

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 24, 2010

The Honorable Michael B. Donley
Secretary of the Air Force
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1670

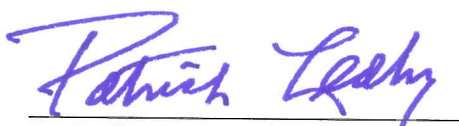
Dear Secretary Donley:

On behalf of the 96 member strong Senate National Guard Caucus, we are concerned and oppose the force structure cuts to the Air National Guard C-130 fleet. We are seriously troubled that the Air Force would consider taking aircraft from the Air National Guard to fill gaps in the Active Component. This most recent announcement is a troubling move in what appears to be a consistent trend since the 2005 BRAC to reduce the number of aircraft from the Air National Guard without substantive or even any consultation with Air National Guard leadership.

The most disconcerting cuts come from the drawdown based on the Mobility Capabilities and Requirements Study 2016 (MCRS 16), which at the time of budget decisions, was still being developed. The programmatic decision resulting in these cuts was based from a draft study which now reflects what the budget had already announced. In a time of economic downturn and smaller defense budgets, we encourage the Department of Defense and the Air Force to adopt structures such as active associate wings to leverage the Air National Guard's lower operating and infrastructure costs and more experienced civilian airmen.

We urge you to reconsider the C-130 Force Structure changes and seriously review alternative courses of action that will preserve our mobility capability for both of the Air National Guard's federal and state missions.

Sincerely,



Senator Patrick Leahy
Co-Chair
Senate National Guard Caucus



Senator Christopher S. Bond
Co-Chair
Senate National Guard Caucus