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This Week In Congress Radio Address: 6-week Preparedness Program for National Guard,  
1957 February 1

Speaker: Senator J. Allen Frear  
Transcribed by: David Cardillo

**[00:00]**

Announcer: The Week in Congress, recorded on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1957.

Mr. Kelly: From Washington, DC, transcribed, United States Senator J. Allen Frear reports again to the people of Delaware on current congressional affairs. Ladies and gentlemen, Senator Frear.

Senator Frear: Thank you, Bob. Washington and part of the nation was spared last week with an old and sometimes frosty controversy. The incident involved the Secretary of Defense on the one hand, the National Guard on the other. The mere basis of the (unintelligible **[00:51]**) between the two groups involves a six-month active duty training period intended to ensure that our military personnel are adequately prepared to carry out their responsibilities in combat. Before joining the National Guard, individuals must agree to take this period of training in order to be eligible for enlistment in the Guard. At present, enlistment in the Guard is possible without this prior (unintelligible **[01:23]**) of active service. Representatives of the National Guard propose instead a three-month compulsory training period, which apparently is not acceptable to the heads of our armed forces. As interpreted by the Guardsmen, the new program will drastically curtail the activities of the National Guard and threaten its present and future programs. This week, Congress is airing the dispute as the Secretary of Defense appears before congressional committees. A great deal more is at stake here than the question of training military personnel. The National Guard is basically a unit of the several states. In times past when our nation faced great emergencies, the National Guard responded to the call for duty and compiled an excellent record of distinguished service. Furthermore, in times of local emergency within the states themselves, units of the Guard have been called up to preserve law and order, and in general, to protect the welfare of the people. Thus, in my judgment, any decision that would adversely affect the future course of the National Guard or its continued development must be looked upon with misgiving until or unless every shadow of doubt is removed from the scene by those who would undertake such sweeping changes. I am confident that the Department of Defense has the best interests of the nation at heart, but so has the National Guard. To be sure, this subject is essentially a military matter and should, if possible, be resolved within the confines of our defense establishment. However, since the Guardsmen inherently belong to the states themselves, and since the

members of Congress represent their face in the Federal government, it is logical to assume that the judgment of Congress should be exercised in this matter. In the past several days, I have received a substantial number of both written and verbal views from various members of the Delaware National Guard. These comments are greatly appreciated and certainly reflect the high interest and pride which the Delaware National Guard has for its service and its accomplishments. But it would perhaps be unwise to express an irrevocable opinion on the merits of this controversy at the present time, yet I believe quite strongly that a very basic and precious part of our state's rights would be in serious jeopardy if the state's stature of our National Guard was compromised. I have asked the Secretary of Defense to furnish me with a detailed explanation of his views on the matter. When they have been received and studied, I hope to arrange a meeting with a group of Delaware National Guardsmen and invite their comments and their reactions so that in turn I may be in a position to not only understand the problem in its entirety, but to offer, if necessary, recommendations to the Department of Defense or to the Congress in order that an equitable solution to the matter may be found.

Mr. Kelly:

Thank you, Senator Frear. From the nation's capital, you have heard United States Senator J. Allen Frear in his regular report to the people of Delaware on current congressional affairs. Senator Frear will be heard again next week at this same time, speaking from the Senate Office Building in Washington.

**[End 05:03]**