

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 30, 2013

The National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force
Suite 200, James Polk Building
2521 South Clark Street
Arlington, Virginia 22202

Dear Commissioners,

Thank you for visiting Ohio as part of your examination and assessment of Air Force structure. Your Commission's charge is vital to ensuring we have the right Air Force to meet the needs of the country today and into the future.

As the Commission evaluates the mission, structure and resources of the Air Force it is important to gain perspective by visiting the Wings, Program Offices, Research Laboratories, and listening to the communities that play a vital role in fulfilling the Air Force mission. Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Springfield Air National Guard Base, Mansfield Air National Guard Base, and Rickenbacker Air National Guard Base provide an excellent example of the contributions made to the Air Force mission throughout Ohio's installations. I am grateful you have the chance to see these units and receive direct input.

Ohio's Air Force installations leverage world-class capabilities and resources and Ohio's favorable geographic location contributes significantly to an array of national security and civil support missions. The men and women of the Department of the Air Force in Ohio exemplify the core values of the Air Force and have a proven track record of increasing readiness and providing valuable capabilities, while prioritizing efficiency and cost effectiveness.

Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio serves as the Headquarters of Air Force Material Command, a tremendous national asset that has proven to be effective at finding efficiencies through streamlining overhead and best aligning resources. The Command has a long history of supporting Airmen's needs and looking out for the taxpayer through acquisition reform, consolidation, and reorganization. The base is also home to other important missions including the National Air and Space Intelligence Center and the Air Force Institute of Technology, which ensure our quantitative edge against potential adversaries through well-informed and well-educated Air Force leaders.

Wright-Patterson is also home to one of Ohio's Air Force Reserve Wings, the 445th Airlift Wing. The unit's long history of providing much-needed strategic airlift is a testament to the dedication of their Airmen. In addition to the 445th, we are also proud to be home to the 910th Airlift Wing stationed at Youngstown Air Reserve Station, which boasts the Defense Department's only full-time, fixed-wing aerial spray unit, which utilizes Ohio's strategic location to conduct aerial mosquito spraying throughout the Midwest and South when not fulfilling other domestic and overseas airlift missions.

I am also pleased that you've taken the opportunity to visit Ohio's Air National Guard. The mission-focus, readiness, and cost effectiveness of the Ohio Air National Guard serves as a model for

the country. With consistent recruiting and retention levels well exceeding goals, Ohio continues to be an invaluable source of Guardsmen and civilians dedicated to service.

Air Force mobility needs both domestically and forward deployed are served by the 121st Air Refueling Wing at Rickenbacker Air National Guard Base and the 179th Airlift Wing at Mansfield Lahm Air National Guard Base. Within the United States, the 121st is strategically located to provide responsive support to the significant demand for domestic aerial refueling and the 179th has invaluable supported domestic response missions throughout the country. While supporting these missions through their unique capabilities, both units conduct important roles overseas in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and other deployed operations.

These units are joined by the 180th Fighter Wing in Toledo and the 178th Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Wing in Springfield. The 180th conducts much-needed Aerospace Control missions providing secure airspace for Presidential flight, Maritime Air Patrols and a variety of other important homeland security missions while the 178th provides critical real-time ISR support to the forward-deployed warfighter. These Ohio-based units are valuable national assets that remain fully capable of fulfilling current and future mission requirements. In addition to their mission accomplishments, the National Guard structure permits the Air Force to leverage the invaluable experience of these Ohio Airmen in a cost efficient manner.

I hope your visit helps you gain a better understanding of the many contributions Ohio's Active Duty Airmen, Guardsmen, Reservists, civilians, and families make to the Total Force. The educated and devoted workforce, established basing structure, reasonable cost of living, and strategic geographic location make Ohio a prime location to support Air Force needs. From the Wright brothers, to astronauts like John Glenn and Neil Armstrong, to the cutting-edge aerospace work being performed throughout the state, Ohio continues to be an incubator of inventors and pioneers. I hope your visit allows you to witness firsthand this proud tradition of aviation and aerospace excellence and the promise it holds for the future.

Thank you for your service to our nation and for consideration of the unique Ohio resources and capabilities in the Commission's recommendations. I wish you the best as you work to position our Air Force for meeting the demands of the future.

Sincerely,



U.S. Senator