Reserve Organization of America

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May 19, 2026

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Chairman
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
By e-mail

The Honorable Chris Coons
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
By e-mail

Dear Chairman McConnell and Ranking Member Coons:

On behalf of the Reserve Organization of America (ROA), I write ahead of the Subcommittee's May 21 hearing to examine the President's FY 2027 budget request and justification for the Department of the Navy. ROA respectfully urges the Subcommittee to fully fund the Navy's request for 18 KC-130J aircraft for the Navy Reserve.

The KC-130J is the Navy's only organic intra-theater airlift capable of moving oversized cargo and the only platform that can meet the full airlift demand generated by Distributed Maritime Operations. The Navy Reserve operates the entire Navy C-130 logistics fleet, which is approaching the end of its operational life. Underinvestment in recapitalization threatens the Navy's ability to sustain distributed naval operations in the Indo-Pacific and erodes the Total Force's organic airlift backbone.

ROA is grateful for the $500 million provided in the FY 2026 Defense Appropriations Act, which funded four KC-130J aircraft for the Navy Reserve and built on the one aircraft procured in FY 2024 and two in FY 2025. The FY 2027 request for 18 aircraft builds directly on that foundation and reflects the scale of recapitalization required to bring the Navy Reserve KC-130J fleet to 32 aircraft by 2030. Sustained execution at this level, paired with a Multiyear Procurement (MYP) IV contract beginning in FY 2028, would ensure production-line stability and capture savings comparable to the estimated 11 percent achieved under MYP III.

As for the industrial base, the C-130J production line supports 497 suppliers across 38 states, 33,563 direct and indirect jobs, and more than $3.9 billion in annual economic impact. Production has declined from more than 24 aircraft per year in 2020 to approximately 20 today, and only sustained congressional investment will prevent further attrition of the only active U.S. airlifter still in production.

Full funding of the 18 KC-130J Navy Reserve request would close a long-standing capability gap and deliver durable readiness for distributed maritime operations. ROA stands ready to support the Subcommittee's work and welcomes the opportunity to engage with you and your staff on this and the full slate of priorities ROA has submitted for FY 2027.

Sincerely,

John B. Hashem
Maj. Gen., U.S. Army (Ret.)
Chief Executive Officer