

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 9, 2026

Troy E. Meink
Secretary of the Air Force
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330

General Steven S. Nordhaus
National Guard Bureau Director
111 S. George Mason Dr.
Arlington, VA 22204

Dear Secretary Meink and General Nordhaus:

We write regarding the troubling decision to deactivate the Central Repair Facility (CRF) mission at the 183rd Wing in Springfield, Illinois, without a suitable replacement mission. For nearly two decades, the dedicated personnel on the CRF mission have ensured our nation's air fleet remains safe, ready, and mission capable. We urge you to consider establishing a new Air Operations Group at the 183rd Wing that would leverage the Wing's expertise and secure the unit's future while strengthening Joint Force readiness and our national defense.

Since 2012, the 183rd Wing has capably provided fighter jet engine maintenance for U.S. Armed Forces aircraft, including the U-2, F-16, A-10, and F-15EX. The CRF remains the only mission of its kind within the Joint Force and is the single dedicated repair facility for the F-15EX aircraft fleet. In 2020, the 183rd Maintenance Squadron was the recipient of the Air National Guard Maintenance Effectiveness Award, and the Wing is recognized for exploring unique innovations such as additive and advanced manufacturing to build and repair engine components. While the Joint Force's engine repair demands have evolved, we are concerned a hasty deactivation of the CRF mission could risk adequate sustainment of our fighter fleet—and leave more than 115 personnel without an appropriate mission. As such, we ask you to delay deactivation of the CRF until at least September 30, 2027. A deferred timeline would mitigate the impact on the lives of our Illinois Airmen and women and their families, allowing them to seek retraining or reassignment—or even retirement for those eligible—while awaiting a suitable replacement mission.

In addition, we request that you swiftly consider establishing a second Air Operations Group (AOG) at the 183rd Wing. A second AOG would build off of the 183rd Wing's current success in providing planning, command and control, and execution support for air operations for the Air Force and the Joint Force worldwide. As the Air Force strives to maintain strategic dominance in an increasingly contested security environment, a highly capable, deployable AOG would serve as the backbone to tactical direction, synchronization, and mission execution. We understand the Air Force supports establishing more AOGs for missions in the Pacific and the global strike mission, and we urge you to urgently fund the standup of at least one AOG, to start on October 1, 2027. Establishing a new AOG in Illinois would leverage the skills of our National Guard Airmen and women and the 183rd's excellent facilities, including its classified operations space; a Joint Cyber Range; and the brand new, 24,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art Base Civil Engineer Complex. While we appreciate the National Guard Bureau plans to complete funding in 2028 for an Air Mobility Operations Squadron and Contingency Response

Group in Illinois, these two missions were previously planned efforts in other parts of the State and will not be sufficient to safeguard the specialized workforce of the 183rd.

We look forward to working with you on a path forward that will continue the 183rd Wing's legacy of service to our nation. Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

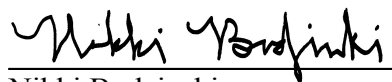
Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Nikki Budzinski
Member of Congress