



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

June 5, 2012

The Honorable Steve Austria
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Austria:

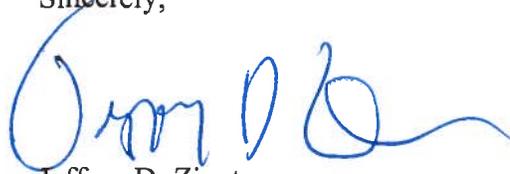
Thank you for your letter regarding the proposed force structure changes to the Air National Guard and specifically, the proposed reduction of six KC-135 aircraft at Rickenbacker Air National Guard Base. I am responding on the President's behalf. I appreciate the time you took to share your views and your interest in the President's Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 Budget.

The President's FY 2013 Budget is built around the idea that our country does best when everyone gets a fair shot, does their fair share, and plays by the same rules. The Budget pursues policies and includes choices to construct an economy that's built to last -- with good jobs that pay well and security for the middle class. In addition to immediate investments to boost the economic recovery and create jobs, the Budget invests in American manufacturing, American energy, skills for American workers, and the infrastructure on which our economy rests. The Budget also puts the Nation on a path to living within our means -- by cutting wasteful spending, asking all Americans to shoulder their fair share, and making tough choices on some things we can no longer afford. The Budget, when combined with the legislation signed into law last year, contains more than \$4 trillion in balanced deficit reduction to put the country on a sustainable fiscal path.

The Administration appreciates the contributions and dedication of the National Guard, including the men and women at Rickenbacker, Springfield, and Mansfield. The Department of Defense (DOD) made some difficult choices in the President's FY 2013 Budget to support the new Defense Strategic Guidance within a more constrained fiscal environment. The Administration proposes to eliminate 303 aircraft from the Air Force's both current and planned acquisitions over FY 2013 through FY 2017, including squadrons from some locations and aircraft from other locations, such as the six KC-135 refueling aircraft at Rickenbacker. The new Defense Strategic Guidance sized the aerial refueling fleet to meet the requirements of the Combatant Commanders. As DOD shifts toward operations in other theaters like the Asia-Pacific, Air Force refueling aircraft continue their vital, daily role of extending the range and persistence of almost all other aircraft of the Joint force. Rickenbacker is one of the larger aerial refueling units in the Air National Guard and has 18 KC-135s. DOD's action will retire one-third of the KC-135s but keep the unit open with nearly 1,300 personnel remaining at Rickenbacker.

I look forward to working with you throughout the budget process and value your input as a member of the House Appropriations Committee. Thank you again for your letter. If you have questions, please contact the Office of Legislative Affairs at (202) 395-4790.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey D. Zients", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Jeffrey D. Zients
Acting Director
