

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 29, 2011

The Honorable Carl Levin
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John McCain
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman and Senator McCain:

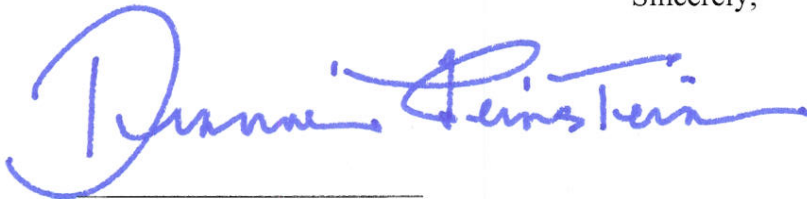
We are writing to express our opposition to a provision in the Senate's FY2012 National Defense Authorization Act that would transfer the MC-12 Liberty intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance aircraft from the Air Force to the Army. We urge you to support removing this provision when the legislation reaches the Senate floor. It is our understanding that neither the Air Force nor the Army has requested this move. The Air Force is committed to the mission of the MC-12. This program has been highly successful in both Iraq and Afghanistan, with the Air Force providing over 96,000 combat hours of direct intelligence support to the warfighter.

Following a March 2011 basing decision, the Air Force is in the process of permanently basing the MC-12 squadrons at Beale Air Force Base in California. The first four MC-12 planes landed at Beale last month with additional planes to arrive this summer. Currently supporting two major intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance missions, the U-2 and Global Hawk, the Airmen of Beale are uniquely qualified to add the Liberty to their mission set. Co-locating these assets will allow for integration of intelligence support from the tactical to strategic levels. We can think of no reason why the Air Force cannot continue to support the intelligence needs of their sister services with the Liberty, just as they do with the U-2, the Predator and the Global Hawk.

In addition, home basing the MC-12 Liberty at Beale is expected to bring at least \$450 million in positive economic impact to the local community. This will be vital to an area of our state that has an 18% unemployment rate. Transferring the MC-12 to the Army, and the subsequent re-locating of the aircraft, support activities, and personnel -- so soon after the Beale basing decision and the arrival of the first planes -- are expenses we cannot afford right now.

We urge you to support keeping the MC-12 with the Air Force at Beale. We appreciate your attention to this request and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Barbara Boxer
United States Senator