



Here's how the National Guard is combating the labor crisis

Brad Howard

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Employers in the U.S. are experiencing an unprecedented labor shortage. Supply chains are facing slowdowns. Politicians are looking at every opportunity to keep the economy moving, and one option is the U.S. military.

The National Guard has filled in the gaps to help with Covid testing, health care and distribution of personal protective equipment. Some states, such as Massachusetts, have also used the guard to help with bus driving for schools, and states such as Texas have been deploying soldiers to the border to help with immigration enforcement.

“We also do see other senior guard leaders pushing back on some of these second-order pandemic-linked missions that are coming up,” said Davis Winkie, a reporter for Army Times. “Like school bus driving, or, you know, filing unemployment claims or filling in for poll workers, the food bank support — the list of second-order Covid-effects missions keeps growing.”

One mission the guard could be asked to take on is supporting port operations and general logistics to try to ease the supply chain issues facing the nation.

“They might do a little bit around the edges, but it’s not gonna solve the issue,” said Scott Lincicome, a senior fellow in economic studies at the Cato Institute. “You’re talking about a drop in the bucket in what’s a tidal wave of import volumes and associated logistics and supply chain pressures. It’s just not going to be the change that the system really needs — although it might, you know, maybe get a few extra Christmas presents here in time.”