



March 19, 2012

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

General Norton Schwartz
Chief of Staff
U.S. Air Force
The Pentagon
Washington, DC 20318

Dear Secretary Donley and General Schwartz:

Thank you for your call this afternoon to discuss the Air Force's latest proposal to modify the Fiscal Year 2013 budget proposal. Like you, we remain hopeful that a better process can be developed for future proposals affecting the National Guard, because we continue to have significant concerns regarding the ongoing use of the Air National Guard (ANG) as the bill-payer to protect the active component. Specifically, the Air Force's budget proposal fails to consider the ANG's cost-effectiveness, high level of experience, and homeland defense and emergency response missions.

Following the Council of Governors meeting on February 27, through key Adjutants General, we proposed a comprehensive alternative that would decrease operational risk by increasing surge capacity, preserve the experience and technical expertise of the ANG at a greatly reduced life-cycle cost, and exceed targeted savings. Our alternative would ensure a more balanced approach to reductions between the active forces and the ANG and would preserve the necessary personnel and aircraft to respond to domestic emergencies throughout the country.

After numerous discussions, significant differences remain with respect to manpower reductions, fighter aircraft and airlift needs. We encourage your consideration of cost neutral options for cross-leveling or reallocating programmed aircraft operations from the active service to the Guard.

Based on our call today, we understand that on Friday, March 23, you will be meeting with other Pentagon officials to discuss this matter internally. After that meeting, we hope to receive back an offer that can better meet the needs of governors and the ANG.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Terry Branstad in blue ink.

Governor Terry Branstad
Co-Chair
Council of Governors

Handwritten signature of Christine O. Gregoire in blue ink.

Governor Christine O. Gregoire
Co-Chair
Council of Governors

cc: General Craig McKinley, Chief, National Guard Bureau