Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 1, 2016

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

Dear Secretary James:

As members of Ohio's Congressional delegation, we request that the 180th Fighter Wing (180th FW) in Toledo, Ohio, be the next assignment for the F-35A mission. The strategic advantages of the 180th FW, in addition to the support from the State of Ohio, the City of Toledo and surrounding communities, and the 180th FW's record of accomplishments make it the best choice for the F-35A mission. Once you compare the 180th FW with all other basing alternatives, we are confident that Toledo and the 180th FW will serve as a superb, cost-effective choice.

The 180th FW's strategic location in the northern Midwest places it within 600 miles of 60 percent of the U.S. population. Accordingly, since October 2008 the 180th FW has been charged with the 24/7/365 Aerospace Control Alert (ACA) mission protecting skies over major metropolitan areas, railway transportation hubs, nuclear power plants, freshwater ports and shipping lanes, and has done so with distinction. The 180th FW has unique access to airspace and ranges in both Michigan and Indiana that allow the wing to find favorable weather necessary to maintain training requirements and these ranges already meet the training requirements for the F-35A.

The airmen of the 180th FW have consistently served our country with distinction both at home and abroad. Furthermore, the 180th FW has been tasked with protecting some of the country's most critical infrastructure, and also has deployed overseas multiple times in support of wartime contingency operations with coalition partners. To support these missions, the 180th FW regularly participates in Close Air Support training exercises at Alpena, Michigan, contributing to their reputation as a Center of Excellence. Additionally, the 180th FW was named ACA Unit of the Year twice, received an Outstanding Unit award in 2015, and was called the "benchmark operation" by the North American Aerospace Defense Command Region Commander. The 180th FW is slated to become an Active Associate Wing of the Air Force in 2018, further enhancing its strategic value to the Total Force.

The people of Ohio support our military and are proud to be family, friends, and neighbors of the dedicated men and women of the 180th FW. The Ohio Air National Guard and the 180th FW in particular have taken great steps in achieving cost effectiveness and mission readiness. We stand ready to assist you in the selection process for the F-35A, and believe that the Ohio Air National Guard and the 180th FW will best meet the needs of the mission.

Thank you for your consideration.

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Sincerely,

Rob Portman
United States Senator

Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

Robert E. Latta
Member of Congress

Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress