

April 27, 2012

The Honorable Carl Levin
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John McCain
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Howard "Buck" McKeon
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Adam Smith
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Levin, Senator McCain, Chairman McKeon and Representative Smith:

As commanders-in chief, governors take very seriously the duties and responsibilities placed on the men and women of the National Guard. The Guard is a cost-effective operational force that is critical to our national security and our ability to respond to domestic emergencies. The Air National Guard (ANG) provides 35 percent of the U.S. Air Force's capability for 6 percent of the budget. Disproportionate cuts to the ANG that also diminish its capacity to fulfill dual missions at home and abroad are simply not acceptable.

Governors, through our Adjutants General and the Council of Governors (CoG), have worked diligently with the Air Force and the U.S. Department of Defense to rectify the surprising and disproportionate cuts facing the ANG as part of the U.S. Air Force's Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 budget request. Unfortunately those negotiations have not produced an agreement; it is therefore critical that Congress address the deficiencies in the Air Force's budget request.

When the CoG discussed the Air Force's budget proposal with Defense Secretary Leon Panetta on February 27, they were pleased that he agreed to work with governors to address our concerns. Following that meeting, several Adjutants General engaged with the Air Force to develop a plan that would mitigate the most harmful impacts of the Air Force's budget and ensure that each state would maintain the necessary personnel and aircraft to fulfill the ANG's mission at home and abroad. Unfortunately, the Air Force was not willing to move much beyond their budget proposal. They never fully responded to states' concerns about manpower reductions and refused to make any adjustments to their transfer of fighter aircraft units from the ANG to the active service.

The proposal outlined by Secretary Panetta this week is essentially the same as an Air Force proposal rejected by governors more than five weeks ago. While we greatly appreciate the willingness of the Secretary to adjust the Air Force's budget request to restore some organic ANG airlift capacity, the package still fails to address state concerns regarding remaining ANG manpower cuts and fighter aircraft and other ANG unit reductions.

Secretary Panetta has offered to work with governors and establish procedures that engage states early in the budget process and determine state civil support

requirements for FY2014 and beyond. This is a critical step forward for incorporating the domestic duties and operational capabilities of the ANG into the overall budget of the Air Force. Until that process can be put in place, however, we request that Congress sustain FY12 funding, manpower and aircraft levels for the ANG for FY13.

We look forward to working with you to support a proposal that honors the enhanced role the ANG plays in our national security today and in the future.

Sincerely,

Governor Dave Heineman
Chair

Governor Jack Markell
Vice Chair

Governor Terry E. Branstad
Co-Chair
Council of Governors

Governor Christine O. Gregoire
Co-Chair
Council of Governors

**Identical letters were sent to leadership of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees, as well as the House and Senate Appropriations Committee Subcommittees on Defense.