

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 8, 2019

The Honorable Rodney P. Frelinghuysen
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Defense
House Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Peter J. Visclosky
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
House Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Charlie Dent
Chairman
Subcommittee on Military,
Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies
House Appropriations Committee

The Honorable Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Military,
Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies
House Appropriations Committee

RE: Support Vital Air Mobility/Aerial Refueling Missions and Expanded Operational and Maintenance Space and Housing at MacDill AFB, Tampa, Florida

Dear Chairman Frelinghuysen, Ranking Member Lowey, Chairwoman Granger and Ranking Member Vislosky, Chairman Dent and Ranking Member Wasserman Schultz:

As members of the Tampa Bay Congressional Delegation, we write in strong support of the Air Force's Air Mobility mission including the KC-135 aerial new KC-46 Pegasus, and respectfully request you help us address critical infrastructure needs at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida in the FY19 Appropriations. The Air Mobility mission is vital to ensuring our military and our allies are able to act and respond anytime anywhere and to keeping America safe and ready for any contingencies.

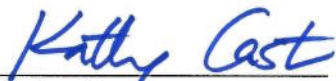
MacDill's 6th Air Mobility Wing is central to the U.S. Air Force's Global Vigilance, Global Reach, Global Power mission through the essential functions of aerial refueling and airlift. MacDill has proven its strategic location for air refueling for the extensive Air Force and Navy assets in the southeast United States, which is part of the reason why MacDill was selected to receive eight additional KC-135 tankers for a total of 24 KC-135s on base. All 24 tankers are now in operation and based at MacDill. MacDill and the Air Force will rely on these workhorse tankers for decades to come for aerial refueling, aeromedical evacuation, training, humanitarian missions and more. We must continue to maintain and support these aircraft and airmen and women, while preparing for the next generation of tankers.

The missions on MacDill AFB, including U.S. Special Operations Command and U.S. Central Command, are growing faster than the overall infrastructure on the base and we respectfully request that you appropriate monies to address expanded operational and maintenance space, the housing squeeze and a building for a second simulator - with an eye to the future growth at this strategically important base. The entire Tampa Bay community understands that *MacDill Means Mobility* and that the missions must strengthen and grow.

We strongly urge you to provide MacDill the resources it needs to carry out its missions and prepare for the future. For example, a recently relocated air refueling squadron has to share very tight work space with other units on base, which impacts readiness and morale. Additionally, we need to ensure hanger space is up-to-date for future KC-46 basing and to properly serve the existing 24 KC-135s. There is more than adequate room at MacDill for needed operations office space, a simulator, dormitories and more. Expanded base housing was in the works for MacDill before a hold was placed on additional housing a few years ago. It is time to return to the original plan to construct on base housing for military families, especially due to the high cost of housing outside the gates of MacDill. MacDill has proven time and again its strategic importance for air refueling, airlift and humanitarian missions, and it is our duty to give them the support they need to get the job done.

Congress and the Air Force have shown a strong commitment to the Air Mobility mission and we must ensure funding continues in support of this vital mission. Our Tampa Bay community embraces the global Air Mobility mission and we are proud of how integral it is to protecting all Americans and responding to disasters. We recognize the difficult task that confronts you as the leaders of the Appropriations Committee, and we appreciate your consideration of our request to address the space crunch at MacDill Air Force Base, maintain and support the KC-135s and broaden support for the KC-46 Pegasus mission.

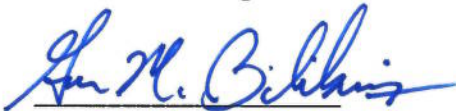
Sincerely,



Kathy Castor
Member of Congress



Dennis A. Ross
Member of Congress



Gus M. Bilirakis
Member of Congress



Charlie Crist
Member of Congress



Vern Buchanan
Member of Congress