Executive Summary

The annual economic impact of the military community on South Carolina is $34.3 billion. This translates to 254,095 jobs that are supported (either directly or indirectly) by the military community along with $14.6 billion in labor income for South Carolinians.

The Palmetto State is home to eight major military installations and numerous other facilities throughout the state supporting 68,493 Department of Defense personnel, of all branches of Service and components. 69% of service members are active duty and 31% are Reserve Component (Guardsmen and Reservists). Importantly, this is the 10th highest density of service members in the nation. There are another 17,579 service members who serve just across the border at Fort Gordon, Georgia, with many living in South Carolina.

Additionally, $3.2 billion in Department of Defense (DoD) contracts is currently being executed among 671 firms within South Carolina and the five-county region in Georgia surrounding Fort Gordon, the 28th highest amount of DoD contracts in the nation.

There are 63,882 military retirees among the state’s 397,649 Veterans, making South Carolina the state with the 8th highest number of military retirees. In addition, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs provides South Carolina’s Veterans with $4.9 billion in VA-funded compensation and pension, among other benefits.

The strategic importance of South Carolina’s military community as part of the broader United States military is critical. South Carolina’s military community provides a variety of resources that the nation regularly draws from for training, combat, and support services. These include:
- Force generation for the long-term sustainability of the U.S. Armed Forces
- Active defense of Continental United States (CONUS) with ground, air, sea, and cyber forces.
- Direct support of combat operations with ground, air, sea and cyber forces
- Strategic transportation
- DoD contractors producing weapon systems for the nation and supporting ongoing military activities.
- Domestic and state emergency support operations