

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 01, 2013

The Honorable Sylvia Mathews Burwell
Director, Office of Management and Budget
Eisenhower Executive Office Building
1650 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 205-3

Dear Director Burwell:

We are writing to you to express our opposition to the possible retirement of the Air Force's KC-10 aircraft fleet in the budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2015. We have previously corresponded with Secretary of Defense Hagel on this issue and would ask you to consider the value the KC-10 provides to the Air Force mission and the risks incurred by discontinuing the fleet as you deliberate on programs for inclusion in the FY 2015 budget request.

Air Force Chief of Staff General Mark Welsh has commented both to the press and in testimony before the House Armed Services Committee on the Air Force's consideration of divesting its entire KC-10 fleet to meet the spending targets imposed by sequestration. While we understand that some cuts may be necessary, eliminating the KC-10 fleet carries an unacceptable level of risk. If the KC-10 were retired, the Air Force would be left with only the much older KC-135 to perform all aerial refueling – leaving this important mission to a single aircraft with an average age of over 50 years. This move would jeopardize our nation's refueling capability and threaten our ability to conduct operations around the globe.

Retiring the KC-10 fleet is contrary to the Air Force's own long-term planning. The KC-10 modernization program, which is currently underway, recognizes a service life of at least 2045. Concurrently, the Air Force's air refueling recapitalization plan would replace the entire KC-135 fleet over the next several decades before retiring and replacing the KC-10 fleet in the 2050-2060 timeframe. The KC-10 has much left to contribute over the next half century, and retiring the fleet would waste a tremendous amount of valuable air refueling capability and investment made by American taxpayers.

We appreciate your attention to this issue and look forward to working with you on a budget that promotes our nation's fiscal well-being and preserves our national defense.

Sincerely,



JOHN GARAMENDI
Member of Congress



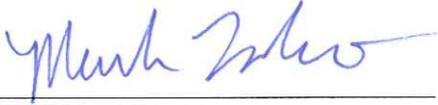
JON RUNYAN
Member of Congress



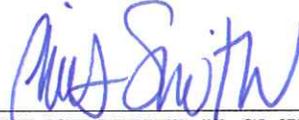
MIKE THOMPSON
Member of Congress



ROBERT E. ANDREWS
Member of Congress



MARK TAKANO
Member of Congress



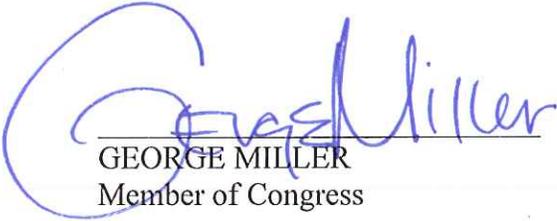
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