

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 1, 2026

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Chairman
Senate Committee on Armed Services
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Armed Services
728 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Rogers
Chairman
House Committee on Armed Services
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
House Committee on Armed Services
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Reed, Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Smith:

As you prepare to conference the Fiscal Year 2027 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), we respectfully urge you to expand existing language in Section 131 of the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) NDAA and include the updated language in the conferenced version of the bill. The addition we seek would place a temporary halt on closing or deactivating any Air Force Central Repair Facility (CRF) until September 30, 2028, unless the Air Force assigns a deployable replacement mission, and require the Secretary of the Air Force to submit a report within 90 days detailing fighter engine repair demands, an assessment of evolving repair needs, readiness impacts of deactivation and a comprehensive sustainment plan for the fighter fleet—including an inventory of all airframe and component repair facilities and the technician workforce needed to maintain required technical skillsets.

We believe this addition would complement the intent of the provision, as we are concerned a hasty deactivation of the CRF mission could risk adequate sustainment of our fighter fleet, especially if Congress mandates an updated inventory of fighters, as required in the current iteration of Section 131. Centralized repair capacity provides critical maintenance depth by concentrating the specialized equipment, technical expertise and trained personnel that are necessary to return engines and components to service. This capacity is especially important as the Air Force sustains forward fighter forces in Europe and the Indo-Pacific, supports ongoing operations in the Middle East and transitions to platforms such as the F-15EX and F-35A. Preserving sufficient repair capacity and a skilled maintenance workforce is therefore essential to sustaining geographically dispersed operations without degrading readiness elsewhere.

We are also specifically concerned about the troubling decision to deactivate, without a suitable replacement mission, the CRF mission at the 183rd Wing in Springfield, Illinois. Since 2012, the 183rd Wing has capably provided fighter jet engine maintenance for U.S. Armed Forces aircraft, including the U-2, F-16, A-10 and F-15EX. The 183rd's CRF remains the only mission of its

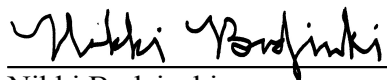
kind within the Joint Force and is the single dedicated repair facility for the F-15EX aircraft fleet. A deferred deactivation would mitigate the impact on the lives of our Illinois servicemembers and their families and make sure the Air Force has a plan for how to maintain the repair capability of our fighter fleet before sunseting this critical capability.

We appreciate your consideration of this language intended to safeguard critical maintenance capability and capacity organic to our Air Force and ensure adequate sustainment of the fighter fleet.

Sincerely,



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Nikki Budzinski
Member of Congress



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator