



**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

October 11, 2011

The Honorable Leon Panetta  
Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 203011000

Dear Secretary Panetta:

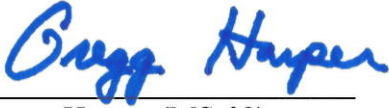
Congratulations on your recent confirmation as Secretary of Defense. Your leadership is vitally needed as the Defense Department continues to focus on our unprecedented global security challenges. Adding to the difficulty is the current fiscal crisis that faces this country. It will be a daunting challenge to provide the capabilities necessary to meet future security threats within a severely constrained budget.

With this new budget environment in mind, we write to highlight the C-27J program, which we strongly believe meets the military's requirement for a cost-effective, medium-lift, intra-theater airlift aircraft. Operated by the Air National Guard, the C-27J is designed to deliver mission-critical/time-sensitive cargo to the warfighter in remote, austere locations and to land or take off from short unimproved runways not accessible by other means. The C-27J is a highly capable, versatile, and cost-effective aircraft with lower acquisition and operating costs than rotary-wing aircraft and larger cargo airlifters. The C-27J's commonality with existing C-130Js guarantees additional savings over the life of the program. We believe the C-27J is the most practical and affordable solution to our tactical airlift requirements.

In addition to supporting the warfighter, the C-27J provides a critical capability to state emergency management and homeland security missions. As evidenced by recent natural disasters around the country, tactical airlift is essential to rapid response, rescue and recovery efforts. The C-27J is especially attractive given its lower operating costs, speed advantage over rotary-wing aircraft, and its ability to operate from unimproved surfaces. State governors broadly support this program because of these capabilities.

We continue to provide unequivocal support for the C-27J program and respectfully ask that in light of the current budget environment, you reconsider the Department's decision to reduce the program from 78 aircraft to 38 aircraft. The validated National Guard aviation requirement to be an integral component of the national security and homeland defense strategies has not changed. The Department's aging intra-theater airlift must eventually be recapitalized. The C-27J should be considered as an affordable, cost-effective option in future defense plans.

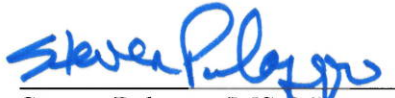
Sincerely,



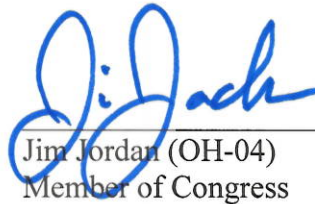
Gregg Harper (MS-03)  
Member of Congress



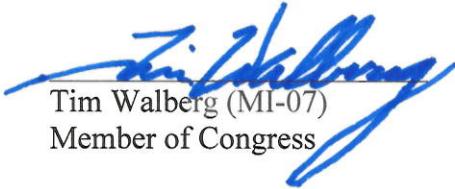
Joe Courtney (CT-02)  
Member of Congress



Steven Palazzo (MS-04)  
Member of Congress



Jim Jordan (OH-04)  
Member of Congress



Tim Walberg (MI-07)  
Member of Congress



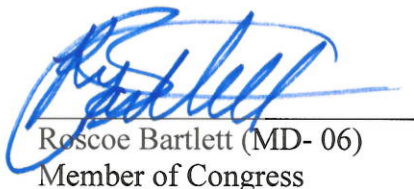
Bennie Thompson (MS-02)  
Member of Congress



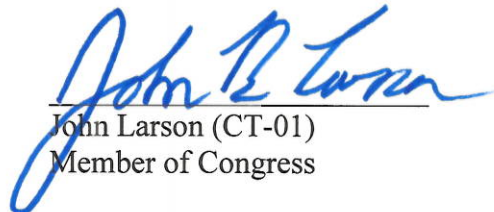
Alan Nunnelee (MS-01)  
Member of Congress



Madeline Bordallo (GU)  
Member of Congress



Roscoe Bartlett (MD-06)  
Member of Congress



John Larson (CT-01)  
Member of Congress



Denny Rehberg (MT)  
Member of Congress



Rick Berg (ND)  
Member of Congress