October 23, 2020

Chairman James Inhofe
Senate Committee on Armed Services
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Chairman Adam Smith
House Committee on Armed Services
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Jack Reed
Senate Committee on Armed Services
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Ranking Member Mac Thornberry
House Committee on Armed Services
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairs and Ranking Members of the House and Senate Armed Services Committees:

We are writing you to express our serious concerns about the United States Air Force’s (USAF) proposed reduction in the Air National Guard’s C-130 Total Aircraft Inventory (TAI). We understand that USAF seeks to cut five flying squadrons as part of an effort to reduce the C-130 TAI to approximately 255 aircraft over the next five years.

Governors have articulated numerous times over the years the detrimental impact of reducing our airlift capacity. This reduction would make it difficult - if not impossible - for the Air National Guard to support routine training missions, as well as domestic operations to respond to emergencies and disasters. Furthermore, the C-130 fleet is instrumental in sustaining the training and operations readiness of Army Airborne units in the active Army.

As the Congress contemplates TAI in the FY21 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), the House of Representatives proposes a C-130 TAI of 292. We are supportive of this number, as we believe it would allow the Air National Guard across the country to continue to support the National Defense Strategy (NDS), as well as domestic missions in response to hurricanes, floods, wildfires, and other emergencies. In fact, the 2018 Mobility Capabilities and Requirements Study (MCRS), which was directed by the FY2018 NDAA, indicates 300 as the number of C-130s required to meet combatant commander mobility requirements to support the NDS wartime
missions through 2023, let alone domestic operations that are critical to the safety and security of the nation.

Reducing the C-130 TAI to 255 puts at risk our ability as governors to adequately and appropriately respond to domestic operational needs across the country. We urge you to support the House’s position of 292 C-130 TAI to ensure that the Air National Guard can continue to maintain its readiness and capabilities to meet the needs of our states and our nation.

Sincerely,

Tim Walz
Governor
State of Minnesota

J.B. Pritzker
Governor
State of Illinois

Gavin Newsom
Governor
State of California

Mike Parson
Governor
State of Missouri

Ned Lamont
Governor
State of Connecticut

Steve Bullock
Governor
State of Montana

John Carney
Governor
State of Delaware

Steve Sisolak
Governor
State of Nevada

Brian Kemp
Governor
State of Georgia

Mike DeWine
Governor
State of Ohio
Gina Raimondo
Governor
State of Rhode Island

Greg Abbott
Governor
State of Texas

Jim Justice
Governor
State of West Virginia

Mark Gordon
Governor
State of Wyoming