

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 11, 2020

The Honorable James Inhofe
Chairman
Senate Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Senate Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mac Thornberry
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee
2310 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
House Armed Services Committee
2310 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members:

We write in support of House Section 1043 which would require the Air Force maintain a Total Aircraft Inventory (TAI) of 292 C-130 aircraft in the final Fiscal Year 2021 National Defense Authorization Act. As Senators from states that have Air National Guard (ANG) C-130 wings, we are deeply concerned by the effects a lower minimum number of C-130s would have.

Our Air National Guard C-130 flying wings provide nearly half of the Air Force's tactical airlift capability. For more than 50 years, we have brought Americans into combat, provided humanitarian relief around the globe, and supported domestic response throughout the nation. As the Air Force proposes changes to align our force structure with the National Defense Strategy (NDS), it is vitally important we do not trade experience and knowhow in pursuit of expensive, less defined capabilities.

The Senate's proposed language takes the approach of setting a minimum number of C-130 aircraft in the fleet by adopting a Primary Mission Aircraft Inventory (PMAI) of 230 aircraft. Unlike the House approach, mandating PMAI alone does not account for training aircraft inventory requirements or backup aircraft needed to support maintenance inspection and depot requirements. This disconnect could hamper the ANG's readiness and training capabilities due to a potential lack of training assets and extended maintenance downtime. The House's proposed TAI of 292 C-130s sets an aircraft minimum that accounts for all aircraft, including the training and maintenance needs of the C-130 fleet. In fact, the 2018 Mobility Capabilities and Requirements Study recommended a TAI of 300 C-130s to support combatant commanders' wartime mobility requirements.

Further, House Section 1043 is supported by 14 governors from states whose ANGs have C-130 flying missions. As these governors highlighted in a recent letter to your committees, Section 1043 would ensure that their ANG wings can continue to support the nation's essential worldwide and domestic contingencies. As such, the 292 C-130 TAI would allow the ANG to

support the NDS without inhibiting the Guard's unique domestic missions responding to natural disasters and other emergencies.

The ANG C-130 fleet has been the backbone of our tactical airlift capability for a generation. Our ANG wings have built experience and expertise through repeated deployments and domestic operations. Hard choices will be required as we restructure the Air Force to face future foreign and domestic challenges. Therefore, we must make informed, data driven, decisions as we manage the C-130 fleet. For these reasons, we strongly urge you to incorporate House Section 1043 supporting a TAI of 292 C-130 Aircraft in the final Fiscal Year 2021 National Defense Authorization Act.

Sincerely,



Tina Smith
United States Senator



John Barrasso, M.D.
United States Senator




Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Michael B. Enzi
United States Senator



Jon Tester
United States Senator



Steve Daines
United States Senator



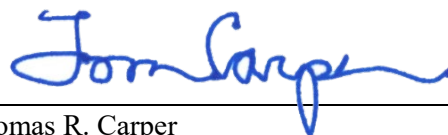
Joe Manchin III
United States Senator



Shelley Moore Capito
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



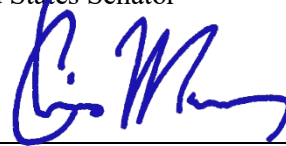
Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Kelly Loeffler
United States Senator

/S/

Rob Portman
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator