

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 29, 2021

The Honorable John P. Roth
Acting Secretary
United States Air Force
1670 Air Force
Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330

RE: Bipartisan Florida Congressional Delegation Supports MacDill AFB as the KC-46 Main Operating Base 6

Dear Acting Secretary Roth:

We write in strong support of MacDill Air Force Base (AFB) in Tampa, Florida as the next Main Operating Base (MOB) for 24 KC-46 Pegasus tankers. As you know, MacDill AFB is home of the 6th Air Refueling Wing, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM), the 927th Air Refueling Wing and other important mission partners. MacDill plays a critical role in America's national security and Air Mobility Command (AMC) operations. As you consider KC-46 mission factors, installation capacity, environmental issues and military family readiness, it will be apparent that MacDill AFB is an ideal choice.

MacDill's 6th Air Refueling Wing is central to the U.S. Air Force's Global Vigilance, Global Reach, Global Power mission through the essential function of aerial refueling and airlift while also providing support to our strategic partners around the globe. MacDill is a natural and strategic location for the most up-to-date tankers because it serves as a power projection platform for critical Air Force missions along the eastern seaboard with a vital orientation towards the CENTCOM area of operation in the Middle East and the Western Hemisphere. MacDill also is well-positioned to help counter China's growing influence in Africa and Central America.

MacDill is a primary jumping-off point for Air Force airlift and MEDEVAC support during humanitarian and natural disasters in the Caribbean, Latin America and the southeastern United States. Additionally, MacDill is uniquely positioned with close access to multiple ranges, including Avon Park Air Force Range and one-of-a-kind extensive overwater ranges in the Gulf of Mexico. MacDill is optimal to support the air refueling requirements for the extensive Air Force and Navy assets from Louisiana to North Carolina; particularly the growing F-35 presence throughout Florida.

Strong base capacity is essential for the new home of the KC-46s. MacDill's location, infrastructure capacity and current layout give the base plenty of room to grow. The ramp capacity allows for more tanker aircraft and the runway was resurfaced a few years ago. Much of the base

infrastructure has been improved as well. A new hydrant system was added to the existing ramp and it was designed to facilitate larger, more modern aircraft. In addition, the fuel storage and a pipeline for fuel from Port Tampa Bay was included in the hydrant system and expanded for additional aircraft. Additionally, our delegation is committed to working with the Air Force to ensure MacDill AFB has the necessary hanger facilities compatible with the larger KC-46.

MacDill AFB is home to 33 mission partner units from all branches of service, including U.S. Central Command and U.S. Special Operations Command. The base includes over 30,000 military personnel and civilians working on base as well as 20,000 military dependents. Regionally, nearly 400,000 veterans call Tampa Bay home – not including annual migration of an estimated 100,000+ seasonal residents. The Tampa Bay area is renowned for its support of our servicemembers and their families. Plus, Florida is a leader in providing licensure reciprocity for military spouses. Just last month Tampa received the Military Spouse Impact Award for Community of the Year by Hiring Our Heroes through the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation. The Tampa Bay community and the State of Florida are focused and committed to supporting the Air Mobility mission, the airmen and their families.

Tampa Bay has had the privilege to host the brave and talented Air Force airmen at MacDill for 80 years. The base was activated in 1941 to train World War II airmen to fly and operate bombers, including the B-17 Flying Fortress and the B-26 Marauder. This proud, unparalleled legacy in support of America's national security has evolved over time: supporting Strategic Air Command, F-4/F-16 fighter training while participating in campaigns from Cuban Missile Crisis, Operation JUST CAUSE, and present day missions in Iraq and Afghanistan. Today, MacDill is home to AMC's air refueling mission with 25+ years of exemplary service of 6th Air Refueling Wing and the KC-135 tankers.

In 2012 local leaders, including the Tampa Bay Chamber of Commerce, Tampa Bay Defense Alliance, bipartisan Tampa Bay Congressional Delegation and Mayor came together in the *MacDill Means Mobility* effort to highlight MacDill's significance in both the critical mobility mission of the Air Force and the security of our nation. Our commitment remains. Local supporters are indispensable partners in supporting and advocating for MacDill and its top-notch personnel. MacDill and the City of Tampa Fire and Rescue provide advanced lifesaving support for the base. AMC surgeons and Tampa General Hospital (TGH) partner to keep current on trauma treatment through access to TGH's unique level 1 trauma center. MacDill's 6th Medical Group is top-tier and enjoys the advantage of partnerships with the James A. Haley and Bay Pines VA Medical Centers that provide medical care and health and wellness services to more than 215,000 Department of Defense beneficiaries throughout Tampa Bay. These types of partnerships are unavailable in almost any other area.

Airmen and personnel at a MacDill KC-46A MOB and their families will find a most supportive base. MacDill is home to three state-of-the art Child Development Centers, a fitness and sports center and chaplain corps. Education is a clear hallmark as Florida is set to become a Purple Star School State and provides in-state tuition for military families and veterans. The Tinker K-8 School is outstanding and Hillsborough County Public Schools are devoted to our military families.

Florida embraces this mission and the outstanding men and women who will serve here. We strongly support MacDill AFB in Tampa as the primary location for the next Air Force KC-46 MOB.

Sincerely,



Kathy Castor
Member of Congress



Scott Franklin
Member of Congress



Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator



Rick Scott
U.S. Senator



Matt Gaetz
Member of Congress



Bill Posey
Member of Congress



Neal P. Dunn, M.D.
Member of Congress



W. Gregory Steube
Member of Congress



Kat Cammack
Member of Congress



Brian Mast
Member of Congress



Al Lawson
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Stephanie Murphy
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John H. Rutherford
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Maria Elvira Salazar
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Darren Soto
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Theodore E. Deutch
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Mario Diaz-Balart
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Charlie Crist
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Lois Frankel
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Vern Buchanan
Member of Congress



Daniel Webster
Member of Congress