

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

May 6, 2009

The Honorable Robert M. Gates
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Secretary Gates,

As Congress awaits the submission of the President's Fiscal Year 2010 budget request for the Department of Defense, we write to share our strong and unwavering support for the Air National Guard (ANG) units in our states that lost their flying missions through BRAC 2005.

As you know, the last BRAC round made significant changes to the lay down of aircraft within the ANG. In our six states, many units lost their flying missions – ranging from A-10s, C-130Js, and F-16s – with some losing the only flying mission stationed permanently in their state. The loss of a flying mission is a direct threat to the manpower, readiness and relevance of our ANG units and their continued ability to meet their state and federal duties.

The ANG not only serves our nation as we ask them to support operations in Iraq and Afghanistan and around the world, but they also serve the local state missions. Without a permanent flying mission within the state, the ANG may lose the valuable expertise and experience our airmen provide. With the immense capability the ANG provides to our nation, we must not jeopardize the investment we've made in the ANG personnel forces.

According to the 2008 Air Force Weapon Systems Roadmap, as well as subsequent planning by the Air Force and National Guard Bureau, our six states are each expected to receive the C-27J Joint Cargo Aircraft (JCA). While we welcome the assignment of a permanent flying mission to our states, we are concerned that continued debate about the organization and control of the JCA program could place the future of our ANG units at risk. We believe it is important to firmly resolve the "roles and missions" debate with regards to intra-theater lift, and move forward with a program that meets the needs of ANG states impacted in BRAC while also addressing the capability gap faced by our warfighters.

This is a pivotal year for our Air National Guard. To this end, we look forward to the Department's strong support for the allocation of permanent flying missions to our states as part of the upcoming submission of the 2010 defense budget.

As always, we thank you for your service to our nation and look forward to continuing to work with you to support our men and women in uniform.

OSD 05298-09



Sincerely,


✓ Christopher Dodd
United States Senator


Joseph Lieberman
✓ United States Senator


✓ John Larson
United States Representative


Joseph Courtney
✓ United States Representative


✓ Barbara Mikulski
United States Senator

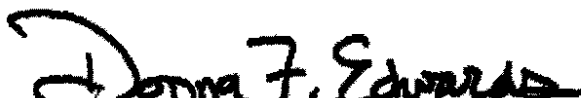

Benjamin Cardin
✓ United States Senator


✓ Steny Hoyer
United States Representative


Roscoe Bartlett
✓ United States Representative


✓ Elijah Cummings
United States Representative


Dutch Ruppersberger
✓ United States Representative


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Tim Ryan
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 United States Representative .

Jim Jordan
 ✓ Jim Jordan
 United States Representative .



John Sarbanes
United States Representative