Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 6, 2014

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States of America
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

As you prepare the budget for fiscal year 2015, we strongly recommend and ask that you fully fund the operation, maintenance and upgrade of the A-10 Thunderbolt II. Full funding will ensure this proven workhorse continues to fly and provide unmatched support to our men and women on the frontlines. If the Air Force were to divest itself of the Warthog, it would create a critical capability gap that cannot be bridged in the near future.

The A-10 is unsurpassed in its ability to provide close-air combat support for service members on the ground. In Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, the A-10 performed nearly one third of the combat sorties. The A-10 is solid, reliable and inexpensive to maintain. It flies low and at slow speeds, providing unique and punishing firepower at extremely close distances with a durability that can take incoming fire in the hottest of battlefields and return home to fight another day. While derided by some as a single role aircraft, the A-10 is a proven asset in combat search and rescue missions and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance.

We are cognizant of the significant budgetary pressures the Air Force faces; however our national security and the protection of our service members in combat areas must be paramount as we consider the needs of the Department of Defense. There is no clear replacement for the A-10 at this time, and once cut, the institutional knowledge of the community of close air support specialists will be lost and difficult to rebuild.

The reported projected savings from the divestment of the A-10 fleet are small compared to the budgetary cuts the Air Force must make. To increase the risks to our ground troops and pilots in the air without significant budgetary savings and a viable replacement on hand is extremely difficult to justify to our service members and the taxpayers. We look forward to working with you and the Department of Defense to find reasonable and intelligent solutions to our fiscal problems, while continuing to support the core components of our nation's combat power.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Ron Barber

RON BARBER
Member of Congress

ROB BISHOP
Member of Congress

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