

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 5, 2013

General Mark A. Welsh III  
Chief of Staff of the Air Force  
1670 Air Force Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20330-1670

Dear General Welsh,

As you know, the Fiscal Year 2013 National Defense Authorization Act (P.L. 112-139) requires the Air Force to retain an additional 32 fixed-wing, intra-theater airlift aircraft beyond the number contained in the Air Force's total force structure proposal from last year. We write today to urge you to use the authority provided by the Congress to assign additional C-130s to the 139<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing located at Rosecrans Air National Guard Base in St. Joseph, Missouri.

The men and women of the 139<sup>th</sup> have a vital mission, providing our warfighters with critical airlift support, and their ability to carry out their mission is enhanced by the unique elements at Rosecrans. Training for pilots and crew members at Rosecrans is made more efficient by the location on site of both a drop zone and an assault zone. This enhances training and saves air crews time and fuel, resulting in a better value for U.S. taxpayers.

Rosecrans is also home to the Advanced Airlift Tactics Training Center (AATTC), which offers training for airlift air crews from the Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve, active duty Air Force, and allied nations in the latest combat flying tactics. The personnel of the 139<sup>th</sup> benefit from the lessons learned by the staff of the AATTC, and crew members of any additional aircraft assigned to the wing would gain valuable knowledge and skills through being co-located with the school.

The results of training are best realized in theater. By this metric, the 139<sup>th</sup> is near the top of the list. Upon returning in November from deployment to Southwest Asia, it was announced that the 139<sup>th</sup> had a mission completion percentage rate that ranged from the mid to upper 90s. This is a record that every airlift wing in the Air Force should strive to replicate and with which every air crew should be eager to associate.

We know you take seriously your obligation to oversee an Air Force that is ready and capable to carry out missions in support of the national security interests of the United States, while always keeping in mind the need to be a good steward of taxpayer dollars. The 139<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing is a unique unit that satisfies both of those critical requirements. As you make a final decision on aircraft placements, we trust you will give the 139<sup>th</sup> the strong consideration it has earned.

Sincerely,



Claire McCaskill  
United States Senator



Roy Blunt  
United States Senator