

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 13, 2018

The Honorable John McCain
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mac Thornberry
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen McCain and Thornberry and Ranking Members Reed and Smith:

We write to express our enthusiastic support for an extremely important readiness provision included in the House passed National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA): \$12.25 million for a new Entrance Road and Gate Complex at Barksdale Air Force Base. This Military Construction project is a vital readiness and rapid response need for Barksdale AFB, for Louisiana and for the Nation.

Following the approval of a new Interstate-220 Interchange connecting Interstate-20 to Barksdale AFB, the Air Force requested funding for this badly needed gate on its FY19 Unfunded Priority List. This project will provide Barksdale AFB with a new East Gate that will greatly improve the base security posture for the construction of the planned Weapons Storage and Maintenance Facility (WSF), open access to the installation's east reservation, improve traffic conditions, and end problematic interruptions from train operations.

The current gate entrance at Barksdale is aging and severely unequipped to handle even its current traffic load. With the increase in traffic and construction due to the WSF, it is imperative that the new gate is completed. Failure to complete this new gate would severely impact Barksdale's readiness and operations, likely causing delays in construction and delays in transporting weapons once the WSF is completed.

This provision is critical to the future of Barksdale AFB, the surrounding community, and to the security of our Nation. Funding the gate in FY19 will synchronize with the timeline of construction for the state Interchange, and the WSF.


The House passed NDAA also included \$24 million for the construction of new alert facilities at the Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base in Belle Chasse, LA. This funding will allow NORTHCOM to construct badly needed infrastructure to support readiness and rapid response for the Air National Guard 159th Fighter Wing.

It is imperative that we include the House approved funding for the Barksdale Gate Entrance and the Alert Facilities at Belle Chasse in the final conference report and we humbly request you give your full support to their inclusion.

Sincerely,



Bill Cassidy, M.D.
US Senator




John Kennedy
US Senator



Ralph Abraham, M.D.
Member of Congress



Steve Scalise
Member of Congress



Garret Graves
Member of Congress



Mike Johnson
Member of Congress



Clay Higgins
Member of Congress