



RON DESANTIS
GOVERNOR

May 3, 2024

The Honorable Jack Reed
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Armed
Services
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Rogers
Chairman
U.S. House Committee on Armed
Services
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Armed
Services
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
U.S. House Committee on Armed
Services
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin, III
Secretary
Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Chairmen Reed and Rogers, Ranking Members Wicker and Smith, and Secretary Austin:

I write to share my opposition to the Air Force's request in Legislative Proposal 480 that Congress directly authorize the transfer of the 114th Electronic Warfare Squadron, a Florida Air National Guard unit, to the Space Force without approval of the Governor.

If adopted, the proposal would flout more than a century of precedent and undermine federal law protections for state control of their National Guard forces. As you know, 10 U.S.C. § 18238 and 32 U.S.C. § 104(c) prohibit the reorganization of a National Guard unit in a state without the consent of that state's Governor. This good-sense statutory requirement ensures that National Guard personnel and assets, which are needed for domestic crisis response and recovery and are under the command and control of Governors, are not siphoned off without consideration of state and local interests.

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As a low-lying, storm-prone state, Florida is uniquely vulnerable to hurricanes and flooding that require significant, operationally ready logistics and disaster support, including from our National Guard units. Given Florida's large population and its geographic susceptibility to major natural disasters, the Florida National Guard should be larger than it currently is. Indeed, because the Federal Government has under-resourced the Florida National Guard relative to other large states, the Florida Legislature has established the Florida State Guard to supplement and bolster response personnel that can be deployed to communities across Florida.

While Florida is committed to the success of Space Force and our national security, it is not possible to effectively protect our nation from foreign enemies when we cannot guarantee the safety and security of our communities here at home. This legislative proposal weakens that guarantee and sidesteps the authority of the Governor to ensure Floridians are prepared and protected to address whatever domestic emergencies may arise, especially as we approach another hurricane season.

I urge you to withdraw or reject Legislative Proposal 480. Under my authority as Governor, I will consider any proposed future force adjustments to the Army and Air National Guard in Florida that enhance national security without endangering domestic preparedness and response.

Sincerely,



Ron DeSantis
Governor

RD/wb