

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 4, 2014

The Honorable Deborah Lee James
Secretary of the Air Force
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1670

Dear Secretary James,

As you know, Section 143 of the fiscal year (FY) 2014 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) states that you “may not retire, prepare to retire, or place in storage” any additional A-10 aircraft for calendar year 2014.

In the FY 2014 NDAA, Congress made its intent clear. It does not want the Air Force to retire or prepare to retire the A-10 before December 31, 2014—which includes the first three months of FY 2015. In addition, Congress may decide to extend this prohibition in the FY 2015 NDAA. Until that decision is made, the Air Force should not take any steps to prepare to retire the A-10 or reduce the modernization or readiness of the A-10 fleet. In addition, the Air Force should not invoke sunset status on the A-10 which directly impacts sustainment and modernization programs that are critical to maintaining the A-10 as the Air Force’s best close air support platform.

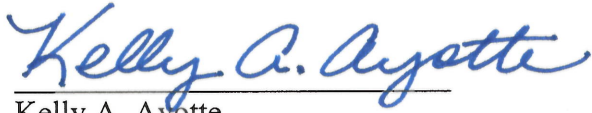
On January 24, 2014, you were notified of congressional concerns about the Air Force’s decision to cease all Suite 8 development of the operational flight program for the A-10. We appreciate your willingness to reverse that decision. However, it has since come to our attention that the Air Force may be taking other steps to prepare to retire the A-10 in potential violation of current law, including:

1. Allotting no flight hours for the A-10 weapons school and operational test squadron at Nellis Air Force Base in FY 2015;
2. Canceling A-10 modernization programs; and
3. Ending normal sustainment and modernization processes.

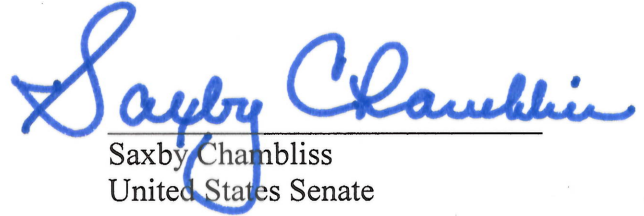
Can you also confirm whether the Air Force has not allotted flight hours for FY 2015 for squadrons at Osan AFB, Moody AFB, Davis-Monthan AFB, as well as the Idaho Air National Guard squadron? If so, we request that you reverse these actions to ensure the Air Force is in full compliance with the law and Congress’ intent.

We look forward to receiving your response. Thank you for your distinguished service to our nation.

Sincerely,



Kelly A. Ayotte
United States Senate



Saxby Chambliss
United States Senate