

AMY KLOBUCHAR  
MINNESOTA

COMMITTEES:  
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JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE  
JUDICIARY

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 3, 2011

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

Dear Secretary Donley:

I write to express my strong support for designating the 148<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing at the Duluth Air National Guard Base in Duluth, MN, as an “active association” wing. As you review potential force structure changes in the coming fiscal year, I respectfully urge you to consider active association at Duluth as a means to reduce costs while improving the mission readiness of active duty airmen.

Active association at the 148<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing would provide excellent training opportunities for active duty airmen. As you know, the 148<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing recently won the Raytheon Trophy for Best Air Superiority Squadron and has received “Excellent” or “Outstanding” ratings on all 15 of its most recent major inspections. In addition, the wing maintains exclusive ownership and scheduling rights for one of the largest airspace complexes in the nation. Providing an active duty unit with the opportunity to train at Duluth’s spacious campus alongside the experienced personnel of the 148<sup>th</sup> would considerably strengthen its mission capability and increase its combat readiness.

Active association at the 148<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing would also ensure a strong network of support for an active duty unit at a significantly lower cost to the Air Force. The Duluth community provides a vibrant infrastructure to support the wing, including access to affordable housing, transportation, education, and recreation. Stationing an active duty unit at the 148<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing, rather than at an active duty airbase, would ensure the highest level of support to the unit members and their families while reducing the Air Force’s operations costs.

During my time in the Senate, I have worked hard to sustain the long-term viability of the 148<sup>th</sup>. With your support, we helped bring 18 Block 50 F-16s to the wing last year, and I look forward to working with the Air Force to acquire F-35 planes for the wing in the future. I have met several times with the Minnesota Air National Guard and the Military Affairs Committee of the Duluth Chamber of Commerce to discuss the issue of active association. Both organizations are fully committed to ensuring a seamless transition to active association at the 148<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing.

Northeastern Minnesota has a strong tradition of military support, and we would be proud to welcome an active duty unit to live and train alongside our Duluth “Bulldogs.” Thank you for

your consideration of this request, and I look forward to working with you to support the men and women of our Air Force.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Amy Klobuchar". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Amy" and last name "Klobuchar" clearly legible.

Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator

CC: General Norton Schwartz