



Iowa



Washington

November 15, 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:

We write to acknowledge your attempt to present a revised Air Force Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 budget proposal to Congress this week as an alternative to the PB13 Air Force budget request. While we appreciate what appears to be constructive Air Force movement on this issue, we cannot support the proposal without any exchange of views and information and without answers to governors' underlying substantive and procedural concerns. In short, we cannot accept what we understand to be a "take it or leave it" proposal without discussion, disclosure of underlying fiscal and operational data and without time to consider its merits.

We wrote to you last week – and have reiterated throughout the year - that governors are open to working with you to reach an agreement on a budget proposal we can all support for FY 2013 *and* FY 2014. By statute and Executive Order, the Council of Governors (Council) is the forum for this dialogue to take place between governors and the Department of Defense (DoD) and we stand ready to work with you as expeditiously as possible. We have shared a number of our initial questions and concerns with General Frank Grass, Chief of the National Guard Bureau, in an effort to obtain more information and a better understanding of the fiscal and operational data behind your recent proposal. We also believe that other alternatives, perhaps even alternatives previously proposed by the National Guard Bureau, can help chart a path toward consensus.

Governors are united in support of our National Guard and welcome opportunities to partner with DoD to protect our nation and assure the safety and security of our citizens. As demonstrated by the role of Dual Status Commanders in achieving unity of effort during the recent response to Hurricane Sandy, when we work together we build trust and understanding, strengthen our nation's capabilities and find agreement in areas previously thought impossible. The Council's work on the Dual Status Command arrangement has resolved issues that plagued DoD, governors and Congress for a number of years. Working through the Council, we achieved a common understanding of requirements and priorities and presented to Congress jointly embraced solutions that have advanced our nation's interests.

We firmly believe that similar success can be achieved with respect to current and future budget matters if the Council's established process is utilized. In the absence of answers to our questions and agreement on a

process to address them, however, we will have no choice but to continue to take our concerns directly to Congress.

We look forward to a renewed discussion with Air Force leaders on the Service's budget for FY 2013 and FY 2014 and to establishment of a mutually acceptable, repeatable and sustainable process for consultation with DoD on budget matters for FY 2015 and beyond.

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