

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20510

December 6, 2012

The Honorable Carl Levin  
The Honorable John McCain  
Chairman and Ranking Member  
U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee  
228 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Howard P. "Buck" McKeon  
The Honorable Adam Smith  
Chairman and Ranking Member  
U.S. House Armed Services Committee  
2120 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members of the Senate and House Armed Services Committees:

We ask for your support in conference of the continued freeze of Air Force manpower and force structure for the duration of fiscal year 2013. Additionally, we ask that you maintain the reporting requirements in Section 1076 of the House-passed National Defense Authorization Act and your concurrence in establishing the National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force, as contained in Title XVII of the Senate-passed National Defense Authorization Act. All four committees of jurisdiction passed laws to prevent the Air Force's injudicious cuts proposed by its budget submission this year. An overwhelming majority of the Congress, representing both parties and both chambers, believes that these cuts need thorough and objective evaluation before they can either be passed into law or replaced by other proposals that will better enable the Air Force to meet its mission requirements while adhering to the Budget Control Act.

In light of the need for an objective third-party review of the Air Force budget, we reiterate our support for the National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force. We believe that an independent Commission is the only manner in which this controversy can be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties. The Commission should work with—but not for—the Air Force, the Governors, the Adjutants General, and the National Guard Bureau to produce a report that proposes the best way forward for our Nation.

Thank you for your leadership on this bill and your attention to our requests.

Sincerely,



PATRICK LEAHY  
Co-Chair  
Senate National Guard Caucus



LINDSEY O. GRAHAM  
Co-Chair  
Senate National Guard Caucus



DUNCAN HUNTER  
Co-Chair  
House National Guard and Reserve Caucus



TIM WALZ  
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Brett Guthrie

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