May 6, 2024

The Honorable Jack Reed
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

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

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

Dear Chairs and Ranking Members of the House and Senate Armed Services Committees,

We write regarding a deeply flawed legislative proposal put forward by the U.S. Air Force that would undermine our National Guard system. Legislative Proposal 480 (LP 480) overrides the longstanding tradition that requires the Department of Defense to acquire governor approval before transferring any National Guard units to another branch of the military.

The recently released proposal by the Air Force seeks to transfer members of the National Guard who perform space missions and designate them as "part-timers" under a full-time Space Force without regard to governor authority. In doing so, the Air Force intends to disregard portions of Section 104 of Title 32, which states that no change in the branch, organization, or allotment of a unit can be made without the approval of its Governor, and Section 18238 of Title 10, which places limitations on the relocation of Army and Air National Guard units without the consent of the Governor. Advancing LP 480 would negate that policy and require statutory changes, presumably through the Fiscal Year 2025 National Defense Authorization Act.

Congress established the National Guard as a "ready" reserve force serving in all 50 states and U.S. territories. Today's Guardsmen and women hold civilian jobs while maintaining their military readiness to respond to domestic emergencies like health emergencies, civil unrest, or national disasters in the state they're serving. They also maintain their operational reserve status for national security missions. This dual mission is essential to the founding purpose of the National Guard.

To be clear: when individuals sign up for the National Guard, they are serving their country and their community. Congress shouldn't abandon this model.

The original intent of the National Guard was to have a force ready to respond to the needs of their state and country. Because of this, authority was placed in the hands of each state's individual governor. This is more than a matter of governance; governors bear the responsibility to protect the safety of their citizens by maintaining the readiness and deployability of their National Guard units. Governors have a responsibility to those Guardsmen and women who voluntarily join the National Guard branch and state of their choosing. LP 480 undermines the choice made by these men and women.

Congress has a duty to maintain the integrity and longstanding tradition of the National Guard, and a proposal of this magnitude threatens to undo over 120 years of precedent. We recognize the Air Force is

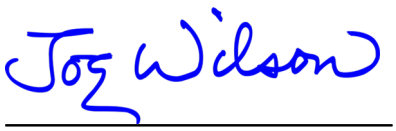
evolving to address future threats, but there are other options available to the Air Force to accomplish this evolution that don't undo an important foundation of our state National Guard system established by Congress.

We urge the House and Senate Armed Services Committees to reject the inclusion of Legislative Proposal 480 in the FY2025 NDAA.

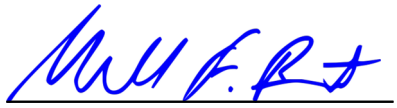
Sincerely,



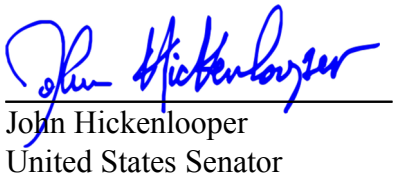
Jason Crow
Member of Congress



Joe Wilson
Member of Congress



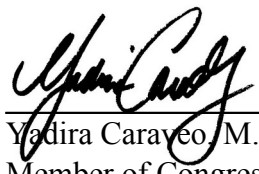
Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



John Hickenlooper
United States Senator



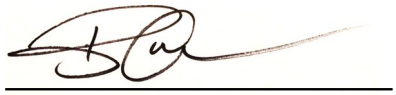
Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator



Yadira Caraveo, M.D.
Member of Congress



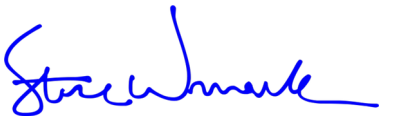
Brittany Pettersen
Member of Congress



Burgess Owens
Member of Congress



Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress



Steve Womack
Member of Congress



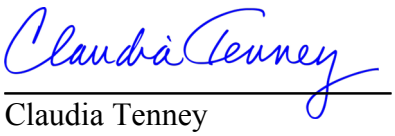
Celeste Maloy
Member of Congress



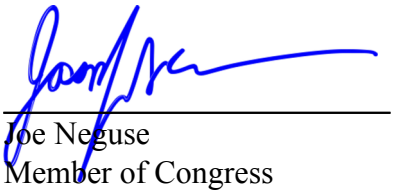
Cynthia M. Lummis
United States Senator



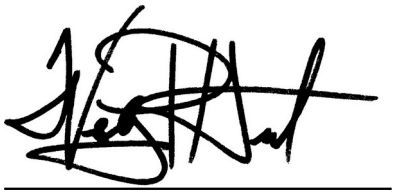
Dean Phillips
Member of Congress



Claudia Tenney
Member of Congress



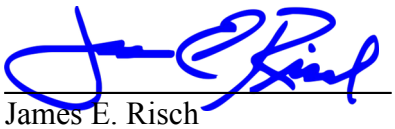
Joe Neguse
Member of Congress



Wesley Hunt
Member of Congress



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



James E. Risch
United States Senator

Mary Sattler Peltola
Member of Congress

Mike Crapo
United States Senator

Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator

Diana DeGette
Member of Congress

John James
Member of Congress

Barry Moore
Member of Congress

Darin LaHood
Member of Congress

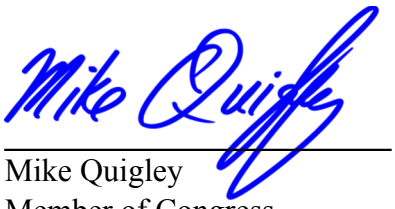
Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator

Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator



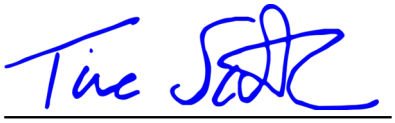
Ed Case
Member of Congress



Mike Quigley
Member of Congress



Chris Pappas
Member of Congress



Tina Smith
United States Senator



Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



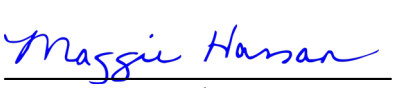
Pete Stauber
Member of Congress



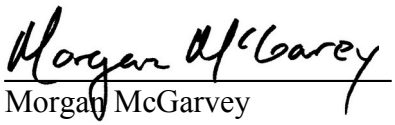
Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



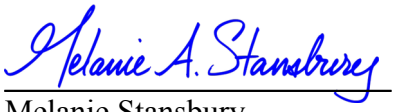
JD Vance
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



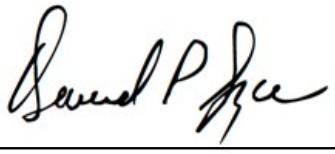
Morgan McGarvey
Member of Congress



Melanie Stansbury
Member of Congress



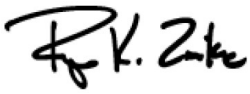
Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



David P. Joyce
Member of Congress



Angie Craig
Member of Congress



Ryan K. Zinke
Member of Congress



Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress



Chris Deluzio
Member of Congress



Donald G. Davis
Member of Congress



Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress



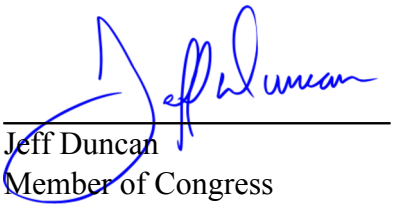
Elissa Slotkin
Member of Congress



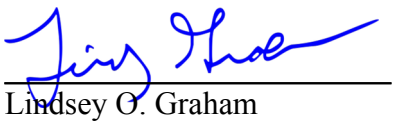
Neal P. Dunn, M.D.
Member of Congress



Mark Alford
Member of Congress



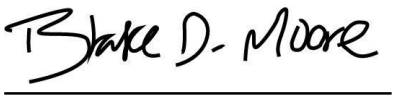
Jeff Duncan
Member of Congress



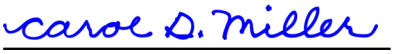
Lindsey O. Graham
United States Senator



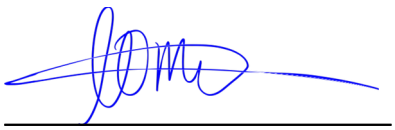
Max L. Miller
Member of Congress



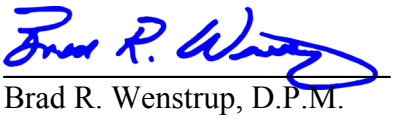
Blake D. Moore
Member of Congress



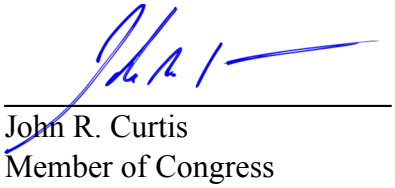
Carol D. Miller
Member of Congress



Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress



Brad R. Wenstrup, D.P.M.
Member of Congress



John R. Curtis
Member of Congress



Patrick Ryan
Member of Congress



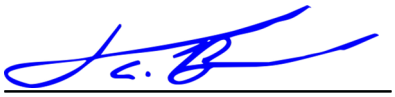
Shelley Moore Capito
United States Senator



Scott DesJarlais, M.D.
Member of Congress



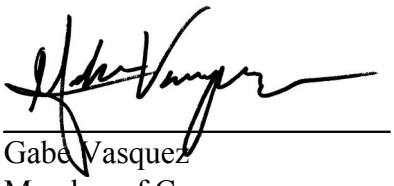
Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



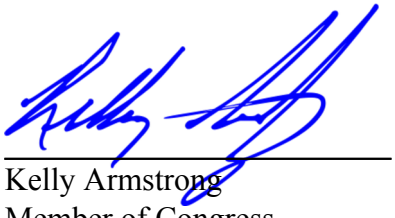
Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Abigail Davis Spanberger
Member of Congress



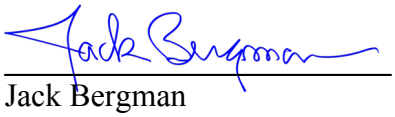
Gabe Vasquez
Member of Congress



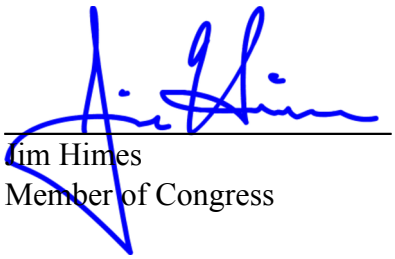
Kelly Armstrong
Member of Congress



Jim Costa
Member of Congress



Jack Bergman
Member of Congress



Jim Himes
Member of Congress



Roger Marshall, M.D.
United States Senator



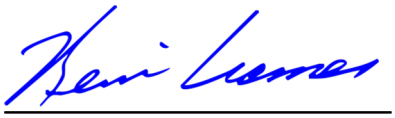
Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Joe Manchin III
United States Senator



Marilyn Strickland
Member of Congress



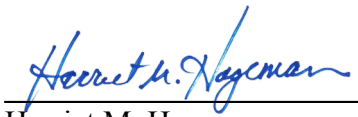
Kevin Cramer
United States Senator



Laphonza Butler
United States Senator



Harold Rogers
Member of Congress



Harriet M. Hageman
Member of Congress



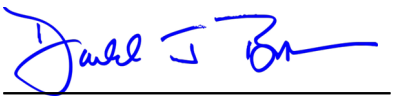
Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



Don Bacon
Member of Congress



Andy Kim
Member of Congress



Morgan Luttrell
Member of Congress