



1 April 2026

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chairwoman
Committee on
Appropriations United
States Senate Washington
D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty
Murray Vice Chairwoman
Committee on
Appropriations United
States Senate Washington
D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch
McConnell Chairman
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on
Appropriations United
States Senate Washington
D.C. 20510

The Honorable Christopher
Coons Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on
Appropriations United
States Senate Washington
D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tom
Cole Chairman
Committee on
Appropriations US House
of Representatives
Washington D.C. 20510

The Honorable Rosa
DeLauro Ranking Member
Committee on
Appropriations US House
of Representatives
Washington D.C. 20510

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Chairman
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
US House of Representatives
Washington D.C. 20510

The Honorable Betty
McCollum Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on
Appropriations US House of
Representatives Washington
D.C. 20510

Dear Chairs and Ranking Members:

We write to express our unified and urgent concern regarding the United States Air Force's current and future ability to meet the requirements of the 2026 National Defense Strategy (NDS). The United States Air Force is the OLDEST, the SMALLEST, and the LEAST READY in its 78-year history. We must build a fighting force that WILL WIN. "*Peace through Strength- not confrontation*" requires a TOTAL FORCE that is fully recapitalized into a diverse and advanced force structure, at a level of capacity that prevails through the attrition imposed in peer conflict, and that presents reliable and ready forces to the Global Force Management Allocation Plan (GFMAP).

The 2026 NDS requires a total Air Force indistinguishable between components in lethality and survivability. The Air Force topline must be raised to resource a recapitalized force that WILL WIN. Aligned with the NDS, we must "*Supercharge the Defense Industrial Base*" to maximum procurement capabilities through multiyear contracts sustained across the 2nd and 3rd FYDPs.

With respect to the USAF Fighter Fleet, we must fully recapitalize all remaining legacy fighters to create an all-component future fighter force of F-47, F-35A, F-22, and F-15EX, optimized for human/autonomous teaming with additive Combat Collaborative Aircraft (CCA). The Air Force must partner with America's Defense Industrial Base to procure a **minimum of 72 new fighters/year** to begin to affect the average age of the existing fighter fleet. New fighter procurement exceeding 100 fighters/year is necessary to recapitalize all legacy fighters at the 'speed of relevance' to effectively build a force that WILL PREVAIL if deterrence fails.

We respectfully request your support for legislating an appropriation that sets the foundation for multiyear procurement of F-35A and F-15EX negotiated to produce the maximum number of new fighters possible each year with the expectation for increased production year after year incentivized by contract. *Annual minimum baseline procurement should be 48 F-35A and 24 F-15EX per year, accounting for fully burdened expenses including required mission support equipment and sustainment, increasing as possible year to year.* The desired end state must be to recapitalize all legacy fighters concurrently (similar rate across components) at a maximum rate (72 F-35A and 36 F-15EX) that exceeds 100 new fighters/year. New fighter procurement that exceeds 100 aircraft/year will effectively, efficiently and responsibly recapitalize the USAF fighter fleet out of legacy fighters over the 2nd and 3rd FYDPs. Current world events have once again demonstrated the irreplaceable and outsized value proposition that the USAF brings to the Joint Force, as evidenced by Operation EPIC FURY. Reliably responsive and decisive airpower requires a force structure capacity that ensures balanced "ready" and "reset" force generation cycles. The Air Force must preserve its present capacity as it charts the path to full recapitalization of its fighter force. We must "*Invest to Invest*" – procure new fighters to enable the divestment of legacy fighters while minimizing the lapse in available combat capability of these fighter squadrons. Winning looks like – 90 total force fighter squadrons comprised of 57 combat-coded fighters squadrons fully recapitalized into a diverse and advanced capabilities fighter force to include full commitment to the F-47.

As the Air Force completes the recapitalization of all A-10s and F-15Cs, it must also recapitalize all F-16 pre- and post-blocks (B30-B52). 33 F-16 fighter squadrons, 22 of which are combat-coded, must be recapitalized into advanced fighters. The ANG comprises 13 of the 33 F-16 squadrons (39%), and 10 of the 22 combat-coded squadrons (45%).

The August 2025 Department of the Air Force (U) Long-Term USAF Fighter Force Structure Report to Congress clearly states that the 24 remaining Air National Guard Fighter Squadrons are required to achieve the stated objective force of 1369 combat-coded total aircraft inventory (CC-TAI) to meet acceptable military risk.

The Air Force must equally prioritize the remaining 13 ANG Fighter Squadrons for recapitalization into advanced fighters. Cascading legacy fighters from the active component to the reserve component is NOT recapitalization.

Concurrent recapitalization across components enables the USAF to optimize its ability to meet the unrelenting demand signal for diversified fighter capabilities from combatant commanders across the globe.

The Air Force must report to congress with a specific plan that accounts for the remaining 13 ANG fighter squadrons to be recapitalized into advanced fighters.

**AIR NATIONAL GUARD FIGHTER FORCE (AT A GLANCE)
24 Fighter Squadrons from 21 States and the District of Columbia**

**AL, AZ², CA, CO, DC, FL, HI, ID, IN, LA, MA, MI, MN, NJ, OH, OK, OR², SC, SD, TX,
VT, WI**

13 of 24 Fighter Squadrons programmed for F-16 post-blocks indefinitely

4x F-16B30 units programmed for post-blocks without a Record of Decision (AZ, CO, NJ, TX)

1x F-16B30 unit with a Record of Decision for F-16B40 (DC)

1x A-10C unit pending a Record of Decision for F-16B40 (ID)

7x F-16 post-block units to remain indefinitely (AZ, IN, MN, OH, OK, SC, SD)

11 of 24 Fighter Squadrons in/programmed for advanced fighters

1x F-22 (HI)

6x F-35A (AL, FL, MA, OR, VT, WI)

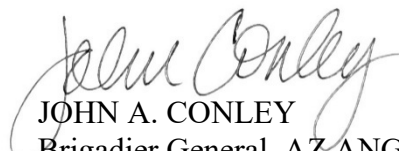
4x F-15EX (CA, LA, OR, MI)

On behalf of the **22 Adjutants General, representing 25 ANG (24) and AFRC (1) fighter squadrons** – and with the support of organizations representing all 54 states, territories, and the District of Columbia, we urge you to support appropriation legislation that sets the foundation for multi-year procurement of F-35A and F-15EX incentivized to meet a minimum of 72-100 new fighters/year.

Sincerely, The Adjutants General:



DAVID K. PRITCHETT
Major General, ALNG
The Adjutant General



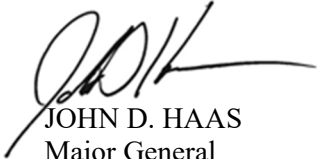
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ROBERT B. DAVIS
Major General, COARNG
The Adjutant General



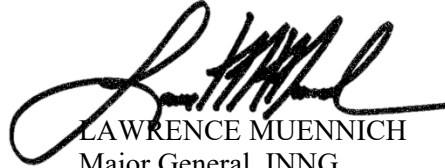
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Florida National Guard
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STEPHEN F. LOGAN
Major General, HING
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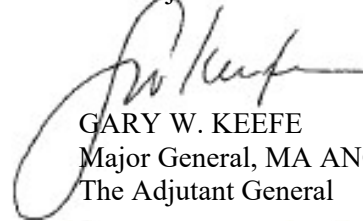
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Major General, MA ANG
The Adjutant General



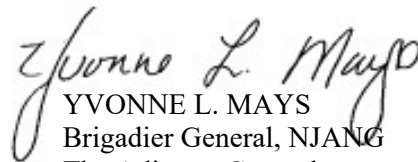
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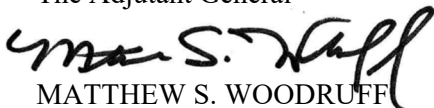
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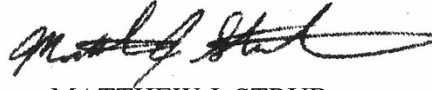
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