialties including: aircrew, ground team, communications, mission base staff and more than five dozen members qualified at the NIMS Section Chief level, or higher. CAP is a formidable resource that provides an on demand, trained and equipped volunteer force for any operational need!

The Wing depends heavily on State support to meet its financial obligations and enhance our mission training and service within the Commonwealth. Through frugality and **volunteer members’ personal financial outlays** the Wing continues to meet its missions. We can do **far more** with the newly restored state funding and the continued support of the Commonwealth. As an all-volunteer organization, Pennsylvania Wing pays no salaries, benefits or other employee-related expenses. Additionally, many of our mission operational expenses are paid by the Air Force and other “customers.” However, the Wing must pay many of its fixed costs. The cost-effectiveness of an all-volunteer force, our ability to bring federally funded assets to serve the Commonwealth’s needs and our dedication to the education and inspiration of Pennsylvanians, especially our youth, when taken as a whole, are powerful testimony to the benefits Pennsylvania Wing Civil Air Patrol provides the Commonwealth and its citizens. We do a lot with what we have; we can do more with additional support from the Commonwealth.

The members of Pennsylvania Wing have solid record of continued service in the proud traditions of volunteers who laid a firm foundation for us 75 years ago. It’s been my honor to present Congressional Gold Medal honoring PA Wing members who served their community, state and nation during WWII; there are very few of them still with us and none who are still active. But as I mentioned, PA Wing members serve from age 12 into their nineties. In a few days, I will have the privilege of presenting two 50 year service awards to long-serving faithful

members at our annual Wing Conference. One of them, Lt. Col. Willa Hayes summed up the sentiment of so many CAP members saying, "I wish everyone could have the experience of being in CAP for a short while...it's not what you get out of it, it's what you put in it without asking for anything back that makes all the difference in the world and in your life!"

That's why I and so many of my brothers and sisters are in Civil Air Patrol; it's REWARDING! There's no paycheck, but we can't put a dollar value on what our members RECEIVE from their service: the satisfaction of serving others and making a positive difference in the lives of those we serve. This is what brings members to meetings week after week and is why they dedicate evenings and weekends to train, practice and teach mission and life skills.

CAP volunteer members head towards disasters when others are running away; they pride themselves on being trained, capable and ready to serve each mission. Jonas Salk said, "The reward for work well done is the opportunity to do more." And that's what Pennsylvania Wing members seek, the opportunity to do more. Thanks to the restored state support our volunteer service continues; with increased support we will do more!

Ladies and Gentlemen, we are your neighbors and friends, we are proud citizens of the Commonwealth, we are the Civil Air Patrol, the all-volunteer Pennsylvania Wing, **Always Vigilant** and dedicated to the service of the Commonwealth and its citizens.

Thank you for your time and attention.