

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 8, 2016

The Honorable Deborah Lee James
Secretary of the United States Air Force
1665 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330

Dear Secretary James:

We are writing as a follow up to our June 2nd letter in strong support for the Homestead Air Reserve Base (HARB) to serve as a location to house the first Reserve-led F-35A Lightning II program. It is to our understanding that the Air Force will soon make a decision on this important element to our national security, and we would like to respectfully reiterate our continued support for HARB.

Since 1942, HARB has been a valuable asset to the U.S. Department of Defense, the Air Force, and the South Florida community. HARB's host unit, the 482nd Fighter Wing, has more than 2,500 members and the ability to deploy with short-notice to anywhere in the world, with 170 additional active duty members through integration with the 495th Fighter Group's Detachment 93. HARB is an ideal location for missions across the Caribbean and Latin America, and a great strategic staging point for intercept and identification of air and sea movements outside of the southeast United States.

HARB was originally intended to host and support sizeable aircraft including bombers and tankers, which is why it was designed and built with large taxiways, oversized ramps, spacious parking aprons, and a long runway. The base also boasts extensive munitions storage and a substantial staging area. With South Florida being a peninsula, HARB-based flight operations enjoy special use of the airspace within close proximity of the airfield. Being surrounded by expansive air space over the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Ocean, flight training can also occur without disturbing residential areas on the ground below.

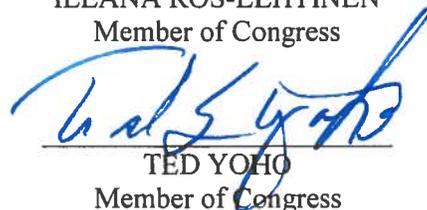
HARB is also well known for its partnership building. With the support of the 482nd Fighter Wing, HARB hosts several tenant units including the Florida Air National Guard's Detachment 1 of the 125th Fighter Wing, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Coast Guard Maritime Safety and Security Team Miami, and U.S. Special Operations Command South. The 482nd Fighter Wing also supports forward deployment of the Air Force Reserve's Hurricane Hunters weather reconnaissance mission and joint-relief operations with the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Once again, within all applicable rules and regulations, we would like to reiterate our strong support for basing the first reserve-led F-35A program at HARB.

Sincerely,



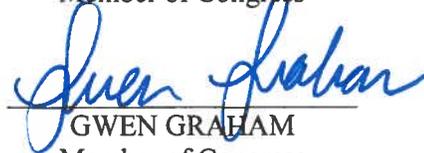
ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN
Member of Congress



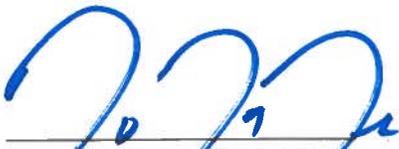
TED YOHO
Member of Congress



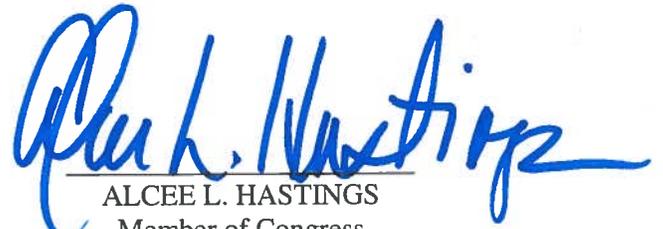
CARLOS CURBELO
Member of Congress



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ALCEE L. HASTINGS
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