



## NATIONAL GUARD ASSOCIATION OF ARKANSAS

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February 24, 2020

Senator Trent Garner  
Senator Kim Hammer

Representative Justin Gonzales.  
Representative Jack Ladyman  
Representative Danny Watson  
Representative Mark Berry

Subject: SB 86: Amending the Definition Of "athlete" Within the Arkansas Athletic Trainers Act to include members of the Military.

I wanted to reach out on behalf the Soldiers and Airmen of the National Guard Association of Arkansas and provide our endorsement to SB86. NGAA supports **SB86** as a smart and needed approach to providing tactical athletes access to quality healthcare they deserve.

SB86 adds active law enforcement, military, and rescue service personnel to the definition of "athlete" as it relates to the Athletic Trainer Practice Act. The term "tactical athlete" is an accepted term in many states and current athlete definitions prevent Arkansas National Guardsmen from having the same access to acute injury and preventative care as the same entities in other states.

Our National Guardsmen required a high level of physical preparedness, that rivals most athletes, to sustain the high operational tempo that is required to execute their state and federal missions. This physical fitness includes strength, speed, agility, stamina and coordination (which are all used to define the term "athlete" in the current statute). "Athlete" is currently defined in the code. SB86 does not change that definition. It only expands it to cover tactical athletes. In addition, SB86 also requires an annual physical fitness evaluation to qualify.

Military branches in other states already employ athletic trainers. There are currently athletic trainers working with all branches of the U.S. military. Current athlete definitions prevent Arkansas warfighters from having access to the same care.

I thank you for your consideration of these issues that are important to the membership of the National Guard Association of Arkansas. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding our request at 501-772-1270 or at [dcluck@ngaa.org](mailto:dcluck@ngaa.org).

Damon Neil Cluck  
Executive Director,  
National Guard Association of Arkansas

Chris Spalding, ATC, PTA  
Sports Medicine Director

201 Victor Wharf Access Rd  
Pearl City, HI 96782-3400



Dear Legislators,

I am writing you to ask for your support of SB86. I also would like to tell you of the experience I have had while serving for the past 20 years as Sports Medicine Director for Naval Special Warfare Group THREE/SEAL Delivery Team ONE in both Coronado in California and the Pearl Peninsula in Hawai'i.

Military personnel must meet a physical standard to be action ready. This readiness requires training to perform at a certain threshold. In my position, I have found that our SEAL operators and support personnel have a very different flow to their training and mission requirements than traditional high school, intercollegiate and professional athletes.

The mission will always take precedence over any type of ability to attend regular physical training and rehab/recovery/treatment sessions. Therefore, the ability to be able to attend to military personnel due to diminished and inconsistent time windows becomes paramount to the Certified Athletic Trainer in a military setting.

The injuries/pathologies incurred by Naval Special Warfare personnel are no different than those incurred by any traditional athlete. They need to be classified as such by whatever nomenclature and designation.

Respectfully,

Chris Spalding  
Naval Special Warfare, Group THREE  
Seal Delivery Vehicle, Team ONE



Dear Senator Garner,

I have been employed as a Law Enforcement officer at the Fayetteville Police Department for over 17 years. During that time I have seen first-hand how important it is for a police officer to train like a professional athlete. I have been involved in numerous encounters where my fitness had I not had it could have escalated the situation to a deadly force encounter. I have also been in a situation where I carried/dragged a shot officer up a hill, and lifted him into the back of a pick-up truck. I would not have been able to accomplish that task without training my body and mind to do hard things.

I often ask officers and military personnel what they think the difference is between them and a "Professional Athlete." The answer is simple, if those that most consider a "professional athlete" fail because of their fitness, they DO NOT DIE. The simple fact is that all law enforcement officers and military personnel must see themselves as tactical athletes. Unlike the professional athlete that makes the big money, if a law enforcement officer's fitness fails them in the line of duty it could cost them or someone else their life. Our fitness can literally be about life or death.

It is also my experience that officers often get injured during the course of their duties. If adding some language to a bill would allow officers and police departments to have another tool on their tool belt to help officers recover after injury or avoid injury all together that would be a wonderful step for law enforcement.

Sincerely,

Sergeant Tony Murphy

Fayetteville Police Department



# Northwest Arkansas Metropolitan Fire Chiefs' Association

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February 11, 2021

To whom it may concern:

The Northwest Arkansas Metropolitan Fire Chiefs' Association would like to respectfully submit this letter in support of Senate Bill 86 currently being considered under the Regular Session of the 93<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly.

Changing the definition of "athlete" to include activities related to law enforcement, military, or rescue services will positively impact these entities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Jeremy Criner  
President, NWA Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association