

February 11, 2010

The Honorable Mayor Bob Walkup
Care of Tucson Lightning
162nd Fighter Wing Minuteman Committee
PO Box 22343
Tucson Arizona 85734

Dear Mayor Walkup:

I write to you as a member of the board of the Southern Arizona Leadership Council (SALC). SALC and its nearly 100 CEO and community leaders fully support the basing of the next generation of U.S. Air Force fighter aircraft, the F-35, at the 162nd Fighter Wing, Tucson International Airport.

The 162nd Fighter Wing has long served this nation by providing unmatched U.S. and international pilot training in fighter aircraft. The importance of the base's \$280 million positive economic impact on our community cannot be overstated. The advantages of pilot training in our region include great weather, unmatched training ranges, a highly experienced team of professionals in the wing and its existing military aviation infrastructure.

Equally important is community support for the continued role of the Arizona Air National Guard and its mission. The business leaders of SALC send this letter today in hopes of demonstrating to U.S. Air Force officials that the Tucson community is proud to serve our nation by hosting military bases in our region.

SALC is pleased to join the 162nd FW Minuteman Committee in support of basing the F-35 at the 162nd Fighter Wing. Basing the F-35 here is critical to our nation's defense and the wing's approximately 1,500 associated jobs have a sizable and important economic impact on our region. We look forward to this decision as a way of ensuring the future prosperity of the wing while serving the needs of our nation.

We urge you and others to enthusiastically support this very important decision.

Sincerely,



Leslie P. Tolbert, Ph.D.
Vice President for Research, Graduate Studies,
and Economic Development