



LANSING, MICHIGAN

FRIDAY, JANUARY 10, 2020

## Johnson: National Guard Can't Go If Congress Won't Act

Congress won't do its job and declare war when military action is needed overseas, said Rep. Steven Johnson, R-Wayland, so he has introduced legislation to block the Michigan National Guard from being sent into combat unless Congress passes an official declaration of war.

"This is not an anti-war or pro-war bill, but rather a simple requirement for Congress to do their job for once," Johnson said. "It is important that we have a declaration of war with a clear mission in place before sending our troops into harm's way."

HB 5320 states that the National Guard "shall not be released from this state into active duty combat" without an official declaration of war or has taken action required by the Constitution "to explicitly call forth the state militia to execute the laws of the union, repel an invasion, or suppress an insurrection."

Johnson noted that Congress hasn't declared a war since World War II, so the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and military action in Syria have all been conducted without an official declaration. He said that means Congress has not laid out a clear mission in those conflicts even though it has continued to fund the undeclared wars.

It is "interesting timing" that the bill is introduced now, Johnson said, with the current tensions between the U.S. and Iran, but he said the bill has been in the works for a long time and is more directed at the situations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

He does not see the bill as a rebuke to President Donald Trump. Rather, Johnson contended Trump has repeatedly said he wants to "declare victory" and bring troops home.

Similar bills have been introduced in other states, including West Virginia, Wyoming and Idaho. The bills are being sponsored by Republicans and veterans, he said.

Further, Johnson contended that the war in Iraq could not have been conducted without calling up the National Guard from various states, so if enough states were to pass such bills, Congress would have to act if it wants to take military action.

"We have a responsibility to our National Guard troops, but unfortunately Congress has failed to do their job and declare war before deployment," Johnson said.

"It's time to stand up for our troops, and ensure that our state's resources are not being spread across foreign lands without official declaration of a foreign conflict."

Cosponsors of the bill include Rep. David LaGrand, D-Grand Rapids, Rep. Brad Paquette, R-Niles, Rep. John Reilly, R-Oakland, and Rep. Jewell Jones, D-Inkster.

The legislation has been referred to the Government Operations Committee for review.

"Government operations is either the committee you send bills to to die or if you want a bill fast tracked, so I prefer this is a bill that is going to be fast-tracked," Johnson said.

For more information: [DefendTheGuard.US](http://DefendTheGuard.US), a project of [BringOurTroopsHome.US](http://BringOurTroopsHome.US)