

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 2, 2016

The Honorable Deborah Lee James
Secretary of the United States Air Force
1665 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330

Dear Secretary James:

As Members of Congress from the Florida delegation, we are writing to express our support for Homestead Air Reserve Base (HARB) as the appropriate location to base the first reserve-led F-35A program.

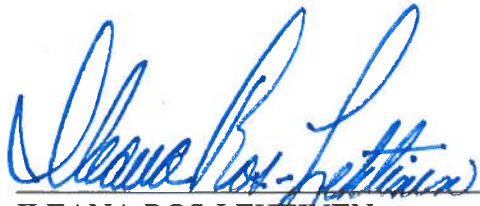
Since 1942, HARB has consistently proved to be a valuable asset to the Department of Defense, the United States Air Force, and our South Florida community. HARB's host unit, the 482nd Fighter Wing, is truly impressive with more than 2,500 members and the ability to deploy with short-notice anywhere in the world. In addition, the 482nd Fighter Wing is integrated with the 495th Fighter Group's Detachment 93 which has more than 170 active duty members. Due to their unique geographical location, HARB is an ideal location for missions in the Caribbean and Latin America and a great strategic location for intercept and identification of air and sea movements outside of the southeast United States.

HARB was originally intended to host and support sizeable aircraft including bombers and tankers, which is why it was designed and built with large taxiways, oversized ramps, spacious parking aprons, and a long runway. The base also boasts extensive munitions storage and a substantial staging area. Since South Florida is situated on a peninsula, HARB based flight operations enjoy substantial special use airspace within close proximity to the airfield and free from residential areas including over the Gulf of Mexico to the west and the Atlantic Ocean to the east, as well as the Avon Park bombing range to the north.

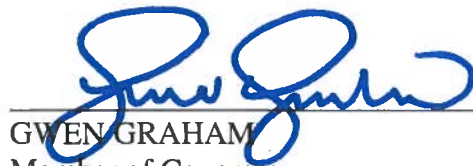
HARB is also well known for its partnership building. With the support of the 482nd Fighter Wing, HARB hosts several tenant units including the Florida Air National Guard's Detachment 1 of the 125th Fighter Wing, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Coast Guard Maritime Safety and Security Team Miami, U.S. Special Operations Command South, as well as others. The 482nd Fighter Wing also supports forward deployment of the Air Force Reserve's Hurricane Hunters weather reconnaissance mission and joint relief operations with the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Once again, within all applicable rules and regulations, we would like to express our support for basing the first reserve-led F-35A program at HARB. We respectfully request your full and fair consideration of this important matter, and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



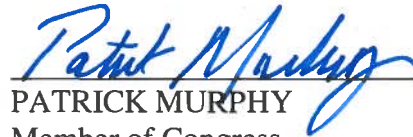
ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN
Member of Congress



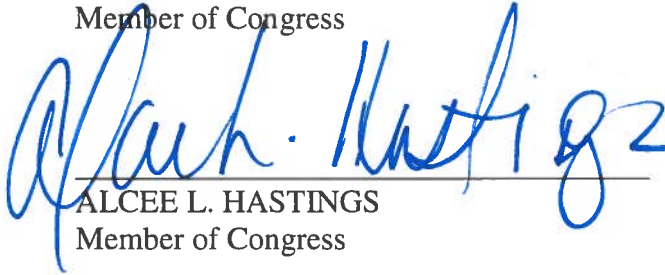
GWEN GRAHAM
Member of Congress



CARLOS CURBELO
Member of Congress



PATRICK MURPHY
Member of Congress



ALCEE L. HASTINGS
Member of Congress



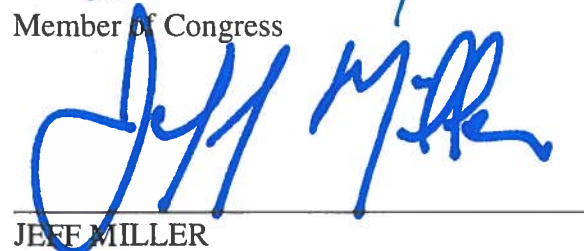
MARIO DIAZ-BALART
Member of Congress



CURT CLAWSON
Member of Congress



DAVID JOLLY
Member of Congress



JEFF MILLER
Member of Congress



FREDERICA S. WILSON
Member of Congress