

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 23, 2012

The Honorable Leon E. Panetta
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We are writing to express deep concern with the United States Air Force's (USAF) Fiscal Year 2013 budget request. The decision to eliminate 141 positions, or the entirety of the 102nd Air Operation Group (AOG) at Otis Air National Guard Base, indicates a lack of communication with the Air Force Global Strike Command that has grave, unforeseen implications for our national security.

The 102nd Air Operations Group is the only Air National Guard unit in the country that has the training, expertise and equipment to align with the 608 Air Operations Center (AOC) at Barksdale Air Force Base, LA. This fact was recently acknowledged in the "Forces For" section of the Global Force Management Implementation Guidance 2012-13 (GFMIG) on November 15, 2011.

The partnership between the 608 AOC and 102nd AOG is necessary for a balanced operational and personnel tempo within the Air Force. Although the 102nd AOG makes up only 10% of Global Strike Command's workforce, it performs well over 30% of all real-time, day to day missions conducted by the 608 AOC. To help with the completion of their mission, the 608 AOC speedily funded the software and programs necessary to bring the 102nd AOG on-line. This investment represents the great need for rapid and enduring support that only the 102nd AOG can provide. The proposal to eradicate the 102nd AOG would not only waste these initial funds, but will transfer costs elsewhere since the Global Strike Command's 24/7/365 mission must still be completed.

It is incredibly perplexing that the only AOG slated to be outright eliminated by the Air Force is also the only AOG in the country with the capabilities, including real world Time Sensitive Planning integration, and training needed to support a mission crucial to the safety of our citizens at home and troops overseas. Furthermore, the 102nd AOG was activated for state active duty (SAD) by Massachusetts for the last three major events during the past year: a major snowstorm, a hurricane and the tornado.

Based on these facts, we have no choice but to conclude that the Air Force Global Strike Command was not at all consulted in this decision and the 102nd AOG's unique capabilities and necessity to the Commonwealth were overlooked.

We ask that the Air Force reexamine its decision by initiating communications geared toward understanding the local and national impact of cutting 141 vital positions within their force.

We appreciate your time on this pressing matter and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

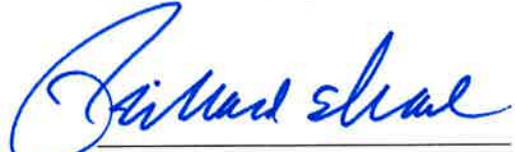

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US Senator


SCOTT P. BROWN
US Senator

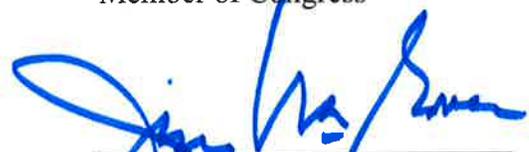

WILLIAM R. KEATING
Member of Congress

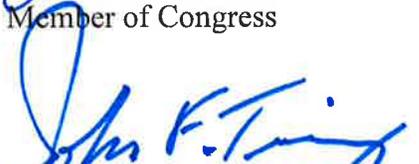

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Cc: The Honorable Michael Donley, Secretary- United States Air Force
General Norton A. Schwartz, Chief of Staff- United States Air Force
Lt. General Harry M. Wyatt III, Director- Air National Guard