



Dave Heineman
Governor of Nebraska
Chair

Jack Markell
Governor of Delaware
Vice Chair

Dan Crippen
Executive Director

February 26, 2012

The Honorable Leon Panetta
Secretary
U.S. Department of Defense
The Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Secretary Panetta:

We, the nation's governors, strongly oppose the disproportionate cuts facing the Air National Guard as part of the U.S. Air Force's fiscal 2013 budget request.

Over the past decade our National Guard has evolved into a cost-effective operational force that is critical to our national security and our ability to respond to domestic emergencies. The Air Guard provides 35 percent of the U.S. Air Force's capability for six percent of the budget. It performs a variety of domestic missions, including transporting vital personnel, equipment and supplies during emergencies and assisting in daily drug interdiction operations.

As Commanders-in-Chief, we appreciate the need to reorganize, restructure and modernize the military to meet new threats and economic realities. We also understand the need for cost-effective means to achieve these goals. Given these realities, we must oppose the proposal that the Air National Guard absorb 59 percent of the total aircraft budget reductions and approximately six times the per capita personnel reductions.

Governors are extremely proud of the role that the National Guard plays in protecting this nation and its citizens. The National Guard is a highly experienced and capable force and an essential state partner in responding to domestic disasters and emergencies. We respectfully request that the Department of Defense reconsider any proposed Air Guard force or equipment reductions and that you work with governors to fashion solutions that best serve the interests of this nation.

Sincerely,





Edmund Brown of Fair Haven, N.H.

Samuel Herbert of New Canaan

John

Robert Bentley

Mary Fallon

Robert Hall

John H. H. Coe

Sam S. S. S.

Paul R. H. H.

C. I. Cliffe

John Malley Mark Dayton

Blignard Jack Daly

William John

Carl Ray Tomlin

James H. Brown Chris Greig

W. E. Daniels, Jr. Tony Brant

Phadon

Tom Platt

Danni Daynard

John Dally

Pat Quinn

John Dally

Neil Abernethy

Ben Paken

John Day

Adri

John Bush

Stewart

Rock Snyder

Devatbathly

Clay Hunt

Nathan Deal

W. P.

Ben Schmitt

John Kuykendall

Brian Harlan

Phil Bryant

John H. H. H.

Sean Farrell