

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 16, 2011

The Honorable Michael Donley  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Air Force  
1670 Air Force Pentagon  
Room 4E878  
Washington, DC 20330-1670

General Norton Schwartz  
Chief of Staff  
U.S. Department of the Air Force  
1670 Air Force Pentagon  
Room 4E924  
Washington, DC 20330-1670

Dear Secretary Donley and General Schwartz:

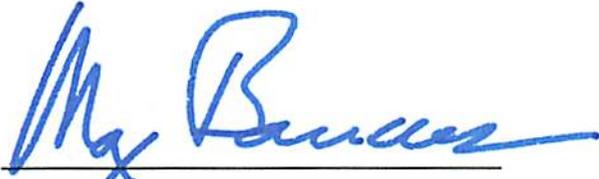
We write in regard to the future of the Montana Air National Guard at Great Falls. As you know, we strongly opposed the decision to move the F-15s from the 120th Fighter Wing of the Montana Air National Guard in Great Falls to Fresno, California. We remain concerned that during a time when our nation has a limited number of fighters to conduct the Air Sovereignty Alert mission, the Air Force is transferring aircraft from a combat-ready unit in Great Falls and creating a conversion which could last between two and four years. Further, despite this difficult budget climate, the Air Force has spent nearly \$75 million on the recent F-15 conversion and plans to spend an estimated \$45 million in infrastructure and training cost to change the mission of the 120th Fighter Wing.

However, the Montana Air National Guard welcomes the C-27J cargo aircraft as a strong flying mission and we are actively looking for other missions to allow the Airmen of the Montana Air National Guard to continue their proud defense of our great nation.

We understand the National Guard Bureau has offered the Montana Air National Guard a Target Production Group mission and may be considering a Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) Squadron as a companion to the C-27J mission. Our understanding is that the Target Production Group mission would complement the RPA mission and allow Montana Guardsmen to further contribute to today's fight. We are proud of the men and women who serve in the Montana Air National Guard and we are confident that if given this opportunity they will perform this new mission at the highest level of precision and excellence. Our understanding is that the C-27J mission and the Target Production Group mission will meet the manpower requirements of the Air Guard and result in few, if any, job losses as a result of the conversion from the F-15 mission. We appreciate your efforts to reduce, and potentially eliminate, the job losses that we originally feared as a result of the loss of the F-15s.

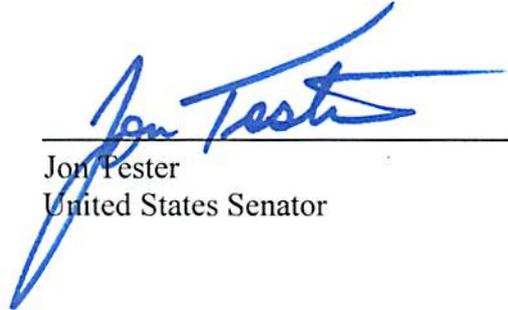
Thank you for your dedication and service to our country. We thank you for your hard work to solve these issues for the Montana Air National Guard, the Air Force, and the United States of America.

Sincerely,



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Max Baucus  
United States Senator



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Jon Tester  
United States Senator