

United States Senate

February 3, 2025

The Honorable Dr. Troy Meink
Secretary of the Air Force
United States Department of the Air Force
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20330-1670

Dear Secretary Meink,

I write to express my strong support for continued investments for the Air Force's F-15EX pilot training pipeline and urge expansion of this training pipeline to ensure the on-time training of Selfridge Air National Guard Base's transitioning A-10 pilots. As Selfridge prepares to accept these brand-new F-15EX aircraft, timely training for its transitioning A-10 pilots is vital to ensuring on time F-15EX beddown.

As you know, following years of vigorous support from congressional, state and local partners on April 28, 2025, President Trump announced the decision to base 21 F-15EX aircraft at Selfridge. The F-15EX is the most advanced variant of F-15s ever to enter production and carries a multitude of advanced features including powerful radars, electronic warfare suites and a glass cockpit with large digital displays. These aircraft are slated to arrive in Fiscal Year 2028 (FY28) to replace Selfridge's aging A-10 Warthogs.

At the heart of Michigan's defense footprint, Selfridge is a strategic location for border security and homeland defense. Its critical location responds to threats to our homeland coming from the north through Canada and the Great Lakes region. As a result, the installation hosts units from every U.S. Armed Service except the Space Force.

Selfridge's unparalleled access to training ranges and airspace ensures relevant and applicable training for its pilots and maintainers. Annually, Michigan hosts Exercise Northern Strike, the largest reserve component, live-fire, joint and all-domain exercise in the continental United States. The Michigan National Guard also hosts one of the premier arctic training exercises – "Winter Strike" which tests unit readiness in arctic environments. The National All-Domain Warfighting Center in Michigan is the largest contiguous joint service range/airspace complex east of the Mississippi River, providing tremendous training and operational readiness opportunities.

Selfridge is also home to the 127th Wing of the Michigan National Guard comprised of the 107th Fighter and 171st Air Refueling Squadrons. The 107th Squadron serves as a source of indispensable close-air support capacity to our Armed Forces and is home to some of the Air Force's most experienced pilots including multiple Air Force Weapons School graduates. The 107th can attract and retain these excellent pilots—along with their exceptional crews and maintainers—in part due to its close proximity to the Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport which provides unique opportunities for citizen airmen.

As these skilled A-10 pilots transition to operating F-15EXs, they must undergo a rigorous training course at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in North Carolina to ensure Selfridge's skilled pilots can transition their current skills to these new airframes. Selfridge's pilots will receive enhanced training requiring additional resourcing to include advanced planning, airframes, trainers and maintenance crews. As the Air Force balances the F-15EX training pipeline against other training and non-training needs, I strongly urge the Air Force to provide the proper resourcing and attention to the F-15EX training pipeline to ensure on time arrival of Selfridge's F-15EXs in 2028.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gary C. Peters". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Gary" being the most prominent.

Gary C. Peters

United States Senator