

June 08, 2012
The Honorable Howard P. "Buck" McKeon
Chairman
Armed Services Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman McKeon:

Thank you for your letter of April 30 and your leadership in ensuring that this year's National Defense Authorization Act continues to provide the Air National Guard with the personnel, aircraft and resources necessary to perform its dual mission overseas and here at home.

In these tough economic times, governors have led the way trying to find ways to do more with less. We understand the need to reorganize, restructure and modernize the military. However, the proposed drastic and disproportionate cuts to ANG equipment and personnel fail to recognize the Guard's importance to national defense, especially its ability to sustain military power and capabilities at a fraction of the cost to taxpayers.

If implemented, the Air Force's proposal would strip states of manpower, aircraft and affiliated support capabilities, such as communications and medical response, that governors rely on to protect citizens during emergencies. Such reductions would leave gaps in critical capabilities and upend years of well-crafted emergency response plans.

Through the Council of Governors, we tried to work with the Department of Defense to ensure that the Guard's cost-effectiveness, high level of skill and experience are appropriately considered in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 budget request. Unfortunately these efforts failed to address our concerns regarding the availability of ANG personnel and appropriate aircraft.

We look forward to working with you and your colleagues to address this issue for FY2013. We also believe it is critical that states and the federal government work together to best utilize and preserve our National Guard and its capabilities in future years.

Again, thank you for your outreach and support of the National Guard.

Sincerely,

Governor Dave Heineman
Chair
National Governors Association

Governor Jack Markell
Vice Chair
National Governors Association

Governor Terry Branstad
Co-chair
Council of Governors

Governor Christine Gregoire
Co-chair
Council of Governors