

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 10, 2010

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Capitol Building, S-128
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Capitol Building, S-128
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Sirs:

We are writing to request your support for additional funding for H60 Black Hawk helicopter modernization programs for the Army National Guard. Army National Guard operational tempos are the highest they have ever been supporting the full spectrum of state missions including search and rescue, utility/lift, disaster relief, fire fighting, medical evacuation, all while sustaining deployments to Iraq, Afghanistan and the Balkans. This high operational tempo is wearing out the National Guard H60 Black Hawk helicopter fleet much faster than planned.

The Army National Guard operates more than 700 Black Hawks. As a result of growth in the Army's H60 MEDEVAC helicopter requirement, the Guard's Black Hawk fleet will grow to 849 helicopters in the next 3 years. When fully equipped, the Army National Guard will own and operate more than 500 older UH-60A models. The A model is more expensive to operate, cannot operate at higher altitudes and has a 1000 lbs lower payload capability than the newer "L" and "M" models.

The Army is modernizing the Black Hawk fleet with two initiatives; fielding new UH-60M utility and HH-60M MEDEVAC helicopters and re-capitalizing and converting "UH-60A" models to the "UH-60L" configuration. These two initiatives modernize or recapitalize between 100 and 115 H60s per year, however the pace is not fast enough to keep up with the demands placed on the Black Hawk Fleet. At currently funded rates, the Army will not retire the UH-60A Black Hawk until 2025. By 2025, the "A" model Black Hawks will be more than 35 years old.

In order to keep the fleet viable and retire "A" model Black Hawk helicopters by FY21, the Army National Guard wants to accelerate the re-capitalization/conversion of their UH-60As and accelerate the fielding of new UH/HH-60Ms to Army National Guard units. Funding additional UH-60Ms, HH-60Ms and UH-60L conversions will enable a more rapid standardization of the Black Hawk fleet, and assure that Army National Guard units are ready, deployable and available to protect our national interests abroad, and respond to emergencies here at home.

To fill the gap, we seek your support to Authorize and Appropriate of \$205.5 million additional funding in the FY2011 Defense Bill for 5 HH-60M MEDEVAC Black Hawks (\$104M), 5 UH-60M Utility Black Hawks (\$84.5M), and 10 UH-60A-A to UH-60L conversions (\$17.0M) for the Army National Guard.

We appreciate the unwavering support you continue to provide the men and women who faithfully serve our Army National Guard. Thank you for your consideration of this critical equipment issue. We certify that neither we nor our immediate family has a pecuniary interest, consistent with the requirements of paragraph 9 of Rule XLIV of the Standing Rules of the Senate, in any congressionally-directed spending item that we requested for inclusion in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010. **I further certify that I have posted a description of the items requested on my official website, along with the accompanying justification.**

Sincerely,



Mary L. Landrieu
United States Senator



David Vitter
United States Senator



Christopher "Kit" S. Bond
United States Senator



Kirsten E. Gillibrand
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



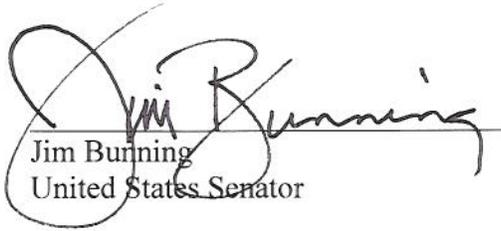
Blanche L. Lincoln
United States Senator

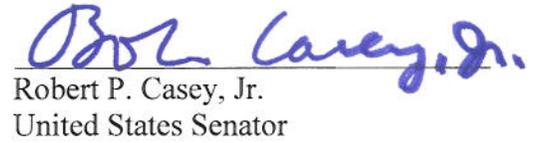


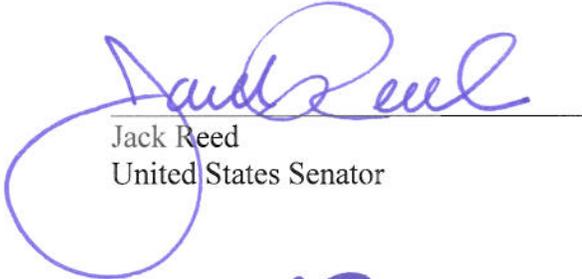
Pat Roberts
United States Senator

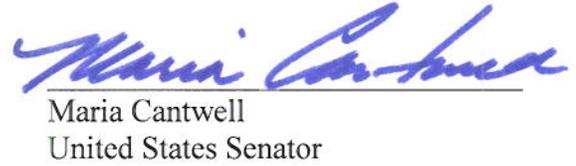


Christopher J. Dodd
United States Senator

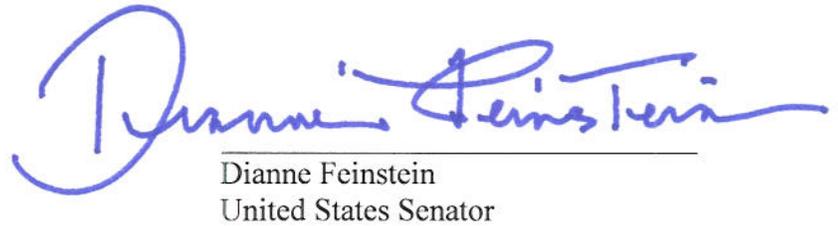

Jim Bunning
United States Senator

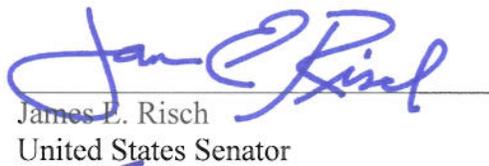

Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator


Jack Reed
United States Senator


Maria Cantwell
United States Senator


Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator


Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator


James E. Risch
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Jeanne Shaheen
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Edward E. Kaufman
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Mark Begich
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Daniel K. Akaka
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