

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 31, 2018

The Honorable Mick Mulvaney
Director
Office of Management and Budget
Eisenhower Executive Office Building
17th Street and Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Director Mulvaney:

As you finalize the details of the president's fiscal year (FY) 2019 budget request, we write to ask that funding be included to support all B-52 Stratofortress bomber modernization efforts, including at least \$65 million for the critical re-engining program.

With the need to maintain sufficient numbers of bombers even after introduction of the new B-21 bomber, it is critical that our nation continue to modernize its legacy bombers. The ability to strike targets around the world deters enemies and potential enemies from taking actions against U.S. interests. Bombers also provide essential conventional capabilities and have flown sorties in Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom as well as in operational contingencies involving Libya and Syria. The B-52 remains the backbone of our conventional and strategic strike forces and, as Air Force Global Strike Commander General Robin Rand has highlighted, will remain a key element of the bomber force beyond 2050. The expected long-term reliance on the B-52 necessitates continued investments in all aspects of its modernization, including continued upgrades to the bomb bay, satellite communications and datalink systems, and radars.

In addition to these upgrades, however, it is imperative that the Air Force acquire new or upgraded engines for the fleet of 76 B-52 aircraft currently in service. According to the Air Force's own requirements analysis, the current plan is not sustainable beyond 2030 without additional program modernization. Funding the re-engining program in FY 2019 would enable production on a timeline that enables engine enhancement or replacement before the current engines become obsolete. Beyond the critical need to push engine sustainability through the service life of the B-52, the considerable benefits modernized propulsion would provide for the operational capability and cost-effectiveness of the aircraft make the case for re-engining clear. Propulsion enhancements would provide substantially longer range and flying time, providing more flexibility to the warfighter and reducing the burden on refueling tankers. Leveraging advances in engine technology would further improve fuel efficiency while reducing the carbon footprint and sound level of the aircraft. Reducing the sustainment requirements would allow for the repurposing of maintenance personnel for other functions within the Air Force. Because re-engining would save approximately \$10 billion over the life of the aircraft, the business case for re-engining aligns with the operational necessity.

Ultimately, prioritizing investments in B-52 re-engining in FY 2019 would set the Air Force on a course to maintain this critical aircraft for decades to come, achieve significant enhancements in operational capability, and save billions of dollars over the life of the aircraft. Because full funding for the re-engining program represents sound stewardship of both national defense and taxpayer money, we hope the president's FY 2019 budget request will fully fund this critical program.

Sincerely,



Heidi Heitkamp
United States Senator



John Hoeven
United States Senator



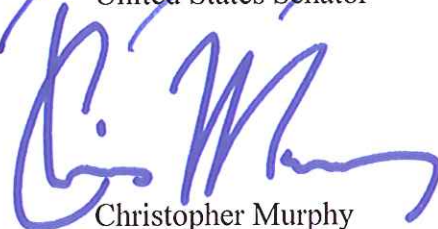
Joe Donnelly
United States Senator



James Lankford
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Christopher Murphy
United States Senator