

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

May 17, 2022

The Honorable Frank Kendall  
Secretary of the Air Force  
1000 Air Force Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20350

Dear Secretary Kendall,

We are writing to request your support in organizing a meeting with a group of constituents from Southeast Georgia and leadership from the Department of the Air Force and the Air National Guard. We believe it is imperative that the Air Force maintain a meaningful dialogue with community leaders in Georgia and across the nation, particularly as the service proposes changes to its force structure.

The Coastal Georgia Military Affairs Coalition, which includes elected officials and community leaders from three counties, two cities, two chambers of commerce, three economic development authorities and multiple businesses, actively supports our Savannah area Airmen and families.

Like them, we are concerned the Fiscal Year 2023 President's Budget requests no funding in two appropriations accounts, Operations & Maintenance (O&M) and Military personnel (MILPER), for the Georgia Combat Readiness Training Center (CRTC) in Savannah. Consequently, the Air National Guard (ANG) intends to close the Savannah CRTC, citing budget concerns.

However, with Russia's military aggression in Europe and China's increased engagement in Asia and the Pacific threatening our allies and partners, we cannot compromise our military's combat readiness.

The Savannah Combat Readiness Training Center is the most heavily utilized, unique, and cost-efficient training facility in the Air Force. It offers unparalleled opportunities for peer-to-peer air combat training, regional training conferences, classified engagements, and support for regional operations. Notably, the Savannah CRTC, located on the Georgia Coast, is one of very few locations in the United States featuring an accredited 6,000 square/foot Special Access Program Facility (SAPF) to support our nation's cutting-edge 5th generation fighter aircraft, the F-35 and the F-22. Funded by the National Guard Bureau, the Savannah CRTC represents a uniquely cost-efficient taxpayer investment, owing to its shared airfield with the 165th Airlift Wing.

Importantly, the Savannah CRTC is already a site for considerable investment. Congress, at the request of the National Guard Bureau, chose to invest \$25 million in military construction funding for a hangar to support 5th generation fighter maintenance. This project is scheduled for completion in August 2022.

Closing the CRTC would pointedly undercut this investment. Furthermore, the Savannah CRTC was recently selected by Air Combat Command to host two exercises annually to train for Agile Combat Employment in support of the Chief of Staff of the Air Force guidance.

Our military's capacity to conduct realistic, live training sets us apart from our adversaries. That is exactly why the Savannah CRTC must remain open—it provides high quality and cost-effective training.

We request the meeting between the Savannah officials and appropriate Air Force leadership take place on Tuesday, June 7, or Wednesday, June 8, 2022. We are grateful for your attention to this matter and look forward to working with you to ensure the preparedness of the United States military.

Attendees:

The Honorable Van Johnson, Mayor of Savannah, GA  
The Honorable Chester Ellis, Chairman of Chatham County, GA  
The Honorable Allen Brown, Mayor of Hinesville, GA  
The Honorable Donald Lovette, Chairman of Liberty County, GA  
Executive Director of the Southeast Georgia Friends of Fort Stewart and Hunter  
Mr. Bill Hubbard, President and CEO of Savannah Chamber of Commerce  
Mr. Trip Tollison, Executive Director of the Savannah Economic Development Authority  
Colonel Pete Hoffman (U.S. Army Ret), Executive Director of the Coastal Georgia Military Affairs Coalition

Thank you for your longstanding service to our Air Force and our nation, and we appreciate your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,



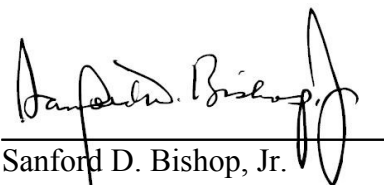
Raphael G. Warnock  
United States Senator



Jon Ossoff  
United States Senator



Earl L. "Buddy" Carter  
Member of Congress



Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.  
Member of Congress



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Austin Scott  
Member of Congress



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David Scott  
Member of Congress



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A. Drew Ferguson IV  
Member of Congress



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Barry Loudermilk  
Member of Congress



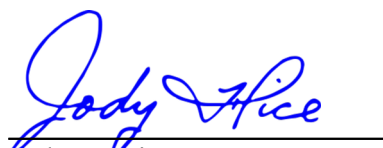
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Rick W. Allen  
Member of Congress



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Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.  
Member of Congress



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Jody B. Hice  
Member of Congress



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Lucy McBath  
Member of Congress