

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 28, 2012

The Honorable Leon E. Panetta
U.S. Department of Defense
1300 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1300

Dear Secretary Panetta,

We write in regard to the Department of Defense's Fiscal Year 2013 budget proposal to eliminate the C-130 Avionics Modernization Program (AMP). We are particularly interested in the effects of this proposal on both the aircraft itself and Little Rock Air Force Base (LRAFB), the nation's premier C-130 installation. We want to ensure that LRAFB continues to serve our national defense in its capacity as the home of the C-130 airlift mission.

The 189th Airlift Wing (AW), located at the LRAFB, provides aircrew training for students from each branch of the military that flies the C-130, including servicemembers from 23 foreign countries. This training sustains the successful airlift of cargo and personnel in support of national, state, and worldwide missions. The 189th AW operates the Air National Guard Enlisted Aircrew Academic School, the C-130 Tactical Airlift Instructor School and provides initial qualification and upgrade training for pilots, navigators, flight engineers and loadmasters.

As you know, the AMP was designed to provide the aging C-130 airframe with an upgraded common fleet while offering life cycle cost benefits. The President's Budget Proposal calls for the elimination of this program and promotes a less technically complex approach to maintaining the viability of the older C-130 fleet.

Specifically, we request written answers to the following questions relating to the effects of this proposal on both the C-130 fleet and the LRAFB community.

- 1) In terms of mission objective, what are the differences in capabilities with the pursuit of a different program over the current AMP upgrades?
- 2) What is the cost estimate for identifying, developing, and implementing the alternate program?
- 3) As far as identifying the cost savings, can you provide information on cost comparison when the Air Force has yet to specifically detail the actual replacement program?
- 4) What specific criteria was examined, both equipment and personnel, with respect to a cost analysis?

- 5) What is the cost to the Air Force of terminating the existing C-130 AMP contract with Boeing?
- 6) If the Air Force pursues an alternate C-130 upgrade program, what is the resulting number of C-130s that will have the AMP upgrade compared to the number of aircraft that will have the alternate C-130 upgrade?
- 7) The LRAFB presently has possession of four C-130 aircraft that have the AMP upgrade. What will happen to those aircraft?
- 8) Currently, LRAFB trains aircrew to operate the AMP legacy aircraft. How will this new upgrade affect this organization and training overall?
- 9) What is the impact on the personnel, both civilian and military, working with the current AMP program at LRAFB?

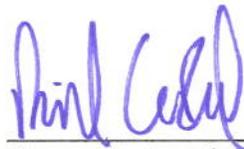
The C-130 Hercules is a proven workhorse that continuously demonstrates its viability for a variety of missions. There is no other aircraft that can assume the diversity of missions this plane undertakes. For this reason, we want to ensure that we provide our dedicated warfighters with the equipment necessary to accomplish their mission. We understand the importance of saving money where feasible, yet we also recognize the value of maintaining cutting edge technology even among our older aircraft models.

We appreciate your attention to our concerns and request a response no later than March 12, 2012. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can provide additional information. We look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,



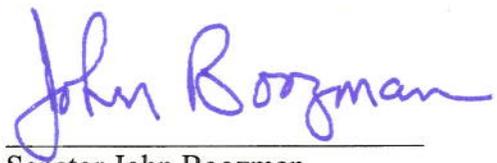
Senator Mark Pryor



Congressman Rick Crawford



Congressman Steve Womack



Senator John Boozman



Congressman Tim Griffin



Congressman Mike Ross