



Iowa



Washington

November 7, 2012

The Honorable Michael Donley
Secretary
U.S. Air Force
The Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20318

General Mark Welsh
Chief of Staff
U.S. Air Force
The Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20318

Dear Secretary Donley and General Welsh:

As co-chairs of the Council of Governors (Council), we acknowledge your recent communication with Adjutants General (TAGs) on a modified proposal for the U.S. Air Force's Fiscal Year 2013 budget. However, we write to express our concern and disappointment with the lack of transparency and sudden rush to brief Congress when the proposal has yet to be shared or discussed with the Council and, through the Council, with all other governors.

As you recall, we attempted to work with you in early March to find a compromise to the Air Force's budget request that would have better recognized the Air National Guard's (ANG's) importance to our national defense and its ability to sustain military power and capabilities at a fraction of the cost to taxpayers. At that time, we expressed our concerns regarding the disproportionate impact of the Air Force budget proposal on ANG manpower, airlift capability and fighter aircraft.

In late March, you terminated these discussions and the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) began an internal review of the Air Force's budget proposal. In late April, Secretary Panetta wrote to us and shared copies of a revised budget proposal the Department of Defense (DoD) had already submitted to Congress – a proposal previously offered by the Air Force that failed to address our concerns. Since then, governors have worked with our Congressional delegations to halt the disproportionate FY2013 reductions to ANG weapons systems, unit structure, and manpower in order to allow time to continue working on a process to better incorporate ANG capabilities, cost effectiveness, and governors' domestic security requirements into the DoD budget.

After months without communication from DoD regarding the FY2013 Air Force budget, the National Guard Bureau called TAGs to Washington, DC to attend a briefing on a new Air Force proposal last Friday, November 2. Due to the short notice, many TAGs were unable to attend and sent representatives with minimal background on previous negotiations with the Council or our collective Statement of Principles. TAGs and TAG representatives were given no information in advance of the meeting nor were they provided any written materials at the meeting that could be reviewed at the time or shared with their respective

governors following the meeting. To be clear, neither the governors nor their TAGs have taken a position on this latest proposal from the Air Force and have yet to see any specifics in writing.

Our shared Statement of Principles states “Federal resource allocation or reallocation proposals that would impact the National Guard or military operations in support of domestic civil authorities will be discussed and views and information exchanged with the Council of Governors in advance of formally requesting, submitting or implementing any such federal resource allocation or reallocation action.” No specifics or written proposals have been shared with the Council, so we currently do not have any review action before us. Until we are able to see a proposal and discuss it with all governors, there can be no representation that this proposal meets the needs of states. We request that Pentagon leaders honor commitments to engage with the nation’s governors through the Council to resolve concerns over the Air Force FY2013 budget.

Throughout this year, we have made clear our willingness to continue working with you to find a better path forward. Since the Council’s last meeting in July, we have worked with DoD to develop a draft consultative process to ensure that governors’ priorities are better incorporated into future years’ budget requests. We are scheduled to discuss the draft future years’ consultative process with Deputy Secretary Carter on November 13 and would be happy to add a discussion of the FY13 budget situation to the meeting agenda.

Sincerely,



Governor Terry E. Branstad
Co-Chair
Council of Governors



Governor Christine O. Gregoire
Co-Chair
Council of Governors

- cc: The Honorable Leon Panetta, Secretary of Defense
The Honorable Ashton Carter, Deputy Secretary of Defense
The Honorable Paul Stockton, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Americas’ Security Affairs
General Frank Grass, Chief, National Guard Bureau
Lieutenant General Bud Wyatt, Director, Air National Guard