

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

December 6, 2012

The Honorable Carl Levin
The Honorable John McCain
Chairman and Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Howard P. "Buck" McKeon
The Honorable Adam Smith
Chairman and Ranking Member
U.S. House Armed Services Committee
2120 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members of the Senate and House Armed Services Committees:

We ask for your support in conference of the continued freeze of Air Force manpower and force structure for the duration of fiscal year 2013. Additionally, we ask that you maintain the reporting requirements in Section 1076 of the House-passed National Defense Authorization Act and your concurrence in establishing the National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force, as contained in Title XVII of the Senate-passed National Defense Authorization Act. All four committees of jurisdiction passed laws to prevent the Air Force's injudicious cuts proposed by its budget submission this year. An overwhelming majority of the Congress, representing both parties and both chambers, believes that these cuts need thorough and objective evaluation before they can either be passed into law or replaced by other proposals that will better enable the Air Force to meet its mission requirements while adhering to the Budget Control Act.

In light of the need for an objective third-party review of the Air Force budget, we reiterate our support for the National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force. We believe that an independent Commission is the only manner in which this controversy can be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties. The Commission should work with—but not for—the Air Force, the Governors, the Adjutants General, and the National Guard Bureau to produce a report that proposes the best way forward for our Nation.

Thank you for your leadership on this bill and your attention to our requests.

Sincerely,



PATRICK LEAHY
Co-Chair
Senate National Guard Caucus



LINDSEY O. GRAHAM
Co-Chair
Senate National Guard Caucus



DUNCAN HUNTER
Co-Chair
House National Guard and Reserve Caucus



TIM WALZ
Co-Chair
House National Guard and Reserve Caucus

Nellie Starnow

Frank R. Lautenberg

Al Franken

Amy Klobuchar

John Cornyn

Robert Menendez

Jon Tester

Lisa Murkowski

Lisa Murkowski
