

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 30, 2024

The Honorable Frank Kendall
Secretary of the Air Force
1690 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1670

Dear Secretary Kendall,

We are concerned about the Air Force's recruitment challenges. As you are aware, last year, the service failed to meet its recruitment goals by about 2,600 airmen, approximately 10% of its goal.

It is estimated that only 23% of young people are eligible to enlist without a waiver and only 1% are both eligible and inclined to have a conversation with recruiters about the possibility of service. There are a host of factors that can be attributed to this problem but we firmly believe encouraging schools to enhance their civics and physical fitness programs, and greater access and engagement of young people in high school via the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) program, can increase familiarity with service and help alleviate the problem.

According to a 2017 RAND study, almost a third of eventual recruits began considering the military as an option in high school. Furthermore, the Air Force estimates 22% of students graduating high school with Air Force JROTC experience choose to pursue active-duty Air Force service.

It has come to our attention that 193 of 841 Air Force JROTC units (23%) are currently non-viable due to cadet enrollment below minimum requirements. Furthermore, 5 of the 193 units have been notified of and approved for closure. The remaining 188 units are being placed on probation and have been notified of their probationary status.

We understand that Section 2031 of Title 10 requires that a JROTC program's minimum enrollment be at least 10% of the total number of students enrolled at a school, or 100 students, whichever is less.

However, Section 551 of the FY24 National Defense Authorization Act (P.L. 118-31) authorized an increase of JROTC programs, from 3,700 to 4,000. It is Congress's clear intent that we should have more programs, not less.

Therefore, we request that you reconsider the closure of these units, putting them on probationary status, while Congress has an opportunity to revise Section 2031 in the FY25 National Defense Authorization Act. We believe this will only help enhance our military readiness and help your Department meet its recruitment goals.

Cordially,



Michael Waltz



Chrissy Houlahan



James Comer



Carol Miller