

December 22, 2011

The Honorable Leon Panetta  
Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Secretary Panetta,

We appreciate the challenging fiscal choices faced by the Department of Defense, especially in implementing the Budget Control Act and other budget policy directives. However, we are concerned about an Air Force decision, awaiting further review, to eliminate the C-27J program. We believe that elimination of the C-27J program would adversely impact key homeland security capabilities as well as our ability to maintain and create jobs.

More C-27J aircraft translates to faster response to homeland security situations and natural disasters at a far more economical price than our larger airlifters, providing the taxpayers with higher cost efficiencies. As the nation's first military responder and one of our country's most cost-effective resources, the National Guard fills critical roles in defense of the homeland, disaster response, and disaster recovery operations. During natural disasters or a terrorist incident, the C-27J is instrumental in helping the National Guard deliver personnel and emergency supplies to areas that would otherwise be inaccessible in an efficient and cost effective manner. These are a few of the many examples that make the C-27J an essential asset.

We ask that you protect this critical program. Thank you for your consideration of this important national security issue.

Sincerely,



Governor Martin O'Malley  
Maryland



Governor Dannel P. Malloy  
Connecticut



Governor Rick Snyder  
Michigan



Governor Haley Barbour  
Mississippi



Governor Jack Dalrymple  
North Dakota