

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 15, 2013

The Honorable Chuck Hagel
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We are writing about a matter of significant importance to our national security, the U.S. Air Force's recently awarded Light Air Support (LAS) contract. The light air support capability is long-overdue and critical to our successful withdrawal from Afghanistan. We urge you to take the steps necessary to ensure that implementation of this contract moves forward without delay.

It is essential that we enable the Afghans to mount an indigenous air force to aid in the defense against the Taliban and other extremist organization. The safety of our men and women on the ground today and the future security of our nation depend on that. Unfortunately the road to providing U.S. commanders in Afghanistan with the light air support capability they requested long ago has been paved with numerous unnecessary and costly delays. Now, the window for providing this resource and training in time to make a difference is quickly closing.

We know that you understand the urgency of this situation and we applaud the determination of the Air Force to move forward with this program despite numerous delays. Please know that we stand ready to assist in any manner to ensure that these aircraft reach our warfighters and partners on the ground in Afghanistan without further delay.


Sincerely,



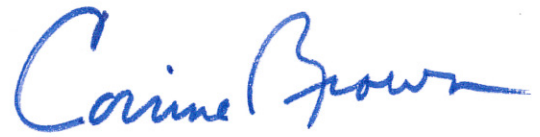
BILL NELSON
U.S. Senator



MARCO RUBIO
U.S. Senator



ANDER CRENSHAW
Member of Congress



CORRINE BROWN
Member of Congress

CC: The Honorable Michael B. Donley