

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

December 8, 2011

The Honorable Carl Levin
Chairman
Senate Armed Services Committee
SR-228, Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Howard "Buck" McKeon
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee
2120 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John McCain
Ranking Member
Senate Armed Services Committee
SR-228, Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
House Armed Services Committee
2120 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Levin and McKeon and Ranking Members McCain and Smith:

As you work to finalize the conference report on the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012, we write to urge you to maintain the MC-12 Liberty aircraft in the Air Force as "strongly recommended" by both the Air Force and the Army.

As you know, the MC-12 was developed in 2008-2009 to enhance our nation's intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities in Iraq and Afghanistan. Over thirty MC-12 aircraft are currently providing sustained ISR capability, supplementing the critical video and signals information obtained by Predators and other platforms. The Air Force has dedicated over five hundred trained personnel who are manning the aircraft at Beale Air Force Base in Northern California and in theater.

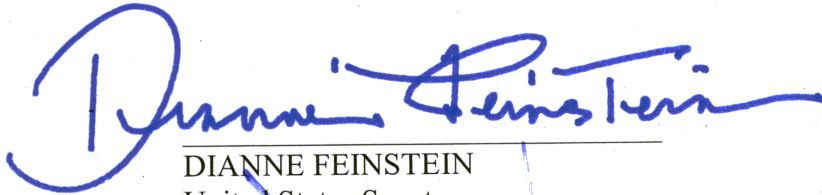
We are deeply concerned that the Senate-passed defense authorization legislation seeks to transfer the MC-12 from the Air Force to the Army despite the fact that the Secretary of Defense and the Secretaries of the Air Force and Army oppose the transfer. In the joint Air Force-Army letter enclosed, both Secretaries "strongly recommend continued operation of the MC-12W within the Air Force." The letter goes on to differentiate between the missions of the MC-12 and the Army's RC-12 Guardrail aircraft, and warns that "replacement would significantly decrease warfighter support due to the extensive internal aircraft modifications required to accommodate these different mission sets..." In addition, their letter indicates that the Air Force is presently maximizing their personnel and that mission transfer to the Army could result in less efficient use of intelligence analyst manpower.

Most important, the Air Force and Army leadership indicated that they are "convinced that any transfer of ISR assets such as the MC-12W...would be disruptive to ongoing military operations." We believe it would be unwise to ignore the united concern and recommendation of the Air Force and Army as our armed forces continue their mission in Afghanistan.

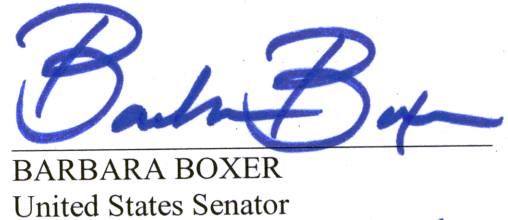
Accordingly, we see no reason why the Air Force cannot continue to meet the intelligence needs of their sister services with the Liberty aircraft and request that the conference report on the FY 2012 National Defense Authorization Act maintain the MC-12 mission within the Air Force.

Thank you for your consideration of our request and your continued work on behalf of the men and women of our armed forces.

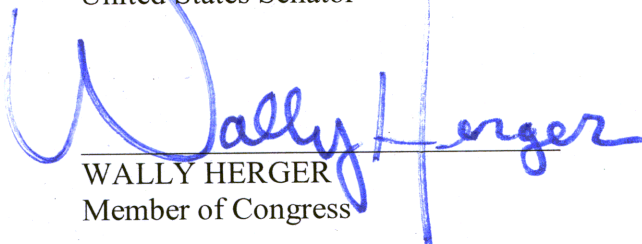
Sincerely,



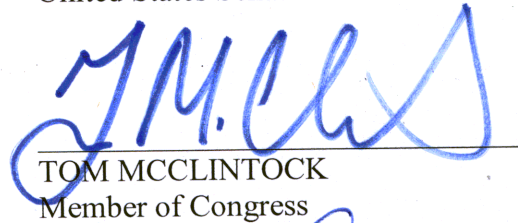
DIANNE FEINSTEIN
United States Senator



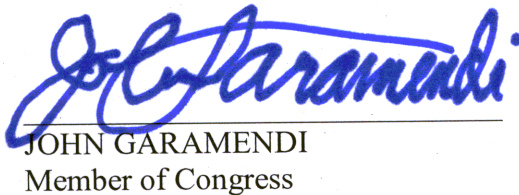
BARBARA BOXER
United States Senator



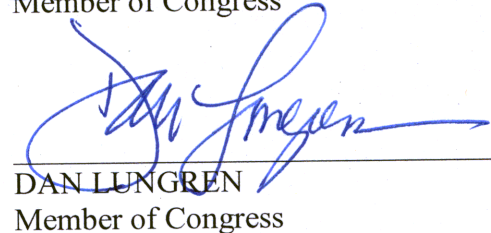
WALLY HERGER
Member of Congress



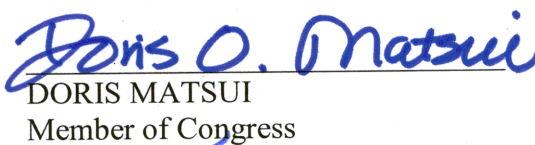
TOM MCCLINTOCK
Member of Congress



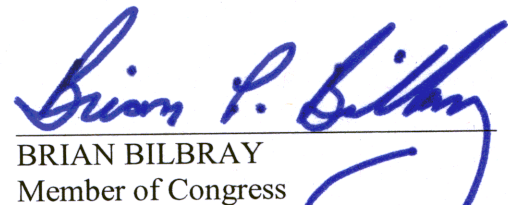
JOHN GARAMENDI
Member of Congress



DAN LUNGREN
Member of Congress



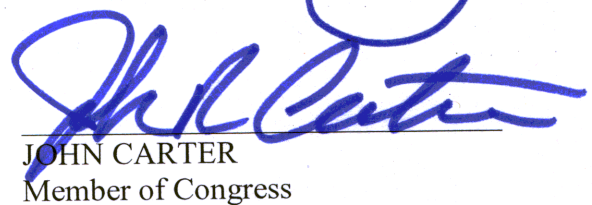
DORIS MATSUI
Member of Congress



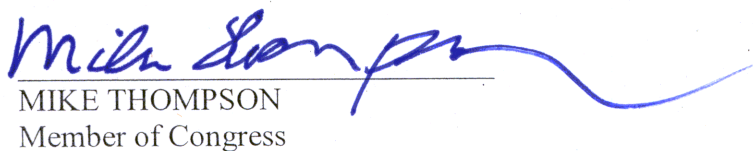
BRIAN BILBRAY
Member of Congress



KEN CALVERT
Member of Congress



JOHN CARTER
Member of Congress



MIKE THOMPSON
Member of Congress