

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 26, 2024

The Honorable Christine E. Wormuth
Secretary of the Army
101 Army Pentagon,
Washington, D.C., 20310-0101

Dear Secretary Wormuth,

We write in support of the stationing of any future Army National Guard MQ-1C Gray Eagle Platform at the Battle Creek Air National Guard Base (ANGB) in Battle Creek, MI, with force structure supported by both Michigan and Indiana. Since 2007, the National Guard has proven its critical capabilities and contributions to the evolving national security landscape in performing unmanned missions with the MQ-1 Predator and MQ-9 Reaper admirably and with distinction. The U.S. Army's MQ-1C is a natural fit and evolution of unmanned capability for the Michigan Army National Guard, and the synergy with existing Air National Guard capability is self-evident.

The Battle Creek ANGB has the necessary infrastructure to host this platform and support Army MQ-1C operations. As one of the most in-demand Guard units with vast MQ-9 remote split operations experience, the base can provide critical assistance in the understanding of unmanned mission platforms. Currently, Battle Creek ANGB supports combat operations in numerous theaters, reinforces domestic missions in Michigan, and rises to the occasion whenever called upon with its MQ-9 platform.

Located at the Battle Creek Executive Airport, the Battle Creek ANGB offers a 10,003-foot runway with ample taxiway, ramp, apron space, and hanger space. The considerable local and State investments this past decade, including a traffic roundabout leading to the new base entrance, the resurfacing of the 10,003-foot runway, and investments in MICH-AIR, a new advanced air mobility hub headquartered at the Airport, make Battle Creek the ideal location for an Army National Guard MQ-1C Gray Eagle unit.

Additionally, adjacent to the Battle Creek ANGB is the federally-owned Fort Custer Training Center, which currently hosts Army National Guard assets, missions, and year-round training. Should the Army come to the same conclusion the Air Force came to nearly two decades ago—that Battle Creek, Michigan, would be a natural home for a future unmanned mission—it could provide similar benefits to national defense that the MI ANG has provided. As the Army evolves the Multi-Domain Operational concept, it's also worth noting that Fort Custer will receive one of the Army's newest Intelligence and Electronic Warfare Battalions, providing additional all-domain capability easily leveraged by future unmanned platforms.

Furthermore, the military culture in Battle Creek is second to none, drawing recruits from across the country. The current mission sets and the community's deep roots of aviation interest from Western Michigan University located nearby allow Battle Creek ANGB to maintain a manning of over 100% and recruit a diverse pool of talented personnel. Additionally, Michigan and Indiana provide critical existing force structure that can feed into the organizational structure of an MQ-1C unit.

Given the reporting requirement due February 1, 2024, enclosed in the House Report 118-125 accompanying the FY24 NDAA entitled *MQ-1C Gray Eagle National Guard Integration and Strategic Considerations*, we urge full consideration of the placement of any such mission at Battle Creek ANGB. We invite you to visit Battle Creek and witness Michigan's 2nd largest military community in action. From world-class training grounds to a well-established military community, Michigan is well poised to take on a greater role and contribute to the Armed Forces' fight against our global adversaries.

Sincerely,



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



Gary Peters
United States Senator



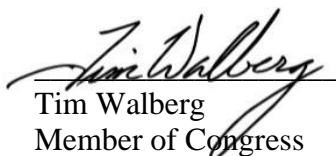
Bill Huizenga
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