

## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2309

September 6, 2011

The Honorable Michael B. Donley  
Secretary of the Air Force  
United States Air Force  
1670 Air Force Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20330-1670

Dear Secretary Donley,

I am writing to express my strong support for the 148<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing in Duluth, Minnesota in its effort to become an Active Associate Unit. As an Active Associate Unit, the 148<sup>th</sup> will benefit both the Active Air Force and the Air National Guard.

The 148<sup>th</sup> is an ideal candidate for active association. Based in Duluth, Minnesota, the 148<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing has a proven track record of success. It earned excellent or outstanding ratings on all 15 of their major inspections over the last ten years. The 148<sup>th</sup> consistently wins awards, including the 2008 Raytheon Trophy for the top air superiority squadron in the entire Air Force – only the fourth time that an Air Guard unit has won this prestigious award.

The Wing has exclusive ownership and scheduling rights of an airship complex that is among the best in the United States. This allows unmatched efficiency and the ability to flex and avoid weather impacts to training.

Both the pilots and the maintainers of the 148<sup>th</sup> have exceptional experience – all above Active Duty squadrons' standards. The 148<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing enjoys broad support from the local community, as the Air Force has been part of the region for close to 100 years. Duluth, a Yellow Ribbon city, has a strong network of support for active personnel. This network includes affordable, quality housing, eight higher education institutions, and access to high quality health care with Tri-Care/Tri-Care Prime.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me, or Jeff Lomonaco of my staff, at 202-224-5641.

Sincerely,



Al Franken  
United States Senator