

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2202

December 19, 2012

The Honorable Rick Snyder
Governor
State of Michigan
George W. Romney Building
111 South Capitol Avenue
Lansing, MI 48909

Major General Gregory J. Vadrnais
The Adjutant General and Director
Michigan Department of Military & Veterans Affairs
3411 N. Martin Luther King Boulevard
Lansing, MI 48906-2934

Dear Governor Snyder and General Vadrnais:

The conference committee on the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 adopted its conference report on December 18th. I would like to share with you the decisions of the conference committee regarding force structure changes in the Air Force and their impact on the Michigan Air National Guard.

First, the Senate Committee on Armed Services rejected in May the original Air Force budget proposal for FY 2013 because of its disproportionate cuts to the Air National Guard. The Air Force submitted a new proposal on November 2, 2012. The conference committee approved the modified and more proportionate "Total Force" structure proposed by the Air Force with a major change. The conference committee required the Air Force to retain an additional 32 fixed-wing, intra-theater airlift aircraft (C-130 and/or C-27) intended to ensure sufficient aircraft to meet the Army's fixed-wing, direct support/time sensitive airlift mission requirements.

The conference report, in other words, retains the A-10 and KC-135 aircraft at Selfridge Air National Guard Base (ANGB) and adds an MQ-1/MQ-9 unmanned aerial vehicle "Remote Split Operations" unit at Battle Creek ANGB. Battle Creek ANGB would also be eligible to host a portion of the additional C-130 and/or C-27 aircraft authorized in the conference report. However, for that eligibility to translate into actual aircraft at Battle Creek ANGB, I urge you to join me in making the case to the leadership of the Air Force and National Guard Bureau that basing of C-130 and/or C-27 aircraft at Battle Creek ANGB would be very much in our national security interest because it would make full use of the great facilities and tremendous talent the base has to offer.

Second, the conference committee adopted a modified provision to establish a National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force. The Commission will be tasked with providing recommendations to Congress on an Air Force force structure that would, among other things, meet the current and anticipated requirements of combatant commanders while achieving an appropriate balance between the regular and reserve components of the Air Force, taking advantage of the unique strengths and capabilities of each. The Commission will be required to report to the Congress by February 1, 2014, in time to inform congressional action on the FY 2015 budget request.

I look forward to continuing to work with you on this and other issues that are important to the members of the Michigan National Guard and their families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Carl Levin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent dot above the "i".

Carl Levin