

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 14, 2014

The Honorable Carl Levin
Chairman
Senate Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-6050

The Honorable James M. Inhofe
Ranking Member
Senate Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-6050

Dear Chairman Levin and Ranking Member Inhofe,

We write to you to express our concern regarding the future viability and operational capability of the Air National Guard's (ANG) C-130 fleet. The ANG C-130 fleet provides 40 percent of the airlift capability for the Total Air Force, and yet the ANG fleet consists of some of the oldest aircraft in the fleet.

As you know, the ANG C-130 fleet, specifically the C-130H, is the military's primary combat delivery aircraft. In addition, ANG C-130s provide humanitarian assistance, precision airdrop and tactical airlift across the globe. However, due to the dual nature of the National Guard, this aircraft is just as critical for use at home as it is overseas. For example, the ANG provides critical and timely disaster relief operations, helps to combat wildfires across the country, conducts information operations, emergency rescue and relief support, and assists the National Science Foundation in remote areas of the Polar Regions.

The ANG's C-130 fleet is in need of critical upgrades. If nothing is done, the fleet runs the risk of near term obsolescence. These upgrades include avionics, global airspace access, propulsion upgrades, enhanced situational awareness, improved self-protection and single-pass precision airdrop. We believe that it is necessary for Congress continue funding for upgrades to the ANG C-130 fleet in order to ensure the ANG remains viable and relevant today and in tomorrow's fight.

Therefore it is critical that the United States Air Force works together with the Air National Guard to move forward and formulate a definitive plan for modernizing and recapitalizing the Air Force's C-130 fleet. The Air Force appears to only be recapitalizing the active component's C-130 fleet while simultaneously taking steps to divest legacy aircraft, which fall on the reserve component. We are concerned that these decisions do not take into account the dual nature of the National Guard.

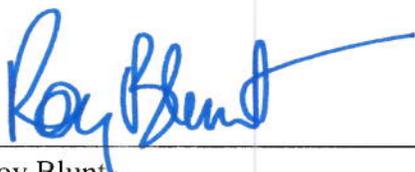
The National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force calls for the concurrent fielding of equipment across the components. In its recommendation, the Commission states “as the Air Force acquires new equipment, force integration plans should adhere to the principle of proportional and concurrent fielding across the components. This means that, in advance of full integration, new equipment will arrive at Air Reserve Component units simultaneously with its arrival at Active Component units in the proportional share of each component. As the Air Force Reserve and Active Component become fully integrated, the Air Force should ensure that the Air National Guard receives new technology concurrently with the integrated units. The Air Force should no longer recapitalize by cascading equipment from the Active Component to the Reserve Component.”

We are disappointed to see that the Air Force has not put forward a plan to modernize and recapitalize the ANG C-130 fleet. We believe that the National Guard can be part of a cost-effective solution that retains affordability for peacetime as well as ability to respond to unforeseen, future contingencies. We also believe that the current leadership of the Air Force is taking steps in the right direction to ensure our ANG is an equal member of the Total Force.

We ask that as you consider the fiscal year 2015 National Defense Authorization Act, you consider continued authorization of funding for both critical upgrades to the ANG C-130 fleet, such as propulsion and CNS/ATM, as well as direct the Secretary and Chief of the Air Force to work with the Chief of the National Guard Bureau and the Director of the Air National Guard to establish a well-defined modernization and recapitalization plan for the Total Force airlift capability.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

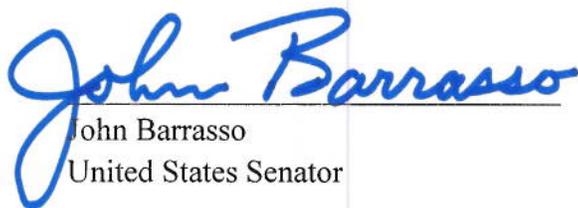
Sincere regards,



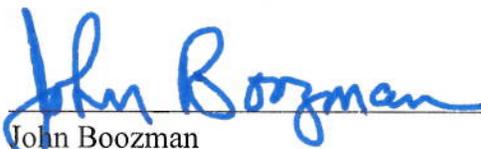
Roy Blunt
United States Senator



Claire McCaskill
United States Senator



John Barrasso
United States Senator



John Boozman
United States Senator



Chris Coons
United States Senator



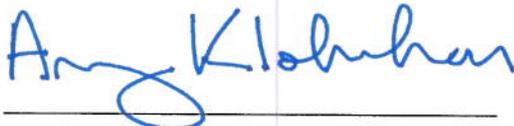
Mike Enzi
United States Senator



Al Franken
United States Senator



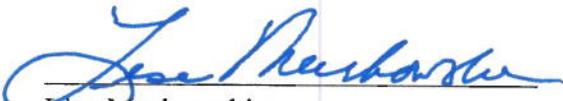
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Amy Klobuchar
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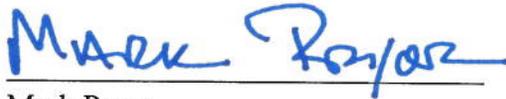
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Chris Murphy
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Rob Portman
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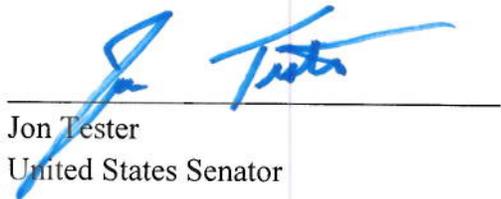
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