

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1317

February 13th, 2019

Secretary Heather Wilson
U.S. Air Force
1690 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330

Secretary Wilson,

As a new member of the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, I am excited for the opportunity to work more closely with you and the Air Force to best prepare to meet national security threats and to support key assets and supply lines in Illinois' 17th Congressional District that help achieve that goal.

Illinois' 17th Congressional District is home to the 182nd Airlift Wing of the Air National Guard. The 182nd has an established track record of excellence – even among their high performing peers – consistently achieving the highest Mission Capable Rates in the Air National Guard. In addition, it is home to a respected and decorated Air Support Operations group. It is my belief that with appropriate support, the 182nd has the capacity to provide even more value to the Air Force, the Air National Guard and our country. I hope that we can work together to support the effort to continue upgrading the C-130H aeronautics systems and ultimately transition the 182nd to the C-130J.

In addition, I believe the 182nd's proven track record of excellence, their capabilities on site and ability to recruit trained medical personnel from the robust hospital and medical network in Peoria and the surrounding region make it a great potential home for the Air Force's new Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron within the Reserve Force. I encourage you to strongly consider the 182nd as you make your final determination as to where to locate this new Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron.

The 17th Congressional District is also home to a robust number of defense suppliers that build the parts and equipment that help our military men and women both achieve their mission and remain safe. Rockford in particular is home to key aerospace research, development and manufacturing that has long been a key partner in developing Air Force technology and capabilities. I also want to draw your attention to the Rock Island Arsenal and its Joint Manufacturing and Technology Center (JMTC). JMTC is a key part of the Army's organic industrial base and its artisans would be an asset to any Air Force program. It will be important moving forward that we maintain an appropriate workload to ensure that the armed services are receiving the materials they need and that we are maintaining these key assets in the industrial base.

Finally, while not the District I represent, Scott Air Force base is an important installation in the state of Illinois. Scott Air Force Base is the headquarters of Air Mobility Command (AMC), and is also the headquarters of the U.S. Transportation Command. The base employs more than 12,000 people, including 5,500 active-duty Air Force, and an additional 2,400 Air National Guard and Reserve personnel. It is my intent to work with you to ensure this installation receives the support necessary to achieve its mission.

Thank you again for meeting with me today to discuss these important priorities in Illinois' 17th Congressional District. I look forward to working with you in my new role as a member of the House Appropriations Committee to meet the needs of the United States Air Force and the people I serve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cheri Bustos". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cheri Bustos
Member of Congress