



# 2025 LEGISLATIVE

# AGENDA

FOR THE 118TH & 119TH  
CONGRESS OF THE  
UNITED STATES

U.S. Marine Corps  
Reserve Association



Prepared by:  
Jeremy R. Williams, MPA  
U.S. Marine Corps, Retired  
Vice President, Legislative Affairs



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



“  
A strong and ready Marine Corps Reserve is vital to our national security. Failing to support these key goals puts our nation at risk. By investing in readiness and partnering to achieve critical legislative priorities, Congress can ensure our reserve forces stand ready to meet any challenge, anytime, anywhere.  
”

Paul 'Chopper' Hopper  
Colonel, USMCR (Ret.)



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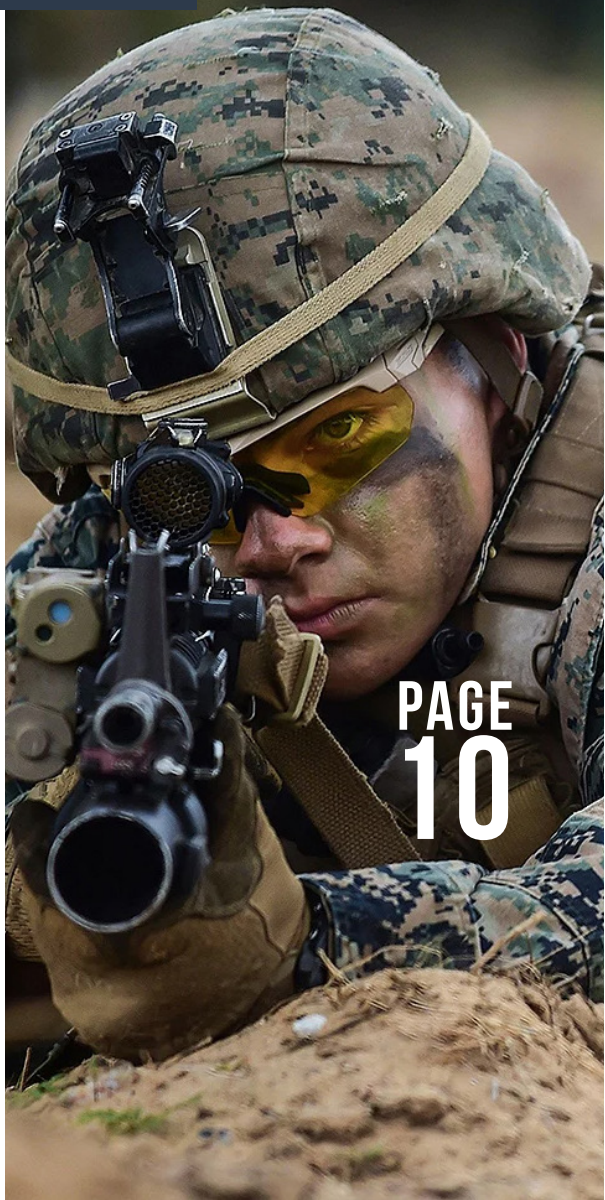
## Introduction



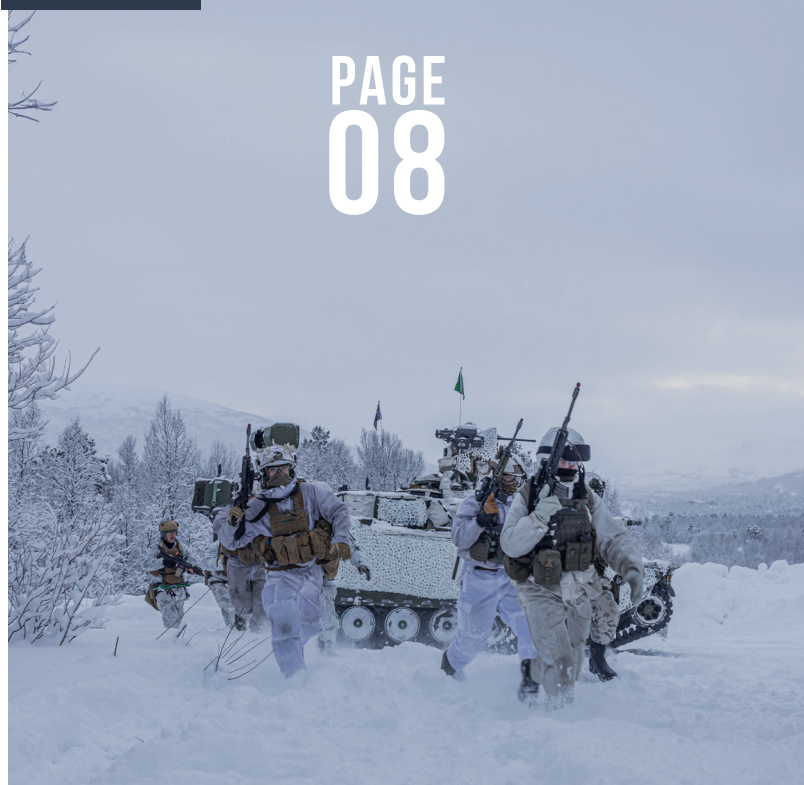
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# INTRODUCTION

The Marine Corps Reserve Association (MCRA) 2025 Legislative Advocacy Platform centers on ensuring that the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve (the Reserve) is appropriately resourced and prepared to support current and future operational demands as part of the Total Force. The MCRA Platform emphasizes supporting the Reserve’s role in Global Force Management (GFM), enhancing recruitment and retention through talent management initiatives, and addressing critical funding needs for training and modernization. These priorities align with broader U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) initiatives, including Force Design. The initiatives seek to reshape the USMC to meet emerging security challenges while enhancing the Reserve’s integration into Total Force Readiness (TFR) (USMC, 2023). Specifically, the Commandant of the USMC (CMC) articulates that a capable, modernized reserve force is crucial for sustaining operational effectiveness. Especially in contested environments, operational effectiveness requires the flexibility and rapid response of a well-integrated reserve component (U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee, 2023).

The MCRA’s advocacy for increased funding and policy adjustments supports the Reserve’s ability to operate effectively alongside active-duty forces (U. S. Department of Defense, 2022). This occurs through emphasizing flexibility in National Guard and Reserve Equipment Appropriation (NGREA) funding. The MCRA advocates for addressing the limitations on reserve mobilization under Title 10 §12304b, which restricts the duration of Reserve Marines’ employment and impacts their ability to meet mission requirements (Congressional Research Service, 2023). The MCRA further advocates for targeted changes to recruitment and retaining highly skilled Reserve Marines (U. S. Marine Corps Reserve, 2023) by championing initiatives, like the Direct Affiliation Program (DAP), calling to expand affiliation bonuses, and increasing Inactive Duty Training (IDT) travel stipends.



**These measures address the unique challenges facing the Reserve while underscoring the relationship between improved operational capacity and securing resources and policies that enhance the quality of life for Reserve Marines and their families.**



# OBJECTIVES

## 01

### STRENGTHEN SUPPORT FOR GFM AND TFRS

#### • Prioritize Resources for GFM:

Advocate for funding that supports the Reserve's integration into GFM, ensuring that Reserve Marines can deploy swiftly to global demands. This includes increased flexibility for using Reserve Marines under Title 10 §12304b and waiver authority to allow Reserve Marines to support combatant commanders for longer periods, which would greatly enhance operational effectiveness.

#### • Enhance Total Force Integration and Transition Programs:

Support initiatives that enhance active and reserve component permeability, including programs that allow seamless transition between active-to-reserve status. Back the CMC's goal of advancing career opportunities within the Total Force structure by streamlining active-to-reserve transitions and creating incentives for this pathway.

## 02

### STRENGTHEN TALENT MANAGEMENT AND RESERVE RECRUITING

#### • Support SELRES (Selected Reserve) Recruiting and Closeout Goal of 32,500+:

Work to ensure that recruitment resources meet the targets for the SELRES, helping to maintain end strength and ensure the Reserve remains capable of supporting mission-critical operations.

#### • Affiliation Bonuses for Retention and Recruitment:

Push for broader use of affiliation bonuses to attract highly skilled Marines transitioning from active duty and those who are new recruits. These incentives are crucial in achieving the end strength goal of 33,600 Reserve Marines, providing stability and preparedness in the Reserve force composition.

#### • DAP Support:

Advocate for expanded funding and resources for the DAP, encouraging Marines who are leaving active duty to affiliate directly with reserve units. This enhances continuity while retaining experienced talent within the Total Force

## 03

### INCREASE RESERVE TRAINING AND TRAVEL RESOURCES

#### • IDT Travel Stipend Increase:

Advocate for setting the IDT travel stipend at a minimum of \$750, with an increase to \$1000, positioning it as a necessary incentive rather than an entitlement. This adjustment would reduce out-of-pocket travel costs for Reserve Marines attending training, helping to retain skilled personnel.

#### • Enhance Resources for Training and Readiness:

Push for sustained or increased funding for reserve training programs, ensuring Reserve Marines participate fully in exercises like Steel Knight and Pacific Sentry, which directly contribute to TFR.

## 04

### MODERNIZATION THROUGH NAREA FUNDING AND EQUIPMENT FLEXIBILITY

#### • Restore NAREA Funding:

Seek a return to historic NAREA funding levels (~7%) to ensure parity with active-duty modernization efforts. This funding is critical for equipping Reserve Marines with modern equipment necessary for current operational demands.

#### • Advocate for NAREA Flexibility:

Emphasize flexibility in NAREA funding to acquire advanced platforms, including Unmanned Aircraft Systems and future aircraft. This flexibility allows the Reserve to modernize

## 05

### SUPPORT RESERVE COMPONENT MODERNIZATION IN LINE WITH FORCE DESIGN

#### • Increase Resources to Meet End Strength of 33,600:

Back the CMC's call for appropriate funding to support an end strength target of 33,600, ensuring that the reserve component has adequate personnel to fulfill current demands and future missions, as outlined in Force Design.

#### • Advocate for Force Design Alignment and Modernization:

Support ongoing Force Design efforts that shape reserve units to be RELEVANT - READY - RESPONSIVE when called upon. This includes advocating for the transformation of units as part of a global contingency response force with II MEF.

## 06

### WELFARE AND FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES FOR RESERVISTS

#### • Support Healthcare and Family Services Access:

Advocate for legislation that ensures continued access to healthcare and mental health resources for Reserve Marines and their families. Emphasize the importance of maintaining comprehensive healthcare and family support services, recognizing that Reserve Marines often serve in high-stress roles and require sustained care, particularly after deployments.

#### • Promote Family and Transition Support Programs:

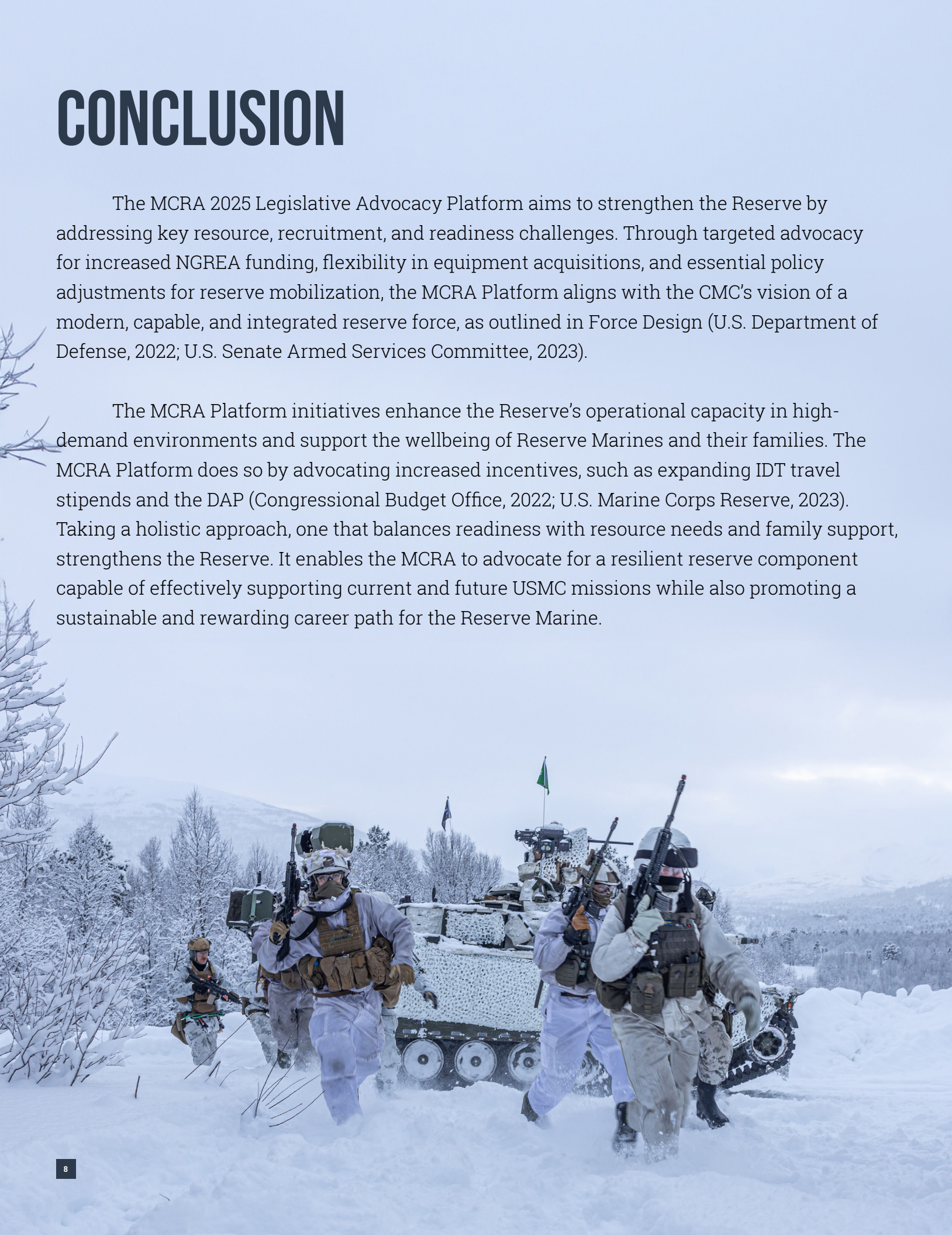
Advocate for expanded family support programs that assist Reserve Marines in transitioning between military and civilian life, enhancing retention and overall morale within the Reserve.



# CONCLUSION

The MCRA 2025 Legislative Advocacy Platform aims to strengthen the Reserve by addressing key resource, recruitment, and readiness challenges. Through targeted advocacy for increased NGREA funding, flexibility in equipment acquisitions, and essential policy adjustments for reserve mobilization, the MCRA Platform aligns with the CMC's vision of a modern, capable, and integrated reserve force, as outlined in Force Design (U.S. Department of Defense, 2022; U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee, 2023).

The MCRA Platform initiatives enhance the Reserve's operational capacity in high-demand environments and support the wellbeing of Reserve Marines and their families. The MCRA Platform does so by advocating increased incentives, such as expanding IDT travel stipends and the DAP (Congressional Budget Office, 2022; U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, 2023). Taking a holistic approach, one that balances readiness with resource needs and family support, strengthens the Reserve. It enables the MCRA to advocate for a resilient reserve component capable of effectively supporting current and future USMC missions while also promoting a sustainable and rewarding career path for the Reserve Marine.



**The MCRA 2025 Legislative Advocacy Platform aims to strengthen the Marine Corps Reserve by addressing key resource, recruitment, and readiness challenges.**





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