



May 26, 2009

The Honorable Michael Donley
Secretary of the Air Force
Washington, DC 20310-1670

Dear Secretary Donley:

The Air National Guard has today the capability to support an expanded number and type of Air Force mission requirements as well as support to civil authorities. To seize this opportunity, the authorized end-strength of the Air National Guard should be increased over the coming years.

For Fiscal Year 2009 the Air National Guard's congressionally authorized end strength is 106,756 airmen. This includes 92,396 traditional members; 14,360 full-time Active Guard Reserve (AGR) members; and 22,657 traditional members who provide full-time support as military technicians. This level of manning is not even adequate to meet current mission set which the Air Force has assigned to the Air National Guard. At present, just to meet the requirements of the missions already assigned by the Air Force to the Air National Guard, the Guard needs more than 2,200 additional spaces above the current authorization. The effect of this shortage is being felt on Air National Guard personnel who must operate at a higher tempo. This pressures our airmen, their families and their employers.

But beyond the benefit of alleviating the stress on the force, an further expanded end strength for the Air National Guard would present a golden opportunity for the Nation to make even greater use of a highly efficient and cost-effective means of national defense.

Today, the US Air Force (USAF) manpower requirements exceed authorized USAF end strength. The USAF is looking to its reserve components to add missions which are appropriate to reserve service so that the active component can focus on those other missions requiring higher full-time manning.

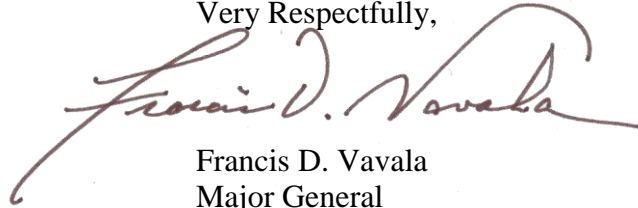
The Secretary of Defense has articulated the imperative for the Nation's military establishment to provide operational capabilities and strategic depth to meet U.S. defense requirements. As tough economic conditions demand that national resources be used in an increasingly efficient manner, the cost-effectiveness of the Air National Guard presents America with a fiscally sound way to enhance Air Force mission capabilities. With additional end strength, the Air Guard can assist the USAF as they respond to the needs of the Combatant Commanders in all mission areas including manned and unmanned Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR), cyber warfare, irregular warfare and building global partner capacities through state partnership programs and training.

Moreover, increased authorized end strength for the Air National Guard will improve the security of our states. For example, the homeland defense/civil support mission can be significantly enhanced by increased Air National Guard participation at the Joint Force Headquarters in each state and territory, by forming cyber security units in every state and territory, and by fully manning medical response teams and Chemical Biological Radiological

Nuclear and Explosive (CBRNE) Enhanced Response Force Packages poised to help communities in the event of a weapon of mass destruction incident.

For these reasons, the Adjutants General feel that the Congressionally authorized end strength of the Air National Guard should be increased by 10,000 additional spaces over the next five years.

Very Respectfully,



Francis D. Vavala
Major General
President

cc: Chief, National Guard Bureau