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March 12, 2014

The Honorable Deborah Lee James
Secretary
United States Air Force
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1160

Dear Secretary James,

It is with concern and dismay that I have received reports that the U.S. Air Force has reduced the level of its honor guard personnel at the funerals of military retirees.

The veterans who have bravely and unselfishly served our country and protected our freedom deserve our highest measure of respect. For many families, the presence of a full military honor guard at the memorial services for a loved one is not only a comfort, but a demonstration of respect and appreciation from a grateful nation.

It is my understanding that the Air Force has instituted a policy that has generally reduced the size of the honor teams available for the funeral services of military retirees from seven members to two members. While fully recognizing the resource allocation issues facing the Air Force and other branches of the military as a result of budgetary constraints, my belief is honoring our veterans and their families for their service and sacrifices is of extreme importance. Therefore, I would request that the Air Force review its priorities and determine a responsible means to restore the policy of providing a full honor guard at military services as before. Please know that I stand ready to work towards that end in Congress as well.

Thank you for your dedicated service to our nation.

Sincerely,

Spencer Bachus
Member of Congress

STB/bm

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