

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

November 17, 2016

Lieutenant General L. Scott Rice
Director, Air National Guard
1000 Air Force Pentagon, RM 4E126
Washington, D.C. 20330

Dear Lt General Rice:

We write to express our appreciation for the RC-26 aircraft in Iowa and ask that the Air National Guard provide all due consideration in determining whether to permanently place it in our state. We understand that the RC-26 aircraft has provided incredible value to our Air National Guard and law enforcement officers in combating illegal drug trafficking, and as you make the final basing decision this year for the aircraft, we urge you to consider the importance of the aircraft to the future of such efforts.

The RC-26 is a key asset to the Iowa Air National Guard stationed at the Des Moines Airport and provides a unique opportunity for the Guard to demonstrate the synergistic relationship of having complementary missions stationed in proximity to each other. Having other pilots and sensor operators trained on the RC-26 leverages the skills that multiple platforms have in common and provides the added benefit of broadening the airmanship of all crew. Moreover, it plays a unique role in the Iowa Counterdrug Task Force. The Task Force, stood up in 1994, leverages military capabilities to enhance domestic support for the fight against illicit drugs and transnational threats to the homeland. The RC-26 aircraft has flown over 35 flight hours, including missions for 10 federal and state agencies, and helped seize over \$566,900 dollars in methamphetamine in Fiscal Year (FY) 2016. In FY2015, it helped seize 20 illegal weapons, over \$500,000 in methamphetamine, and \$4,000 in heroin. Given the rising drug epidemic facing our nation, and Iowa's strategic location at the intersection of drug routes along I-80 and I-35, the RC-26 aircraft is sure to continue being a key asset in the fight against illegal drug trafficking in the years to come.

Thank you for taking the importance of Iowa's RC-26 missions into consideration as you make the final basing decision for the aircraft.

Sincerely,



Joni K. Ernst
United States Senator



Charles E. Grassley
United States Senator

David Young

David E. Young
United States Congressman

Rod Blum

Rodney L. Blum
United States Congressman

Stevie King

Steven A. King
United States Congressman

Dave Loebsack

David W. Loebsack
United States Congressman