

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

January 24, 2013

The Honorable Michael Donley
Secretary of the Air Force
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1670

Dear Secretary Donley:

We write today concerning the Air Force's force structure plans, particularly about the distribution of our airlift capabilities. Maintaining the Air National Guard airlift mission at W.K. Kellogg Airport in Battle Creek, Michigan, is of substantial interest not only to the Guardsmen, their families, and regional military assets, but also to residents of the entire region for whom the airlift wing provides both national security and emergency preparedness services.

As you are well aware, the Upper Midwest has very few active-duty Air Force installations and none in Michigan, Wisconsin, or Indiana. In addition, the Michigan Air National Guard's 110th Airlift Wing in Battle Creek is one of only a few airlift operations in or near the region. The location has substantial intermodal transportation connections, a 10,000-foot runway, ample hanger space, a variety of other necessary assets, and is near agricultural production and processing as well as substantial industrial capacity. It is well-placed to deliver goods and personnel anywhere in the country on short notice, especially to the major population centers in the region. It helps ensure adequate airlift coverage and strategic dispersal of assets.

In addition, the men and women of the 110th are prepared to assume responsibility for any aircraft they are assigned. While they expected to receive C-27 aircraft and prepared accordingly, they are ready and willing to accept a C-130 mission instead.

The Air National Guard is also a cost-effective way to provide surge capabilities in times of conflict. Now that missions in Iraq and Libya have ended, forces are drawing down in Afghanistan, and we appear poised to transfer some security responsibilities to allies, rebalancing the services towards Guard and Reserve forces seems more likely than before.

Rebalancing the force and ensuring dispersed airlift capacity are among the important priorities you and your colleagues must confront. We hope you will give full consideration to maintaining the airlift mission at the Kellogg Air National Guard Base in Battle Creek, Michigan.

Sincerely,



Justin Amash
Member of Congress



Dan Benishke
Member of Congress



Kerry Bentivolio
Member of Congress



John Dingell
Member of Congress



Dan Kildee
Member of Congress



Gary Peters
Member of Congress



Tim Walberg
Member of Congress